

THE ROMAN ROAD TO SALVATION

David Halbrook

Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran Church and father of Protestant churches, believed the book of Romans best explained God's plan to save man from sin. The book of Acts explains that too so we are not surprised to learn that both books give the same teaching about God saving the lost.

1. We must hear God's word before God will save us (Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:41). Who can believe what they do not know?

2. We must accept that message (faith) before God will save us (Rom. 10:17; Acts 2:41). Without *gladly receiving* God's word, we are lost. No one is saved by hearing alone.

3. We must repent of (determine to leave) sin before God will save us (Rom. 2:4; Acts 2:38). Many people believe what Jesus said but refuse to change their lives (Jn. 12:42).

4. We must confess Jesus with our mouth before God will save us (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37). God will not save us until we have used our tongue to confess our faith in His Son.

5. We must be baptized into Jesus before God will save us (Rom. 6:3; Acts 2:38). Many people today believe they are already in Christ before baptism. This baptism is not Jesus' baptism and therefore is spiritually empty (Eph. 4:5).

Contact us for a free CD of a sermon on this subject.

-- *Editor's Note:* This week, our article in *Arkansas Weekly* is a condensed version of the sermon recently preached by Jerry Fite, by the same title. CDs of that lesson are available to any who will use them (see David Halbrook). [Beginning in January, we will not have an article in this paper every week but will begin publishing articles every other week.]

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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DEFILING THE BODY

Jarrold Jacobs

In the Bible we read about how one may defile his own body. Let us look at some things that do this. We may be surprised at the ways that one may become defiled.

Thinking On The Wrong Things Can Defile A Person.

Yes, my thoughts can defile me and bring about my spiritual downfall if I am not careful! Notice the words of Jesus: "*But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornications, theft, false witness, blasphemies: These are what defile a person...*" (Matt. 15:18-20). If I think on sinful, evil things, they will defile me! Why is this the case? This is because when I begin thinking about sin and evil, it usually will not be long before I begin to do that very thing that has been occupying my mind! In connection with this, let us see what Paul wrote. "*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*" (Phil. 4:8). Therefore, I can see that the thoughts I have and maintain are up to me. Also, I can choose whether or not I will think upon the things that will bring about my being defiled or the things that will bring about my cleansing! I must examine myself and my thoughts. Evil, filthy thoughts can defile me and can lead to my spiritual ruin in a devils' Hell!

(continued inside)

One's Own Tongue Can Defile Him.

Let none be ignorant on this subject; if we say things we shouldn't, we can defile our body. James said, *"the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining (defiling, KJV) the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell"* (Jas. 3:6). The tongue is small (Jas. 3:5), and yet it can defile a man if he does not have control of it! This control begins by thinking on proper things (Phil. 4:8). This is because if we fill our minds with sin and evil, this will be what comes out. Likewise, if we fill our minds with those things that are pure and holy, this will be what comes out! Paul taught that *"filthy communication"* must be put away from us (Col. 3:8). Lying has no place in the life of a Christian, either (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9; Rev. 21:8). Let us never forget that we will go to Hell for what we say just like we could go to Hell for sinful actions!

Let Us Heed The Warning Of God.

Just as God has warned us about sins of the mind and tongue that defile the body, so also God warns us about actions which defile the body. *"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple"* (I Cor. 3:16-17). Besides defiling our body by our thoughts or speech, the Bible teaches when one engages in sexual relations outside of marriage, he has defiled his body (I Cor. 6:18-20; Heb 13:4). This includes sins of adultery, as well as homosexual sins. All of these can defile the body (I Tim. 1:9-10). It is plainly stated that this is a sin "against" your own body! God has spoken plainly and given a clear warning that defiling the body results in an eternity in Hell. Let us do all we can to keep ourselves pure in God's sight (I Tim. 5:22).

OLDER PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S WORK

Louis J. Sharp

It is reported that Henry W. Longfellow was once asked by an admirer how he continued to maintain the vigor to write so beautifully in the waning years of his life. He turned to an apple tree nearby and said, "That apple tree is very old. I never saw prettier blossoms upon it than it now bears. The tree grows a little new wood each year and I suppose it is out of that new wood that those blossoms come. Like the apple tree, I like to grow a little new wood annually."

What a wonderful attitude to develop. Instead of talking incessantly about our aches and pains we should be producing a little "new wood" in our sunset years. Aged

saints are valuable assets to any congregation, by reason of experience and wisdom. It is true that some consider the aged to be a liability rather than an asset. It all hinges on the kind of outlook older people cultivate in reference to life. We should heed the words of Longfellow and continue to grow and remain useful in this world. As long as one grows, age is nothing but a blessed anticipation.

The Holy Spirit, through Solomon, has given a beautiful picture of the infirmities of advanced years. In Ecclesiastes 12:1-7, He writes:

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Solomon's exhortation is directed to the youth before the frailties of advanced years should overtake them, when so many are inclined to give in to their infirmities. We do recognize that some are incapacitated and unable to perform as in their youth, but we are pleading for the elderly not to give in when able to produce.

Younger folk should learn from the experience, advice and wisdom of those who have lived before. People who are older should only be aged in years and remain always useful to the Lord spiritually. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31). "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the gray head" (Prov. 20:29).

What a happy balance as the old and young work together for right purposes - as they blend their abilities and use them to the "glory of God"! We pray that the elderly may demonstrate a greater patience while working with the youngsters; likewise, that the youth exert more eagerness