

HAS GOD SAVED YOU?

David Halbrook

How would you react to the question “Do you know that God has saved you from your sins?” Some people would be offended that the validity of their salvation was questioned. Others would answer in a variety of ways (“Yes; No; I think so, but I’m not sure; My preacher or parents tell me I was; No one really knows; It doesn’t matter”).

Paul challenged the Corinthians to *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves* (2 Cor. 13:5). Paul wanted them to know, not wonder. Paul not only taught people to test themselves—he also tested others. In Ephesus, he met some spiritually-minded individuals and questioned their baptism. They gladly answered his questions and were soon convinced of their need to be baptized again having never learned of the baptism of Jesus (Acts 19:1-7). Not all baptisms please God for there is one baptism (Eph. 4:5).

Jesus’ baptism was not for infants, for the saved, or into a man-made religious group. If one of these is the baptism you received, you are without Jesus’ baptism and lost. For further study see *Basics of Baptism* at WWW.QVCOC.COM, under *Topics For Study*, or contact us with your question/comment.

-- *Editor’s Note:* The subject of our individual spiritual condition is not always an easy subject to think about or discuss, but we must, both with ourselves and others. But how do you begin a conversation of that kind? Consider using this week’s article in *Arkansas Weekly* as an “icebreaker.” If it will help you prepare to give an answer, review the article “Basics of Baptism” on our website (or ask David for a copy).

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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AN IDEAL ASSEMBLY

Bobby Thompson

“Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God” (Acts 10:33). These are the words spoken by Cornelius in explanation of his sending to Joppa for Peter. An angel of the Lord had appeared to Cornelius a few days before and told him to send for Peter “he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do” (Acts 10:6). Without delay, this good man, Cornelius, set in motion the directions that were given to him. ‘And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa’ (Acts 10:7-8). Peter, accompanied by six brethren, had returned with to Caesarea. He had come to preach the gospel to this Gentile household and the meeting was ideal from various viewpoints. I would like to suggest some of these in hope that all of us might think on them and work to make every assembly ideal.

Unity Of Purpose: “Now therefore are we all here.” We do not know the attendance count, but we are told that when Peter came to Caesarea for this meeting he “found many that were come together” (Acts 10:27). There was a reason for them being there. While Cornelius was waiting for the preacher to come, he had been busy. Note verse 24, “And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.” He doubtlessly wanted other to hear what he would hear. He was not ashamed of what would be taught him. If there were things that he ought to hear, he wanted his relatives and friends to be benefited by hearing the same. What a wonderful attitude! How wonderful it would be if we had such an attitude toward our assemblies! At times, we think enough of our relatives and friends to invite them to other endeavors. We want them to participate in them with us. But what about hearing

the gospel? Don't we think enough of them to invite them to attend where the gospel is preached? Cornelius did and there were those who accepted the invitation. There is no better advertisement in the world than the personal invitation of a member of the church to someone who needs to hear the gospel.

Consider again the phrase: "Now therefore we are all here." Just think what a thrill it would be if all the members of this congregation were present for every assembly. In the years that I have preached, I do not recall any service where all the members of the congregation were present. There are those who are sick, and they are not expected to be present in such a condition. That is certainly understandable! But what about those who are not ready to sacrifice a little time and effort to be a part of the assembly? What about those who prefer something else rather than worshiping the Lord, when their presence could mean so much to encouraging the preaching of the gospel? Cornelius was where he was supposed to be, and we could make our assemblies ideal if we were where we are supposed to be. Satan can give us many excuses for not attending. Whose side are we on, Satan's or the Lord's?

Reverential Aspect: "Present Before God." When Cornelius and his guests came together to hear the message from Peter, they knew that they were "present before God." No doubt they met worshipfully and were attentive to the things preached. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). God will be present at our assemblies, too, and we need to conduct ourselves reverently during that occasion. We should arrive on time, participate heartily in the singing, and listen carefully to the things preached by the preacher with the intent of obeying the commands of God.

Noble Purpose: "To hear." They had not come together to be entertained or amused. There were other assemblies that could be attended for that purpose. They were there to hear the gospel of Christ. Some people say the service does nothing for them. Usually those who make such a statement do not understand the purpose of the assembly. They are not there to be taught the word of God. They do not have the noble purpose of Cornelius and his guests. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:13-14).

Determination: "To hear all things commanded thee of God." In essence, they were saying to Peter, "Lay it on us." Whatever God has for us to know, let us hear it. Don't hold back and keep it from us. They were interested in all things commanded

of God. So many people want a part of the truth, but here are other things of truth of which they want no part. Such an attitude can take the very heart out of an assembly where the gospel is preached. Peter came to preach the gospel, and those who gathered wanted to hear all the things commanded by God. Neither the preacher nor the hearers were interested in speculative theories, philosophy, psychiatry, or other rhetoric. The traditions and teachings of men cannot save; the gospel is God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). We should expect the gospel to be preached in every assembly. We hope you desire to hear the word of the Lord without addition or subtraction. When Peter came to preach at Caesarea, it was an ideal assembly.

Think of these things and let every one of us work diligently to make every assembly idea in the sight of the Lord. This is something that challenges every member of this congregation. (Speaking Truth in Love, p25-28)

"BY FAITH ONLY?"

Larry Ray Hafley (http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com/sermons/?page_id=105)

Many in the religious world preach and proclaim, "Salvation is by faith only." If that is true, note I Corinthians 13:2. Paul said, "*If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*" If, as some allege, salvation is "by faith only," why would one who lacks love be "*nothing*" since he has "*all faith*"? The fact that one who lacks love is "*nothing*" shows that salvation is "*not by faith only*" (Jas. 2:24).

"*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love*" (I Jn. 4:8). One may have "*all faith*" and yet not know God. Since love is required, salvation cannot be "by faith only." Only those who have love are "*born of God*" and know him (I Jn. 4:7). Hence, salvation is "*not by faith only.*"

If a farmer raises "corn only," he does not also raise cotton. Once he begins to raise cotton, we may no longer say that he raises "corn only." Likewise, if we add love to the requirement of faith in order to know God, then salvation is "*not by faith only.*"

Faith does not work alone. Faith works through love, by love (Gal. 5:6). This faith working through love keeps God's commandments (I Cor. 7:19). "*And hereby we do know we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth is word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him*" (I Jn. 2:3-5).

Without "*faith which worketh through love,*" a man is "*nothing.*" His faith is "*dead, being alone*" (Jas. 2:17). So, salvation is "*not by faith only*" (Jas. 2:24).