

# What It Means to Be Saved

by Rolfe Barnard

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*To be saved means to be laid hold of by Almighty God, have the will of God made known to you and made central in your life, living that life in the will of God, doing the will of God.*

**Duration:** 1:03:18

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 4:1, 1 Peter 1:15-16

**Topics:** "Salvation Experience", "Surrender To God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being a witness for God. He urges the audience to shut up and listen, as they need to have personal experiences of God's work in their lives in order to effectively represent Him. The preacher discusses the doctrine of election and warns against misinterpreting it, stating that God chooses individuals to know His will. He emphasizes the need for surrendering to God's will and giving oneself fully to Christ. The sermon highlights the significance of salvation as the dethroning of self and the enthronement of Christ, as well as the response of surrendering to Him.

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## Transcript

I'm going to ask you to turn tonight to the Book of Acts, Chapter 22. Last evening I spoke to you along the line of Paul's definition of what it meant to be a Christian. Tonight I want to come at the same truth, I hope I'm led of the Lord, and just ask the question, what does it mean to be S-A-V-E-D, saved? There isn't anybody in the world tonight who gives the slightest evidence of being a captive of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is in wrecking his brain and searching his heart to find out how we can represent Christ in this age where the spirit of Antichrist breathes down our necks, where everything that's worth believing is under severe attack, where preachers all over the world are taken out, and where it's a question of whether we're going to have any open churches in America two years from now, and a deeper question of whether we've got a right to stay open.

I believe, don't make it so, that everyone who names the name of Christ and makes a good confession, say, Amen, to the fact that you realize something has died and that new thing has not yet been born. I'm dead certain that we can get all the labels we want, we can call ourselves fundamentalists and Bible believers and grace people, and making them what label we put on ourselves, that we're going to have to come to the hard-core discipline of the New Testament, or we won't have any right to claim to be Christ's representatives, for nothing short of utter, utter, abandoned commitment to the redemptive program of

Christ Jesus is going to enable us to keep our heads above the water. I believe last fall it was, as I left you, dear people.

I went north to Pennsylvania, as I recall, and then to Canada, and I believe I went first to Canada. I'm not certain. But up in Pennsylvania, Pastor said, I want you to take a couple of hours, I want you to take out in that country.

And he took me out to the training center of the New Tribes Mission. I was challenged there, since I do not believe there's a bit of difference in being a witness for Christ in the jungle and in Pasadena, since I believe all this foolishness about Lord called me to be a missionary, was born in hell and not in the Bible, since I believe the day God saved me gave you a ministry and made you a missionary, since I believe the Commander-in-Chief has a right to transfer one of his missionaries anytime he wants to. I saw something there at that training center that I said, if this doesn't take place, we don't quit being so pious and so fundamental and so religious, and we don't do some hard thinking and quit being religious as a substitute for being obedient and have some congregations that are made up of people who are not a disgrace to the grace of God, learn how to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, quit this piousity that's about to put us out of business.

I'd rather have a church full of folks that get drunk every Saturday night, rob poor banks and come and repent Sunday morning and go out and put his arm around some old devil and love him to Jesus, than this religious Pharisee-ism that we call fundamentalism. I learned that all those young men and women, I watched them and they showed me their training ground and what they had to do. I recommend it to this church and this school and every church.

I believe the church now that is not an institute training to do battle in this day has no right to exist. No youngsters before they send them over to do missionary work for what we call the heathens, they spend two years sleeping on the ground. It gets cold up in Pennsylvania, but since the natives are going to preach to all sleep on the ground, the youngsters have to learn how to sleep on the ground.

And then three months out of every year, the two years those youngsters are there, they have to live off the earth. Learn to live off of berries, acorns, pork salad, whatever you can find lying around, because that's the way the folks they're going to preach to live all the time. I ain't going to join that mission group.

I want to be religious, but I don't want to get radical around here. Of course, I believe that there's a hell perhaps. Men ought to repent to a certain extent.

They're going to be punished probably, but I don't want to get too deeply involved, and you don't either, do you? We're going to get involved, but we're going to be out of business as sure as God made green apple. This business of substituting attendance on a place of service for obedience to Jesus Christ is already out. We just haven't found it out.

I want to talk to you out of the book tonight again on what it means to be saved. What does it mean to be saved? Every church in America is split wide open on this subject. I think that it is of Satan, not of God, for churches to split over doctrine.

I don't believe any of us know enough about any doctrine to fuss about. But I wish that the Holy Spirit would favor us with his presence one more time and reveal the awful split in all of our churches over this question of what it means to be saved. For I think we'll find out that most of our churches, this one

included, to be saved means an eternal joy ride of talking a good ball game.

But in the New Testament, it's a white horse of a different color. I believe that God has shut us up and brought us to this hour, and put us in a cave like he did Elijah, and caused us to be all by ourselves because he's not been pleased with what we preached to men and women when we had an open door to reach them. I do not believe God is going to give us another hearing in my day, until with iron-core discipline we quit making a joke out of what it means to be saved by the grace of God, and that when we go out to witness, we'll have something to say.

And I don't believe God is going to put his fire on us until we get back to the gospel that transforms men and women and settles some things at the beginning. I'm so tired of this nice gospel that's made us invent 1,700 different terms to make this generation of nice little people who have gone through some sort of emotion and profession or something like that, and we've had to invent all of these terms. I hear them talking about, he's a born-again Christian of some other kind.

He's a praying Christian, that means of some other kind. He's a consecrated Christian, that means of some other kind. Now, that's a bunch of sassy prayers.

He's a Christian who loves the Lord, that means of some other kind. He's a Christian who served in the Lord, that means of some other kind. He's a Christian who is all out for Christ, that means of some other kind.

Now, that's not so! That's what our trouble is. We just want to come on back for ourselves individually and go a little more into Bible truth and find out whether we got the slightest reasonable evidence to call ourselves a captive of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I don't know whether this is so or not, but I believe it.

I just do not believe that we're going to have any kind of fire except false fire until we get back to the gospel. And the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, not your testimony, not you telling somebody what great things the Lord has done for you. There ain't no power in that.

The power is in the gospel. And we just, well, camp here a while and just say something and come out behind our alibis why it's been 40 years since we've had any church members who could do anything else except go out and try to get somebody to take Jesus. They've already taken him a dozen times.

Or go out and try to get somebody to come and hear somebody preach, when the only kind of personal work there is in the New Testament is to go out and preach the gospel, just like Peter did to old Cornelius. And I hope this school will tear up and burn up before tomorrow, and this church will be wiped off the face of the earth, the world's in bad enough shape, unless we're ready to come under Christ's discipline, quit playing rumble peg, quit making a joke out of what God does when he revolutionizes a man and changes him by his grace, and learn the gospel and go out and have time. You can get a sinner still, don't waste time trying to get him to do anything, telling the thing that's got power to transform men.

It's the God's truth that we've got to quit being little babies and wanting somebody to believe that we are the people in whom the Lord has triumphed for his power and grace. And it's got to come to the place where we've got to take down our sign and quit claiming to be a child of God, unless we're full of the gospel and just spout it off every time we can get a fellow to stand still. Now, there's been none of that.

There's been none of that. All this feverish activity of the flesh, we've been using it as a substitute for doing what we're commanded to do. The Lord never did tell the Church to go into all the world and tell what

Jesus means to you.

The Lord never did tell the Church to go into all the world and try to get somebody to make a decision. The Lord never did tell the Church to go out and try to get somebody to come here and somebody to preach. I guess those things are better than nothing, but we've got to the place now that better than nothing ain't going to get the job done.

We're going to have to start doing what the Bible says. We're going to have to start the school now, and if you can, quit being so bloomin' religious for a little while and just come on and be an old sinner saved by grace, I hope, and sit at the feet of the Master, Teacher and the power of the Holy Ghost, until the Lord, having worn out your traditions, can send an army out from this place to do what the Lord told you to do, preach the gospel. You don't believe that, but it's so.

Imagine the Lord having to kill the Apostle Peter, and finally got the Apostle Peter to leave some of his prejudice behind, and he sent him down to that old Cornelius. The first thing Cornelius did was say, Cornelius, I've come down here to ask you if you will take me. And he said, well, we've got Brother Jackson preaching for us, and we'd like you to come out to one of the services.

He didn't say that, did he? No, he just opened up the book and preached. And that's what everybody's going to have to start doing. That's the truth.

This is the hard part. You've got any scripture for it? I dead sure have. Acts 22.

Let's look at this passage briefly. Three times in the book of Acts we have the account of that dramatic experience when Saul of Tarsus was on his way to Damascus on destruction bent, and the Lord Jesus Christ confronted him, revealed himself unto him, and lifted him prostrate, conquered him, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have me do? Acts 9, Acts 22, Acts 26. Acts 9, Luke does the talking.

Acts 22 and 26, the Apostle Paul does the talking, and you're familiar with his experience, an experience that settled something, that from there on out the Apostle Paul would just be interested in one thing. And he said, Lord, you call the shots, what wilt thou have me do? The old Aunt Pabner said, When I was a boy I went to the old-fashioned altar, and I went through the motions the brethren told me to do, and I didn't know much what was going on. I didn't know one doctrine from the other when I went down there, or after I got up.

The only thing I knew when I walked out of that little church building that night was that I was under a new mask. That's exactly what happened to Saul of Tarsus. Everything is not settled in a person's conversion experience, but this is, that from now on out there is just one thing that will make me think, what wilt thou have me do? And so the Lord was kind to Paul, and he sent a fellow by the name of Ananias, verse 12.

Ananias was a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there. This fellow Ananias came unto Paul and said, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. In the same hour I did, and I looked up upon him, and he told me what had happened to me and why it had happened.

Here it is. Ananias said to Paul, that God of our Father hath chosen thee. Young preachers, if you decide to tackle the doctrine of election, study it at least 30 minutes before you do, because it's been butchered all over this country, and it's been made an enemy of the gospel, and it's led so many people to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness.

And that means they haven't got it right. Study it under this aspect, that God of our Father hath chosen thee. What for? That three things would be true of you.

First, that thou shouldst know his will. Oh, you little pecker would run round here and say, and ask him to find out what the will of God is. Well, he'll show it to you when he sees it.

All you need to do is get saved. The will of God! That's why God chooses people, that they would be able to live in a God-ordered world where the only way that works is to be in the will of God. Away with our easy salvation that's got us in the mess we're in, that is utterly separated from doing the will of God.

I'll tell you why God laid his hand on you, Paul. I'll tell you why he crossed your path. I'll tell you why he revealed himself to you, so that you'd know the will of God.

This is the biggest thing between the eternities, the will of God. This is the only place a man can fit in, in this world, for this is God's world, and I want you to know it. And then I want something else.

Second thing, the reason God chose you is that you might see that just one. He'd reveal himself to you. This is worth fighting for.

I'm just not going to waste my time trying to get somebody to change their belief in a certain doctrine, just make you a little meaner. Hear me! But I will fight, and please God, whatever it costs, I've been in this battle, that salvation comes to a man when, with eyes of faith, he sees Jesus Christ, not believe something about him. They're in the person here whose belief right now is as sound and orthodox as the devil's is.

But Paul, I went down and interfered with you and laid my hand upon you! Thou mightest see that just one. Third thing, that thou should hear the voice of his mouth. Now, honey, until these three things are about you, are true of you, for God's sake, don't touch the doctrine of election, and for God's sake, don't say nothing about being a Christian! This is it! What kind of an animal is a Christian? He's a man or a woman who's been apprehended by Almighty God, and the will of God has been made central in his life.

That's what conversion is. And it's been made central in his life because he can say, Lord, I believe some things, but I've seen somebody. And that somebody is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I have not only seen him, but I've heard of him. One hundred and sixty-seven times in the New Testament, salvation is ascribed to a sinner being enabled by the Spirit of God to respond when God calls him to the gospel. One hundred and sixty-seven times.

If you haven't seen him, shut up. If you haven't heard from him, shut up! This world's confused enough as it is. And if you haven't been broken and triumphed over, until the only freedom you want is the freedom to do the will of God, for God's sake, shut up and come to the morning speech and get right with God before you go out to represent him.

Now, is that just your opinion? No, sir. These three things have got to be true in your experience, or you are misfit. The 15th verse says, God chose you and brought these three things in you, for he's got something for you.

For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what? What you believe about something? No, sir, of what you've seen and heard. And this isn't optional. It isn't that God's people ought to be witnesses, it is that God's people are witnesses.

And God's people are witnesses of what they've seen and what they've heard. Now, somebody said, Brother Barnes, this is in the realm of the supernatural. Sure, sure.

But this is why God laid hold on Paul. And you've got to get your two plans of salvation, or two Gospels, or something, or you've just got to camp here. This is it, this is it.

What does it mean to be saved? What on earth does it mean to be saved? Now, there ain't a bit of use on earth, us trying to deny the fact that if any of us have ever got to the Lord, it'd be a wonder. How on God's earth anybody could have got saved in the last 40 years is some miracle. For the biggest joke between the eternities is what it means to be saved.

I've had preachers cancel meetings on me when they heard that I said it, what the Lord said it. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, that's good Calvinistic hard-shell orthodoxy, Lord, Lord. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but who will? He that doeth, present tense participle.

What? The will of God! And these folks that have got us some little church like Brother Tyner and some little theories and boxed up God so even God's afraid to knock on the door, afraid it'll be in the wrong dispensation. Why, bless God, they said, well, the man that preaches salvation by works, I never did deny it, unless God Almighty lays hold on you and fixes your soul that the one thing that characterizes your life is doing the will of God. You're going to split hell wide open.

That's right. That's right. You had to put up with that cruel business for years, Brother.

I'm not talking to you about being baptized. I'm not talking to you about joining the Church. I'm just talking about being saved, as if there's anything in the New Testament that doesn't smell like that junk.

We've made a joke out of what it means to be saved. It's a good thing we've invented all those terms. We'd be in a mess.

We liable to have to repent and lean on Jesus Christ. Some schoolteacher in a Baptist church in the South, not long ago, a twelve-year-old boy's class, a little boy asked the teacher, Do you think Adolf Hitler was saved, was a Christian? And the teacher had been reading our books and listening to us preach and attending your Sunday school class and listening to all your terminology and believing what she'd heard, the product of what passes for salvation in your day and mine. And the teacher said, Well, son, we can only hope.

We know he didn't live like you ought to, but we can only hope when he was a little boy he gave his heart to Jesus. Since when was salvation believing something? Since when was salvation a transaction? Since when was salvation something more than believing, something more than a transaction? Since when was salvation anything short of a new birth, not into a peculiar feeling, but a new birth into a new way of life wherein one surrenders oneself utterly to be an instrument of God Almighty's eternal redemptive purpose? That's salvation. What does it mean to be laid hold of by Almighty God, have the will of God made known to you and made central in your life, living that life in the will of God, doing the will of God, always looking at the growth of the one whom by faith is more real to you than mother or father or brother or sister, always listening to the voice of his mouth? Wouldn't it be wonderful if we put back in the hands of King Jesus the only map he's got to direct our lives? What does it mean to be saved? Surely it means three things.

That faith which is the response of men, that faith that cannot do anything except receive, that faith that recognizes it can make no contribution, it can only be a candidate for blessing. That faith of the beggar catching forth his arms and hands for offering prayer, saving faith, has got to mean at least three things. It has got to mean the response of the whole man to the Lord God when he calls.

I'm not going to dwell on this, but God only knows how much hell has been caused and how many souls have been damned, shouting hallelujah just two feet before they got there, depending on this little stuff they call the salvation of the soul today. Thank the Lord for saving my soul! But the Lord don't save your soul, he saves you! I'm well aware of the fact that something in the Bible about man is a soul. I don't know where on God's earth they got this business about him having a soul.

He is a soul. God breathed his breath into Adam and he became a living soul! He lives in a body and he's got a spirit! Jesus Christ came down here not to save some phantom that's floating around that will enable us to call ourselves Christians when it hadn't affected us by this spirit and the whole shootin' match, and when we haven't responded to his call by the giving not of something we call a soul, but the giving of ourselves. Nothing less than this total re-creation of a hornet with something floating around in him will pass for conversion.

And to have confidence in anything else, I don't care how ancient it is and how prized by conviction the religion it is, it's to delude oneself. I wish I knew how and you how to get what I'm trying to say. You see, salvation has utterly been divorced from practical living now, because there's nothing saved about you, brother Tanner, but something floating around in the effect of that old body of yours and that mind of yours, and you, you, it's the commitment of oneself to Jesus.

You! Why, my soul, because we haven't preached that, we've got this vile body heresy, and out of the vile, vile body heresy has come this situation ethics now. And when had this situation ethics had been for us fundamental Bible teachers? Because we've separated salvation from any relationship to this old hope that I live in, and there ain't nothing wrong with this flesh. This flesh of mine is not vile.

It ain't that old nature of mine vile, but there isn't anything vile about this body, and when we've lost that by separation, we open the gate for what's happening now. Hear me, saving faith is the response to the all-out givenness of Jesus Christ. That little took on me because I'll give Jesus anything on God's earth he asks for, except myself.

I'll quit chewing tobacco and drinking liquor and quitting adultery and cussing and anything, but I'm not going to relinquish myself. If I had the money, I'd give you a million dollars to help build your school here, but I'm not going to dethrone myself. And all the days of your life and mine, salvation has been divorced from the utter dethronement of S-E-L-L-self.

That's the reason I'm glad God never let me be a pastor, having to fool the bellyaches of unsaved Church members who are still sitting on the throne where God says nobody is to sit except Jesus Christ. Glory upon glory, grace upon grace, mercy upon mercy. God turned his back on his Son, laid the lash of his holy wrath upon him, to buy Rothbard what on God's earth he wanted with me.

I'll never know what he wanted all of me. And that's what salvation is. What does it mean to be saved? It certainly means that Rothbard is granted the ability, if you can do it, but I hope you will, greatest privilege and greatest miracle that could ever happen to Rothbard would be to have the ability to take the crown of the universe off of my head and put it on the head of Jesus Christ, in order to surrender myself to the will

of God in Christ.

That's what sovereignty is. It is salvation that leaves you still deciding what you'll do is whether to die. In the act, the crisis of conversion, this business has to be settled.

If it's not settled, then it'll never be settled by taking sooth and surf afterwards. Got to make you a willing captive and slave of the Lord. I know this has been minimized, the dear preacher, if I call his name, some of the folks here tonight that I met this summer would recognize him.

He said to me the other day, Brother Barnes, send me some books and send me some tapes. He said, I know that God is God. He said, it rings true in here.

I know God's sovereign, that just means that he's God, not a pretender. But he said, the preachers have all warned me not to touch it, that it'd ruin me. Well, the lack of it's ruined what we call Christianity today.

And I know we've minimized this. And yet, absolute, total surrender to the rule of Christ, the will of God, they're the same thing. Anything short of that is not saving faith.

A thinker today says, those who seek to eliminate this frickin' element of absolute claim would thus eliminate that which more than anything else throws into sharpest relief the distinctive essence of the living touch of God upon the human spirit. Ladies and gentlemen, you don't care what it means to be saved. It means it puts you to the place where you do not have the luxury of following your own desires.

You do not have the luxury of doing as you please. You've just got one thing, Lord, what will thou have me to do? It's just one cry of a Christian. Now, to get saved doesn't mean that you'll be perfect, but it does mean that you're perfectly committed to one thing.

It doesn't mean that you walk a perfect road, but you walk the perfect road imperfectly. But it does mean, hear me now, for anybody to claim to be a Christian who could sleep five seconds or eat one meal a day, that is to say, to be saved, is to be holy. When he's not conscious that he's not in the will of God, that's sin.

I can't preach perfectly, but I can preach. I can't live a perfectly holy life, but I can live a holy life. God says I must do some things, but the only thing in the Bible God says I must be is holy.

I must do gracious things. He doesn't ask me to be gracious or be loving, he just tells me to be holy. And holiness is conformity willingly to the will of God.

That'll cure you of the bellyache if you ever get saved, and does just one thing count with you? What's the will of God? That'll keep you meddling in somebody else's business, honey. Keep you busy. Why, Brother Barnes, you preach in Christian perfection, so does the Bible.

You're either headed in that direction or you're headed for hell. God's not going to be satisfied with anything less, and nobody's going to walk the streets of glory that isn't utterly conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. God says for you to be holy, how holy? Even as I am holy.

A fundamental expression of the Christian life is doing the will of God on earth, regardless of the cost. Then there's submission to the sovereign rule of God in Christ, must be present in a saving relationship with Christ. Now, if I believed this, I could understand how come I spend most of my time crying when I'm alone, talking to God about my sins.

Of course, if I had this nice little salvation that the will of God's optional, and holiness is optional, I don't think I'd ever have to do that. I'm just like you are, brother. Oh, my soul, when I see what it actually means to claim to be a Christian, I had a crisis experience, and my will was broken, my evil heart was subdued, and it left me a willing captive.

So where I've come from, I'm not alone. I'm not alone. I'm not alone.

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I'm not alone. You know nothing about salvation. What does it mean to be saved? It means the response of Ralph Barnett, dethroning myself, the enthronement of Christ.

How can I enthrone Christ but doing his will, utter surrender? And it means, in the last place, to respond to Christ's giving of himself by surrendering to be his instrument in his redemptive purpose. Now, I got messed up here and preached too long to you, but I ain't going to let you go for another minute. Listen to me.

I'm 64 years old. I'm not as old as I hoped to be, but I'm not as young as I used to be. For 36-and-a-half years of my 42 years as a minister, I've been hitchhiking from one place to another.

I'm just going to share the deepest heartbreak of my poor little ministry. How in the name of God, Brother Jackson, did we get off the track somewhere and preach a nice little gospel that enabled men and women to say, I'm saved, when they're not from that hour on, knee-deep in the business of saving sinners? We just, well, face it, we've come to a day now when in the pulpit and the pew, you and me put together, we don't give a hoot whether anybody gets saved or not, as long as we live like hearts. We are disgraced in anything that smells like being a captive of the one that God ransacked heaven and emptied to come down here, though he is rich and become poor.

Where on God's earth did we get off the mark of speaking peace to our juniors and intermediates, where they can't even sit through a service at you and bubble them a right nose? There's nothing but salvation. Where did we get off the track of raising up this generation of you men and women, and you haven't wept over a sentence in so long you can't recall? You don't know what it is to be a saved person, because a saved person is a commissioned person, as my Father has sent me, even so sent me. Why all the days of my life, only the folks that have got a special call are supposed to be Christians? Isn't that awful? We've got to face it, folks.

Folks come to me sometimes and say, Thank you, Brother Barnard, for saving me. Well, I did. If I'm a Christian, I'm a Savior.

Who made me a Savior, the Lord? When did he do it? In John 20, he came and breathed on his people the Holy Spirit and commissioned us. He said, Now, Brother Coots, I want you to do the same thing I'm doing. He said, The Father sent me down here to represent him, and I'm sending you to represent me.

And we've got to be God for some poor old sinner, with a world on fire, with your next-door neighbor that you can't even talk to, with your children that don't hear a word you say. Oh, God, help us to take down our sin and surrender ourselves to him. And you can't surrender to him without surrendering to his redemptive program, to be a Savior.

As my Father has sent me, I'm sending you. This is what it means to be saved. We curse out the Methodists for baptizing infants, and we're just as bad.

We're baptizing folks who haven't the slightest conception of the fact that God Almighty, in saving people, buys them to possess them. That his last word is not, I save you, but I claim you are mine, you are mine. Oh, if we ever get to this conception, God will have to get him some secretaries to listen to the prayers and watch the tears of us nice little church people, who will not live another hour trying to be saviors apart from the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

For even Christ wouldn't sit out on his mission until the Spirit came upon him. God help us. I was in Greensboro, North Carolina, and one night the pastor got up and said, We've got Miss So-and-So here tonight, and she's a missionary, and is she going to get up here and give us a word of testimony and sing

a special number? And she did.

And when she got through, I got up and I was hoping that I might get their attention. And I said, It's so good to have a Christian here tonight. There's no difference between being a Christian and being a missionary.

Saving faith is saying, Yeah, my Lord, that's it. Let us bow our heads. I wonder whether our heads bowed if you'd join in singing, I hear the Savior's voice, thrills unspeakable.

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