

April 24, 2015

For Salvation

Romans 1:16c (NASB), **“for salvation.”**

Increasingly in our world today there is a perceived lack of a need for salvation. So much of what is sinful is in the modern way of thinking just a happenstance of birth. Many people just do not see a need for salvation from their sins because they do not understand (at least on the surface) that what they are doing is sin. Sin however still is and always will be man’s greatest problem. This is why Paul here in verses 16-17 of Romans 1 is laying out four key words that are crucial to our understanding of the gospel. Yesterday we looked at the first word which was **“power.”** The gospel is the **“power of God for salvation.”** God’s power is directed towards one great endeavor and that is the salvation of sinners.

Salvation is the greatest demonstration of God’s power. God’s power in salvation transforms men’s natures and gives them eternal life through Jesus Christ His Son. We learn in Psalm 106:8 that despite man’s rebelliousness, God has saved His chosen people **“for the sake of His name, that He might make His power known.”** As God in the flesh Jesus Christ demonstrated His power, His divine power in healing the sick, restoring those who were crippled, stilling the storm, and even raising the dead.

Paul uses the Greek noun *soteria* which is translated to mean **“salvation”** nineteen times, five of which are in Romans. The basic idea behind the use of this term is that of deliverance, or rescue, and the point here is that the power of God in **“salvation”** rescues people from the ultimate penalty of sin, which is spiritual death which extends into a tormented eternal separation from Him.

As I mentioned above many people today do not see the need for salvation and therefore they object to the use of terms like **“salvation”** or *being saved*. They claim that the ideas that these terms convey are out of date and meaningless to contemporary society and much of this thought is coming from within the church. The problem with this is that the term **“salvation”** is God’s term, and there is no better one to describe what God offers fallen people through the sacrifice of His Son. Through Christ, and Christ alone, men can be saved from sin, from Satan, from judgment, from wrath, and from spiritual death.

Regardless of the words that are used, man is on an unending quest looking for perceived salvation of one kind or another. Some look for salvation in their finances, others look for political or social salvation. Some look for salvation in drugs, alcohol, sex, or relationships. We (mankind) are always looking for something to satisfy our greatest need, the need to have our sins forgiven and be in relationship with our Creator. As we have already discussed, many people look for inner salvation and relief from the guilt, frustrations, and unhappiness that fill their lives as a result of sin.

As it says in Ecclesiastes, **“there is nothing new under the sun.”** Even before Paul’s day, Greek philosophy had turned inward and had begun to focus on changing man’s inner life through moral reform and self-discipline. William Barclay in his commentary on Romans tells us that the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus called his lecture room “the hospital for sick souls.” Another famous Greek philosopher named Epicurus called his teaching “the medicine of salvation.” Seneca, a Roman statesman and philosopher and contemporary of Paul, taught that all men were looking for salvation. He taught that men are overwhelmingly conscious of their weakness and insufficiency in necessary things and that we therefore need “a hand let down to lift us up.”

“Salvation” through Christ alone is God’s powerful hand that He has let down to us to lift men up. His **“salvation”** brings deliverance from the deep spiritual malady of **“this perverse generation.”** His salvation delivers us from lostness as it says in Matthew 18:11, **“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”** He has come to save us from our sin as it says in Matthew 1:21, **“She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”** His salvation delivers us from the wrath of God as it says in Romans 5:9, **“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”** His salvation brings deliverance from our gross and willful spiritual ignorance. Hosea 4:6 says, **“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge...”** His salvation delivers us from our self-indulgence. Luke 14:26 says, **“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”** And finally His salvation delivers us from the darkness of false religion. Colossians 1:13 says, **“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”** But this salvation is only for those who believe.

Do you believe? Do you understand that you are a sinner and that your sin has separated you from God? Do you understand that salvation is only in Christ alone?