

Salvation and Separation Ryde

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon emphasizes the critical understanding of being lost and the transformative power of salvation through Christ, leading to a life separated from worldly influences.

Scripture: Luke 15:17, Galatians 1:4

Topics: "Separation from the World", "Salvation"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the critical connection between understanding our lost state and the concept of salvation, arguing that many fail to grasp the reality of being lost to God. He explains that true salvation involves recognizing our separation from the world and the flesh, which cannot be improved or redeemed. Darby illustrates this through the story of the prodigal son, highlighting that being lost is not merely about actions but a state of being apart from God. He asserts that the death of Christ signifies the end of the old creation and introduces a new creation in Him, where believers are called to live by faith, not by sight. Ultimately, he encourages Christians to manifest the life of Christ in their daily lives, fully embracing their identity as new creations in Him.

Transcript

There are two things which I should like to touch upon - Salvation, and separation from the world.

The two practically run into one another: "Who gave himself for our sins, so that he should deliver us out of this present evil world." And these connect themselves, too, with deliverance from self.

Flesh has its religion as well as its lusts and pleasures.

As to Salvation; it is important we should know ourselves lost; but I think you will find many that have not got the simple plain consciousness that they are lost - not really got it, I mean.

But if they are alive in this world, they are lost to God. I do not say "guilty" now, that is true, of course; but, lost. If I am lost, now I am; and there is nothing to judge.

I do not mean, shall be lost finally, but that now am lost, as to my state.

People don't believe it. They believe that they have sinned, and that Christ has died for their sins; but that does not touch this question of being lost.

But if I get the consciousness of being lost now already, and that Christ dealt with that on the cross also; I then get saved, and that now, and that is just what people have not got thoroughly. They know neither what it is to be lost, nor what it is to be saved.

It is not the first thing we get hold of, my conscience takes knowledge of my sins, and that must be settled, but there is this other thing.

As in the case of the prodigal son, he was just as much a sinner when he crossed his father's threshold, as when he was eating the husks with the swine. He had not degraded himself with the riotous living, but he had just as much turned his back upon God, and in that sense was lost just as much.

Now the world tries to check the evils of sin, and seeks to put down drunkenness and the like, and that is right so far. That is the difference between the old world before the flood, and after the flood.

It was corrupt and God had to destroy it, as it had become intolerable to God and man; after the flood, God put the power of the sword into the hand of man. That was not a restoration of man to God. Man was the same after as he was before. But then, what was the first thing God did after He had put outward restraint upon man?

47 It was to call a person clean out of the world, saying, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." And connected with that, there was the promise of a seed, i.e., Christ, of course.

There I get a second man, another man, much more than a man, but still a man. And now the question is, What is my place? Is it in the second man, or is it in the first?

The world's place is in the first, i.e., the old creation; but the Christian's place is not in that at all. We are in it outwardly, and, as regards the body, we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption" of it; but this we shall not get until the glory. But as regards our spiritual condition, we belong to the new creation entirely, and this is of immense moment. The change is total.

Look at all the human ordinances of the day we live in. Do you think we are going to have that kind of thing in heaven?

No. The first man - Adam - is done with for ever, as unchangeably evil, and the death of Christ has, to faith, closed this scene for ever. The moment God's Son was rejected, all that belonged to the first Adam was set aside, and God's dealings with it, as such, ended.

The world may try to imitate the new thing which God has set up, and get a religion in the flesh; it may have some sense of the church as in nominal christendom, an outward thing to shew; but that will be instead of having it in heaven.

And then, too, there is a practical worldliness that sticks, more or less, to us all, even if we do not stick to it.

It all hangs on the one question: Am I alive in this world, or am I not? I mean, of course, looked at as in relation to God. I say, I am God's, and then, I have to go through this world. Christ had, but He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." That makes all the difference.

Before God, can you mend the first Adam? Will you educate him, and get any good out of him? You will not. God tried it, and it ended in the death of His Son. The very world we are living in is the world that had God in it, but it turned Him out. The flesh that I have got in me has had that Christ presented to it, and it rejected Him - morally, that is. We cannot now, of course, kill Him outwardly.

48 But people put this flesh under law, and they fancy they can school it. Do you think they would insist so upon law, if they were sure and certain that the only thing it can do is to damn them?

For God, the world's history has been gone through and finished; and it has proved this, that no matter what man is, his church and all else, as having to say to God, man is found utterly bad and lost.

When God has set up anything good, the first thing man has always done has been to spoil it. Adam, Noah, Aaron, Nebuchadnezzar. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

And have not we got that nature?

Are you then going to educate and improve, and cultivate enmity against God?

It is lost, as to all connection with God.

The death of Christ was the moment of putting flesh to the test. It was not merely that men had sinned lawlessly, and then broke the law; but when God Himself came into the world in goodness, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, bearing their sicknesses, and carrying their sorrows, in the Person of Christ, then, because God was with Him, they would not have Him. That is what the cross of Christ tells me, and tells me about myself, and therefore I say that I am lost.

And we must learn that, if we are to get clear and straight; but you will find many a Christian that has not yet learnt it.

I quite admit that the first question we have before us is our guilt. Conscience must be reached, and that ought to be the first question for the soul. But if I want to get understanding in the path of the Christian, and get clear from the delusions of Satan, as well as from religiousness in the flesh, then I must get hold of the truth that I am lost already.

You will never know what it is to be saved until you know what it is to be lost.

It is a totally new thing brought out by God.

And now look at the cross in that aspect; you will see it is God cast out of the world, i.e., God in Christ.

Flesh's religion was Judaism, and people are very fond of it now, but God says, "I will not dwell in a house made with hands."

49 If I were to go into a church nowadays, I may have to take off my hat, but what to? What does doing so say? That it is God's house. Then I won't go into a temple and say that.

I won't take my hat off, to say that that is God's house.

I merely give that as an illustration, not that I would offend anybody, of course not, not even a Turk.

But God has judged all that; He tried it, and it utterly failed, and finally it rejected Himself.

Yet now, wise man will go back to flesh's religion and says, you must get the temple, and the vestments, and the music.

They come of man's mind, and what are they all?

Only flesh. Then I say, it is wrong altogether.

As a Christian I am not in the flesh, for that is outside Christianity. I am sure if anybody could delight in religious music, it was myself, even as a schoolboy, but then, what was that?

Now the cross was God's testing-place of it all.

I know there was supplementary grace, God responding to the prayer of Christ on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." The Jews were led away by Satan to crucify Him, and the Lord interceded for them, so that Peter said, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it; repent, and Christ will come back again; if you will believe now in a glorified Christ, you shall have him back, though you would not believe in a humbled One."

But they would not. And so you get by Stephen, this testimony which I called supplementary; recounting the past history of the nation, he convicts them of having rejected Him whom God had sent. They had received the law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it; they had persecuted the prophets, and they had slain those who shewed before the coming of the Just One; and of Him they had now become the betrayers and the murderers. But they gnashed their teeth upon him, stopped their ears, and stoned him.

There is the history of man, and of the testimony of God in the world; there is the end of religion for man in the world; and also, in a certain connection, with it as the object of promise, Christ rejected entirely, and man left simply and solely a lost sinner in this world. Not that he could not be saved, but such was his condition - lost.

The life of Christ only brought out the state of man's heart as to God; while He Himself shewed what God was.

50 At the beginning, Satan tempted Him by the privileges that belonged to the Son of God, and at the close, Satan came with all the terrors he could bring upon His path. So the Lord says, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

And death and judgment stood in the road, too.

But there was love enough in Christ to go through it all. He saw what the cup was, as none of us can, and in His own infinite and blessed love, He accepted it in full.

And man's history as man, was thus ended in the cross. It was not historically, but morally "the end of the world."

And now, He who has accomplished that work is set by God Himself at His own right hand, for the display of God's own righteousness.

The first man rejected Christ, and was the instrument of His death; the second Man, in the perfectness of His ways before God, is taken out of this world, and is set at God's right hand; so that now the testimony of

the Holy Ghost - His special work - is to convince the world of righteousness, because Christ has gone to the Father, and they see Him no more.

That is the end of the world.

There is now a Man in heaven. True Christianity is founded on that. We learn by degrees; but there was in the cross, the total, entire, complete condemnation of man, and in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, a totally new place is taken (which is the foundation of all blessedness), where Adam innocent was not, any more than Adam guilty.

It is a new thing altogether, and "if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation."

We are not as yet fully in the new scene founded on the cross, but, in Christ, I am a new creation; and so now we have to manifest the life of Jesus in this mortal flesh, while we walk by faith, not by sight.

The Christian has to go through things down here, but now they are no longer his object; it is not merely that certain things will do him harm; of course they will; but he is looking at things not seen and eternal. He groans, too, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house from heaven. The apostle adds, "He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God." God hath not only prepared a place there, but hath wrought us for that selfsame thing, which is glory with Christ there. That is what God has wrought you and me for. The world comes to chain me down, but God has wrought me for that which is inside the vail, and the vail is rent. I can talk of it therefore as having it, because God has so wrought me for it, and prepared it for me, and though as yet I have not actually got it, yet I have the earnest of the Spirit.

51 The Christian is born again, and is not in the flesh before God; he is a renewed man, but a renewed man without salvation of body, and there comes the connection between two distinct points. The law has power over a man as long as he lives; but, in Christ, I have died away from under it; the cross has finished that. Law was God's rule for a child of Adam, and now I am not a child of Adam. What am I then? A child of God. What is that? A new creation. The epistle to the Romans treats of our responsibility in the old creation, but in the Ephesians it is the new creation, we are God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus," and so on.

Now the law was very useful to kill me; it came, and required certain things of me, and I could not give them. It has a right therefore to kill me. But it is written, "Ye are dead."

Now, where did I die? In Christ's cross.

Suppose a policeman had apprehended me and that I had died while in his charge, what can he do with me but give me up to be buried? So now, "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." We "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." When I began to try to do good, I found there was none in me, and it was "when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly."

I recognise my want of strength, and that Christ has come and taken me totally out of that condition, and put me in Himself, so that in Ephesians it is, "According to the power that worketh in us" and "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," etc.

Forgiveness, cleansing, and justifying apply to a child of Adam, but I am in the Christ, the last Adam, in whom alone I stand before God, for I cannot stand in both. In the first man I was helpless; in the second Man, I have the power of God. But until you have got into the thorough consciousness that you could not

succeed in the first Adam, you can never get free from it, because you are trying to mend it.

You get a crab-tree, and you say the fruit is sour; but put it in your garden and do your best with it, and what do you get? More crabs and bigger ones. The change has not made the tree good.

52 Then what would you do if you had a crab-tree? You would cut it down and graft it. So God has sentenced the "old man" in the cross of Christ, and brought in a totally new thing.

That is the salvation of God.

God has gone through the whole probation of man, his whole moral history, and has sentenced his entire state.

"There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable."

That shews God's view of the whole situation.

But He came in grace and sought after them, and now I can go to every poor sinner in the wide world with that grace.

But more than that. I find Christ has risen again into a totally new place as man, and the place He has brought me into is His own present place. God has given me the earnest of the Spirit until I come into that place in full, but it is mine now. That is salvation. So that I do not own the flesh, nor the world, nor its religion. I have the consciousness of the death of Christ, which has closed the whole thing for me. He has so settled all for God's glory, that God has set Him at His own right hand, and that is where I am.

That is the blessed condition into which I am brought as to salvation, and then consequent upon that, all the counsels of God come out "according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Not according to my responsibility at all - I was lost according to that - and I shall be judged according to it if I do not escape by grace.

I am saved solely by the cross.

What part had you in that cross?

Shall I tell you? If you are saved by it, your part in it was your sins. Had you nothing else in the cross? The enmity that put Christ to death. What else? Nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

I am brought then to the cross, with the consciousness of guilt and sins, and of the enmity of my heart. But then, there, there was a death which on the one hand clears my sins away, and which on the other hand redeems me out of the condition I am in, and there I find salvation.

53 And, mark, the whole of this was God's work - a work done alone between Him and Christ.

All was darkness around, a mere outward testimony, but real - Christ was left alone with God. The disciples had run away, and the whole world was contrary to Him; divine power not screening Him from the cup, but enabling Him to drink it.

And all was finished, finished for ever and righteously, and God's righteousness made known, because Christ went to the Father, and the world sees Him no more.

It will see Him as Judge, but not as a Saviour.

But life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel.

It was this purpose of God to bring us into the second Man that was never made manifest until the cross; the ground of it was not laid. Promises and prophecies there had been; though, remember, there were no promises to flesh - none to the first Adam. There was that which Adam's faith could lay hold of; but it was not a promise to Adam. The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head truly, but then Adam was not the seed of the woman. The seed of the woman was the man that was not. The promise really went clean outside the whole existing thing. It was to Christ.

And then you get God dealing with fallen man, up to the cross, and there proving what he was.

But there, too, God works His own work, whilst His purpose which existed before the world should be accomplished by it.

And then we get blessed fruits.

Not from man's works, but God's works.

Just as was said of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" Not, what hath man wrought? That was all to condemnation; but, what hath God wrought?

He has raised His Son from the dead, after He had been "made sin," and, in that, He has raised us too. We have our place with God in Christ after death, after judgment of sin, after the power of Satan is broken, and, as being raised out from the dead, in Christ.

We are saved - not our bodies - but we have got salvation, not simply forgiveness (which we do have, of course, but that applies to the old condition); we have a new condition; we are in Christ the second Man, the last Adam; we are not in the flesh; and you will never know what salvation is - what it really means - until you understand that you are not in the flesh, but are in Christ.

54 I am anxious that this should rest on your minds.

God alone can teach us. He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth - so we are brought back to the Father, and we have the ring, the best robe, and the shoes. The very best thing God had in heaven to give He has given us.

Most surely there was repentance in the prodigal; he says, "Make me as one of thy hired servants"; but there was no such thought in God's heart at all, though it is what the experiences of the prodigal bring him to. But his father meets him in all his rags - the proofs of his profligacy are upon him; but until he met his father, he did not know his father's heart.

So we have nothing else to put on, we are all in rags. And after that you do not get one single word about what the prodigal son did at all. It is the Father says, "Let us . . . be merry," "Bring forth the best robe," and so on. That is just where we are with God.

Of course, we look for good fruit from all this; we ought to manifest the life of Christ in everything - buying, selling, the counting-house, dress, everything.

Are you doing so?

Do you do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus?

If not, you are giving up Christ for some folly or other. If you cannot do the thing in that name, do not do it at all. The way the Lord walked was by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.

The fact is, I am not alive in this world at all. (I don't mean physically, of course.) But Paul asks, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" As to my place in Christ, "The body is dead because of sin"; and again, I am "dead to the law by the body of Christ." I have no more to do with the world or its religion, for I have died. I have, of course, to go through what is of the world; Christ Himself did that.

The Lord Himself give us to see the connection between living by faith and the clear apprehension of what salvation is; that it is not merely forgiveness, though that is the first thing, but also, the taking the believer out of the place he was in, in the first Adam, and the putting him into Christ the second Man, and seating him in the heavenly places in Him.

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