

U.H.P.C. WORSHIP: Nov. 03, 2019

SERMON TOPIC: "SALVATION IS FOR THE LOST" (SOULS)

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10) - This may sound like the "Old, Old Story" we often hear and sing about. But it bears repeating because it seems like the church/we -often forget why Jesus came, suffered, died, was buried, rose again, ascended into heaven, and has promised to return again to judge the living and the dead. The church is often embroiled in power struggles, infighting, and various kinds of issues that have nothing to do with seeking and saving the lost souls who are dying every day separated from eternal life in the presence and peace with the Almighty Creator God.

So, I would like to ask if there is anyone here who has been a Believer and follower of Christ Jesus for some time, but has never won a soul for the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ Jesus? If not, now is a good time to ask the Lord to send you a soul who needs Salvation, and to give you the right words to say that will draw them to Christ Jesus. (Pause and say it now) Pray the Holy Spirit to draw them, keep them, and to encourage them on their spiritual journey. Ultimately, pray that their whole being be anchored forever in God for eternity in heaven. Then watch, wait, and trust the Father to answer this prayer, for the Scripture tells us to pray the LORD of the harvest to send workers into the vineyard, for the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. (We pause and do so now.)

It is nice to have a church of saved believers. But it can become very comfortable for the saved ones to bask in their gift of Salvation. And that is good to an extent. Yes, we were saved, sanctified, and consecrated to do good works for God in the world; however, that is not all we are called to do. The Scripture reminds us that: *"Those who win souls are wise."* In keeping with that instruction, we are reminded in Matthew 28: 19, by Christ Jesus Himself, to *go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.* Then further, we are to teach them what we have been taught about Christ, and life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes, the saved need to be nurtured, fed, empowered, and equipped for service so that they/we can be sent out into the world to "seek and to save the lost." But if the saved ones do not heed this call and make it a priority, then many will continue to be condemned to eternal damnation away from the presence of God forever. That type of existence is called "Hell." --(To put it bluntly) According to Scripture it is a place of torment and indescribable heat and turmoil.

(Remember the account of Lazarus and the rich man?) In these days, it is not politically correct to preach and to teach about this aspect of our faith because it is disturbing to people. That may be so, but it is precisely because of this very reason that Jesus the Christ was sacrificed for the atonement of human sin. It was to give people a choice between heaven and hell for eternity. There is no right way to preach Salvation without teaching about the consequence of unrepentant sin. ***The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. WE HAVE A CHOICE. However, somebody has to carry the seed-bag of the Gospel to the unsaved; for Paul tells us in Romans 10: 13 and following that: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." BUT then he asked --How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim Him to them? And how are they to proclaim Him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news?"***

Our Salvation is for more than just our own comfort and security. It is for us to be equipped to go and to save the lost souls who are dying daily without someone to tell them about the choice between heaven in the presence of God, and eternal separation from God in torment forever. SALVATION IS FOR THE LOST and not for the righteous already saved ones. The saved is commissioned by Christ to invite others to the spiritual feast in the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ Jesus and His finished work on the Cross.---(The Gospel) Jesus told Peter: "And Peter, when you are (fully) converted, you will go and bring others into the Kingdom." He was not only to bring them in, but he was to teach them the way of righteousness by faith. He was to teach them the truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was to teach them the way of Salvation about confession, repentance, forgiveness, baptism, peace, love, and reconciliation... etc. He was commissioned to feed God's sheep and to tend God's lambs. In other words, we don't just bring them in and let them go without discipling them so that they will grow and go out to make more disciples. JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST AND THE MATURING SAVED ARE CALLED TO GO AND DO LIKEWISE.

Jesus demonstrated Salvation to a lost soul one day as He was walking along the street of Jericho with a crowd of people following Him as usual. There was a rich tax collector who was

of short stature. His name was Zaccheus. He wanted to see this Jesus, about whom so many were talking. So, He climbed a Sycamore tree to get a better view of Him as He was passing by. As Jesus got to the tree, He looked up and saw Zaccheus perched in the top of the tree, and Jesus called him down. Zaccheus was so happy, he hurriedly came down. But then Jesus said something that might have been a little disturbing to him and it was this: *"Today I must abide at your house."* I WONDER WHY? Couldn't Jesus just pronounce Salvation right there on the spot? Couldn't He just touch Him and pronounce him saved? I am sure Jesus could have done that. But I wonder if He did not know that Zaccheus' riches might have come from evil means of lawlessness, injustice, and possibly corruption or "shake-downs." Could it be that Jesus wanted to lead him to repentance that he might be forgiven and receive Salvation for his soul? Remember that this man was one of the chief tax collectors, and they were known to be the worst of the corrupt of the I.R.S. of their day. Zaccheus must have "smelled the rat" and so he began to repent.

You see whenever someone encounters Jesus, they will feel the need to confess their sins and to repent. Zaccheus began to tell Jesus, that if he defrauded anyone, he was willing to restore four times what he had taken. THEN JESUS SAID TO HIM: "TODAY, SALVATION HAS COME TO YOUR HOUSE." Can you remember the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well and how Jesus told her about her life and how she acknowledged her sins, then Jesus revealed Himself and His deity to her? Do you recall how she ran to her village to tell them about this Rabbi who told her all about herself and that it seemed He was the promised Messiah? Jesus was constantly teaching, preaching, and evangelizing? WHY? -- BECAUSE HE CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST. He seemed to always find some subtle way to bring people to the place of repentance that they may be forgiven and receive Salvation. That day Zaccheus' life began to change. He crossed over from being a corrupt rich man to being called a son of Abraham. This meant that he had become a part of the company of those who were saved by faith. He had become an honest man. He offered to make restitution for his wrong-doing. He was once a man who was comfortable in injustice, plundering the poor, ripping off the weak and the helpless. He once belonged to the group who perverted the Law. Can you think of anyone like this today? Can we see any of this in our social, political system today?

This was the state of things in the time of the Prophet Habakkuk also when he cried out to Jehovah God in his complaint about the situation of injustice and wickedness in his society. AS IF TO CHALLENGE THE LORD, Habakkuk said words to the effect: **“With all due respect, Jehovah, my God, I want to ask you –what are you going to do about this ugliness and corruption in your world? I would like to know when are you going to put a stop to it? I am just waiting and watching to see how and when You are going to take action against all this mess!”** Then the LORD answered and told him words to the effect: “Write this vision down plainly and boldly so that everyone can read it. The vision is for a specific time. Do not doubt that it will be fulfilled. However, the time is not yet. Wait for it. (Habk.2: 4)—“Behold the PROUD! His soul is not upright in him! --His time is coming... don’t worry! But the just shall live by faith.”

Zaccheus was one of those who perverted the Law. He was one of the Proud living in excess as society taught him to do. But when he met Jesus, all of that changed. His heart was changed. His character was changed, and his conscience was made alive to truth and righteousness. Maybe this is what the church needs to pray for our government today. Maybe we ought to pray that Jesus should visit the “house” of some people who have been plundering the poor and perverting the Law. Maybe we should be praying for Jesus to confront them and call them down from their perch in the top of their Sycamore Tree and bring them to an eye to eye level. For I believe too many of them are lost souls that need a conversion experience. Unless they meet Jesus, they will be forever separated from God and spend eternity in turmoil and heat where they will be tormented forever. Many do not know the Gospel Truth, so someone has to tell them. They are rich in things but poor in soul and in the things that last for eternity. This is blatantly obvious in our government today, but they are only a small part of a global problem. Jesus came first to save the world, but Jesus has promised to come again to judge the living and the dead. Also, I would like to remind us that if He does not come in our lifetime, everyone will be going to meet Him at their appointed time. SO, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOSPEL BE PREACHED, SOULS BE SAVED, AND THE WORD OF GOD BE PROCLAIMED SO THAT FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD. However, the LORD needs the church and all who are saved to carry the seed bag of the Gospel into the world. The parting song we

sing—“Go Ye into the world and make disciples of all the nations...And I will be with you there” is not just a beautiful song, but a powerful directive about what God has called us to do.

In Isaiah 6, we hear Jehovah God asking the Prophet Isaiah: “Who will go for me? Isaiah, after his mouth was purged by fire from the altar, and he repented of his sins... he said: “Here I am Lord, send me?” I ask us: Who will go for God? Who will pray that the lost will be saved? Who will have compassion for those who will spend eternity apart from God and from the Heavenly Kingdom? Will someone pray for a lost soul to be saved today and for the rest of this week? Will we invite someone to come into the ark of safety and out of the hopeless turmoil of the world system? Zaccheus came to realize that all his riches and wealth were of little value when he met Jesus. So, he repented, made restitution, and began a whole new life of faith in God through the Grace of Jesus Christ. Let us pray that today this word will flow out of this place and into many hearts and minds so that they will do as Zaccheus did and be saved. May God give us the will and the opportunity to speak life into a lost soul and show us how to lead them into the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

AMEN.

Rev. Brenda Berry/ Pastor-Moderator

U.H.P.C.