

The Meaning of Salvation

by Oswald J. Smith

The sermon teaches that true salvation comes from heartfelt trust in Jesus Christ, not merely intellectual belief.

Duration: 29:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 16:25-31, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, Oswald J. Smith focuses on the importance of saving faith and what it truly means to be saved. He starts by emphasizing the need to hear the message of God's salvation, but highlights that hearing alone is not enough. He then shares the story of the Philippian jailer in the book of Acts, who asks Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. Their response is simple: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Smith also shares a personal experience of questioning his own salvation and the realization that true belief in Jesus is what brings salvation.

Transcript

This is an exciting time for me because I happen to be his son, and I happen to be very, very proud of my father for many reasons. Number one, if it were not for him, I would not be here. Now, do not hold that against him, but in a broader concept, you realize if it were not for the founder of this church, we would not be here, any of us.

This building would not be here. This telecast would not be possible. Our missionary work would never have materialized, and I think it is miraculous, it is fantastic, and it is beautiful that the man whom God spoke to when he sat and prayed on a log in the bush of British Columbia many, many years ago, and talked to him about founding a church in Toronto, that that man is still here, still vigorous.

As a matter of fact, I tell Father he will probably preach at my funeral service. I fully expect that, and I'll be smiling when he does, and you'll say, my, he looks nice, and you'll know the reason. But it's a great joy to have Dad here and have him preach on this Sunday morning, and I know you'll pray, and we'll all expect as the Spirit of God moves through this congregation.

Let's stand together and sing his chorus, and right after we've sung it, Dr. Oswald J. Smith will bring the message of the morning. The first word is with. Will you turn with me this morning to the book of Acts, the 16th chapter, and I want to commence reading at the 25th verse, reading from verse 25 to verse 31.

The 25th verse 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 foundation of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he 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 on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. There was a time in my life when I didn't know whether I was saved or lost. I was 16 years of age.

I was working in the Massey Harris company of this city in the office. As I went from one department of that great firm to another, I wasn't interested in what I was doing. I was asking myself one simple question.

Am I saved or am I lost? And I'll never forget the anguish. I'll never forget the torment through which I passed as I asked the question, Am I saved or am I lost? My uncle was the president of the great Massey Harris company of Canada. My salary was three dollars a week.

I paid two dollars and seventy-five cents a week for room and board. I had left twenty-five dollars, twenty-five cents a week with which to buy my clothes and other necessities. I'll never forget that experience.

All the time I was in the Massey Harris company, I was concerned about my sole salvation at 16 years of age. I sat and listened with both ears. I watched with both eyes.

But at the close of the service, I got up out of my pew, went into the darkness of the night, still not knowing whether I was saved or whether I was lost. Now why was it? Dr. McPherson, the pastor, had preached the gospel. Again and again he had said, Believe, believe, believe.

But never once did he stop to tell us what he meant by the word believe. And that was my problem. I knew I had to believe, but I didn't know what it meant to believe.

And therefore I was in total darkness. There are millions of people in this world of ours who believe, but who are not saved, who never have been saved. They're all over Europe.

They're everywhere throughout the world. They believe. They believe as much as I believe.

But they are not saved, even though they believe. Their problem was the problem that I was facing when I was 16 years of age. Then I came across that little book, Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment.

And God brought me out of darkness into light, and I came to know what it meant to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Now there are just three steps in saving faith. The first I express by the simple word hear, h-e-a-r, hear.

How shall they believe except they hear? That's why we send missionaries to the foreign field. They haven't heard, and they must hear in order to believe, and in order to be saved. And so we send out

missionaries, and they hear the message of God's salvation.

That does not apply here. Everyone in this congregation has heard. Everyone in Radio Land, in all probability, has heard.

You have heard again and again and again. But what does it mean to be saved? Is it sufficient to hear? Is it sufficient to believe? One time I went to the dictionary to find out the meaning of the word believe, and the dictionary gave me this explanation. Giving intellectual assent to a truth.

What has intellectual assent to do with salvation? Millions of people give intellectual assent to the truths of the Bible, but they're not saved. Salvation does not concern the intellect. Salvation concerns the heart.

You may give intellectual assent to the truths of God's word and still be lost, and lost eternally. I went to another dictionary, and I read this. To consent with the mind.

To consent with the mind. But what has the mind to do with salvation? You may consent with the mind and still perish, and perish eternally. It is not sufficient to simply give intellectual assent to a truth or to consent with the mind.

When the King James translators were translating the Bible into English about the year 1611 A.D., they came across a word in the Old Testament, and they sought for an English word with which to translate it. Finally, they chose the word trust, and that's why you have the word trust occurring so often in the Old Testament scriptures 152 times. Then they came to the New Testament.

They came to the same word in the Greek, and again they searched for an English word with which to translate it, and for some unknown reason, instead of using the Old Testament word that they had used, they chose an entirely different word. They chose the word believe, and that's why you have the word believe occurring so frequently in the New Testament scriptures, especially in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Believe, again and again it occurs in the New Testament scriptures.

To believe intellectually is the faith of the demons. The Bible says the demons also believe and tremble. Why do they tremble? Because they know that there is no salvation for them.

They know that they are doomed. They know that they are going to spend eternity in perdition, and therefore they tremble. Their faith is an intellectual faith.

They believe intellectually. They do not believe in the heart, and there's the difference. You may believe intellectually and be lost and lost forever.

Not until you believe in the heart will you be saved. Thousands of people believe intellectually. As I travel through the different countries of Europe, and I have traveled in every country except four in Europe, everywhere I went, I discovered people who believed in Spain, in France, in Russia, in many of the other countries of Europe.

They believed, but they only believed intellectually. They did not believe in their hearts. There was no change in their lives.

They went on living the same lives they had lived before, and therefore they were not saved. For the remainder of Dr. Smith's sermon, please turn this tape over. There was no change in their lives.

They went on living the same lives they had lived before, and therefore they were not saved. To believe intellectually is not sufficient. You and I must believe in our hearts if we're going to be saved.

Now, what is the meaning of faith? I can express it in three words. The first word is the word hear. H-E-A-R, hear.

That's why we send missionaries to the foreign field. They've never heard. They must hear in order to be saved, but hearing is not sufficiently.

There must be something more than merely hearing the message of God's salvation. You have heard. I need not pause on that first word this morning.

I doubt if there's anyone within the hearing of my voice but who has heard. Again and again you have heard the message of God's salvation, but not until you have believed in your heart are you saved. It isn't sufficient to believe intellectually.

That is the faith of the demons, as I've already said. When the translators of the King James Version of the Bible, when they came to that word in the Hebrew, in the Old Testament scriptures, they decided to translate it, as I've already stated, by using the word trust, and they used it 152 times. And that's why you have the word trust occurring so frequently in the Old Testament scriptures.

Then they came to the New Testament, and they found the same word in the Greek in the New Testament, and for some unknown reason they did not translate it by using the word trust as they had done in the Old Testament, but they chose a different word. They chose the word believe. Why? I do not know.

But that's why you have the word believe occurring so frequently in the New Testament scriptures. Believe is not sufficient there must be trust, and until there is trust there is no salvation. You may believe as much as I believe and still be lost and lost eternally.

Now the word trust. In the New Testament, in the New English Bible, you have the word translated from Acts the 16th chapter and the 31st verse like this. In the authorized version it says believe.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. In the New English Bible it is translated 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. That is the right translation, and that translation is exactly what Paul said when he answered the Philippian jailer. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

Now what is the meaning of the word trust? First of all, trust excludes effort. If there is effort there is no trust. When you're floating you do not put forth effort.

You simply throw yourself back on the water and you allow the water to hold your weight and you float. That's what it means to trust. No effort, just resting, trusting, floating.

In the second place it implies committal. The best illustration is the marriage ceremony. A young woman keeps company with a young man for some considerable time, at least she ought to, and she gets to know him rather intimately.

Her girlfriends come to her and they say we understand that this young man of yours has promised you a house and he has promised you clothes and he has promised you food. Yes, she says, he has. Well do you have them? Why no, I haven't any of them.

I still live in my father's home. My father supplies my food. My father supplies my clothes.

No, I haven't any of them so far as the young man is concerned. And yet you believe the young man. You believe what he says.

Why certainly I believe. I trust his word. I believe exactly what he says.

There comes that never to be forgotten day when he stands at the front of a church, first on one foot and then on the other. Never has he been so nervous in all his life. Presently, down the aisle, on the arm of her father, slowly, oh so slowly, comes the young woman.

She takes her stand at his side. The minister asks one or two important questions. Dost thou? And she dost.

Wilt thou? And she wilts. And then on the arm of the young man she goes out. Never again will she have to work.

From now on it's his responsibility. It's up to him to supply a home for her. It's up to him to buy the clothes she needs.

It's up to him to purchase the food she requires. Her working days are over. From the time she gets married until the day of her death, she is able to live her life, putting her trust in the young man.

He bears the responsibility and it's up to him to take care of her. That is trust. And the young women come around and they say, do you have the home, oh yes.

He purchased a home for me and now we live together in our home. Have you the food? Oh yes, he pays the butcher bills and the grocery bills. We have all the food we need.

What about the clothes? Yes, he buys my clothes. I have no more worries of any kind whatever. He bears the responsibility.

I have put my trust in him. He is responsible and he is taking care of me. That's what it means to be married.

Now if it isn't that way, that's the way it ought to be. That's the way it should have been. That's the way it was intended.

She puts her trust in the young man of her choice and henceforth he bears the responsibility. She belongs to him. My friend, you may believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as much as you want to, you may believe everything that I believe, but unless you have trusted, unless you have trusted as that young woman trusts the young man of her choice, until then you are not saved.

I asked you the question this morning, have you ever trusted the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you ever put your faith in him? Have you ever relied upon him? Are you relying upon him now or are you simply believing intellectually? Are you trusting in your heart? If you are, you are saved. If you are not, you have

never yet passed out of death and into life. I pray God this morning that you will put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and as you think of that wonderful verse in Acts, quote it from the New English Bible.

Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. Shall we bow together in prayer?

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