

Salvation Past, Present, and Future

by Stephen Kaung

This sermon emphasizes the all-inclusive salvation of God, highlighting how Jesus' sacrifice on the cross forgives our sins and offers us eternal life. It discusses the sinful nature inherited from Adam, the need for forgiveness, and the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers to live a Christian life. The sermon concludes with the anticipation of Christ's return and the importance of being prepared for His second coming.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 1:10, John 3:16, 1 John 1:9, Matthew 24:44, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Salvation through Christ", "Preparedness for Christ's Return"

Description

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Transcript

Will you please turn to 2 Corinthians 1, verse 10. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 10. Who has delivered us from so great a death, and thus deliver him whom we confide that he will also yet deliver? May we have a word of prayer.

Dear Heavenly Father, We thank thee for the privilege of being gathered together in thy presence. We thank thee for thy presence in the midst of thy people. We know that it is thy pleasure to reveal thyself, thy purpose to thy people.

So we are here this morning looking to thee to share with us what is uppermost upon thy heart and bring us all into thy very presence that we may see thee and by thy grace to love thee and to serve thee and to do thy will that thou may be honored and glorified. We ask in thy precious name. Amen.

The salvation of God is all-inclusive. He delivers us not only from our past but also for our present and yet also for our future. Sadly, we were born in sins and transgressions.

Our forefather Adam sinned and all who came forth from him had that sinful nature within them. In a sense, we are born to die not to live because the sinful nature of Adam in us led us to sin. Whether we have sinned or not, we have the tendency to sin.

We are open to sin. So it can be rightly said, we are born to die, to die in our own sins. But thank God, in his great mercy, he has sent his beloved son, our Lord Jesus, into the world.

As our Lord was crucified on the cross, the first thing he said was, Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did. Brothers and sisters, we cannot look at the cross of our Lord Jesus without being deeply touched in our hearts. Because we who were destined to die through the cross of our Lord Jesus, we have hope because he had died for our sins.

So the first prayer of our Lord Jesus on the cross was, Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did. Brothers and sisters, how we thank God for the salvation of our Lord Jesus. We who were born of Adam, we had inherited his sin.

It is in our very nature. Whether we have sinned or not, we have the tendency to sin. It can be rightly said, we were born to die, not to live.

This is our destiny. There was no hope in ourselves. Sooner or later, the sinful nature in us will be revealed and we'll begin to commit all kinds of sins and transgressions.

So in other words, we were born not to live, but to die. This was our destiny. But thank God, he sent his only beloved Son into this world to seek and to save the lost.

So the first word that our Lord Jesus spoke on Calvary's cross was, Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did. This was spoken not only to the people at that time. It is spoken to every one of us here.

Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did. We did not know what we did, but the Lord knew. He knew the sinful nature that we have inherited.

Sooner or later, the sinful nature will express itself in sins. So it can be truly said, we are born not to live, but to die. That is our destiny.

So far as we are concerned, brothers and sisters, no matter who you are, our destination is tragic. We have been born not to live, but to die. And that death is more than the physical death.

It means eternal death, because that's the wages of sin. Throughout our life, whether we have the desire to live righteously or not, unfortunately, our nature brings us into sin. So in the sight of God, we were all sinners, and we were all destined to eternal death.

But thank God, He loves us so much. He sent His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, into this world. As we read the Gospels, we find that how our Lord Jesus lived a perfect life upon this earth.

He was tempted in all things. Whatever temptation we may know, He knew. Satan tempted Him to the uttermost.

But our Lord Jesus resisted the devil and obeyed the Father in all things. How often He said, I cannot do anything by myself. I do it because I've seen my Father has done it.

I cannot go anywhere that I wanted to go. I go because that's where my Father sends me. Throughout His life, He was obedient to the Father to the uttermost.

And on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was a glorious scene. Our Lord was transformed into glory. Moses and Elijah appeared to talk with Him about His exit.

Brothers and sisters, it was a very important time. So far as the Lord Himself is concerned, He was qualified on the Mount of Transfiguration to ascend and go back to His Father on the throne. But we know when Moses and Elijah were talking with Him on that Mount, our Lord was not going to leave the world and go back to the Father.

If that was the case, today in heaven, there will be only one man, our Lord Jesus. But our dear Lord was willing to come down from the mountain, went to Jerusalem, even to the cross, to bear the sins of the world. So the first word our Lord Jesus spoke on the cross was, Father, forgive them for they knew not what they did.

Because of the prayer of our Lord Jesus. Because of the work of our Lord Jesus on the cross. All who believe in the Lord Jesus shall have their sins forgiven.

And not only that, will be given eternal life. They shall not die, but they shall live by the grace of God. And this happened to all who believe in the Lord Jesus.

I suppose all who are here this morning have believed in the Lord Jesus. And if this is the case, then we thank God we know that we shall live and live forever. Because of the prayer and the work that our Lord Jesus had done on Calvary's cross.

So this is salvation. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the promise of God.

It is based upon the finished work of Christ on Calvary's cross. So whoever today will believe in the Lord Jesus, accept him as his or her personal savior, all of his or her sins will be forgiven. And more than that, he will be given eternal life.

Even the life of the Lord Jesus, that will enable him to live today by the grace of God. So this is salvation passed. I trust that all who are in this auditorium have done that.

If you haven't done that, today is your opportunity. God is waiting for you. Just confess your sins before the Lord and you will be saved.

I remember my own story. When I was 14, I was sick almost until death. My pulses became irregular.

At that time, such sickness, typhoid fever, was no cure. The only thing is to see if you can pull through. Now as a young man of 14, I did not want to die.

I prayed, asking the Lord to heal me. My father prayed for me. The missionary prayed for me.

And after four months, I was recovered. After I was recovered, there was a natural thought within me. I should die, but now I live.

It is the grace of God. How can I do something to repay his grace? That's the natural thought. Then God, a classmate of mine, came to me and said, Can we organize some Christian meetings in the school? Now that fit me very well, because I want to repay God for his goodness.

So we started to have meetings in our school. Every night after supper, we would knock the doors of the dormitory, inviting our fellow students to come to the library for a Christian meeting. I still remember very vividly the first time I was supposed to lead a prayer meeting.

You know what I did? I did not know God in a living way. I knew of him, but my father was a pastor, and he had many books in the library. So I went to his library and took out a book on prayer.

I translated it into Chinese, memorized it, and that evening I gave a message on prayer and how God answered prayer. Wonderful. After I finished speaking, I asked all to kneel down and pray.

There were my fellow students. There were even some teachers among us. But nobody knew God in a personal way.

So nobody prayed. After a while, some people began to laugh. I scolded them.

I say we are before God. We have to be reverent. I still vividly remember that's the first time I led a prayer meeting.

I still remember the first time I preached. Now I wasn't saved yet. I went to my father's library.

Find a book on prayer. I still remember it was Jovid's book on prayer. He was at the time a famous preacher in this country.

So I choose a subject called Noah's Ark. I translated it into Chinese. I memorized it.

And on Friday after school, we went to the church Sunday school building to have our meeting. I started to preach. I preached not my own sermon, but Jovid's sermon.

I felt good about it. The only thing I regretted was nobody praised me. That was how it all began.

But brothers and sisters, God is merciful. Wherever there is one who is seeking, as a matter of fact, it is God who is seeking him or her, not he or she seeking God. So God was really seeking me.

Without anybody talking to me, outwardly I looked very religious, very pious, a good student, in good relationship to everybody, even to the servants in our school. But the Spirit of God began to work in me. He began to show me that I'm a great sinner.

From the top of my head to my feet, there is nothing complete. I was sinful. I was destined to die, eternal death.

There was no hope in me. So think of that as a young man of 14. I sometimes sat there and wept.

I wept for my sins. I wanted to be saved. At that time in Shanghai, lots of world-famous preachers came to Shanghai to preach.

And they always preached in my father's church. No matter how busy I was in school, I was always present. I wanted to be saved.

A few times, I even went to the altar and prayed and cried, but nothing happened. This went on for a whole year. During the summer, there was a summer conference in Bethel, Shanghai.

So I determined to go there to get saved. Three young men just graduated from Asbury College in this country. They came to preach the gospel.

I went to hear them. But what they preached, I knew them all. Nothing was new.

A few days passed. I was still unsaved. One morning, I was in my room.

I don't know whether I'm praying or I'm just talking to myself. I said, God, why is it other people got saved so easily, but it is so hard for me? If you want to save me, save me now. If you don't, goodbye.

That afternoon, I went to the meeting. It was Mr. Kilpatrick who was speaking, and he spoke of John 3.16. It was so familiar to me. Nothing was new.

I wasn't touched anymore. After he finished, he asked everybody to kneel down and pray. So I knelt down by my chair.

An Indian brother came and knelt by my side. All he did was to encourage me to go to the altar. I thought I had been there a few times.

Nothing happened. I didn't want to go again, but because out of courtesy, I went. I went to the altar.

I prayed. I wept. I cried for mercy, but nothing happened.

The meeting was over. There were hundreds of people there. As I was walking out, a Chinese pastor.

He wasn't a pastor yet. He was just a preacher. He must be noticing me.

So he stopped me, and point blankly, he asked me a question. Are you saved? I had to be honest. I told him, I want to be saved.

So he stopped me there. Everybody left, just two of us in the big auditorium. And he said, do you believe the Bible is the word of God? I said, from my childhood, I believe it.

He said, all right. Turn to 1 John 1 and read verse 9. So I turned to 1 John 1 verse 9. And he said, put your name there and read it. He made me to read it twice.

I did. And he said, let's pray. So we knelt down.

I knew how to pray. So I started to pray. I said, Lord, I have confessed my sin.

Many sins I have forgotten, but you remember. According to your word, I have done it. Now it is up to you.

Whether you want to save me or not. But when I was praying in this fashion, suddenly a great peace came into my heart. I stood up.

So this brother asked me again, are you saved? I said, yes. I'm saved. He said, how do you know? I said, I felt such peace in my heart.

The burden was gone. He shook his head. Immediately, I knew.

So I told him, I know I'm saved because God has said so. He said, yes. This is the right thing.

Your emotion may change, but God's word never changes. Go out, tell some people what the Lord has done for you. I did.

I went to my room, opened my Bible. It was 2 Peter, chapter 1. As I read it, every word began to speak to my heart. The Lord, in his mercy, has saved me.

Brothers and sisters, are you saved? Have your sins been forgiven? If you have yet to believe in the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior, this is the opportunity. You may do it. Any time when you begin to confess your sin and believe in the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior, salvation will come upon you.

So when I was doing that, a great peace came upon me. I stood up and Brother Chi asked me, are you saved? I said, yes, I'm saved. He said, how do you know? I said, I have such peace in my heart.

He shook his head. Immediately, I knew. I told him, I know I'm saved because God has said so.

He said, yes. Your emotion may change, but God's word never changes. Go out, tell some people what the Lord has done for you.

I did. I went to my room, opened the Bible. It was 2 Peter, chapter 1. I read it, and every word is living, speaking to my heart.

From that day onward, over 80 years, the Lord has been keeping me. He's enabled me to serve him as I know how. Brothers and sisters, what about you this morning? Are you sure that you are saved? If you are not sure, this is your opportunity.

Right here, you can open your heart to the Lord. Confess your sin. Trust in the Lord Jesus as your personal savior.

You will experience the salvation of the Lord. Just say, I did. This is salvation, past.

So far as those who are the Lord's are concerned, we are sure of the salvation of the Lord. If we shall die today, we know where we will go. How blessed this is.

But brothers and sisters, this is not the end. This is just the beginning. There is the salvation now God has provided for us.

You know, sometimes I wonder, as soon as I was saved, how good it will be. Immediately, he will take me to himself. Then I will be solved from all the troubles that I've gone through in this world.

This was my wishful thinking at that time. But God knew better. After he has saved me, he did not take me right away.

He allowed me to live and live for so long. Do you think living is easy? No. I believe we all know that living as a Christian is very difficult.

Because we are living in a wrong environment. The enemy is trying very hard to bring us back to sin. Only by the grace of God, we will be kept.

So now we come to salvation, now. Salvation is not past. Salvation is now.

Now how can we live victoriously, gloriously, doing the word of God, the work of God, the mind of God, and learn to please him in our lives? Dear brothers and sisters, living in this wretched world is not easy. To be a Christian and try to live righteously according to God is the most difficult thing so far as human life is concerned. By ourselves, we won't be able to do it.

But thank God, there is a salvation now when we believe in the Lord Jesus. Not our past sins have been forgiven, but God has given us a new life. And with that new life, he has put his spirit, his own spirit, into our new life.

And the work of the Holy Spirit, the inward Holy Spirit, is one. He is there to see and to help me to be a Christian. To be a Christian, you will find out, in this world is very difficult.

There are temptations everywhere. The enemy is trying very hard to bring us back into sin and to live righteously according to God. None can do it except by the provision of God.

So thank God for salvation now. He has not only forgiven our sins, he has not only given us a new life, but he has even put his own spirit within our new spirit. What is the work of the inward Holy Spirit? Brothers and sisters, all who believe in the Lord Jesus has a new life.

And not only that, in that new life that dwells the Spirit of God. Why is he there? What is his work? The inward Holy Spirit is doing one thing. He is bringing us into Christ.

We cannot do it ourselves. If you try to be a Christian by your own effort, you will find it's impossible. You are surrounded by temptations.

Surrounded by things that will lead you astray. But thank God he has made provision for us now. You know I had a wishful thinking when I was saved.

I hoped that God would take me right away. Then I would be saved from all the difficulties that I had to go through in my long life. But God knew better.

He does not want heaven to be filled with babies. He wants to fill heaven with people who are grown up in the life of the Lord Jesus. So that's why after we are saved, he leaves us on earth.

How can we be Christians on this earth? What is the secret of Christian life? There is only one secret. And the secret is he put his own spirit in our spirit. The inward Holy Spirit is the secret of Christian living.

You cannot do it yourself. By yourself. You have to learn to listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

Allow the Holy Spirit to guide and lead you. Obey him. Go with him.

And that is the way of Christian living today. So what is salvation now? Salvation now is the inward Holy Spirit is working in your new life. Enable you to overcome all temptations and to do the will of God.

That's the secret of Christian living. You cannot do it yourself. Nobody can.

It is the inward Holy Spirit who is doing his work. Even though oftentimes we did not listen to him, we even rebelled against him, but he would never leave us nor forsake us. He is faithful to God and to you.

He will continue to touch your spirit, enable you to see what is the will of God. And by his strength you are able to overcome all temptations and be obedient to God and to grow in your spiritual life. This is the

secret of Christian living.

The secret of Christian living is not you. The secret of Christian living is the indwelling Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, learn to cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

As he moves in your spirit, follow him. No matter how difficult it may seem, trust him. He will enable you to live of Christ in your life.

And this is salvation now. Thank God there is also a salvation in the future. When our Lord shall return.

You remember the Lord, before he left, he told his disciple, I'm going, but I will come back to receive you to myself. When I am there you will be. And this promise has been for 2,000 years.

Has our Lord forgotten? No. It is not he whom you wait. It is you whom he waits.

It is because you have not been cooperating. You have not followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. You are not willing to pay any cost to be a Christian.

When we are ready, he will return. He is waiting for us. So brothers and sisters, the only way to live a Christian life is not by yourself.

You cannot do it. It's by cooperating with the indwelling Holy Spirit. He will give you the strength to bear all the sufferings that you must go through.

But as you obey him, he will make the life of Christ in you, grow in you, until you come into maturity. So that is salvation now. But there is a third element, which is salvation in the future.

That is our blessed hope. Even though it has been 2,000 years, and yet, to God, 1,000 years as in one day. A day is 1,000 years.

But we know that our Lord is returning. Why is it that he is not yet coming? The reason is not in him. It's in you.

Because he is waiting for you. Are you ready for him? When by the grace of God, we are ready, he is ever ready. So I often say, I believe the Lord can come at any moment.

He may come now, if he finds that you are ready. He does not want to see you being rejected. He wants you to be completed by his grace.

Do you know, brothers and sisters, we are living on the verge of the return of our Lord Jesus. He can come back at any moment. Even when we are gathering here this morning, he can come.

Because he is ever ready. He is more anxious to return to receive us. It was us who delayed his return.

But when he sees the time has come, he will come. The trumpet will sound. The dead in Christ will be raised.

And those who are still living will be changed. And we will be all taken to the earth before the judgment seat of Christ. Those who live a life by the Spirit will be rewarded with the kingdom, millennium, a thousand years of rule.

Those who have disobeyed him will have to go into outer darkness in order to repent and be restored. Because it is God's will. Once he has set his eyes upon you, he will never give you up.

He will continue to work in you until you are completed. Until we shall all be like our Lord Jesus and be ruled and reigned with him for eternity. This is the will of God for you.

Thank God for that. So dear brothers and sisters, the Lord is coming. He may come at any moment now.

All indications show that all the prophecies preceding his coming have been fulfilled. And now the next one will be his return. Are you ready? One is taken.

One is left. The one taken is one who has been prepared for him. The one who is left, God has to do something more.

So the Bible tells us those who have been left, they will go into outer darkness with gnashing of teeth, regretting, repenting, and allow the Holy Spirit to complete his work until finally in eternity all who the Lord has saved, he will perfect. And all will be reigning with him for eternity. This is our destiny.

Our destiny. Brothers and sisters, what a glorious day this will be. So may the Lord have mercy upon every one of us here.

May it be the prayer of our hearts. Come, Lord Jesus. Come.

In your name, Amen.

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