

Call upon the Name of the Lord – 15/05/2016

“And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Acts 2:21)

Beloved in the Lord,

Just recently I heard Oxford University Professor John Lennox compare religion with University, and then show that Christianity is not like other religions. Lennox said that most people understand religion to be like a University. There is some sort of entrance requirement, a ceremony, followed by tuition and learning. You are lead along a course or pathway and at the end there is an exam. At the exam you are suddenly alone and how you fare determines your future. Religion is all about what you do and how you perform. If you perform well, you reach a state of blessed existence. If you fail then you are in the dark.

This is how many people view Christianity. You enter via baptism, you are taught by Pastors and teachers and at the end you face God’s judgement and He decides whether to let you into Heaven or not.

The problem with this view is, that although widely held, it is untrue and unbiblical. This view of Christianity states that your place in Heaven is according to your merit. That is not what the Bible teaches. Our place in Heaven is not based on our worthiness, but on the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is dependent not on us, but on what He has done.

Jesus is the door through which we enter Heaven. We enter through the door when we believe in Him and call upon His name for salvation. At that moment we become His children and heirs of eternal life. When we believe on Jesus, call upon His name, trust in His blood for our redemption, then our future is forever sealed. We don’t need to die to find out where we are going, we know it here and now, because of His promise.

Jesus put it this way: ***“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 3:16-18)***

You see, when we believe in Jesus, then we know our eternal destiny. We do not need to live in fear of the final exam or judgement, because we will not be facing it. Our judgement as Christians will not be to decide our eternal home, but our eternal rewards for service. That is good news my friends. Jesus Christ has paid the price, the matter is settled. Our place in Heaven is not according to our meritorious life, but on faith in Jesus.

You see, God has made the way of salvation so simple and it is the same for all people. We see this in our text today which is part of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. This was the birthday of the Christian Church.

Peter's sermon was simple: ***"And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"***.

Please note the word ***everyone***. Jesus died for all people, He paid the sin debt of all humankind. That includes both you and me. If we call upon His name in faith, then our personal sin debt is paid by His blood and we are saved. That means that we are then co-heirs of eternal life.

When we are in Christ, then we know right here and right now that we are going to Heaven when we die, no doubt about it. Not that we have earned it, but God's amazing Grace has given it to us. God's gifts are irrevocable. God wants us to live in this sure knowledge and hope. He loves us so much and He has a place for all in His Father's House. We just need to receive His gift.

And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

On that day, when Peter preached this sermon, we read that 3000 people called upon the name of the Lord and were saved. They were baptised into Christ that very day, and the Church was born. Today, more than 2000 years on, neither the message, nor the way to God has changed.

And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Now the important question that you must answer in your heart is have you called upon the name of the Lord and been saved? Are you set free from your sin debt, are you free of eternal death? Have you passed from death into life? It is important that you are sure.

If you are hoping to live in Heaven, what is this hope based on? If not on the shed blood of Christ alone, then you are heading for a great disappointment. If you still are of the camp that says "I am basically a good person, I have wronged no-one, I have tried to live a good life, therefore I believe I will be accepted", then my friend you are horribly deceived. Stop thinking like that and run to Jesus. Call upon His name and be saved. He loves you with an eternal love; He experienced hell so you would not have too. He is waiting for you. The moment you call upon His name, in faith, He accepts you.

This is most clearly demonstrated on Good Friday, when one of the criminals being executed alongside of Jesus turned to Jesus and called upon Him.

He said: ***"Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" and Jesus replied: "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise."*** (Luke 23:42-43)

This criminal looked to Jesus and called upon His name and he was saved that very moment. Today he is in Heaven with Jesus. He was not a good man, he was a criminal. He even admitted that he was being fairly punished for his crimes. He did not try to justify himself. No, he simply called upon the Lord and was saved.

Every single person, that follows his example, who like him, - calls upon the Lord – will be saved. When we call out in faith, Jesus responds “You will be with me in paradise.”

Do you know that? Have you called out to Him and been saved? Are you sure of your eternal destiny? You can be. God desires for you to be. He loves you and it is not important to Him what you have done or believed up until this moment. It is this moment right here and right now that counts.

Don't rely on your works, on your service, on your so called good life. These are threads that cannot sustain your weight. They cannot pull you up out of the mire. You need to cling onto Jesus cross.

Call upon His name and receive the peace that comes with the knowledge that you are saved, and that your name is written in The Lamb's Book of Life. It is written in Blood that can never be wiped out.

There are not many certainties in life aside from death and taxes. There are not too many reliable people around. We are constantly frustrated and let down by broken and empty promises. Many promise much but deliver little or nothing.

Ah, but with God this is never the case. He fulfils His Word to the letter every time. God is not man and He does not lie, falter or waver. He is Almighty, all knowing, ever present. He is everywhere and nothing is impossible for Him. You can totally rely upon Him knowing that His Word is sure.

God has promised: ***“And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.***

There are no buts or exceptions. This is good news, great news in fact. Call upon His name and you will be saved. This is so simple that many miss it. Don't be one of them. Believe. Call upon His name and be saved. This promise is not only for the afterlife but has application in this life also.

When you are in Christ, when you have believed in Him you are saved not only from eternal death, but also from many of the afflictions of the godless. For example: Jesus saves us from loneliness. He is with us constantly. He says: ***“I, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Mt.28:20)***

He saves you from the burdens that weigh you down and oppress your soul. He takes the weight off your shoulders:

“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Mt.11:28-30)

He delivers you from fear with these promises:

***“Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.***

***I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” (Is.41:10)***

***Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are Mine! (Is.43:1)***

There are so many other examples I could give, but these will suffice.

If and when you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved and these promises are yours.

Call upon His name and be saved and live.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***