

# What Is Saving Faith - Part 2

by Rolfe Barnard

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*Saving faith requires a daily surrender to the sovereignty of God, a commitment to his will, and a response to his claims.*

**Duration:** 44:43

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21, Acts 2:1, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Saving Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the need for reexamining our message and approach to evangelism. He emphasizes the importance of being true to men and women and telling them the truth in love. The speaker shares personal anecdotes about his parents' birthdays and the challenges of finding truth in the current times. He raises questions about how to make ministry more effective and suggests that the church needs to reestablish contact with the world. The sermon emphasizes the need for dynamic change in the lives of believers and the importance of surrendering oneself to God's program of redemption.

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## Transcript

Now, may I say two things? I'm going to say them anyhow. I'm just being polite, asking your permission. But I want to say two things before we get to the study for tonight.

Your pastor and I talk a good bit during the day about what to do. I come here, and one thing I never have done in forty-odd years, I never have come and bragged on people. I always try to find out what's wrong with them.

Everybody else brags on you, so... But that's my job. But a brother said to me last night, he said, I'm disturbed, and that's about as far as I can go. Oh, I'd love for us to get desperately disturbed.

Because we're in such a terrible shape, I don't know what to say about how to get out of it. I can't talk to anybody who's got more sense than I have got. But I believe the first work of God's grace is to bring a deep disturbance.

I think God has to thrust us out of our nests. We're just like homing pigeons. We just go from one resting place to another.

You drive us out of one, we'll head for another. I do, and you do too, if you'll be honest. Somebody said the best way to hide from God now is to be a member of the Church.

That's my truth in that. Just do what they call joining the Church now. You'll be perfectly safe having any dealings with God.

But tomorrow night it may be, I'm not certain about this, appreciate you. These messages have been rather dull this week. I don't know what to say.

I've just been sort of talking about what's the matter with us. Tomorrow night I think perhaps we're going to make some suggestions that I believe God's people need to face as to how to get out of the ditch that churches as such find themselves in now. I do not know of a congregation on the face of the earth that's in perfect order, nor do I expect to find one this side of the coming of the Lord.

Some are more in order than others. Now can you take that or not? If you can't, you're in bad shape because you think you can be a Pharisee, you know. Rejoice in that you're not as other men.

You have tremendous, tremendous significant conception through your pastor of divine order. But none of us believe that we'll ever be brought back fully to divine order of God's church when the pickings, spiritually speaking, are as lean as they are now. This will come in the fullness of the Spirit.

And thus every church that has any right to call itself a church ought to be on its feet looking to God for an outpouring of His Spirit. Isn't that right? I was a boy on the farm in Texas. Out of here, a fellow from Texas, I had never had a good day in Alabama.

Out in west Texas, it wouldn't rain about every five years, you know. We'd plant the wheat or the cotton, pray for rain. If it didn't rain, the seed wouldn't come up.

It's awful hard to make crock when it don't rain. That's nearly impossible. And not raining much, brethren, in these days.

And truth is hard to come by. In the atmosphere of the Holy Ghost, the Bible just flashes, you know. When the heavens are brash, it's like the Bible's a closed book.

How to get out of the complacency and the ghettoism of church life today. How to reestablish contact with this world. How can people who want to exercise their ministry as priests unto God, how can that be made more effective a hundredfold than it is today? Those are questions we need to face.

Maybe tomorrow night, a last indulgence, I'll bring you some suggestions. I was on the farm, we had an old brantle cow. Do you know what a brantle cow is, any of you country people? They live pretty hard to do anything with.

One year, we had almost drought. And all the crop we made was a bunch of nubbins. Any of you know what a nubbin is? You city folks don't know, but you know what a nubbin is? You're no preacher, you city fellows, you don't know.

Most of you folks were born in the city and so young, you ain't got sense of nothing but tell you anything. Bad. A nubbin, you know, they're all Baptist.

Ain't a Methodist nubbin in the crop. A nubbin, it's sort of akin to an ear of corn, but it's a lot of shuck and a lot of cob and very little corn. And that's a nubbin.

And in order to save food and yet keep the old cow from dying, we'd try to feed her nubbins. Just take a pitchfork, throw over some nubbins. We thought we'd get the old cow to eat the shuck and the cob with the corn.

But she had more sense than the average Baptist. She'd shuck that nubbin and nibble that corn and leave the cob. I wish you had that much sense.

Any suggestion brought to you, just shuck it, you know. What you can't take of it, leave it and take what you can. I'm not perfectly libertarian, but I think I want to say this.

If it tears up the whole outfit, you've got lots of money. You can build it down in there. I was led to believe down in West Virginia the other day by your pastor that I might be sinning against you.

I'm not certain about it. And out of that, we corresponded some. And I didn't expect to be here this week, but through his goodness and yours, I'm here.

And I've had a good time. But I want to say to you on this Wednesday night, the responsibility is all yours. And I want to say thank you, a deep thank you, that for now or a period of two years or such a matter, you have honored me by keep nibbling a little bit as to whether you have any responsibility in my ministry.

I know only two, only one church in my experience has ever asked me to be its evangelist. That's the church of which I'm now a member. Your pastor tells me you believe that a local church ought to have an evangelist.

Now, he's scriptural there. And I've had pastors all over America tell me they believe, but they can't get their churches to do it. See what I mean? So this church ought to have that.

You folks do show a willingness here, as far as I'm able to understand, with three visits to you. You show a very decided willingness, and I praise God for that. If you thought it was in the book, you might miss it, but you try to do what it says.

I like that. Now, whether that has any reference to me or not, I don't know. But I want to say thank you for even the nibbling.

And I'm hopeful that the nibbling can be settled into a bite or something. I don't know a thing about it because I can't because it don't come in to hit my business. I don't know how I can assume the responsibility of this church.

That comes under your shoulders, don't it? But I'm here, and I'll be here Saturday. If I can do what the Lord has me to do, to be honest with you people, that's what I want to do. And then it's up to you.

Is that clear as mud or not? I could not accept the offer of the congregation of which I hold membership to go out as their evangelist, by that I meant to be sent forth, as Paul and Barnabas were from Antioch and so forth, because there would be too much conflict between my ministry and what they would want it to be. You folks say that everything ought to be church-sponsored, but it isn't. I don't know of a Baptist church anywhere that sponsors an evangelist.

There may be some, but I've been around a little bit, and I never heard tell of it. They'll all tell you they ought to, but they don't. Isn't that right? And I'm not fixin' to agree to something that I don't believe, or to say I'm going to do something that I'm not going to try to do.

I'm too old for that. And I'm dead sure not looking for anybody to sponsor me. And if I got out here in a fight over some great truth of the Bible, that you'd be ashamed that I had any connection with you.

In the average Baptist church, you sure have to pick your truth, or you'll get in a fight, and I've been in a few. I'm sorry. One of the deepest thinkers, I think, living today, says that religion, and by that he means religion, man's response to God, not Christianity, but religion.

This man says that religion has a meaning for men only if it can find in history a certain point to which it can absolutely surrender. Christianity, then, or a Christian, is real, and his faith is authentic, and his relationship is what God requires if and only if he finds someone to whom he can totally surrender himself. I will repeat, a man's bragging about I'm saved is no good unless by that he expresses the fact that he's meant somebody to whom he may totally surrender.

We can answer rightly God's call and elective grace in Christ Jesus only by choice. He revolves of a commitment, and that commitment is the commitment of oneself utterly, with utter abandon. Christ Jesus didn't come and die on a cross to do anything short of possessing us.

Whether you are saved or damned, you belong to Jesus Christ, he bought you. And if he sends you to hell, he will send you to hell because you belong to him by purchase price, and he's got a right to save you or damn you. Every church in America, some more than others, and every preacher, and every individual Christian need desperately to reexamine what's involved in answering God's call.

What's involved in saving faith, which is response to the revelation of God in Christ and his call through the spirit in the gospel. What's God calling men to and how can Ralph Barnett or anybody else properly and savingly respond to God's elective call? I don't know of anything more important than that. And under God, if God Almighty could be pleased to use somebody in this congregation to come up with some good answers as to how we can start all over again nearly and rescue the word faith, make it meaningful again.

How we could stop this traffic in the souls of men going through the motion of profession and church membership and so forth without any dynamic change that keeps on changing in the lives of men and women. How can we reexamine our message and our message to the air that we could do a better job of being true, true to men and women. Telling them the truth.

Tell them in love, but telling them the truth. Not trying to get people converted by hiding the truth. Not what we've called evangelism of the last 60 years that is built on the proposition that the less truth, the more results.

This is a serious proposition. I do not know about you. My father and mother are both gone.

Last Lord's Day was my mother's birthday, the 92 she is living. Yesterday was my father's birthday, the 95 that he is living. I am one of six remaining children, brothers and sisters.

My older brother is gone. I have five brothers and sisters. One of them in California.

One is in Montana. Two are in Alabama. One is in Georgia.

They are products of what is called Christianity today. They are all devout, faithful, hardworking church people. And only one of them gives the tiniest little bit of evidence.

We can't judge what it is. Oh, we look for just a little bit of evidence. If they are your loved ones.

My soul, how people are being butchered today. For the fact that for the last hundred years we have been whittling down on what saving faith is. What God demands of men and women as a response to his dying on a cross in Jesus Christ.

My loved ones are as honest as you are. They are as sincere as you are. They are as kind hearted, humane, good neighbors.

All of that you are. But they are the product of what passes for salvation, the gospel and Christianity in cross section of America. My soul, I wish something could take place where churches all over the country are making Christians.

Men and women who are faced up to the fact that the last word that God almighty says to a man is not I save. The last word he says to an individual is I claim. You are mine.

You belong to me. For the chief sign of salvation is not a sense of freedom. But it is an experience of being mastered by somebody.

And I look you in the face and tell you now that you are not fixing to become a Christian. Unless you are willing to be utterly conquered by and mastered by and ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ. And nobody is trying to wish anything off on anybody.

Nobody is trying to get you to accept anybody. And if you are determined to split hell wide open in spite of everything, nobody can keep you from it. But I am telling you if you want to be saved, you are going to have to be willing to be utterly mastered, utterly conquered, utterly possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I wish we would quit trying to talk people into accepting Jesus. I don't know what good that would do anyhow for men don't need to accept him. They need to surrender to him.

For that is exactly what he demands. How can men savingly respond to the holy God who in Christ Jesus bought you lock, stock and barrel with his own precious blood? How? The scriptures divide it up by thinking we can say three things quickly first. Saving faith, savingly to respond to God's claim upon you in Jesus Christ dying on a cross in your behalf.

Saving faith. That faith that will do to ride the river west since everybody's got faith. That faith that is man's act and God's gift.

That faith that is the method through which God works salvation in a human being. That faith requires very simply a response of Roth Barnard. Not of my soul, but of me, of me.

He didn't come down here to save your soul, honey. He came down here to possess you. You.

And if we'll cut out that silly stuff that all of us talk about. Every last one of us. He saved my soul.

Thank you Lord for saving my soul. He didn't know what to say. He saved people.

People. He bought you. He owned you.

He possesses you. Or not yet. But something goes to happen.

He's at the men and women. And the only way that Roth Barnard can respond to God's claim and demand upon him in his call from a cross is to do exactly toward him that he did toward us. He didn't give us some advice.

Bless God. He gave us himself. You will not give yourself to him.

If you want a nice little salvation, you can put up and refer to it now and then, talking about you saved my soul, praise the Lord. But no, if you want him to have you lock, stock and barrel. You.

You. You. You.

Not part of you, but you. Not some of your time, but you. Not this damnable stuff about you ought to give your talents to the Lord.

You ain't got nothing to start with. He's a fella of my goodness of life. Isn't that silly? But he wants you.

And he's not going to trade for anything beside you. He's not going to accept anything short of you. Here I am Lord.

I surrender. He gave. He gave.

He gave himself for you. You will not give yourself to him. That is a part of saving faith.

Away with this foolishness about accepting something or believing something or trusting something. Salvation isn't in reference to a something. Salvation is in reference to a somewhat.

Saving faith is the response of me. All there is of me. That's reading.

Bless God. Scripture don't know nothing about one act of faith saving anybody. Hell going to be full of Baptists talking about what God did thirty years ago.

Every reference to faith, belief, saving belief in the New Testament. This is the God's truth. It's in the present tense.

He that believeth. Just keeps on. We are kept by the power of God.

How? How? Through faith. Somebody says, but Luke, my faith will it go to heaven? No, sir. That's a silly question.

But the only way God keeps you is how? Through faith. My soul, anybody on earth that's willing to trust yesterday is silly. Got to be today.

If salvation were a transaction that I could settle, brother Paul, and lock it up in a safe and refer to it now and then be a white horse of different color. But salvation is a bringing into a relationship of two persons. And every decision and every involvement between persons must be renewed and renewed and renewed and renewed.

That's right. Oh, you're a day late if you're talking about what happened yesterday in your relationship with Jesus Christ. I understand why Ralph Barnes has to repent every day.

I have to put my faith again in Jesus Christ every day. Bless God, I need him today just as badly and much terribly and absolutely as ever I will or ever I dare. I can't make it today without appropriating the blood and the body of the Lord Jesus Christ today.

Oh, my soul, don't tell me about your beliefs. Tell me about your daily feeding upon and appropriating all the living Christ. That's faith.

That's faith that produces life. Not Phariseeism that stops us. The devil can't get us one way, he'll do it another, you know.

We're never safe from his attacks if we're headed in the right direction. Oh, my soul, every day must be a renewing of relationship with the living. It's only this kind of response, a daily response that the New Testament talks about.

Authentic or saving faith is that response that's required which one surrenders himself utterly to the sovereignty of God in Christ. You can put it down that unless God's claims, sovereign claims are bowed to, you'll never know peace. You'll never know peace.

You can put it down that you can't keep your shotgun pointed in the direction of the heart of God and have his peace. I'm telling you the truth that the very heart of saving faith is a crisis and then a daily dealing with the claims of an all-sovereign God. That means he's simply God, very God.

I'm saying to you that saving faith has one thing that it's got to face and it has to face it every day for every day for as thy days, so shall thy strength be. And that is we are bound to the will of God. That's what it means to have faith.

We are unto another. We are not at home with the Lord brother Christ unless you're willing to have the one thing foremost in every day's experience, the will of God. You haven't faced the demands of God on a cross for proper response.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you're talking about doing the will of God yesterday, you're a day late. This thing's got to be faced every day, every day, every day. This is the biggest thing between the eternities.

Isn't there anything else Master Hill obeys? Whose will is to be done today? Well, right there, right now, you can't depend on past experience here. This thing is vital. It's concerned with the relationship.

Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but who will? Try to get your doctrine to throw this out. It's in the Bible too, and it don't contradict anything else, but it just simply says the guy that will is the fellow that doeth. That's continuous.

What? The will of God, brother. That won't fix you, make you roll up your sleeves, spit on your hands, and get out of your nice little comfortable religious pew. Brother, this thing's a day-by-day proposition.

Oh, last Lord's day, I got up and gave a testimony and bragged on the Lord, but that ain't worth the hill of beans. Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, that's orthodoxy, but he that doeth the will of God. God help us, this thing's serious.

As long as we keep preaching to men and women that they ought to be saved, nothing's going to happen when they die, and they can just float along, and they get baptized, and that's all of it. God's going to save them by saying, plus nothing, minus nothing, that's all of it. No, bless God of salvation, that doesn't rightly

relate yourself to the doing of the will of God.

It is not God's salvation. Saving faith involves giving the surrender of oneself to be a part of God's program of redemption, to be a part of God's program of redemption. Here's something that if Satan had a heart that was as soft as a bunch of steel, it'd break his heart even.

Men and women who've been led to believe they're rightly related to God and Jesus Christ, who are not committed utterly to God's redemptive program through them. What are you talking about, Brother Barnum? I've mentioned it before, I'll mention it again before I leave you. The tragedy of what we call Christianity in America that's causing Christianity to die in America to rot is the fact that we've divorced salvation from accepting the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to be his instrument in his program of redemption.

And many of you believe that you were included when the Lord breathed on them, said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, John chapter 20. And then he said what? As my Father has sent me, even so send I you. You in on that? Who's that talking to? I tell you, you know that's pretty embarrassing.

Let's adopt this. I've read this, it's pretty popular. Is that just for the apostles? Is that alright? Can you take that? No? Well, who on earth is he talking about? You in on it? Aye? God help me, I've got no business claiming to be a Christian unless I've gladly received this commission to represent Jesus Christ.

That's what he said. Aye? Can't pay nobody else to do that for me, can they? Aye? Aye? No, to my soul this is it. Every Christian is to be God to somebody else in the spiritual sense.

Every Christian has exactly the same job as Jesus Christ. Every Christian is a sent one to represent somebody. Amen.

Well, burn out the icicles from our nice little, nice little, icily regular, futilely futile faith today. Pour out a portion of the Holy Ghost to set us on fire. Somehow through the burning quality of our testimony, we might make a penetration at least an inch deep in the thick skin of this godless generation.

Nothing short of men on fire. Nothing short of churches utterly consumed with the fire from heaven, with the immensity and the responsibility that Jesus Christ left us with the job of representing him. Rob Barnett could ever drink at that fountain at all.

Maybe I'd be some account if you're not interested, but God's sake pray for me before I die. I'd love to be able to take seriously the fact that when God calls people, and from the cross having bought them, he calls them to send them forth to represent the Lord. That's saving faith.

That's it. When I graduated, we graduated from Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas in 1900, January of 1930. That's a few years ago.

The president of the seminary, a blessed man, called me into his office and said, Brother Barnett, I've been watching you, and the brethren have been reporting on you, and we believe God's called you to do the work of an evangelist. And said, if you would, I wish you would get in the car with me, and I want to take you over to Dallas, see the secretary of our convention, and see if he wouldn't put you on the evangelistic force of the Texas Baptists. Well, I went with it.

It didn't work out. But going over there, I pass on this experience, and I hope the Lord won't take the eyes off of a little weak me, but I want to leave this with you. Going on over in the blood of God's people to carry out the redemptive program of Almighty God.

He knew what he was talking about. Let us stand. Without him singing tonight, if I may be permitted, I'm going to ask you to go home.

Is that all right, Brother Pastor? God help us. As I preach to God's people, how can we do a better job than we've been doing? Facing men with what it actually means to savingly respond to the call of God. Our Father in bloodstained Jesus' name, and we think if we know our hearts, we pray in for his glory.

We think we do at least. These desperate hours, when so little of spiritual power, so little of faith. Oh, God, come to the rescue of your people.

Anoint us. Garrison us. Equip us.

The spirit of the age is too much for us in our own strength. Oh, God. Helplessly but hopefully we see as little children we come and say, Oh, God, come to our rescue, that we may come to the defense of the gospel in our day.

We beg in Christ's name that you'll speak as you see fit to people here tonight. Demand of them nothing short of total surrender. In his name we pray.

Amen.

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