

"Saved or Lost?"

There is a big difference between being saved and being lost. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're exploring the difference between being right with God and not being right with God.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Scriptures give us the words of Jesus, and these are words of eternal life. That's why we turn to Scripture! We want to live eternally with our Father in heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ. Our prayer is that you too will have eternal life with the Father. You can always trust the Scripture to teach the truth that leads to eternal life. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." Most people are surprised at this statement from the Lord. They imagine that most people are saved and only the worst people will be lost. But Jesus didn't say that; He said many travel the broad way that leads to destruction, while few take the narrow road that leads to life. Be one of the few!

The Lord Jesus said in John 14 verse 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; and no one comes to the Father but through Me." Now many are embracing a false assurance that everything is spiritually all right, when, in fact, unresolved sin is endangering their souls. Others are blindly following the crowd, never examining the Scriptures to see if what they believe is true. They listen to the world and never consider what God says. They don't realize that they're risking their souls. When it comes to our souls, everything we treasure is at stake. Whether we serve God is not a trivial matter.

We offer this study free on saved or lost. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Titus 2:11 to 14, and explore the fact that life in God, and in His will matters.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to Titus, and it tells him about what grace can do for us. Titus 2, verse 11 to 14.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and Godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possessions, zealous for good works." That's a reading from God's Holy Word.

Let's pray together. "Oh Father, we pray that we may not have believed in vain, and that the grace that you have imparted to us did not work in vain. Help us to live soberly, and Godly, and righteously in this world, and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The topic of sin is sensitive for many people. People don't want to think of themselves as sinners, so people tend to ignore the word. A Harris poll several years ago suggested that 13 percent of Americans think there's no such thing as sin. Many others think the whole concept of sin is obsolete and that God won't condemn anybody. The Scriptures, however, are clear. We have all sinned,

everyone of us. Romans 3 and verse 10 says, "as it is written, 'there is none righteous, not even one.'" Romans 3:23 says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Solomon observed in Ecclesiastes 7 and verse 20, "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins." 1 John 1 verse 8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we're deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." Verse 10 continues, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." Now considering that we all have sinned against God, we may say with the psalmist, "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (Psalm 130 verse 3).

When we sin, it affects our souls and our relationship with the Lord. What does sin do to us? Well first, sin deceives us. Hebrews 3 and verse 12 speaks of how people are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. People grow to love sin, because it promises them pleasure; but sin's pleasure ends up corrupting and enslaving those who practice it. Second, the Lord Jesus said in John 8:34, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin." We think we're in control, but sin will take control of us and make us do things that bring shame and regret.

Ultimately, sin will cause us spiritual death. James 1:13 to 15 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I'm being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he's carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Again, Romans 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now Christ brings us eternal life, but sin brings nothing but spiritual death and eternal separation from God.

Paul describes those who are lost in sin in Ephesians 2:1 to 3: he says, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." You see, when people follow the devil and live in disobedience, they are destined to face the wrath of God. Now he gets even more specific in verse 12, when he said "remember that you (that is before you became a Christian, that you) were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." No hope and without God! That's what it means to be lost.

Thankfully, this is not the whole story. No one has to remain lost. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we can have forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. Ephesians 2:4 to 7 says, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you've been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." God has graciously given us Jesus Christ that we might find forgiveness and hope for eternity. The grace of God is truly amazing; but it's only amazing when we realize the consequences of sin and our need to be saved. When we finally realize the bitterness of sin and being lost, we'll begin to see the beauty and the love found in salvation and grace.

Titus 2:11 to 14 says, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and Godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ

Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." God doesn't leave us where He found us. His grace not only saves us and redeems us; it changes our hearts and our lives. We become new people, born again.

Titus 3:3 to 7 tells what happens. "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we've done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Forgiveness takes place when we're washed and regenerated (that is born again) in baptism. God's grace justifies us and makes us heirs of eternal life.

Now forgiveness permits us to be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 19 describes forgiveness as God "not counting their trespasses against" us. When we're forgiven, we can come to God. In 1 Peter 3 and verse 18 says, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." When we come to God, God sees us differently than when we were in the world.

1 Peter 2 verses 9 to 10 describes those who have come to God, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of GOD; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Ephesians 2:19 says, "So then you're no longer strangers and aliens, but you're fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household (God's family)."

The Lord Jesus said in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting (or eternal) life." Now every word the Lord said here is true, but the Lord says more than what is found in just one verse, or this verse. One verse may tell you something true but not the whole truth. Some take this verse as the whole gospel and ignore other verses that are just as binding, and just as inspired and authoritative. They argue one is saved by faith alone and nothing else is necessary, some do.

But the Lord Jesus, however, also said to Nicodemus in John 3 and verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We must believe this verse is also true. Unless one is baptized, born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Saying we must believe in Jesus is surely true, but we can't ignore the necessity of being born again of water and the Spirit. Christianity isn't a smorgasbord where we can pick which verses we like and leave the rest alone. Jesus is Lord every time He speaks. Baptism into Christ is a necessary act of faith. Scripture reveals that God desires penitent and baptized believers, not simply people who say they believe. Galatians 3:26 to 27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

Now John 3:16 should also be understood with John 3:35 to 36, which says that "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Now if you believe the Lord but are unwilling to obey Him, you won't have eternal life. Saying you believe isn't sufficient, you must obey the Lord and practice your faith. Many people have faith, but they're not willing to practice it.

John 12, verses 42 to 43 describes such people. "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." And some today hold so strongly to their human traditions and positions in the community that they're unwilling to confess and obey the Lord.

The Scriptures teach people who come to Christ, that they can fall away and leave the Lord. Hebrews 3:12 to 14 says, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it's still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." It's not enough simply to become a Christian; we must hold fast our faith until the end. Those who begin walking the narrow road must remain on that road. To forsake the Lord and the church by turning back to the world will cost you your soul.

2 Peter 2:20 to 21 says, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them." Many Christians have wandered away from the faith; they no longer believe in Jesus Christ. And others have allowed the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life to choke God out of their hearts and lives.

Continuing in willful sin can cost a wayward Christian his soul. Some Christians turn from the Lord and love sin so much that they'll not give it up. The writer of the book of Hebrews described some early Christians as drifting away from the truth, neglectful of their salvation, dull of hearing, immature, and sluggish. And some have abandoned assembling with other Christians at church. Hebrews 10:26 and 27 says, "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries." The sacrifice of Jesus Christ that once saved them would no longer be available to them. God didn't abandon them; they abandoned God. What about you? Have you become a Christian? Have you abandoned your faith? Are you saved or are you lost?

Let's pray. "Oh Father, we pray that we'll have hearts that are set upon serving You, and loving You, and staying faithful. And Father, help us to do Your will always. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen."

Would you rather be saved or be lost? Some have made this earth their focus, but there's something more valuable than the whole world. The Lord Jesus said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done" (Matthew 16 verses 25 to 27). Wouldn't you rather live with God in heaven than without Him? Heaven is a place of joy and love and peace. It's a place without sorrow or sin.

1 Timothy 2:3 to 4 says, "This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of our God, our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." You can be saved if you'll place your faith in Jesus, if you'll confess your faith that He is the Lord, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, and if you repent of your sins, and if you'll be baptized (that is immersed in water) in the

name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, just as Acts 2:38 teaches. God's love and His grace are abundant, but we must not take grace for granted.

We must hear and obey the Lord. We must deny ourselves and take up our crosses daily. Sadly, many choose the broad way that leads to destruction. Won't you take the narrow road that leads to life? Won't you hear God's word, believe it, and follow the Lord all your days? Only the truth can set you free.

We hope that today's study about being saved or being lost has stirred you to consider your soul and your eternity. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube, and we hope you will. Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, if you get a hold of us, you write s or you ask for something, we're not here to try to make money off of you. We're here to try to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you get your heart focused on God today by worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, read your scriptures, learn for yourselves what God would have you to do, and tell a friend about this program. As always we say to you, God bless you, and we want God to bless you, and we love you, and that comes from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.