

# The Logic of Salvation

by Warren Wiersbe

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation, and living a life that is pleasing to God, in order to avoid the consequences of sin and judgment.*

**Duration:** 35:13

**Scripture:** Proverbs 28:13, Ecclesiastes 10:7, Isaiah 53:6, John 8:10-11, Hebrews 3:15

**Topics:** "Judgment Day", "Faith Decision"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the coming judgment and the urgency for sinners to put their faith in Jesus Christ. He references an old Appalachian ballad that depicts the sorrow and regret of those who are faced with their fate at the white throne judgment. The preacher also highlights the importance of addressing past sins, present temptations, and future judgment. He uses the example of Paul reasoning with Felix to illustrate the logical decision of putting faith in Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes by noting the lack of emphasis on judgment in many churches today and the need to preach the truth of a coming judgment.

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## Transcript

It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that Paul was defending as he stood before kings and rulers, and today we have him standing before Felix, and he's defending once again the resurrection of the dead. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. If there is no life beyond, then there is no life now.

We have nothing to live for that is eternal, and Paul had met the risen, glorified Christ, and Paul was sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with a man who needed it, and needed it badly. And as Paul reasoned of righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and he said, go thy way for this time. When I have a more convenient season, I'll talk to you.

The gospel is reasonable, and Paul reasoned of righteousness and self-control and judgment to come. The gospel is not a myth that people have invented. It's not the opiate of the people to try to console them in difficult times.

The gospel is not some kind of a story that religious people have invented to keep them in business. The gospel is history. It is historically true that Jesus lived, and that he died, and that he arose again, and that he's alive today.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is reasonable. God says, come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

It's reasonable to become a Christian. I suppose there are many motives that people have had for trusting Jesus Christ. Some trust Jesus Christ out of fear, nothing wrong with this.

Felix trembled. Some trust Jesus Christ out of simple logic. They weigh what's involved, and having weighed what is involved, they make a decision.

Paul reasoned with Felix. He reasoned and said to Felix, you may be the governor, you may be the ruler, but the most reasonable thing you can do is to put your faith in Jesus Christ. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you have made the most logical decision a person can make.

In verse 25, God gives to us three compelling reasons why the sinner should trust Jesus Christ. He reasoned of righteousness, of self-control, and of judgment to come. And in this verse, we have three compelling reasons why the sinner should trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reason number one, because we must do something about yesterday's sin. He reasoned about righteousness. We must do something about yesterday's sin.

Now, we can't deny the fact of sin. Some people try to. I noticed that one of our psychiatrists, Dr. Menninger, has written a book called Whatever Happened to Sin? There are those people who try to deny the fact of sin, but of course we can't.

Our own conduct won't let us deny the fact of sin. There's not a person here in this church today who this past week has not said something he's sorry for. There's not a one of us who has not done something this past week we wish we had not done.

Every one of us is happy that there are people who didn't see some things we did or hear some things that we said, and how grateful we are that people don't have Superman x-ray vision to look into our hearts. Even our nearest and our dearest can't read our minds. And in thought, and in word, and in action, and in attitude, and in motive, we have sinned.

We know this. And others have sinned. We know this.

You pick up the newspaper and you read what's going on in today's world, and you shake your head and say, my, how can people do that? The only thing that keeps us from doing some of these things is the grace of God. We can't deny the fact of sin. Our own conduct affirms it.

The conduct of other people affirms it. And of course the conscience affirms it. We talked about conscience in our last message.

Conscience is that little judge who sits down inside, and he doesn't have a gavel, he has a sword, and he pierces, and he pricks, and he cuts when we've done that which is wrong. And there are those people today who hear my voice who say, yes, conscience is talking to me, and I know there is such a thing as sin. But my friend, the greatest evidence that there is such a thing as sin is not my conduct or my conscience.

The greatest evidence of the reality of sin is a place called Calvary. For if there were no sin in this world, there would have been no cross on Calvary. Jesus didn't die to be an example to us.

He is that. But Jesus died to be a sacrifice for us. And when that darkness moved on to Calvary, and my Lord was completely enshrouded by darkness, God was saying, it's because of darkness that He's dying.

Moral darkness. Spiritual darkness. Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

If ever someone comes to you and says, I don't believe there's such a thing as sin, all you have to say is, then why did Jesus die? Sin is not just an action that we perform. Sin is a process that just keeps on going and going and going and going. Over in the book of James, James says this to us, And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death.

It's the picture of a pregnancy. And here is a person who desires something, and that desire is sinful. And so he goes out and he commits that sin.

And when he commits that sin, he starts a process of birth that leads to death. Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death. And this is why God's word says, the wages of sin is death.

My friend, the most logical thing the unsaved person can do is to trust Jesus Christ because he has to do something about yesterday's sin. Now, what shall we do about yesterday's sin? Can we deny it? There are those who do this. I have books in my library where people are arguing that there is no such thing as sin.

There may be error, there may be wrong thinking, there may be accidents, there may be weaknesses, but there is no such thing as sin. And yet my Bible tells me that sin is transgression of the law. God draws a line and God said, you're not to cross over that line.

I'm drawing this line because I love you. I'm not drawing this line because I hate you. I'm drawing this line because I love you.

And if you cross over that line, you're going to hurt yourself. And we're like so many spoiled children. We look up and say, oh, oh, I can cross over that line and I'll hurt myself.

Let's just see. And so we cross over the line and the Bible calls this transgression. Or God sets up a standard and God says, now here is my standard.

I want you to be measured by this standard. And we say, oh, we prefer to have our own standard. And the Bible calls this falling short of the mark.

There are many different words for sin in the Bible. You can't deny it. Some people say, well, I know how to handle yesterday's sin.

I'll just cover it over. And there are people who do this. There are many people in today's world who are doing nothing but running from yesterday.

A guilty conscience, a soiled record, a broken life, heartache. And yet, instead of saying to God, oh, God, here's my sin, I've disobeyed. I've rejected Jesus Christ.

I've been going my own way. Here it is. No, they cover it over.

My Bible says, all we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him, on Jesus, the iniquity of us all.

My Bible also tells me he that covereth his sins shall not prosper. But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. Covering sin is the worst thing we can do.

Now, there we have many ways of covering our sin. We can cover our sin by lying. We can cover our sin by hypocrisy.

We can cover our sin by pretending. We can even cover our sin with religion. We can become very religious and people will say, my, isn't he a godly person? And yet we are just simply covering our sin.

No, what shall we do about yesterday's sin? Shall we cover our sin? Shall we deny our sin? No, we should bring our sins to Jesus Christ. I can see the apostle Paul as he stands before Felix and all the other nobles that were there. Felix was there.

Felix's wife was there. She knew what Paul was talking about. She was a Jewess.

Felix knew what he was talking about. Because he had studied these things. There stands this little Jewish apostle.

And he's not a king, ah, but he is. He's been caused to reign in life through Jesus Christ. He's in chains and yet he's free.

For if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. And Paul stands before these rulers. He says, you've got to do something about yesterday's sin.

You can't cover it. You can't deny it. You can't live with it like a cancer.

It eats away at your soul. And one of these days it will condemn you. You've got to do something about yesterday's sin.

And I've got the answer for it. Paul says the answer is Jesus Christ. One of the remarkable things about the Lord Jesus Christ was that he forgave sin.

He was criticized for it. One day he was preaching in a house and some men opened up the roof and they lowered a man before the Lord Jesus. And the man was a paralytic.

And Jesus looked at the man and he said, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. And the religious crowd immediately was incensed and said, who is this that forgives sins? And Jesus said, what's easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee or rise, take up thy bed and walk? What's the easiest thing to say? You say one of them. Can you forgive his sins? No.

Can you make him well? No. Then I'll do it. Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Rise, take up thy bed and walk. And the man was healed and the man was forgiven. Jesus turned to the woman who came and wept at his feet and said, go in peace.

Thy faith has made thee whole. Your sins are forgiven. They brought a woman to him who had been caught in the act of adultery.

They were going to stone her. Jesus said, if you're without sin, you cast the first stone. And one by one they left.

And Jesus looked at the woman and said, where are your accusers? She said, no man, Lord is accusing me. He said, neither do I accuse you. Go and sin no more.

And Jesus can come to anyone today. I don't care how dark the pages of your diary may be, how stained your life may be. Jesus can come to you and take that whole burden of yesterday's sin and he can wash it away.

That's a good reason for coming and trusting Jesus Christ. You've got to do something about yesterday's sin. But Paul gave a second reason.

Paul says, Felix, this thing I'm preaching is logical. It's reasonable. I'm not spinning a myth.

I'm not telling a fairy tale. It's logical for you to trust Jesus Christ. You must do something about yesterday's sin.

And secondly, you must do something about today's temptations. He reasoned with him about righteousness and about self-control. Now, he was talking to the right man about self-control.

It's strange to find out that Felix had been a slave. He was a slave. And the Emperor Claudius had made him a ruler.

He had lifted him up from slavery and given him freedom and made him a ruler. But I would have you to know that Felix was still a slave. He was a slave to lust and cruelty and wickedness.

His wife, quote unquote, Drusilla, had been another man's wife. He'd stolen her away from him. He was a cruel man, a lustful man.

Felix was the kind of a person who lived for the pleasures of this world. And as Paul looked him straight in the eye, he was looking down into his heart. And Paul was saying, I know the kind of a life you're living.

It's a life of drink and be merry. Tomorrow we die. But I want you to know something, my friend.

Jesus Christ can give you self-control. We've got to do something about today's temptations. You see, my friend, when God saved us, he saved us to be kings, not slaves.

We usually avoid the book of Ecclesiastes. I don't know why. But there's a verse back in Ecclesiastes that I think is rather interesting.

I want to comment on it for a moment. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 and verse 7. Now, as you know, Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes because he was searching for the meaning of life. Ecclesiastes chapter 10 and verse 7. Here's what he says.

I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking like servants upon the earth. Let me read that again. Ecclesiastes 10, 7. I have seen servants upon horses and princes walking like servants upon the earth.

What's he saying? He's saying the servants are supposed to be leading the horses and the princes should be sitting on the horses. But it's reversed. Those who should be ruling are serving and those who should

be serving are ruling.

Now God put into your life and mine certain desires to be our servants. There's nothing wrong with appetite because appetite tells you you need food and if you don't eat, you'll die. There's nothing wrong with instincts to love or for protection.

God has built into us servants. He gave us a body to be a servant. He gave us a mind to be a servant, a will, appetites, desires.

All of these are to be our servants and they will be our servants if we are God's servant. If you and I have yielded to Jesus Christ, then our body becomes our servant and his servant. The desires that are written into our very nature become his servants and our servants, you see.

But when sin takes over, everything is reversed and I'm speaking to some people right now who are leading the horses instead of riding the horses. What I mean by that is those things that ought to be your servants have become your masters and God never meant it to be that way. When God made us, he made us to have sovereignty under his sovereignty.

He made us to have power under his power. He made us to have liberty under his direction. P.T. Forsythe used to say that man's purpose in life is not to find his freedom but to find his master.

And you find the right master, you'll have your freedom. And some of you today are leading the horses instead of riding the horses. And Paul said to Felix, I want to talk to you about self-control.

You are a slave. Oh, I know you were lifted up and given your freedom, but you're a slave. You're a slave to lust and a slave to cruelty and a slave to power.

And Jesus Christ can move into your life and give you victory. He reasoned with him about self-control. You've got to do something about today's temptation.

Now, what do most people do with temptation? Sad to say, most people yield to temptation. God made us to be kings and we're slaves. God made us to enjoy victory and instead we are victims.

And Paul says the only answer is Jesus Christ. You see, Jesus Christ died to take away yesterday's sin. Jesus Christ lives to give me power over today's temptation.

And I tell you on the authority of the Word of God, that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He moves into your life, brings with Him a whole new purpose and a whole new power and a whole new perspective on things. And when temptation comes, it looks cheap and evil. And we look at it and say, I'm sorry, that's not what I'm interested in.

I have something far better. This is what the resurrection of Jesus Christ is all about. We sing in one of our popular gospel songs, He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today.

You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart. Paul said in Galatians 2 20, Christ liveth in me. Jesus said, because I live, ye also shall live.

And we do live through Him. In fact, Paul wrote, for to me to live is Christ. Now, my friend, when you trust Jesus Christ, He moves in and He makes a new person out of you.

He gives you the ability to say no to the wrong things and yes to the right things. He breaks the shackles of sin and He sets you free. If we stop at this point right now, I think we've given you two good reasons why a person ought to trust Jesus Christ.

We've got to do something about yesterday's sin. And Jesus is the only Savior. We've got to do something about today's temptation.

And Jesus is the only victor. He breaks the power of canceled sin. He sets the prisoner free.

His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me. But Paul gives a third reason.

Paul reasoned of righteousness. You've got to do something about yesterday's sin. And Paul reasoned of temperance or self-control.

We've got to do something about today's temptation. And Paul reasoned of judgment to come. We've got to do something about tomorrow's judgment.

It's rather interesting to note that the preachers of judgment today are not the preachers in the pulpit. They're the scientists in the laboratory. They are the politicians in the state house.

Many churches today no longer preach that there's a judgment to come. They preach the world's going to get better and better and better and then Jesus will come when it's good enough for Him. Oh no.

No. The word of God tells us very clearly that there is a judgment to come. And we're going to face it.

As you read magazines and newspapers and listen to TV commentaries, one word keeps coming into the vocabulary. It's the word crisis. And crisis is a good Greek word.

It's the word for judgment. Now is the judgment of this age. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out? It's the word crisis.

The world is coming to a crisis. It's the crisis of judgment. Now someone says, Pastor, I came to church today to have my heart soothed.

I trust that in some measure your heart has been soothed. But if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior, I don't want your heart to be soothed. I want your heart to be stirred.

I want you to come to the place where you'll realize you need Jesus Christ. Paul reasoned about judgment to come. We have to do something about tomorrow's judgment.

Now there is such a thing as judgment. As you read history, you find that God breaks into history with judgment. God broke into history with the judgment of the flood.

God broke into history when He buried Sodom and Gomorrah for the vileness of their sin. God judged in the past, and God is judging in the present. But that's not what He's talking about.

He's talking about a future judgment. There's a present judgment to sin. If a person sows sin, he's going to reap corruption in this life.

If a person sows lies, he's going to reap it. If he sows hatred, he's going to reap it. There's an awful judgment in this life, but that's not what He's talking about.

He's talking about a future judgment. He reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come. Now this judgment is described for us by the Apostle John, who was the apostle of love in Revelation chapter 20.

May I read it to you? Make a few comments on it? Revelation chapter 20 verse 11, And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Now please don't get the idea that people go into heaven by their works. This judgment is a judgment of the lost. Verse 15.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into a lake of fire. How do you get your name written in the book of life? By doing good works? No. By trying hard and being religious? No.

No. I'm glad for people who do good works. I'm glad for people who try hard and who seek to live moral lives.

But that's not how we get our name in the book of life. We get our name written into the book of life by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior. The apostles came to Jesus one day, and they were rejoicing because they had cast out some demons.

Jesus said, don't rejoice because the demons are subject to you. Rejoice because your names are written in heaven. You say, I'd love to have my name written in heaven.

You can have your name written in heaven by receiving Christ as your Savior. That's why He died. Would you notice something about this judgment? There's a judge, but there's no jury.

John didn't say, I saw a great white throne, and off to one side I saw a jury. No, there's a judge, but no jury. You see, many people have the idea that when they stand before God, they can argue their case.

There's a prosecution, but there's no defense. God is the judge, and God is the jury, and God is the prosecutor, and no one will ever be able to stand before Him with anything in His hand and say, I deserve to get into heaven. I deserve to be forgiven.

No. No, we deserve to go to hell. We deserve every judgment God can give to us, but thank God, by the grace of God, we can be saved.

There's a judge, but no jury. God makes the decision. There's a prosecution, but no defense.

People will stand before God, and their mouths will be shut. There is a sentence and no appeal. If a person is tried in one of our lower courts, he can take it to a higher court.

He can go as high as the Supreme Court if he wants to, and there have been multitudes of cases that have been changed by the Supreme Court. There have been sentences that have been changed by a higher court. Not so when you stand before God.

When we stand before God, there's a sentence, but there's no appeal. Now, who's going to stand before this great white throne? The dead. What's that mean? The people dead in their sins.

Those who have never trusted Christ. I get no particular joy talking about this, but it's in the Scriptures, and I must be faithful. There's going to be a coming judgment.

An old Appalachian ballad puts it this way, I dreamed that the great judgment morning had dawned and the trumpet had blown. I dreamed that the nations had gathered for judgment before the white throne. And oh, what weeping and wailing as the lost were told of their fate.

They cried for the rocks and the mountains they prayed, but their prayers were too late. The soul that had put off salvation, not today, I'll be saved by and by. No time now to think of religion.

At last he had found time to die. Paul reasoned of judgment to come. And as Paul reasoned with Felix, he said, you've got to do something about yesterday's sin.

Jesus died for you. You've got to do something about today's temptation. He can live for you and in you.

You've got to do something about tomorrow's judgment. He's coming for you. That's the great message of Easter.

John 5, 24, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. A wonderful spiritual resurrection through faith in Christ. I say to you again, the most reasonable thing you can do is trust Jesus Christ.

It solves the greatest problems that you face, meets the greatest needs that you have today. How did Felix respond? He understood and he trembled. And as Paul reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled.

Why did he tremble? Because he wasn't righteous. Why did he tremble? Because he had no self-control. Why did he tremble? Because he was not ready for judgment.

And anybody in that condition ought to tremble. But please don't do what Felix did. He trembled and he said no.

You say, Felix didn't say no, he just said later on. He said no. When I have a convenient season, I'll talk with you about this.

And he did talk with Paul. And Paul urged him day after day to give his heart to Jesus Christ, put his faith in the Savior. And Felix said no.

Somebody here today is saying, I do intend to become a Christian. I know that I have sin that needs to be forgiven. I know I have temptations I can't handle.

I know judgment's coming. I can't face God without Jesus Christ. I do intend to be saved, but not now.

Well, if not now, when? Well, before I die. When are you going to die? Well, you don't know. Then you better be saved now.

Today while you hear His voice, harden not your heart. May I close by reading you some devastating words from Proverbs. Here's what God says to people like Felix who tremble and delay.

Because I have called and ye refused. I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded. But ye have said it not my counsel and would have none of my reproof.

I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.

When distress and anguish come upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would have none of my counsel.

They despised all my reproof. Oh, my friend, this is why the prophet Isaiah says, seek ye the Lord while ye may be found. Call ye upon Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake His way. Come to the Lord. Let Him save you.

Felix could have been saved that day. He should have turned to his wife and said, we've been living in sin. We deserve the wrath of God.

But this man is telling the truth. Jesus is alive and He can change us. And Felix and Drusilla could have been born again that day and life would have been different for them.

But instead they said, not today, some other time. Years ago you could have been born again, but you said, no, I'll put it off. I'll put it off.

I plead with you, put it off no longer. I have given to you three compelling reasons why you should trust Jesus Christ. You've got to do something about yesterday's sin and He died for you.

You've got to do something about today's temptation. He can live in you. You've got to do something about tomorrow's judgment.

He is coming for you. Will you trust Him today? Heavenly Father, we pray that all who have rejected the Savior who hear this word might trust Him today. Oh God, cause them to realize the solemnity of this hour, that decisions are being made that will count for eternity.

May there be many here who will trust the Savior and be born again. For we pray it in His name and for His sake. Amen.

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