

***“Remember Your Salvation”***  
**Grow Up Series, Part 2**

I was meeting with my counselor for just a normal check in session. At one point he asked me how my schooling was going, and I said great. I told him that everything I am learning in my Church Revitalization Doctorate Degree can be immediately applied to my current ministry position. I then went on to flap my gums at him for the next thirty minutes about why my vision for the church is to be a missional house of God and leave the attractional church model. You all know how I talk fast normally right? Well, I was talking even faster. I knew I was passionate about the house of God but when I explained it to ears that have never heard me explain it, I couldn't stop. It confirmed for me that the direction we are going in this church is a burning passion in my heart.

The two large churches I was a part of for eighteen years of my life followed the attractional model. I laughed when I told my counselor that the first church, I worked in had an Easter Sunrise service on the beach. We had a jumbotron screen that the NFL used. We had a continental breakfast for every one of the ten thousand people in attendance. There was even a year we had sky drivers land in the amphitheater we were using. The attractional or seeker-sensitive model focuses heavily on first impressions and providing for every need of church goers. There is nothing really wrong with this approach and it is one of several approaches' churches use. The seeker-sensitive model got me in church, and I got saved in a seeker-sensitive church. It's not evil, I just don't think it is God's best or the biblical model given to us from the Lord.

The reason I am convinced that the missional model of church is more of God's will is due the biblical command we are given by Jesus to die to ourselves and make disciples of all nations. It doesn't matter what church you go to, every single believer on this great planet is called to die to themselves, live for Christ, and make disciples of all nations. When someone comes to church and hears the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died on a cross to forgive you of all your sin so that you can make Him Lord of your life and live forever in heaven, they should be afraid. They should be afraid because the cost is tremendous! You need to forsake your desire for the things of the world and live for the Kingdom of God. The cost is tremendous, but the reward is even more out of this world.

Friends, we have an opportunity here at South Gate Fellowship. We have the opportunity to operate as a house of worship where God is the main attraction and every person who comes to visit this church would see that it is about giving thanks to a great God who *has* given us all things in Christ. Today, we are going to jump back into the series through the book of Ephesians. The title of the message today is “Remember Your Salvation.” Preaching the Gospel is generally thought of as for sinners and the lost. But today I want to remind us of the Gospel and the blessing of our transformation in Christ. We were blind and now we, we were lost and now found, we were dead and are now alive in Christ. I want to remind us of what we have in Christ today so that we would be motivated to follow what He calls us to do while on earth. So, if you have your Bible go with me to the book of Ephesians and we are going to be in chapter two this morning:

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

I want to pause really quick and thank you all. Nikki and I were able to get away for our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and go on a cruise. If you didn't already know this, cruises are designed for extroverts, and I was on that big boat with three extroverts. We got to watch awesome shows, eat awesome food, I ordered room service three times in the same day...don't you judge me. We got to go to Cozumel, Mexico, and swim with the dolphins. It is not every day you get to swim with dolphins. Nikki looked like a little kid in a candy shop who had just been given a thousand dollars. There are moments in our lives where we experience something, and it causes you to feel so alive. Think about it...have you ever said, "I feel so alive?" It sounds weird right? Why would you say, "I feel so alive" when you are already alive? In the same way, how can we say "I was dead and now I am alive in Christ" when we have never died? Paul is telling the Ephesians here, "You were *dead* in your trespasses." Your see, when God created the Garden of Eden, He told Adam and Eve that they could eat of anything they liked but must not eat from the Tree of Life. God said, "If you eat of the tree of life, you will die." Well, we know the story, Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Life and they did not physically die. So, was God a liar? Absolutely not. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says we are made of a body, a soul, and a spirit. So, when Adam and Eve sinned, they didn't die physically, they died spiritually. Their body and soul remained alive, but their spirits were dead. Before you accepted Christ, you were dead. You were lost and followed any sinful desire and lust you wanted.

Paul says you were dead in your sins...BUT GOD. Your marriage may have been on the rocks, but God. You may have lost your job, but God. The doctor may have told you that you were gonna die, but God. But God made us *alive* together with Christ. Paul says God made us alive in Him *because* of His great mercy and love for us. The mercy of God is powerful amen? We all know the story of Jonah, right? God called Jonah to go preach about God's mercy to a bunch of people that Jonah hated. Jonah knew that if he went to Nineveh and told these people he hated about the love and mercy of God, they would repent and not be wiped off the face of the earth. He knew God's mercy was that powerful and he hated these people so much that he turned the complete opposite way God told him to go and avoided the assignment. If you are taking notes please fill in point 1:

**POINT #1 – Your Salvation brought you To Life.**

*6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

So, God's rich mercy and great love saved us and made us alive in Christ. It doesn't stop there because Paul says that we have been seated with Christ in heavenly places. Philippians 3:20 tells us that "we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus lives." Even though you live on planet earth *physically*, you are *positionally* seated next to Jesus in heaven. I am on the earth to make a Kingdom impact but my citizenship, my reality is in heaven. Let me put it to you this way. A couple weeks ago I was in Mexico, but I am not a Mexican Citizen. I am an American Citizen. And when we landed back in Galveston, Texas and I walked through immigration and customs with my passport in hand, I better have said, "I am an American Citizen." I don't know if you know this or not, but I look very Mexican. I look like I belong in Mexico. In fact, I have dozens of family members that live in Mexico, but I am not *of* Mexico I am *of* the United States. In John 17 Jesus says that we are *in* the world but not *of* the world. Why is this so important to know? Because you will live, breathe, and behave according to where you come from. Although you live on this planet you are not to operate like this world, you are to operate from your position in heaven. Last time I checked there was no sin in heaven no shame in heaven, no separation in heaven, no sorrow in heaven. So, my role is to usher in the realities of heaven into this world through my authority in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Matthew 6, this is how you are to pray, "Father, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on *earth* as it *is* in heaven.

**POINT #2 – Your Salvation gave you Heavenly Authority.**

***8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:1-9 NASB1995***

Grace is the unmerited and undeserved favor of God in your life. I always say that Grace is everything Jesus purchased for you on the cross. I like to use the example of getting pulled over by a police officer. Let's say you are driving down the road and a cop pulls you over because both of your break lights are broken. If the cop says, "I'm gonna let you off with a warning," that's extending *mercy*. But if the cop were to say, "And you know what I am going to give you two brand new taillights right now." That's *grace*. Mercy is NOT getting what you deserve. Grace IS getting what you do not deserve. Because you and I were sinners we did not deserve heaven and all of God's blessings. But because of His great love and *grace*, we are saved and will spend all of eternity in heaven with the Father.

I am sure many of you in this room utilize Amazon. I love how simple it is to return things on Amazon Prime. That is of course if you stay within the allotted return window. I was going to return something for Nikki and then I realized that the return window was closed as of October 28<sup>th</sup>. Once the window is closed it is the end of the story there is nothing more you can do. I wish a lot of Christians believed that way about their salvation. What Jesus did for you is done, it is final, and there is nothing the world can do about it. When Jesus died on the cross it was finished. Have you noticed how much of Paul's language in Ephesians is past tense? You *were* blessed with every spiritual blessing, you *have* been saved, etc. Look at what the Bible Commentator Francis Foulkes says:

***“The precise form of words here stresses two things. As consistently emphasized by Paul, it is entirely of His grace, His free, undeserved favor to mankind. Then also this salvation is presented as an accomplished fact.” (Francis Foulkes)***

If you reflect back on the book of Exodus, you will see that God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God didn't just remove their suffering, He clothed them with purpose. Deuteronomy 6:23 says that the reason God brought the Israelites out of Egypt was in order to *bring them into* the Promised Land. God didn't just save Israel from Egypt so they could have no more suffering and just hang out in the wilderness. Saving them from suffering was only one part of the purpose of God rescuing them. You weren't saved just to avoid hell. You were saved so that all of heaven could get into you. Heaven is my destination, but bringing heaven to earth is my assignment. Notice Paul here says that we were created by God to do good works. Our salvation has set us free so that we could do good works in God that the world may see His love through us and praise the Father in heaven. Please fill in the final point:

**POINT #3 – Your Salvation gave you the power for Good Works.**

As a father of two 19-year-old kids I have discovered a powerful truth. If I am going to pay my kids to do something for me. As an example, I paid Gabriel to stain our fence a few weeks ago. I have learned to give a 19-year-old a check only when the work is done. That check motivates the 19-year-old to finish the job and finish it well. If I were to give the money up front...well, you know. There would be one excuse after the other. In our physical world, we work for a paycheck. We earn a reward by working. But in the spiritual it is completely backwards. Romans 4:5 says something very powerful. It says, “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness...” We don't do good works to *earn* salvation. We do good works *because* of our salvation. That is a big difference.

Let close with this. Back on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006, a man who had been battling personal demons of the sins of his past walked into an Amish school house and killed five girls. It was a horrible and tragic event that we see far too often in our country. The killer was sick in the head and planned to barricade himself in the school for days. In the end the killer and five young girls were killed. What was remarkable was the forgiveness of the Amish community. Not only did the victim's family forgive the killer, but they even surrounded and supported the killer's wife and family. Many of the Amish attended the killer's funeral just to be in support of the wife who was a Christian. The wife was actually at a Bible study when she got the news of what her husband had done. The wife later wrote to many in the community how grateful she was that the Amish would remember that she and her kids would be suffering, not just the victims. She had no words to describe how it helped them heal. There is power in remembering.

This Thursday we are going to be gather around a table of thanks. I am sure many of you will go around and say what you are thankful, and many will be grateful to have some time off from work and school to enjoy some fun and family. But let me encourage you this week as you prepare for Thanksgiving to be thankful and be reminded of the power of your salvation. Like the Amish community who didn't stop at just forgiving the killer, you and I need to go upon and beyond because of all that Christ has done for us.