

## "The Gospel and Salvation"

How does God bring us to salvation? Some say it's by a special feeling, and others say it comes through the gospel. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." And today we're looking at how God communicates, so stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH the Lord's Way. We want to know God's will. David said in Psalm 19:9 to 10 that, "The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." The Bible is a treasure; it opens the door to God's heart and His promises. We can come to know God and His grace through the teaching of Scripture. That's why, when we want to know about God and how He works in this world today, we go to the Bible. The Bible is the only sure source of Divine truth. We're delighted that you're spending time with us. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Many churches teach that babies are born with original sin. They say this is inherited, original sin that so corrupts a child that he's utterly lost and incapable of choosing or even desiring God. They claim that without the miraculous intervention of God, a person is not able to respond to God's call for them to respond to the gospel. They say a person must go through a spiritual experience with God before they can even believe in Jesus Christ.

But reading through the Bible—and especially those early stories of conversion in the book of Acts, you find something quite different. Instead of stories about some miraculous experience opening the corrupted hearts of people so that they can believe, you read about the apostles and disciples preaching the gospel to the lost. They preached how Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and the good news of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection. When people heard the preaching they believed and responded to what they heard. These lost and sinful people can and did desire and choose God! Amazing! Preaching the gospel and salvation are indeed related.

Now we're offering this Bible study on the gospel and salvation free. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study, 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) and on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew 28:18 to 20, and we'll explore how the gospel and salvation work together.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 28 verses 18 to 20. And there Jesus says,

And Jesus came up and spoke (to His apostles) to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

That's the word of God. That's the thing that Jesus the apostles to do and what we should do as well. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us Your word. Help us to make disciples of those who don't know You. To bring them along to help them to know the truth and be saved. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus gave His marching orders to His disciples, the great commission. The Lord said in Matthew 28:19 to 20 to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to

observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Jesus commissioned them to preach the gospel to every person in every place for all time.

Reading through the book of Acts, you’ll find a constant emphasis on preaching the gospel. Peter and the eleven preached on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. When Peter revealed to the Jews how God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ, and that they had crucified Him, well the people then were filled with guilt. They wanted to know what to do. Well Peter didn’t spend any time telling them the Holy Spirit had already worked a miracle in their lives. No. He told them to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2 verse 38).

Verse 41 says, “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” Now these Jews, who had crucified Jesus and needed forgiveness, heard and accepted what Peter said and obeyed it. Three thousand repented and were baptized! They came to the Lord by obeying what they heard. They didn’t have an experience. They didn’t pray through. They simply accepted what Peter preached and obeyed.

Verse 42 says, “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” They devoted themselves to learn more and more of the will of Jesus Christ. They told the story of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus repeatedly to everyone. Acts 4 and verse 4 says, “But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.” There was no spiritual experience miraculously changing their nature. They simply heard the message and believed.

Acts 6 and verse 7 says, “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” The more they preached the gospel the more people believed and became obedient to the faith.

When persecution arose and the Jews stoned Stephen, the church didn’t stop believing or stop preaching. Acts 8:4 to 5 says, “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria. He began proclaiming Christ to them.” Preaching led to the way. And it led them to act in verse 12 Acts 8 says, “But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.” Again, there is no miraculous changing of hearts by the Holy Spirit. The power to change hearts was not some direct operation of the Holy Spirit but a change from the preaching of the gospel.

Later in Acts 8, Philip taught an Ethiopian eunuch. Now an angel and the Holy Spirit spoke directly to the preacher Philip, but the communication between Philip and the Eunuch was a normal conversation. There is simply no indication of some spiritual experience changing the Eunuch miraculously from a sinner to a believer. What we have is a simple, gospel preaching.

In Acts 8:34 the eunuch asked Philip, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” Well this is not a question of a man who is miraculously saved; this is the sincere question of someone seeking the truth. Verses 35 to 36 say: Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” Well here it was the preaching that made the difference.

When Saul of Tarsus was on the road to Damascus, he was miraculously blinded and had a conversation with the Lord Jesus. Acts 9, however, says nothing of Jesus miraculously changing Saul’s heart on the road. In Acts 9 verse 6 Jesus said, “but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you

what you must do.” Now though Saul fasted and prayed fervently, he was not saved until three days later when Ananias came to him and told him what he must do. He said, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22 verse 16). For Saul of Tarsus salvation was not a “better-felt-than-told” experience, no, but the washing from sin that came when he responded to the gospel in baptism. That is when his sins were washed away.

Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was a devout man who feared God with all his household, continually prayed, and gave many alms to the Jewish people; but he was not saved. An angel appeared to him, but there’s no suggestion he was saved when the angel appeared. The angel told him to send for Peter in Joppa, and Cornelius did so. Well, Peter came to preach Jesus to Cornelius and his loved ones. According to Acts 11 and verse 14 Peter spoke “words to you (that is Cornelius) by which you (Cornelius) will be saved, you and all your household.” It wasn’t the gift of tongue speaking that saved Cornelius and his household; it was gospel preaching.

Now God uses the gospel to touch people’s hearts, to convict them of sin, and to teach them about salvation. Paul wanted to preach in Rome, so people could be saved. Paul said in Romans 1:13 to 16, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” It isn’t some experience that saves but a response to the gospel. According to Romans 1 and verse 5 Paul said he “received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith.” Gospel preaching leads people to gospel obedience!

And Paul explained in Romans 6 verses 16 to 18, “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

First, people choose to obey sin or obey the Lord. People aren’t so totally corrupt that they can’t desire or decide to follow Christ. Second, these slaves of sin understood and obeyed the teaching from the heart. Their hearts weren’t so corrupted that they were prevented from obeying righteousness. Third, obedience to the teaching transformed these slaves of sin to servants of righteousness. This passage in Romans says nothing about a direct operation of the Spirit that miraculously changes people before obedience. Romans clearly says believing and obeying the gospel is what transforms people from sinners into servants of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 1 verse 21 says, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” Salvation is not in the messenger but in the message of God’s love and the cross. The Bible clearly says faith comes from hearing the gospel preached. Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (or God).” People come to faith when they hear the word of Christ. Faith follows hearing the gospel, not some experience.

John wrote in John 20:30 to 31, “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” The gospel story of Jesus brings faith, which can lead to eternal life. The Scriptures are divinely inspired, God-breathed, and have the power to bring faith and to save.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:1 to 3, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” When people hear, receive, and take their stand on the gospel of Christ, they can be saved by it. They must hold fast to it to be saved.

James 1:21 says, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.” People must repent and humbly accept God’s word. The implanted word, the word of God, “is able to save your souls.” James didn’t tell people to “pray the sinner’s prayer” or ask God for an experience. What he did was he pointed to repentance and humbling the heart so that they might receive the Word.

Peter knew being born again was not through some miraculous experience but from hearing and obeying the word of God. Peter said that Christians purified their souls by their obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1:22). He explains this in verses 23 to 25, “for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, ‘All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.”

The Spirit directly inspired the apostles and prophets who wrote Scripture. And Jesus promised to send out scribes in Matthew 23 and verse 34, and they recorded His words for all generations. And that’s why we go to the Bible. We can know the words of Jesus, because scribes wrote them down in the New Testament. 2 Peter 1:20 to 21 says, “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Those who wrote Scripture were moved by the Holy Spirit. They didn’t write on their own initiative or make up stories. God produced the Scriptures by working in and through men, yes. God uses the Divine message to pierce our hearts (just as He did on Pentecost).

God draws us through the gospel. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:44 to 45 that, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘and they shall all be taught of God.’ You see everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.” The Lord draws us when we hear the message of His love and grace. Preaching the cross draws people to God, not some personal experience. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:32, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” Christ demonstrated His love and grace through suffering on the cross. And His message is what draws us to love and serve Him.

Let’s pray together. Oh Father help us to look to the message, to know the truth so that we might be saved and have eternal life. Help us always to do Your will as it’s written and revealed in the bible. In Jesus name, Amen.

1 Timothy 2 and verse 4 says that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” The Father gave His Son on the cross to save us and He gave us the gospel message so that we might know the truth. Even in sin, people can repent and choose to follow the Lord. There is hope for you! The gospel is “good” news! And Jesus wants the gospel preached to everyone! He cares about you and He cares about your soul.

Sometimes people quote Acts 16 and verse 14 and say the Lord directly and miraculously changes our hearts. Acts 16:13 to 14 says that Paul “sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.” Well yes,

the Lord opened Lydia's heart by the power of the gospel message itself. In Colossians 4:2 to 4 Paul urged the church to pray "that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak." Why pray for an opportunity for the Word? Because God uses the gospel to open hearts!

To be saved, we must hear the word of Christ. Faith comes by hearing. If we welcome the gospel message, the Word will open our hearts. With love and faith we must respond to the gospel by placing our trust in Jesus Christ, by repenting of our sins, by confessing Jesus as the Christ and God's Son, and by being baptized. Now baptism into Christ is an immersion in water. And when you're baptized, the Lord washes away your sins (Acts 22:16), He buries and raises you with Christ (Romans 6:3 to 7), and makes you His child (Galatians 3:26 and 7), He also adds you to His church. Won't you believe and come to God today?

We hope that today's message has opened your heart to the gospel and that you'll be saved. We offer a free printed copy of this message, Gospel and Salvation, so 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](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Well, our programs also appear on our website.

And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.