

Accomplished Plan of Salvation (7)

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 ゴットホルド・ベック

Luke

8:11 After this, Jesus traveled from one city and village to another, preaching and spreading the good news about God's kingdom. The Twelve were with him,

8:2 as well as some women who had been healed of evil spirits and illnesses: Mary, also called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out;

[International Standard Version]

John

20:16 Jesus told her, "Mary!" She turned around and told him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means "Teacher").

20:17 Jesus told her, "Don't hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

20:18 So Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" She also told them what he had told her.

One of the most important calls, the most important commands in the Bible is this; "Fix your attention on Jesus." At the moment you lose your attention on him, you will be bewildered. You will find yourself totally at a loss. Nothing is more important than looking up to Jesus. Let us read a few more verses.

These verses are from the First Epistle of John, chapter 3. In this letter too, the subject is always in a plural form like in most of the other letters in the Bible. It might be very helpful as a personal testimony or confession to read some of these verses with all plural forms replaced by singular forms.

1 John

3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given us: We are called God's children—and that is what we are! For this reason the world does not recognize us, because it did not recognize him, either.

3:2 Dear friends, we are now God's children, but what we will be like has not been revealed yet. We know that when the Messiah is revealed, we will be like him, because we will see him as he is.

3:3 And everyone who has this hope based on him keeps himself pure, just as the Messiah is

pure.

It is stated that "we will see him as he is." Although it is not clearly stated in these verses what will actually happen in the future mentioned in here, we can be convinced of one thing; we will see Christ as he is. What a blessing! This makes us compelled to worship him.

So far, we have been trying to find answers to two questions. The first question is, what is it that we need to get hold of? The answer is an eternal life in the Lord Jesus. "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly," said Jesus.

The second question revolves around how we obtain it. The answer is simply by regeneration, by conversion of mind. Without conversion, there will be no salvation, no liberation, no hope. The Bible is telling us, not only that the conversion is necessary for us, but that the conversion is absolutely possible for any one of us. This is what is called the arrival of true joy.

We cannot start over our life in a physical sense from the beginning. However, by coming into Jesus and having a fellowship with the Lord, we are given an opportunity of conversion, which matters a lot to our lives. While the life which was given to us when we were born into this world belongs to the flesh, new life is given from Jesus when he comes inside us.

Possession of a new life can be proved by a fellowship with Jesus. The Bible clearly declares that we are all eligible for having an eternal life.

As described in some verses we read at the beginning of this sermon, a woman called Mary Magdalene was once in deep trouble. She was possessed by seven demons. However, through the encounter with Jesus, she was completely healed and liberated.

A man called Saul, who used to engage in persecution of saved Christians, was also changed by the encounter with Jesus. His life took a 180 degree turn. He later confessed that;

2 Corinthians

5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and—look!—all things have become new!

New creation is possible only through a fellowship with the Lord Jesus. By having a fellowship with Jesus, our way of viewing things and accepting things, concepts and values are all changed. Jesus liberates the ones who are in bondage; he converts the greedy to the spiritually rich, gives comfort to the ones who committed adultery, keeps people from being self-assertive and instead helps them to

develop humility.

It is only possible by Jesus. When the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of God, enters the spirit of a spiritually dead person, that person begins to live a spiritual life and becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. By grace of the salvation, which was accomplished by Jesus, all sinners receive this gift of the Lord, that is to say, the eternal life through the work of the Holy Spirit.

What is the regeneration? Regeneration refers to the birth of a new relationship with the Lord God. This is a relationship that will never be broken. Some children refuse to obey the commands of their father while others run away from their home causing a lot of grief to their father. However, still they are children of their fathers forever and this relationship will never end. Many other relationships between humans can be dissolved.

Contracts are broken off; married couples are broken up, and friends leave you. Although even after the regeneration, we still commit sins, cause grief to the Holy Spirit and may disrespect the fellowship with the Lord God, our status as a child of God remains unchanged forever. Regeneration is the birth of a new relationship with the Lord God that will never be broken. Some believers say that, because they committed sins, they lost the eternal life they once received. This is totally absurd. It is a horrible misunderstanding.

Once you are regenerated, you are given an eternal life, which is a life that will last forever. This is because the life of God was a life that was not created by anyone but has been there since time immemorial and will remain everlasting. The Lord God calls all those who were born from above his children.

The Lord God would never shut any of his children away. When a sinner appreciates the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross for the sin of himself, at the very moment, he turns into the child of God. And as he now lives in the world of eternal lives, he will remain as the child of God forever.

John

1:12 However, to all who received him, those believing in his name, he gave authority to become God's children.

Romans

8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Whoever was born from above is justified by the Lord God. Justification refers to having a new status in front of the Lord God. Before we are born from above, we are sinners before the Lord God. After we

are born from above, we are made children of God.

Justification does not depend on our good deeds but on our attitude toward the Lord God. Justification is not a reward for our benevolence but a consequence of our choice of accepting Jesus.

I once read a poem. It was a poem about a king who married a young beggar who did not even have shoes. This young woman used to be a poor beggar before she married. However, as soon as she was married, she became a queen.

This young female beggar decided to marry the king. She had no reason to refuse and she chose to become a queen. When this young beggar became a queen, she wore a beautiful dress, put on a pearl necklace and began to live a life of luxury.

However, what happened here was that this young beggar became a queen. No matter how beautiful a dress she wore before the marriage, she was still a beggar and nothing else. She was not a queen until the marriage.

Justification does not depend on our good deeds, but on our attitude toward the Lord God. Justification is not a reward given for our benevolence, but a consequence of our decision to choose Jesus.

Even if you see yourself as a sinner destined to perish and are feeling overcome with grief now, you will one day find that you are regarded as the child of the King, child of God, which will make you cry out in delight. If we have not experienced the regeneration yet, we are still dead in our sin and we have no fellowship with the Lord God at all.

The cross is the only way for us to reach the new life. By the blood of the cross, our sins are wiped away and forgiven. It is written that we died on the cross with Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, our old man died together. When the body of Jesus was laid in the grave, we too were buried in that tomb.

Have we ever realized how our lives are filled with failure and covered with sins? Do we desire to receive the new life today? Jesus is alive. Let us look at this wonderful promise.

Isaiah

1:18 "Please come, and let's reason together," implores the Lord. "Even though your sins are like scarlet, they'll be white like snow. Though they're like crimson, they'll become like wool."

What a wonderful call and promise of the Lord! We will be blessed if we speak out our confession loudly to the Lord; "Jesus, I have been spending a sinful and meaningless life until today. Please have mercy on me and give me a new life." If we sincerely plead

this way, we will understand through our own experience how Jesus is willing to transform us completely.

3:3 And everyone who has this hope based on him keeps himself pure, just as the Messiah is pure.

The relationship between ourselves and the Lord Jesus will never be the same again. That is to say, the Lord God is now our father; Jesus has become our savior and the Lord. We will understand that our sins have been forgiven by the blood Jesus shed and will come to be convinced that we are given an eternal life from in-dwelling Jesus. The purpose of our life is not within ourselves now but in the glory of the Lord Jesus. The promise of the living Lord God can be found in this verse.

End

Proverb

28:13 Whoever hides his transgressions will not succeed, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will find mercy.

John, one of Jesus' disciples, said virtually the same thing. He used different words to express the same thing in terms of content.

1 John

1:9 If we make it our habit to confess our sins, in his faithful righteousness he forgives us for those sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

1:7 But if we keep living in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Once you confess your sins, please thank Jesus for the blood he shed. At the moment you thank him, the Holy Spirit revives your dead spirit to live again and begins to dwell inside your spirit. When it occurs, you come back to life from death with a totally new life together with Jesus.

Only if we surrender our lives of sins to the hand of Jesus today, will he soon come to wrap us in garments of salvation. Is there anyone who is willing to be transferred from the life of spiritual death into an eternal life today? It is by faith that people are transferred from the power of darkness to the hand of the Son. It is not a matter of knowledge or emotion, but a matter of faith. Let me read again the first verse. This is such a wonderful confession.

1 John

3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given us: We are called God's children—and that is what we are! For this reason the world does not recognize us, because it did not recognize him, either.

3:2 Dear friends, we are now God's children, but what we will be like has not been revealed yet. We know that when the Messiah is revealed, we will be like him, because we will see him as he is.