

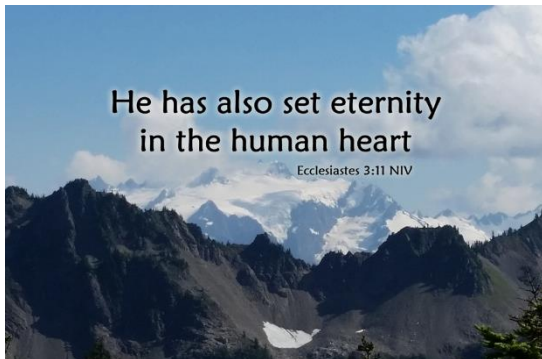
## The Blessing of Salvation

Ehesians 2:4-9; Titus 3:3-7; Matthew 28:20

Online Sermon:

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Life is a mysterious and yet profoundly beautiful journey. In our youth, we feel invincible, filled with dreams of freedom, independence, and the excitement of adulthood. We imagine owning our own cars and homes, setting our own rules, and enjoying the pleasures we believe adulthood brings. But as



we grow older, we find ourselves reminiscing about our younger days—when energy was endless, and health issues seemed a distant concern—and wondering why we still feel so incomplete, as if we're not as in control of our lives as we once thought we'd be. Adulthood brings not only the aches and pains of a body that's aging but also reminds us of a deeper ache in our hearts that has always been there: a desire to be significant, to leave a legacy that truly matters. We try to fill this yearning with strong marriages, families, career successes, and well-planned retirements, but these can only go so far. God has placed

within us a desire for an eternal perspective, a longing for something far beyond the fleeting pleasures of this world. Today's message is about this truth: that we are made for a relationship with our Creator, for a purpose not rooted in ourselves but in His everlasting kingdom. In Christ, we find a salvation that frees us from the pursuit of temporary things and assures us a place in God's family forever, grounded in the sacrifice of the One who gave His life for us.

As I share the Good News of Jesus Christ, take a moment to reflect on the life you are pursuing. Are the goals and dreams you chase built to endure, or are they bound by the limits of this earthly life, unable to stand the test of eternity? Have you been born again, becoming part of God's family? If you are a follower of Christ, then honestly ask yourself: are you building for your own kingdom, or are you investing in God's? Consider where your heart truly lies and the legacy you seek to leave—one that vanishes with time or one rooted in the eternal purposes of God.

## Salvation by Grace Through Faith

Wilma Rudolph was born prematurely in 1940, weighing only 4.5 pounds, and faced numerous health challenges from the outset. She contracted polio at the age of four, which left her with a paralyzed leg. In those days, polio had no cure, and doctors informed her family that she would never walk again without support. Wilma also developed scarlet fever and pneumonia, further complicating her already frail health. Her mother, however, was determined not to give up on her, and with

her family's support, Wilma began a relentless regimen of physical therapy to regain strength in her leg. The family made regular trips to a hospital that was miles away for specialized treatments, and her mother and siblings would assist her with exercises daily. After years of this grueling routine, she was finally able to remove her leg brace at the age of nine. By age 12, she was walking normally and even playing basketball with her siblings.

As she grew stronger, Wilma found a love for sports and joined her high school track team, where her talent quickly became evident. She trained relentlessly, motivated to overcome her physical challenges and become a world-class athlete. Her



determination and hard work paid off when she was noticed by Tennessee State University's coach, Ed Temple, who invited her to train with his team. Wilma's breakthrough came in the 1960 Rome Olympics, where she achieved what many had considered impossible: she

won three gold medals in the 100 meters, 200 meters, and 4x100 meters relay. She became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympics and set world records along the way. Her achievements turned her into an international icon, proving that with perseverance and belief, even the most challenging barriers can be overcome.

Rudolph's story is a powerful reminder of how dedication, support, and unyielding determination can help achieve greatness, even when the odds seem insurmountable. Her legacy

continues to inspire athletes around the world, proving that no obstacle is too great when you have the courage to believe in yourself and work tirelessly toward your dreams.

I shared the story of Wilma's life as a powerful illustration of human grit contrasted with the eternal gift of salvation. Wilma overcame tremendous physical challenges, winning gold that would one day fade. Yet, as remarkable as her determination was, it reminds us of the deeper truth: human grit can only accomplish so much. To understand this, let's look at



our condition before salvation. While few of us may experience Wilma's physical suffering, we have all felt the spiritual pain of separation from our Creator. The Apostle Paul tells us that we all began "dead in our

transgressions" (Ephesians 2:5), stricken by a disease—sin—that has no human cure. Sin separated us from God, earning us both physical and spiritual death. And unlike Wilma, who achieved her victory through her own strength, Paul reminds us that no amount of good deeds can bridge this gap. Even our best efforts—whether feeding the poor, visiting widows, or engaging in noble causes—fall short of God's perfect holiness (1 John 1:5). But here is the beautiful truth: while Wilma had to strive tirelessly for her prize, we are offered the gift of salvation freely. As Paul writes, "it is by grace you have been saved, through

faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Out of His great love, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ the moment we believed that Jesus bore our sins on the cross (Ephesians 2:4-5). This gift, unlike earthly prizes, endures for eternity.

## Salvation is a New Beginning

Titus 3:3-7 gives us a profound reminder of our life before salvation. Paul writes, “At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating



one another.” To the Romans, he similarly described those who reject God, saying, “They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful... they have no understanding, no

fidelity, no love, no mercy” (Romans 1:30-31). But through God’s mercy, we experience the “washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by

grace, we might become heirs with the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). When we accept Christ’s sacrifice for our sins and invite Him to lead our lives, we undergo a radical transformation, far surpassing even Wilma’s journey. No longer bound to our past, we are “born again,” not of flesh and blood, but of the water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Just as a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly, leaving behind its old ways, we, too, by God’s grace, are lifted into His kingdom as beloved children who inherit eternal life and are empowered to soar in His love and purpose.

**Reflection.** Upon receiving God’s gracious gift of salvation, it can be tempting to view His grace as a license to continue in sin. But if you are saved, I encourage you to ask yourself: are you truly living as someone who has been made new in Christ? Does the description of your old life bring conviction because there are still areas you haven’t fully surrendered to Jesus? Are you offering your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, as Paul urges in Romans 12:1? Have you deepened in your relationship with the Lord, or are you still spiritually immature, needing “milk” rather than solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2)? Reflect on these questions and seek to grow in faith, letting God transform every part of your life into a reflection of His holiness and love.

## Benefits of Salvation

This radical transformation through salvation not only renews us but brings profound benefits that impact every part of

our lives. First, we are reconciled with God, gaining access to His throne of grace (Romans 5:1; Hebrews 4:16). While we might never have a personal audience with dignitaries or billionaires, we are given the incredible privilege of speaking directly with our Creator at any time, day or night. Second, salvation grants forgiveness for all our past sins and allows God to search our hearts, helping us identify, confess, and receive



forgiveness for any sin we may struggle with. Third, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit brings comfort, guidance, and truth, revealing more of the Father's heart to us (John 14:16; 16:13). Fourth, we have ongoing access to the One who

clarifies right from wrong, removing the "gray areas" of life. Fifth, because there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Romans 8:1), our salvation assures us that we are no longer bound for a place of suffering but instead join the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12). As His sheep, we look forward to being caught up with Him, receiving new bodies (Philippians 3:21), and enjoying the eternal Great Banquet in heaven (Matthew 22). Sixth, salvation equips us with spiritual gifts, enabling us to serve in His kingdom and fulfill His calling. Finally, salvation assures us that God is always working for our good, promising never to leave or forsake us but to surround us with His grace, mercy, and steadfast love (Romans 8:28).

Speaking from my own journey, I can tell you that salvation has transformed me in ways that are truly miraculous. Like most Christians I was not much when I was called. I dreamed of becoming rich, famous, and powerful, having lots of money and retiring without a worry in the world. But no matter how much I strived to achieve these things they could not fill the eternity that God had placed in my heart to know Him. I



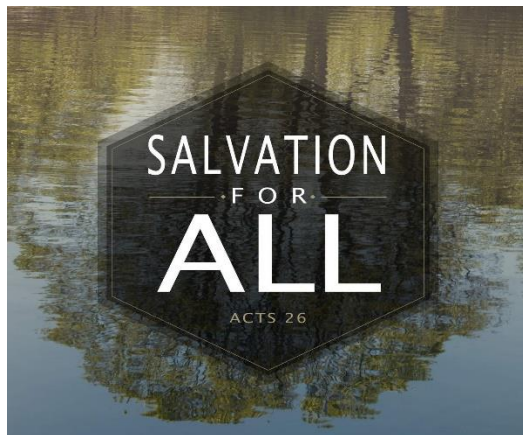
remember the day I came forward and said YES to Jesus, like it was yesterday. The sorrow, pain, and shame of sin

fell from me like scales. As I felt His Spirit enter my body, I was overwhelmed with joy for at this very moment I was no longer condemned to hell but had an Advocate and a seal that guaranteed my place in God's family as His son! He cloaked me with blessings beyond measure or description and tenderly said you are mine! While I love all of you, how I look forward to going to my true home, sitting at the feet of Jesus and like a child forever being loved and fed in His gracious arms of love! You too can become saved, just have faith in Him! My experience is just one example of how God's grace reaches out to us all.



## Salvation is Available to All

The benefits sound staggering, and here's an amazing truth: they are available to everyone, without exception! In a world where nearly everything comes with a cost—the water we drink, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and even, in some places, the air we breathe—it's remarkable to think that salvation is freely offered. The Bible tells us that Christ died



once for all (Hebrews 10:10), and during His ministry, Jesus dined with tax collectors, sinners, Jews, Gentiles, and all who sought Him (Matthew 9:10-12). God's desire is that none should perish (2 Peter 3:9), and in His

open-armed sacrifice on the cross, Jesus signified that salvation would never depend on wealth, status, background, or appearance, but solely on faith in His atoning sacrifice (Ephesians 2:8-9). Even if you feel weighed down by past failures, disappointments, anger, jealousy, or hatred, remember that the Good Shepherd has not written you off. He constantly calls you into His kingdom, rejoicing when His lost sheep comes home (Luke 15:3-7). You are precious in His sight (1 Peter 2:9), and His purpose for you is not harm but reconciliation, offering an eternal home with Him. In heaven, there will be no more

sorrow, pain, or death (Revelation 21:4); there will be only joy, for He is our portion forever (Psalm 73:26).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, let us embrace the beautiful truth that salvation is both a gift and a calling, filled with benefits that transform every aspect of our lives. Through salvation, we are reconciled with God, gaining direct access to His grace and love at any moment. We receive forgiveness for all our past sins, lifting the burden of guilt and shame, and through the Holy Spirit, we are comforted, guided, and taught to live in truth. Salvation grants us the assurance of eternal life, removing all condemnation and replacing it with the hope of heaven, where there will be no more sorrow, pain, or death. Even here on earth, we are given spiritual gifts that empower us to serve in His kingdom, fulfilling a purpose that extends beyond this life. Let us remember this profound truth: salvation is freely offered to everyone, and its blessings are both eternal and immediate, touching every part of our journey. This gift of grace transforms our present lives and secures our eternal future, giving us hope, purpose, and a lasting peace that only God can provide.

As we journey through life, let us not settle for building our lives on temporary pursuits but place our hope in the eternal promises of God. Today, examine your heart, surrendering fully to Him as both Savior and Lord. Trust that you are precious in His sight and that His plans for you are filled with peace, joy,

and purpose—both now and forever. As we leave here today, may we commit to living lives that reflect His love, sharing the Good News with a world in need, and building a legacy rooted in God’s eternal kingdom.