

Eternal Life– Sunday March 17th 2013.

“¹⁴ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)

Beloved in the Lord,

Every single person that has ever lived will live forever. The question is not will you live eternally, but where will you spend eternity? Many people falsely believe that life ends when we die physically and after that there is nothing. Yet others falsely believe that a person is reincarnated into another life, and yet others falsely believe that somehow all will be well, and no matter what they have believed a loving God will ultimately accept them into His Kingdom of Heaven.

The truth is that everyone will live eternally either with God in Heaven or in eternal separation from Him in hell. There are no other options. God created man to live forever. It is by reason of sin that we die because the wages of sin is death. Adams rebellion against God in the garden of Eden gave birth to mortality. Man must die physically and if not reconciled to God also spiritually. To be dead in Scripture is not cessation of life but separation from God. When we die physically, our soul and spirit separate from this body. The body becomes a lifeless corpse, but the soul and spirit live on eternally, and in God's appointed time will be reunited with a resurrected body that will live forever either with God in paradise or eternally separated from Him in hell.

This raises the all important question: “What determines our eternal destiny?” The simple answer is faith in Jesus Christ.

Our text today is part of a statement made by Jesus regarding salvation. It is important that we read it again and also the following verses:

“¹⁴ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:14-18)

We can see clearly from these words of Jesus, that the key is faith in Him. Hebrews 11:1 gives us a definition of faith: ***“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”***

Assurance and conviction. We cannot see God but we believe in His Holy Word and trust in Him with conviction, not doubting.

In His statement Jesus talks about Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness. This reflects upon an incident in the wilderness, where the people were grumbling and complaining about their life. God got angry and sent fiery serpents to bite them. They were deadly and many died. Moses interceded for the people and God told him to fashion a serpent out of brass and to raise it up on a pole. Moses did so and we read in Numbers 21:9

“And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.”

So then, if someone was bitten by the deadly serpent, but did not look to the bronze serpent, he or she died. If they looked up at the serpent they lived. This was how God had provided for their healing, for their salvation. We now know that this serpent was a sign pointing to Jesus. That is why Jesus points this out in our passage today, because the principle is exactly the same. Anyone who looks up to Jesus for salvation is saved, he who does not will die in his sins and be eternally lost.

As the people in Moses day needed a Saviour, so too today. We are born already bitten by sin and we will die eternally if we do not look to Jesus for our salvation. Jesus Christ is God’s provision for our salvation. He is the only means of salvation, He is the only antidote to sin. His blood alone can save. We read in Acts 4:12: ***“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”***

It is of vital importance that we understand this Truth. When we do then we are blessed. Jesus Christ and He alone is the only means of Salvation. He is the door to eternal life in Heaven. There is no other. He is the only one who can save us from eternity in hell. There is no other name.

Because God is gracious and loving, He has provided for our salvation. He has given us a Saviour who is Christ The Lord. Jesus shed His own innocent blood for us. He did it because He loves us so much.

In order to secure our place in Heaven all we need to do is look to Jesus and be saved That’s it. Jesus said: ***“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” (John 6:37)***

Jesus does not reject anyone that comes to Him in faith. It doesn’t matter who we are, where we are from, what we have done, if we look to Him in faith, He saves us. That is the Good News of the Gospel. So many people think that they are not worthy to come to Jesus. They are right. No one is worthy, for we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Nevertheless, Jesus invites us to come, because salvation is not earned, it is freely given to us. Jesus paid the price with His own blood, and He was worthy. He took our sin upon Himself and suffered our punishment in order that we may be accepted by The Father.

We read in 1. Peter 2:21-24: ***“²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”***

He bore our sins in His body, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness! Jesus did it for us. He suffered our punishment so that we would not have too! He suffered a horrible punishment, He bore the full wrath of God upon sin so that we would never have to bear it. He suffered rejection so that we might be accepted. I believe that the greatest agony Jesus suffered was not physical but spiritual. Don't get me wrong: He suffered physically to a degree that we cannot imagine, but the greatest pain came when the Father rejected Him for the first and only time in eternity. When Jesus cried out from the cross: “Eloi, Eloi lama Sabachtani – My God, My God, why have You forsaken me” it was a time of great agony. He was forsaken, left to bear the sins of the world. The Father had turned His back on Him because He had become sin. Jesus experienced the full weight of Hell – separation from God. He was bearing the punishment of our sin- yours and mine. He did it for us. He was separated so that we might never call out in eternity: Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachtani, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

Do you understand? Really understand what I am talking about? This is a very serious matter. Sin, Hell, death and eternal life are serious. One hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a million years from now, you will be alive somewhere. You will either be with God in His Kingdom or you will be in utter darkness separated from Him, with no relief, no hope. That is a fact.

Have you looked to Jesus in faith? Have you prayed from the depth of your heart: God be merciful to me a sinner? If you have, then be comforted and reassured that you are eternally secure. Say thank you to God and live for Him in the knowledge that your name is written in the Lamb's book of life and cannot and will not be removed.

Jesus said: ***“²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.”*** (John 10:27-29)

This is great news. If you are in Jesus, you are eternally secure. Jesus said so, No one can snatch you from Him. Hallelujah. There are not many certainties in life, but this is one. What God has promised is iron clad guaranteed.

But maybe you haven't yet trusted in Jesus as your Saviour. If you haven't why not? What is holding you back? Come to Him right now, today. He is waiting for you to come. He is

standing with arms outstretched. He died for you. He took your place, He shed His blood for you, so that you would not be eternally lost.

Do not reject Him today. Do not put it off, for tomorrow might be too late. Now is the time to come to Him. He loves you and us waiting for you. He will accept you just as you are.

On Good Friday, there were two criminals being executed alongside Jesus. One was on His right, one on His left. One is with Jesus in paradise and the other is eternally lost. What separated them? One looked to Jesus and the other rejected Him.

The cross is the point of division. Those who look to Jesus and accept Him in faith go to heaven, those who reject Him go to hell. It is that simple. No-one need go to hell because Jesus offers life to all.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.