

Assurance of Salvation

by Oswald J. Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning of faith and the difference between intellectual assent and saving faith, highlighting that salvation is not by our good works, but by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Duration: 1:00:02

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 16:25-31

Topics: "Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the minister discusses the importance of trust and commitment in relationships, using the example of a marriage ceremony. He emphasizes the significance of a young woman giving herself over and trusting her chosen partner. The minister then relates this concept to salvation, urging the congregation to put their trust in the Lord Jesus for their eternal salvation. He highlights the simplicity and clarity of the gospel message, stating that it leaves people in two categories: those who have trusted and those who have not. The minister concludes by asking the congregation to reflect on their own salvation and whether they have truly put their trust in Jesus.

Transcript

I'm going to ask you now to turn with me, if you will, to the Acts of the Apostles. Let us turn to the 16th chapter. I'm going to read from the 25th verse, and I want to read seven of these verses.

Verse 25 of the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God, and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed.

And the keepers of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.

Years ago, when I was only 16 years of age, I left my home and traveled 94 miles to Toronto to attend the great campaign that was being held by Dr. R. A. Torrey and Charles M. Alexander here in Massey Hall. I attended the last eight services of that campaign. I listened to Dr. Torrey's messages.

I reveled in the singing of the gospel songs. When the invitation was given, on the second to last day of the campaign, I got up out of my seat, walked down the aisle, shook hands with Dr. R. A. Torrey, went down to the basement of Massey Hall, and there on my knees, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior. I say, I was then just 16 years of age, and I had traveled 94 miles in order to get saved.

I'll never forget that experience as long as I live. The months went by. While I was still 16, I commenced to doubt my salvation.

For some reason, I wondered whether or not I had really been saved. I'll never forget those days of doubt, those days of anguish, those days of tribulation, when I didn't know whether I was saved or whether I was lost. I used to pray again and again, Lord, if I'm lost, let me know it, in order that I may get saved.

And if I'm saved, if I'm saved, let me know it, in order that I may rejoice in thy salvation. I was working at the time in the Massey-Harris Company. My uncle was the president of Massey-Harris for the whole of Canada.

I was working in one of the offices. My salary was \$3 a week. Time after time, I would walk along the corridors of the Massey-Harris Company, not interested in the business I was doing, not concerned about my position, but asking myself this one important question, am I saved or am I lost? That night, Dr. MacPherson did preach on salvation.

Again and again, he cried out, believe, believe, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved. I sat there leaning forward. I can still remember it.

I listened with both ears. I watched with both eyes. But at the close of the service, I got up out of my seat.

I walked to the door. I made my way through the darkness of the night to my home, almost afraid to go to bed, still not knowing whether I was saved or whether I was lost. Why was it? Was it because Dr. MacPherson had not preached the gospel? No.

He did preach the gospel. He cried out again and again, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved. But he never once stopped to tell us what he meant by that word believe.

And that was my problem. That was my trouble. Had I believed or had I not believed? And if I had believed, was I saved or was I not saved? What did it mean to believe? I listened, but I did not find out.

I did not get the answer. You know, there were no unbelievers in my community. In the place where I lived, there at Embro, Ontario, I had never once met an atheist.

I didn't know what an atheist was. There were no unbelievers. There were lots of drunks.

There were lots of men who swore and cursed God. There were lots of those who never docked at a church door from one year's end to another. But I never met one single man who was a non-believer.

Every person in my community believed. Everyone believed in God. Everyone believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

No one was an atheist. All of them were believers. Yet I knew perfectly well that they were not saved.

I knew they were not going to heaven because of the kind of lives they lived. Drunken lives. Lives filled with blasphemy and curses.

I knew perfectly well that there was something the matter. But I couldn't understand because I knew also that they were all believers. And every man in my community believed in God and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know there are millions in the world who are believers who have never been saved? You think of Spain, if you will. I traveled at different times in the country of Spain. I preached in that country at different times.

I never met anyone in Spain who was a non-believer. Everyone believed. And yet, it was almost impossible to find Christians.

To find those who had been saved. To find those who had been born again. They were believers, but they were not saved.

I traveled all through Italy. From one end of Italy to the other. I preached in Italy.

And yet, in spite of the fact that practically everybody in Italy believed, it was very difficult to find men and women who had been born again. I traveled extensively through the Russian mission fields of Europe. And I preached to the great masses of Russians all over Central Europe, wherever I could find them.

And the Russians went to church, just as they went to church in Spain, just as they went to church in Italy. So over there on the Russian mission fields of Europe, they went to church. They were in church every Sunday.

I used to go. I used to see them standing there. Of course, they never sat down, because in the Russian churches there are no chairs, and there are no pews, and there are no seats, and nobody would ever dream of sitting down to worship God.

They stand for an hour or two hours and take part in the entire worship, but none of them are seated. They're all standing, and I stood with the rest of them, listening to the service over there on the Russian mission fields of Europe. And I knew perfectly well that even though they believed they had never been born again, and they did not know Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, then one day in the midst of the agony of my heart, I got a hold of that little precious book entitled Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment.

I sat down and I read it from cover to cover, a little bit of a booklet worth about three and a half cents, or at the most five cents. I read it through, and as a result the light broke, and I came to realize what it meant to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And from the time I had read that book until this day, I have never had one moment's doubt in regard to my salvation.

I've known that I was saved. I've known that I was born again. I've known that I was a Christian.

This was very, very early in my life. When I took charge of a church, I put that little booklet on the table in the vestibule. During all the years of my ministry as pastor of the People's Church for well over 30 years, during all those years, I saw to it that that little booklet was always on the bookstand so that it could be sold to the people, they could get a copy, and they could find out what I found out.

They could get to know what it meant to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby to be saved. That's an experience that I'll never forget as long as I live. Now there are just three steps in saving faith.

The first step I express by the word hear, H-E-A-R, hear. How shall they believe except they hear? That's why we send missionaries to Africa and to India and to the other foreign fields. People must hear before they can believe and before they can be saved.

And therefore the first step in saving faith is expressed by the word hear. People must have a knowledge of God's salvation. That's why we try to persuade them to come to church so that they'll be under the sound of the gospel and they'll hear the message of the salvation of God.

Then they'll get saved as the Holy Spirit convicts them and they give themselves to the Lord Jesus. But I'm not going to dwell on that word tonight. You know what it is to hear.

You've come to the church again and again and again. You've heard times without number. But the second step I want to express by the word believe, not by the way it was used in Bible times, not by the way it was used when the King James Version was prepared, but as the way it is used today, taking its simple meaning in this our day and generation.

What is the meaning of the word believe today as you and I understand it? This is the meaning. Giving intellectual assent to a truth. When you have given intellectual assent to a truth, then you have believed.

Now that doesn't save you. You're not born again when you do that. That doesn't make you a Christian.

And yet there are thousands upon thousands of people who have given intellectual assent to the great truths of God's word who have never been saved, who have never been born again. I went to the dictionary. I looked it up in the dictionary.

And it read like this, to consent with the mind. To consent with the mind. What has that got to do with salvation? What has that got to do with being born again? To consent with the mind.

You can consent with the mind about thousands of things. And you can consent with the mind about God's salvation. That doesn't mean that you're going to be saved.

That doesn't mean that you're going to become a Christian. You have simply consented with the mind. You have given intellectual assent to a truth.

Three hundred and fifty years ago, the King James translation of the Bible was made in the year 1611. When the translators came to a certain Hebrew word in the Old Testament scriptures, they discussed it for some considerable time and they asked themselves the question, what English word should we use with which to translate this Hebrew word? Finally, they chose the word trust. And that's why as you read the Old Testament scriptures, you find the word trust used so frequently in all the Old Testament books.

Trust. Then they came to the New Testament. Again, they found the same word in the New Testament, this time in the Greek.

And again, they asked themselves the question, what English word will we use with which to translate this Greek word here in the New Testament? Now, if they had done what they did in the Old Testament, if they had used the same word that they had used in translating the Old Testament, this sermon would not be necessary tonight or at any other time. But for some unknown reason, instead of using the word trust, when they came to that Greek word in the New Testament, they chose another word altogether. They chose the word believe.

And that's why you find the word believe used so often in the New Testament scriptures. And so you ask yourself the question, what does it mean to believe? Does it mean to give intellectual assent to a truth? Does it have to do with the intellect? Or does it have to do with the heart? What does it mean? In the Old Testament scriptures, the word trust is used 152 times. But when you come to the New Testament scriptures, you find this other word being used, the word believe.

Now, the Bible says that that is the faith of the demons. The demons also believe and tremble. Now, why do they tremble if they believe? If believing is sufficient, then why tremble? Are they not saved? Of course not.

None of the demons are saved. They believe, but their belief is an intellectual process. They believe with their minds.

They know that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. They know that he died on Calvary's cross. They know that he bore the sins of the world in his own body on the tree.

They know all about his relationship to the Father. They know these things. But are they saved? Most certainly not.

Not one of them. Because all they have done has been to give intellectual assent to the truths concerning Jesus Christ. And to give intellectual assent to the truths concerning Christ does not bring a man out of death into life, does not save a man.

He is not born again because he takes that step which is taken by the intellect and not by the heart. That, I say, is the fate of the demons. Now, the third word is the word trust.

T-r-u-s-t, trust. I was holding nationwide campaigns in Australia many, many years ago now when I was 42 years of age. I'll never forget them as long as I live.

I traveled all over Australia. I've been there on three different occasions. I saw crowded halls and crowded auditoriums almost everywhere I went.

I saw hundreds upon hundreds come forward and accept Jesus Christ as a personal Savior. While I was there, the committee that had brought me made me a present of a new translation of the Bible, the New English Bible, which had just been translated. Now, as soon as I get a new translation, I sit down immediately and I read it through from beginning to end, taking care to look at every word and noting the difference between that translation and the King James Version, which I still use.

And so I sat down in Australia and I took this New English Bible and I read it through from beginning to end. To my amazement and astonishment, as I read the New Testament scriptures, I found the word believe almost entirely eliminated from those scriptures, hardly ever used. When they came to that great verse that I've read in your hearing, Acts the 16th chapter, the 31st verse, which reads in the English

translation, in the ordinary English translation, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

This New English Bible translated it like this. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

I want to tell you, when I saw that, I sat up and took notice. I thank God for a translation that put it right, that cleared up the difficulty, that solved the problem. And as I went on to read the rest of the New Testament, I found that again and again it said, Put your faith or put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

If they had translated it that way in the King James Version, my message tonight would not be necessary. You would understand in a moment the meaning of faith. You would forget all about your intellect and you would think about your heart.

And instead of believing with your intellect, you would trust with your heart. And the moment you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ with your heart, you would pass out of death into life and you would be saved. It isn't believing that saves, the way the word is used today.

It's trusting that saves. And only when you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, only when you trust him, do you pass out of death and into life. Now there are two things that that word trust emphasizes.

First of all, it emphasizes this, the fact that effort of any kind must be absolutely excluded. As long as you put forth effort, works, in order to get saved, you never will get saved. But as soon as you set aside effort or works in order to be saved and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, that moment you will pass out of death and into life.

It's like a man floating. In 1932, I visited Palestine, a visit that I'll never forget, never have forgotten. From that day to this, I spent a great many days in Palestine and I went down to the Jordan River and I had a swim in the waters of the Jordan River, swimming across the Jordan from one side to the other.

Then I went to the Sea of Galilee and I had a swim in the waters of the Sea of Galilee and enjoyed it immensely. Then I went to the Dead Sea and I decided to have a swim in the waters of the Dead Sea and I did. But you know that no matter how I struggled, how I tried to swim, no matter what I did, I simply could not get down under the waters.

You know, of course, that there is 23% salt in the waters of the Dead Sea. And as I was in those waters, I discovered that if I had had a newspaper or a book, I could have thrown myself back on those waters, on my back, and with great comfort I could have read that newspaper or read that book without making one single motion with my hands or with my feet and I wouldn't sink. I would float because of the salt in the waters of the Dead Sea.

The only way that you and I can get into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, I say, is by trusting, by putting our faith in Him, by floating on His salvation, not by putting forth effort, not by using our hands or indulging in works or trying in any other way to get to Christ. We have to do absolutely nothing but trust the Lord Jesus for our salvation. For the remainder of Dr. Smith's sermon, please turn this tape over.

We have to do absolutely nothing but trust the Lord Jesus for our salvation. And the moment we trust Him, we pass out of death and into life. Have you ever floated on God's salvation? Have you ever floated on God's great work of redemption? Or have you been struggling? Have you been working? Have you been

striving? Have you been trying by putting forth effort to find your way to God? If so, then I would like to beseech you tonight to lay aside all effort of any kind whatsoever and don't put any faith in it and don't struggle anymore and don't strive any longer and don't perform any more works so far as getting salvation is concerned.

Merely throw yourself back, as it were, on the waters of God's salvation and float. And without any effort, you will pass out of death into life and you will know the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. Last of all, it implies committal.

And I suppose the marriage ceremony is the clearest illustration. Here is a young man who keeps company with a young woman for some considerable time and here is a young man, here is a young woman who keeps company with that young man. And during their engagement, the girlfriends gather around and they ask her some very important questions.

They say, we understand that this young man to whom you're engaged is going to provide a home for you. Is that right? Yes, that's what he's going to do. Well, do you have the home? No, of course I do not have the home.

And yet you believe the young man. Certainly I believe him. He's going to provide a home for me.

We understand he's going to buy food for you. Is that also true? Yes, that's also true. And does he do it? Are you getting the food? No.

Only when we go to the restaurant together. And sometimes I pay the bill. No, I'm still living in my father's home and I'm still eating my father's food.

And yet you believe the young man. Yes, I believe him with all my heart. I have no doubts of any kind.

We understand he's going to buy clothes for you. Yes, he is. Well, do you have them? No, my father still buys my clothes.

He hasn't bought any for me. And you tell us that you believe him? Yes, I believe him, in spite of the fact that he hasn't yet bought a single garment for me. I believe the young man.

There comes a never-to-be-forgotten day when the young man stands at the front of the church auditorium, first on one foot, then on the other, waiting there impatiently for the coming of his bride. And at last, on the arm of her father, she comes walking slowly, oh so slowly, up that aisle. She wants every eye to be fastened on her and to see the wedding garment that she's wearing.

And that young man stands there waiting impatiently for her to arrive. At last they stand side by side at the front. Then the minister asks two or three very important questions.

For instance, he says to the young woman, Will thou have this man to be thy wedded husband? And she wills. And then when it's all over, on the arm of the young man, she walks out of the church having done something that she had never done before, having given herself over, having handed herself to, having trusted the young man of her choice, something that has happened for the first time. And now she goes out with the young man.

Never again will she have to work. It's now up to the young man to look after her. It's up to him to support her.

Her place is in the home. His place is out earning the money that she needs for support, providing for her. And so he works for her.

He labors for her. And she takes care of the house, takes care of her husband, takes care of the children. This is the way it was when I was a young man many, many years ago now.

She is his responsibility. And that's the way it is with the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment you put your trust in him, the moment you exercise trusting faith, that moment you become his responsibility.

Now it's up to Christ to look after you. It's now up to the Lord Jesus to take care of you. You'll never have to struggle again.

No work of yours will ever avail in the least. Nothing that you can do will ever have anything to do with the saving of your soul. You have now put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And by doing that, you have passed out of death and into life. My friend, I want to say to you tonight in the words of the New Testament Scriptures as translated in the New English Bible, what must I do to be saved? Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. That's what I did.

I had always believed in Jesus. There never had been a time in my life when I didn't believe in Jesus. From the time I was a small boy, I believed in Jesus.

I didn't believe in him anymore after I was saved than I did before I was saved. I had always believed in Jesus. I knew he was God's Son.

I knew he had died on Calvary's cross. I knew he had borne my sins in his own body on the tree. I knew those facts intellectually, every one of them, but I wasn't saved until the night in Massey Hall.

I walked forward, went down to the basement, got down on my knees, opened my heart, and for the first time in my life at 16 years of age, received, trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior. And just as I trusted him then, so I am still trusting him now. If you have believed intellectually only, you are not saved.

You are not a Christian. But if you have trusted, if you have put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then, my friends, you have passed out of death, you have passed into life, and you know Jesus Christ is your own personal Savior. I want to make that clear because I want everyone in the people's church to know what it is to be saved by trusting the Lord Jesus, not by believing intellectually, but by trusting with the heart and in the heart.

Have you done it? Have you done it? If you haven't, then let me urge you tonight to put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Shall we bow together in prayer? And could we have every head bowed and every eye closed? All of us have just listened to the kind of preaching that built this church. None of us will ever hear the gospel more simply.

We will never hear it more understandably. We will never hear it more clearly. We'll never hear it more concisely.

No matter who we are, this message from the Word of God by our Founder leaves us, all of us, in just two categories. There are those who have trusted. There are those who have not trusted.

There are those who have floated. There are those who haven't floated. There are those who have said, I will.

There are those who have never said, I will. May I ask you two questions before we close our service? I wonder how many there are here tonight who in the light of this extremely clear message can say, Dr. Smith, I know what you're talking about. I know what you mean.

I too believed for years, but there was a day when I trusted and I know I'm saved. Have you? If you can say there was a time, there was a place, there was an hour, there was a situation when I did personally what you did in Massey Hall, and Dr. Torrey preached, I have trusted Jesus with my heart, with my life, and I know it. I know I'm a child of God.

If you can say that while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, would you put your hands up right now with me all over the building, everybody who can say it honestly, truthfully before God. Would you please put your hands down? It looked as if almost everybody raised a hand, but maybe there's one person, an honest man, an honest lady, an honest girl or boy. Maybe you've been coming to this church all your life.

Maybe you've been in some of the Sunday school classes, some of the singing groups, some of the instrumental groups of this church, and you've always believed, you've always known the lingo, but you were honest, and I thank God for that. You did not raise your hand because you couldn't before God, because God saw you. Does that mean you don't care? Does that mean it doesn't matter? Does that mean that you're not concerned? Or would you say this, Dr. Smith, I'd like to do tonight what you did in 1906 in Massey Hall as a 16-year-old boy.

I'd like to take my belief, my knowledge of Jesus, and I'd like to begin to lean on Him for my salvation. I could not raise my hand that time, and I did not because I'm honest, but I wish you'd pray for me. I wish you'd ask God to help me, and I know Dr. Smith, Sr. would be delighted to pray for you.

He's had 70 years of praying for people all over the world. I know more than anything else in the world in his 89th year moving into 90, he'd like to do what he's done for thousands of people all over the world, and he'll pray for you and ask God to help you trust. If you did not raise your hand that time because you're an honest person, but you are interested because you're a concerned person, and you'd like Dr. Smith, Sr. to pray for you specifically, where you are in your seat right now, quietly would you put your hand up and say, Yes, sir, please include me in that prayer.

I want to trust Jesus tonight. God bless you, sir, I see you. God bless you, sir, I see you.

God bless you, I see you. God bless you, ladies under the balcony, I see you. Are there others who will raise their hand and say, Yes, please include me in that prayer.

The best I know how. I'd like to trust Jesus.

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