

UHPC WORSHIP---JULY 28, 2019

SERMON TOPIC: CHRIST: "How He Saves, Transforms, and Restores"

If anyone asked us: "Are we saved?" What would be our answer? Most of us would answer "YES!" We are saved. If they were to ask: "Saved from what and by whom?" Could we tell them?" Then they may ask: "How are we saved?" What would we say? The short answer would be something like: **"We are saved from our sins and transgressions by grace through faith in Christ Jesus, the risen Son of God.** However, there is much more to be understood about this faith and this hope that we have. We might call that "Faith seeking understanding." For those who have participated in our monthly "Train-The-Trainer evangelism workshops, this phrase is familiar. As we grow or hope to grow in our Salvation, it might be helpful to know that our Salvation is a growing, moving, expanding, upbuilding, deepening, purifying, transforming, reforming, and continuous process that leads to a maturing Grace, a newness of life, a **detachment** from the world's systems to a restoration and **attachment** to a Christ Centered, Kingdom focused existence. WE MIGHT THINK OF THAT NEW LIFE AS A LIFE BEING LIVED FULLY IN AND THROUGH CHRIST. OUR FULLNESS OF LIFE IS ANCHORED IN CHRIST WHO IS THE FULLNESS OF GOD IN FLESH/ BODILY. HE CAME FROM THE HEAVENLY FATHER ABOVE TO BRING THE KINGDOM OF GOD NEAR TO US on earth. HE CAME TO OFFER HIMSELF A SACRIFICE TO ATONE FOR OUR SINS, PURCHASE OUR REDEMPTION, AND TO GIVE US ETERNAL AND ABUNDANT LIFE. We are to become so connected and attached to Christ Jesus, that we do nothing without inviting Him into our plans, looking and listening to Him for guidance, and calling to Him for help in everything whether small or great. After a while this will become automatic and effortless. It will become just a way of living life here on earth.

This type of life is lived anchored in an inner core belief and faith that is able to keep us steady in the storms of life. Last week we heard about Jesus being the visible image of the invisible God. We heard that he had the exact imprint of the Father in Him and had all of the Father's attributes residing in Himself bodily. He was/is the Bearer and Giver of life. And according to John 1, that life is the LIGHT that enlightens all human lives. This Light is beyond the light that we know in the earthly realm. It is more of an INNER light than an outer one. And without Christ within we are all in darkness. Without Him with us and in us we do not have life in its fullness.

So, Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, tried to break down and outline how Christians became Christians, how they need to grow, mature, develop, and be established in their faith. This is still good for us today. Let's look at some of what Paul highlighted to them:

1. To begin with, Paul told the church then and us now, who have received Christ, to CONTINUE TO ABIDE, LIVE LIFE IN—WITH, AND THROUGH HIM/CHRIST JESUS. From now on see that He is included in all that we do or plan to do.

2. Be rooted and grounded, built up, and established in the faith. In other words, grow deeper and stronger in the faith daily.
3. ABOUND i.e. OVERFLOW IN THANKS-GIVING RICHLY because of What Christ has done and continues to do from now until eternity. (Saving, sanctifying, justifying, forgiving, giving us the Holy Spirit, abundant and eternal life... making us children of God.)
4. Be alert, discerning, and wise so we won't be deceived by false doctrines, traditions, and worldly spirits which are not according to Christ. Some of us have heard of people who claim to be harnessing or praying to the 'UNIVERSAL SPIRITS.'" No. We pray to the One who created the universe. He us the one to be exalted, worshipped, honored, and adored.
5. WHY? ...Because only in Christ dwells the FULLNESS OF DEITY/ bodily.
6. By faith you have come to fullness in Him who is the HEAD OF ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.
7. In Him you are spiritually circumcised cutting off the stony heart to give us a new heart of flesh and a new spirit of love, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. (Re-born from above.)
8. When we were baptized our sins were buried with Him and we were raised with Him unto a new eternal and abundant life by faith in that same power of God that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.
9. God the Father made us alive together with Him when He forgave our sins and trespasses. The record of our sins against us were erased from the demands of the Law.
10. They were set aside and nailed to the Cross.
11. In His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus disarmed the universal elemental spirits of darkness, and publicly exposed them by triumphing over sin, death, and the grave— WHEN HE AROSE FROM THE DEAD ON EASTER MORNING.
12. Thus, Jesus justified us by the blood of His Cross, forgave us, and began the transforming process in our lives... heart, mind, body, soul, and spirit.
13. He transformed us ... changed us... from our worldly habits of the kingdom of darkness to bring us into the Heavenly Kingdom of Light. He saved us to consecrate and to sanctify us, to make us holy to fit us for the Kingdom of Heaven. Our flesh often resists this purification process because we do not understand what is happening. But Jesus is persistent in His passionate love, to make us more into His likeness and image.
14. With the sacrifice of His blood and his body, Christ did battle against the world's glory, and systems in order to shepherd us into His sheep-fold to dwell among His chosen flock, and to train us for Kingdom living. After a while He begins to restore us to a better life of peace and rest as our reformation and transformation begin to take effect and to manifest.
15. In reforming us into His likeness and image He is making us children of God with the attitudes and attributes that reflect godliness and light.

16. He is Changing our disobedience and rebelliousness to obedience and willingness. He opens our eyes, ears, heart, and mind to know His voice, so that we will not follow another.
17. OUR RESTORATION BEGINS AFTER OUR CORRECTION AND OUR HEALING BEGINS TO FORM US INTO NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST JESUS. Here we begin to recognize His voice, understand spiritual truths more clearly, see things from a different perspective, and the meaning of Scripture begins to become clearer.
18. We came to Him as children, but His goal was to correct our lame walk, open our blind eyes, deaf ears, and soften hardened hearts.
19. We are becoming more and more rooted, grounded and established in our Salvation. We are continuing to grow in strength, wisdom, knowledge and understanding.
20. So, when we are fully converted, we can bear witness and testify of the goodness of the Almighty God, His steadfast love and faithfulness; for now we have a testimony of how God divinely brought us through our trials and tribulations, took our feet out of the miry clay, turned us around—360 degrees and plant our feet on the Rock to stay.
21. Salvation is not a one- shot deal, but a refining process intended to sanctify or make us holy ...for the LORD our God is HOLY and as His children, we must be holy too.  
I heard a speaker say recently that everything that happens to us for good or for bad is intended to purify and refine us. I AM NOT SO SURE THAT IS TOTALLY TRUE. However, I know that for the child of God whatever the enemy meant for evil, can be turned around for our good.

Another speaker spoke about spiritual transformation that matures us into a Christ centered life which is lived above the ups and downs of the chaos of what might be called the “Wheel of Fortune” of the earthly life. Those who live on the edge of this world’s systems cannot stand when things begin to quake and shake spiritually, economically, financially, or relationally. Living with Christ as center of our inner core helps to relieve us from undue fear and restlessness about all that is happening around us. Jesus desires to bring us to that place of rest where we struggle no more no matter what is happening in our world. **He builds us to stand in the divine presence, anchored to the Solid Rock that will not move... Grounded firm and deep in the Savior’s love.** This same speaker said something interesting about the Beatitudes... Blessed are you who ... mourn, you who are hungry now, who are peace-makers, who are persecuted for righteousness sake, you who are meek, etc. He thought that as far as being detached from the world and its rules, laws, and ways such people are LUCKY. So, he would prefer to use the word: “LUCKY” ARE THOSE WHO... **For those who are detached from the worldly stuff and ARE ATTACHED TO CHRIST AT THEIR CORE, THEY ARE LUCKY AND BLESSED, FOR THEY WILL NOT BE EASILY SHAKEN OR BE AFRAID WHEN WORLD SYSTEMS BEGIN TO FLOUNDER, SHAKE, QUAKE, AND FALL.** WHY? –Because they feel SECURE with Christ in them and with them. He is their hope of glory. He becomes their strong Rock of Defense, their

refuge and their fortress. They know that their Heavenly Father is their Provider. Scripture will be brought back to their remembrance by the Holy Spirit which says: "Behold I am with you always even to the ends of the earth!" "I will never leave you nor forsake you." "Fear thou not for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." Etc. That is why we can sing: "On Christ the Solid Rock I stand... and ask: "Will Your anchor hold in the storms of life?"

WHEN WE HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING, GROUNDING, AND ROOTING IN THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF OUR SALVATION, we will be better able to hold fast to our Anchor when storms arise. So, let me ask us: On a scale of 1-10, where are we in understanding our faith? How are we growing in our Salvation? Have we stopped at a point and refused to grow further? Are we thankful for the great work Christ has done and is doing for our purification and advancement in the Heavenly Kingdom? He is the One who rescued us from sin and transgressions by His Precious Blood. His way is the more excellent way above the Law of works and punishment. How do we modify our existence to grow and mature spiritually? I share something I heard from E.W.T.N.: "CREATE A RULE OF LIFE BASED ON THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST IN YOUR LIFE, such as—"Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. Therefore, as such I go to Him about everything... big or small. Another might be: "Christ in me is my Hope of Glory." -----  
-There is a hope of eternal and abundant life that lives in me because of Christ who is living in me. Therefore, all success and achievement go to glorify Him who worked it through me. That speaker went on to say that we should honestly **identify our vices** that we know we have and offer them at the foot of the Cross asking the Holy Spirit to deliver us from evil and lead us not into temptation. Then also, we should make a **list of our virtues and give thanks** for them, asking the Lord to protect them and us from pride and arrogance. And we should make a habit of SANCTIFYING OUR ORDINARY DUTIES... daily chores by asking the Lord to help us in accomplishing them successfully and unto His glory... not as men pleasers, but as unto the glory of God. Finally, apologize when you are wrong. Ask forgiveness and give credit and praise to others who we have hurt wittingly or unwittingly.

If we want to get off the treadmill of the life of anxiety, stress, hurry, fear, always striving for more, then spend more time in Bible Study, fasting and prayer, fellowship with serious believers. Christ will guide you into green pastures and lead you by still waters... even if you/we have to pass through some dark valleys to get there... we/you will get there. LET US GIVE HIM THANKS AND PRAISE FOR OUR BLOOD BOUGHT SALVATION. LET US LAY OUR BURDENS DOWN AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS. LET US SURRENDER OUR ALL TO HIM WHO CARES FOR US AND DESIRES TO BLESS US WITH MORE AND MORE OF HIMSELF. HIS WAY IS THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY. It is the NARROW WAY, BUT IT IS THE BETTER WAY OF LIFE. MAY GOD FILL US WITH MORE OF HIS LIFE- GIVING SPIRIT AND POWER SO WE WILL RISE UP, BE HEALED, TAKE UP OUR BED AND WALK. MAY HE BE FIXED IN OUR INNER CORE, BE ANCHORED, AND NEVER BE

MOVED. MAY HE CAUSE US TO STAND FIRM AGAINST THE WINDS AND THE STORMS OF LIFE WITHOUT STUMBLING OR FALLING.

Scripture tells us to be ready to give an explanation of our faith and the hope that we have. I trust that this message has given us more confidence, courage, knowledge, and power to grow up in our most holy faith more fully. May God grant us grace to become more alert, aware, wiser, stronger, more diligent, faithful, loyal, dedicated, etc. Let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify God in heaven above ...Let your light so shine...as we endeavor to live our lives centered in Christ, the Solid Rock.

AMEN.

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