

Six Pressing Reasons Why You Should Be Saved Today

by John R. Rice

You should be saved today because it is the right thing to do, because the Holy Spirit calls you today, because of the danger of a hardened heart, because of the imminence of Christ's coming, and because of the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death.

Topics: "Salvation Urgency", "Holy Spirit"

Description

John R. Rice preaches a powerful sermon emphasizing the urgency of turning to Christ today, as highlighted in Hebrews 3:7-15 and II Corinthians 6:2. He stresses the importance of not hardening our hearts against God's voice and the Holy Spirit's call to salvation, warning of the dangers of delaying acceptance of Christ. Rice presents compelling reasons why every unconverted person should choose to be saved today, including the imminent return of Christ, the uncertainty of life, the mounting wrath of God on Christ-rejecting sinners, and the danger of a hardened heart.

Transcript

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

"When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

"So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

"While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."--Heb. 3:7-15.

"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."--II Cor. 6:2.

These Scriptures give strong reasons why every unconverted person should turn to Christ today. The Holy Ghost has a message, and it can be summed up in one word: "TODAY!"

"The Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." Readers are to "exhort one another daily, while it is called To day." And again, "While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

The message of the Holy Spirit of God to every lost sinner is, "Today!" Be saved today!

Again the same message is brought in II Corinthians 6:2: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." What time is the acceptable time for a sinner to be saved? "Behold, now is the accepted time," answers the Scripture. When is the day of salvation? "Behold, now is the day of salvation."

Unsaved friend, I beg you to consider some pressing reasons why you ought to be saved today. Not one single soul ought to lay this printed message down until you have said "yes" to God, until you have earnestly confessed yourself a sinner and depended on Him for mercy and claimed Him as your own Saviour! Today is the day to be saved!

I. If It Is Ever Right to Be Saved, Then Be Saved Today

No one has a right to go on in sin.

No one would claim that it is all right to continue a life of murder, then just before he dies, quit murdering people.

No one would claim that it is all right to go on stealing and being dishonest for a season, then at some convenient time, quit being a thief.

But the most horrible of all sins is the sin of rejecting Christ. If you have not accepted Him, you have rejected Him. If you are not for Him, you are against Him. If you are not saved, you are lost. And as long as you continue unsaved, you are living in deliberate and willful sin, the most horrible sin.

Never try to defend your delay in accepting Christ. To postpone your salvation is like the murderer who continues to murder; the blasphemer who continues spewing out oaths; the adulterer who continues his vile sin. Not to be saved is an open sin, a willful sin of disobedience to and rebellion against God.

Anyone who will admit that one ought to be saved must admit that he too ought to be saved. Anyone who will admit that he ever ought to be a Christian, must admit that he ought to be one today.

On the general ground, then, if it is right to be a Christian, it is right to be one today; and if it is right to accept Christ, honest people ought to accept Him now, turn from their sins and trust Him for salvation. If repentance is commanded, then sinners ought to repent this very day.

The very moment you know you are a sinner, you ought to flee from your sins and turn to the Lord Jesus for mercy and salvation. Not to do so is deliberate sin, continual sin, sin indefensible and inexcusable.

II. You Ought to Be Saved Today Because Today the Holy Spirit Calls

"The Holy Ghost saith, To day...." Then the rest of the statement follows, "...if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts."

Are you interested in what the Holy Spirit says? Are you interested in the will of God? Then hear what the Holy Spirit says--that today is the day to be saved!

An alarming example is given. Sinners are urged:

"Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

"When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

"So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."

The children of Israel in the wilderness who did not hearken to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who kept telling them, "Today, believe in God! Today, trust Him for salvation!" died unsaved in the wilderness. You should not be like them, lest your heart be hardened and lest God's wrath fall on you too!

To the wicked Jews at Jerusalem who had crucified the Saviour, then would not hear His ministers, Stephen cried out, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51).

What was wrong with those Christ-rejecters? They resisted the Holy Spirit! They would not listen to the call of God through the Spirit. Hence the terrible punishment that came on Jerusalem in a.d. 70 when it was destroyed by Titus; and the Roman army came on a nation that would not listen to God's voice through the Spirit. Individuals who died unsaved could only blame their hard hearts and the fact that they would not listen to the call of the Spirit of God.

When the Spirit of God says "To day," then it is time for sinners to be saved today.

Doubtless in your own heart the Holy Spirit says you should be saved today. This very day God's Spirit speaks to you through the Scriptures, through this printed sermon. He moves upon your heart to accept Christ and be saved. To dally, to trifle, to delay is to continue in sin. Such delay, such disobedience, such resistance to the Spirit of God may harden your heart and doom you forever to Hell, the place prepared for Satan and his angels. Heed today the calling of the Spirit of God!

III. The Danger of a Hardened Heart Makes It Urgent to Be Saved Today

The Holy Spirit urges, "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." And again, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

The hardening of the heart is the most terrible calamity that can come upon a lost sinner this side of eternal destruction.

One reason the great majority of all those who are ever saved are saved in childhood is that the child has the advantage of a tender heart, a tender conscience that grieves over sin. The child is easily moved by the fear of punishment. He knows that it is dangerous to go on in sin.

Only as one violates his conscience, goes against his reason, ignores the call of God and the principles of honor and righteousness, can he harden his heart and become accustomed to sin. Only by resisting the Spirit of God and continuing in the willful sin of rejecting Christ can one get a hardened heart.

The days and weeks go by, and, unknown and unnoticed by the sinner, his heart is being hardened, his conscience is being dulled, his perception of right and wrong is becoming inaccurate and faded. Delay in salvation means a hardened heart.

Oh, then, hear the call of the Holy Spirit and be saved. "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts."

To sin once, knowingly, is wicked. To continue in this rebellion, this ungodly resistance, this self-will in delaying your salvation, is a deadly sin that will have a blasting and damning effect upon your own heart. The danger of a hardened heart warns you to be saved today!

Every blatant infidel was once a tenderhearted child who may have trembled at the thought of his sin and of judgment. But delay hardened his heart.

Every drunkard was once a pure and innocent child, beloved of parents and promising for the future. The years hardened his sensibilities and made him ignore his duties to family, to self and to God.

Every harlot was once a sweet little girl, precious and gentle and with holy possibilities. But sin unrebuked in the heart and life, sins unrepented, along with the passing days, dulled the pangs of conscience and led to an indifference about holy matters.

Oh, the danger of a hardened heart! Oh, that much-to-be-feared calamity! And, dear sinner, if you reject Christ today, your heart will be harder tomorrow. The danger of a hardened heart impels honest thinking people to be saved today while they can.

IV. The Imminence of Christ's Coming Makes It Urgent to Be Saved Today

Matthew 24:44 has a solemn warning from the mouth of the Saviour Himself: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

Jesus will return to this earth. There will be a resurrection of all the Christian dead. The bodies of the saints in Christ will rise first, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:17). Living Christians will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up to be with the Saviour, taken away to the Father's house of many mansions. Jesus said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

Those who are unsaved and left alive on the earth when Jesus comes will go into the terrible Tribulation, a time of such trouble and sorrow and war and plagues as this world never saw before nor will ever see again!

To be left here with every Christian taken away; to be left here with every true preacher gone, every real church closed; to be left here where all principles of righteousness and morality are ignored and Satan has his way in the Great Tribulation, will be a horrible state. But that is the punishment of those who are yet unsaved when Jesus comes.

We do not know when the Saviour will come. But many times we are warned in the Scripture to be ready, to watch for the Saviour's return.

In view of the imminent coming of the Saviour one ought to be saved today, this very day, without delay.

V. The Uncertainty of Life and the Certainty of Death Press Upon Sensible People the Wisdom of Being Saved Today!

In James 4:13,14 there is a solemn warning:

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

It is presumptuous for anyone to say that he knows what will happen tomorrow. How do you know you will buy or sell tomorrow? How do you know you will go on vacation next week? How do you know you will get home tonight? "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow."

Human life is like a vapor "that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Man's life is like the fog in the valley which soon vanishes under the heat of the rising sun.

This lesson is brought home to us in Psalm 103:14-16:

"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

"As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

"For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

Your life, which seems to you so well established, so important, is like a blade of grass that may be plucked up in a moment, or may be crushed under a heel, or blown away. How fragile, how uncertain is life itself!

The son of President Coolidge blistered his heel playing tennis. In a short while he died of blood poisoning.

A tiny clot in the blood may stop a capillary in your brain, and you too may die.

People have strangled to death on flies or gnats.

The scratch of a nail or one streptococcic germ in the throat may mean your death.

A fall from a stepladder in your own home or a cut on the hand or a ride in an automobile or on a plane may cut your life short.

Every day people die unexpectedly. The old die. The young die. The sick die. The well die. Life is but a vapor. Your hold on life is insecure, so I urge you to be saved while it is today.

Death is a certainty. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).

A man, who may leave this world tomorrow and makes no provision for the future, could not complain if sensible people call him a fool. People who prepare for meals tomorrow or for a bed tonight or for an education next year, but do not prepare for death, which may come at any moment, surely are guilty of wicked and senseless folly.

So, because life is so short and death is so sure, be saved today! "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

VI. The Mounting Wrath of God on All Christ-Rejecting Sinners Impels You to Be Saved Today!

God was grieved at the wicked generation of Jews in the wilderness who would not hear the voice of God. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest" (Heb. 3:11). And this wrath of God is on everyone who delays salvation.

Consider several Scriptures which teach this terrifying and solemn truth.

1. Jesus said in John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

It is not that one who dies without Christ will be condemned; one who is without Christ is condemned already "because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Already condemned! Already headed for Hell! That is the condition of every unconverted sinner.

2. John the Baptist said in John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The anger of God abides, stays on, every unbelieving, Christ-rejecting sinner! If you have not believed in Christ, that is, have not trusted Him to be your own Saviour, nor depended on Him to forgive your sins, then the wrath of God abides on you this day!

What a terrible truth--God's anger mounts up every day, all the day, and never forgets the insult you do Him! God never for a moment is pleased with you who reject His Son; rather, His wrath is on you day and night!

3. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha," says I Corinthians 16:22.

The word anathema means accursed. If you do not love the dear Lord Jesus, you are under the curse of God! How God must be grieved over your rejection of His Son! To eat God's food, breathe God's air, live on God's bounty, exist, even, by His mercy, yet reject His dear Son! Not to love the Lord Jesus, the most lovely of all the universe! Not to repent of your sins and receive Him into your heart! Such sin deserves and has on it the curse of God.

You who do not know the Lord Jesus, do not love Him, do not have Him as your own Saviour, are accursed of God. And God's wrath mounts up against you.

4. Psalm 7:11 says the same thing again in these words: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

If men were sensible, surely they would be terrified at the thought that "God is angry with the wicked every day." Are you wicked? Well, in God's sight you are terribly wicked if you reject His Son, if you do not repent of your sins and will not trust Him to save you. And God is angry with you every day.

These Scriptures press upon our hearts the thought that God's wrath and His anger keep mounting up and growing hot against Christ-rejecting sinners. No wonder so many are cut off suddenly without time to repent! No wonder God turns people over to a reprobate heart that they might believe a lie and be damned! No wonder God's Holy Spirit ceases to call and leaves men to their own doom and destruction! No wonder God has a Hell for Christ-rejecting, impenitent, unbelieving sinners!

Because of God's wrath on all who reject Christ, you are urged to be saved today. Today is the day of salvation. Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.

Here are six forceful reasons, reasons that must appeal to any sensible man or woman, boy or girl. Do they not convince you that you ought to be saved today? Do they not remind you that your best chances may be soon gone? Do you not feel the call of the Spirit of God? Today, I urge you in Jesus' name, trust Christ and be saved.

I do not ask you to pay for your sins. You could do that only by going to Hell. I ask you to turn your heart from sin and trust Jesus Christ to save you. He died on the cross for you. He loves you. He is ready to receive you today. John 3:16 tells you, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then will you trust Him today and have this everlasting life and not perish?

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