

Saved or Lost

Gospel Preaching Worthing, 4th November 2018 - Chris Bond

Bible Scriptures: **Darby Translation**

Ecclesiastes 3:15 "and God bringeth back again that which is past."

Luke 19:10 "for the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Looking around tonight I think everybody in this hall has been to a Gospel Preaching before, you know the format. We have a hymn and a prayer, we read the Bible. The preacher says a few words. We have another hymn and a prayer, and then we go home. Same last week, the week before, perhaps you think the same next week and the weeks to come.

I want to ask you a question at the beginning of this gospel preaching tonight, I'm not interested whether you've been to the gospel preaching before, how many times you've been. I'm not even interested if you've been brought up in a Christian house or whether you pray or whether you read the scriptures. That's not the point tonight. I want to ask you a question that I want you to answer in the reality of your heart; you don't have to answer to me, the reality of your own heart between you and God. I want to ask you, my friend, quite simply, "Are you saved?" Are you saved?

The stories told of a young man brought up in the Christian household, and one night he was approached by a friend and asked to an open-air gospel preaching. It was quite novel to him, he thought he'd go along, the novelty of it appealed to him. It'd save him going to the chapel that night. So he agreed to go with his friend. And the preacher told the old, old story of unseen things above of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love, that old, old story that we love so much. How He came from heaven, went to the Cross of Calvary, laid down His life there for needy sinners. Rose again from the grave the third day, the Saviour of God's providing. He heard that story again, and it just all washed over his head.

But at the end of that preaching the preacher said to him, he said to everybody there, he said, "I want you tonight to do something when you get home before you go to bed, I want you to take a piece of paper and I want you to write on this piece of paper one of two words, either saved or lost." Solemn reality of the gospel tonight - saved or lost, no in between.

That young man went home, but he didn't go home to a restful night's sleep, those words straight in front of his eyes. He knew that in the reality of his heart he couldn't write saved, because he wasn't saved. And God knew he wasn't saved. But he was utterly determined that he wasn't going to write lost, because he knew what the hopelessness of what being lost was.

That young man struggled in his soul for about two weeks after that. Everywhere he went every day those two words were in front of him. Until one night down on his knees he was reading Psalm 23, and he found that the Lord Jesus was his shepherd, the one that had laid down His life for him, and you know he gave his heart to the Saviour. His most treasured possession from that moment after was a piece of paper, and on that piece of paper he'd written saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he put a date on it, the day he was saved. Ain't it wonderful? The day he was saved.

What about you, my friend? Are you saved? Have you put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? You know I said about that young man, he knew the awfulness of what it was to be lost, the hopelessness of it. And there's no kindness for me in the preaching tonight to hide from you the reality of what it is to be lost. My friend, you and I are all lost sinners. The Bible says it clearly all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we're all hell deserving sinners, it's absolutely true. And you know the end of a Christless life is a lost Christless eternity.

How real it is, you know? The Bible has several descriptions of that awful place called hell, and there's no ... As I said no kindness for me to hide it from you tonight. It speaks of a lake of fire, endless burning. It speaks of the outer darkness, a place where no light can penetrate, bottomless pit, no standing, nowhere to find a foothold. Think of the awfulness of being lost.

The Lord Jesus I think in the Bible spoke more than anybody about hell and the reality of it. We say in the gospel we don't preach judgment and that's absolutely true, but there's no kindness for me to hide from you the awfulness of neglecting God's offer in the glad tidings.

The scripture I read in Ecclesiastes, "God bringeth back again that which is past." I think in the authorized translation it says, "God requireth that which is past." My friend, even if tonight you decide to turn around your life and to never ever even commit another sin, simple question is, "What about your past?" My friend, every one of us, in the honesty of our hearts, I think we know we're sinners, don't we? We've done things wrong, we've said things wrong, we've thought things wrong. All sinners, the Bible says so. Do you know the reality of it? It's absolutely true.

Think of that, "God requireth that which is past." We have to answer to a holy God. A God who knows us absolutely. He says that we shall all appear before the judgment seat of God to give an account of the things that we've done in our lives. Solemn, isn't it to think of that? How are you going to stand before God?

I spoke to a man just earlier on this year, he'd taken on a position in the Catholic Church, and I said to him, "Well, tell me what are you going to say when you have to stand before God? What's your claim going to be?" Absolutely incredibly, you know what he said to me? He says, "Well, I've done my best, and I go to Mass." Do you think that will do him any good whatsoever? "I've done my best." We have to do with a God who is infinitely holy. And God requires a payment for those sins that we have committed. There is a penalty attached to sin, all have sinned come short of His glory. How are we going to stand before God?

I thank God that God has made provision for me, He's made provision for everyone who puts their faith and trust in Jesus. That's what it means to be saved. God requireth that which is past.

What about your sins, my friend? Have they been dealt with? Mine have, thank God. The stories told us, isn't it? John Newton I think it was. And the devil came to him in a vision, with a list of all his sins, and they were many. He tells you that he himself what a great sinner he was, and he says as if to say to the devil, "Is that all of them?" To make sure they were all there. And he says, he took the pen, and writing right across them all, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanses from all the sin." Hallelujah. Ain't that wonderful? Every one of your sins - past, present, and future can be dealt with, brought under the shelter of the precious blood of Jesus.

Is that true of you tonight? That's what it means to be saved. You know your sins which are many, my sins which are many are all washed away. Oh, hallelujah. May that be the position of everyone tonight.

I want to tell you about the one who has come to meet the need of the sinner. That's the wonder of the gospel, it's not to occupy you exactly with the awfulness of your sins, but that's the first step to blessing in the gospel. You need to realise you're a sinner. Because if you've got a sickness, where do you go? You go to the doctor, don't you? To find a cure. But you have to realise you're sick before you're going to go. So I would that every one of us tonight may be convicted of our need as sinners, so that we might come to the one who has the cure for those sins, the Lord Jesus Himself.

It tells us that the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. Oh, I love to think of this, I think of the Lord Jesus, think of God looking down upon this earth and seeing men and all their need. Is there anyone that could take up the case of man? Not one could be found, one to meet the righteous claims of a holy God in relation to sin. Could any such a man be found? God's righteousness and His holiness is absolute. Can I have sinned in His presence? God could not pass the sinner by, justice demands that He should die in the cross of Christ we see. Our God can save yet righteous be. Yes, God had a plan for your salvation and mine, and it involved the most wonderful giving - God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

Think of that, God looking down, no man could meet the need of men. What does God say, "I'll send My son." Isn't it wonderful? "I'll send My son." The one who meant everything to the father. And He was prepared to send Him into this world. Think of Jesus stooping down to Bethlehem's manger. I love to think of that, that holy baby, think of Him there a holy ... the holy baby, think of Him lying there. Coming to conditions of weakness. None could say that Jesus passed them by, He's been in every condition that you and I could ever meet, He's gone through babyhood, childhood, teenage, into manhood. There's no part of your life that Jesus hasn't experienced.

Isn't that wonderful? To think of that, what a saviour He is? He came to seek and to save that which is lost. I love to see Him seeking men, women, and children in His pathway here. Think of that woman in Samaria, there she was in all her misery, a dissatisfied soul, living her life keeping out of the way of everybody else because she was ashamed of her moral condition. There she went out to the well at the midday; the Lord Jesus it says must need to passed through Samaria. Think about that, He was there seeking a needy soul. He came to seek, to save that which is lost.

What a wonderful transaction took place with that woman. Come see a man who told me all things that I'd ever done is not He the Christ. You think of Him going off to that city called Nain, and that woman coming out of this city and bearing the coffin of a dead son, that widow, what a conditions she was in. All her hopes were up, all was gone, everything she depended on. Jesus comes up to the bearer and stops it, "Youth, I say to thee arise." Wonderful, death couldn't stand in the presence of Jesus. I'd love to think of that.

Think of that man in Gadarenes, possessed of a legion of demons, there no one could do anything for him, could they? We live in a world where there's plenty of people who are in a similar condition, wholly held in the power of the devil. He gets people addicted to drugs and alcohol, gambling, other things. We live in a wicked world. That man was wholly held in the power of the enemy. Jesus went across the water, across the sea to meet that man. He went to seek him and to save him.

What does it say? He was found clothed and sitting at the feet of Jesus. Isn't it beautiful? What a transformation. We had a preaching about that recently, didn't we? About transformation, how Jesus will transform your life, that's what it means to be saved. He came to seek and to save that which is lost. He came to seek, you see Him seeking. But how did He come to save? He came to save by giving His life, a ransom for many.

If your sins or mine were to be met, if that penalty, that price, that debt was to be paid, if it was to be met rightly in the sight of God, Jesus had to go to the cross to take the penalty of sin and sins. Think of Him in that lovely pathway, going about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, what a lovely pathway it was. But it was a pathway that ended at Calvary. That cross, you think of it, there's nothing attractive about the cross, is there? It's an awful sight outside Jerusalem, that hill Golgotha three crosses, think of the awfulness of those men hung there, nails through their hands and their feet. What a dark scene it is? But that Man in the middle, Jesus. He was there to bear the penalty and the punishment of sin.

What does the malefactor say? "This man has done nothing amiss." Jesus was there, because He went that way, voluntarily, to take upon Himself the penalty of sin and sins. And He bore God's judgment. Think of Him those three hours of awful darkness. God took all my sins, He took the sins of all who put their trust in the Saviour, and He laid them on Jesus, and then He punished the penalty of our sins, He took the penalty of those sins and put it on Jesus. And Jesus bore it, three hours of darkness, ending in those mighty words, "It is finished."

Wonderfully, that work of redemption completed. As the soldier comes and pierced the side of Jesus, and what's the divine answer? Out flowed blood and water, without the shedding of blood there's no remission. Oh, praise God, Jesus' precious blood was shed. Eternal witness that a life was given up, a life that satisfied the claims of God so that tonight God can come out in blessing to the sinner, He says, "I have found a ransom." He's got a basis upon which He can bless the sinner tonight and forgive you every one of your sins, because those sins have been paid for by the precious blood of Jesus. They've only been paid for if you'll put your trust in the Saviour yourself.

It's down to you in that sense, you know? The work has been done, Jesus died, He shed His precious blood. He went into the grave, He's been raised again by the glory of the Father, raised again for our justification. There He is presented tonight as a prince and a saviour for your faith and belief, if only you'll trust Him tonight. Simplicity of the gospel is lovely, isn't it? You don't have to do anything, why? Because you can't. You can do nothing to wipe away one single sin. Precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from every sin.

Is that you tonight, my friend, if I was to say to you, I want you to take that piece of paper, write on it tonight the truthful answer to my question? I wonder what it would be, I pray to God that every one of us may know what it is to be able to write in all reality before God, **SAVED**. May we all be saved for His name sake.