

The Helmet Of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17

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We have just a half a verse tonight, Ephesians 6:17. It's a lot shorter text than I would normally preach from, but I want you to look at it with me. Paul says, "Take the helmet of salvation." In battle, the soldier must protect his head at all costs. If you're a soldier in battle, one of your most vulnerable areas is not just your heart, which is very critical, but also your head. If you're injured in the head, chances are you will die. I believe also for us as Christians in our war with satan, Paul makes it clear that we "...wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In our spiritual battle against our enemy, we must protect our heads and minds. Satan wants to attack our minds by deceiving us, by causing doubts, and also by causing discouragement, so we need to put on the helmet of salvation.

What kind of helmet did the Roman soldier wear? It was quite often made out of brass, sometimes a thin layer of brass over steel. They would put felt, foam, a sponge, or some kind of padding or material underneath it. A Roman soldier's helmet actually had a centerpiece that came down between his eyes. It also came down over his cheekbones so that only his mouth, nose, and eyes were exposed. It was a helmet that would cover his entire head. If he went into battle with all of his gear but didn't have his helmet on and was struck in the head, naturally he could be defeated by the enemy.

What does the helmet symbolize in Ephesians 6:17? When Paul says, "Take the helmet," it is a very, very important thing. Notice it's the helmet of salvation, he makes it clear, "...take the helmet of salvation." The question needs to be asked: What does he mean by salvation? First, it could mean that he's talking about simply being saved. It could be that Paul is basically saying make sure that you are saved. I believe that a person comes to salvation when he realizes that he or she is a sinner and guilty before God. You can't come to God unless the Holy Spirit first convicts you of sin. That's what Jesus said. He said the Spirit of God would come to the unbeliever and would convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Perhaps you remember when you were in your unconverted days when the Spirit of God simply began to convict you—that you were a sinner, that you need God, that you need to get right with God. You needed to realize that I'm a sinner and Jesus is the Savior. That's the realization you need to come to—Jesus Christ died on the Cross for my sins, He was buried, three days later He rose from the dead, and Christ is the One Who can save me from my sin.

The second thing you need to do is repent. You need to realize I'm a sinner, Christ is the

Savior, and then repent. In the New Testament when the Bible uses the word “repent” it’s the Greek word *metanoeo*. It actually means to change the mind. I think it’s significant in the helmet of salvation because if we’re going to be saved, we need to change our minds. The change of mind also indicates a change of direction. Every Bible scholar agrees that the word *metanoeo* means that you change your mind, you turn 180 degrees, and you begin to go a different direction. You change your mind about the way you’re living and repent, which means you turn and go the other direction. Previously you were following your sin, and now you’re going to be following the Savior, but it involves the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting me of my sin and granting me repentance (yes, I’m involved—there’s the will and the emotion). Repentance isn’t just sorrow. It’s not just intellect. It’s sorrow, intellect, and it’s will—I must turn and trust in Jesus Christ. No one goes to heaven by believing with their head that there’s a God or that Jesus died for them. No one goes to heaven because they feel sorrow for their sin. They go to heaven because they turn from their sin and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. That’s what we mean by believing in or receiving or trusting in Jesus Christ. So, you realize that you’re a sinner, Jesus is the Savior, and you repent or change your mind. You feel sorrow or remorse and then surrender your will—there’s the mind, the emotion, and the will. When that happens, then you receive, which is the third step, Jesus Christ by faith into your heart. You’re basically putting your trust in Him to save you.

We sing Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling. That is a fancy way in the hymn to basically say it’s not being baptized, it’s not being good, it’s not being confirmed, it’s not doing penance, good works, or going to confession. It’s basically just trusting in Jesus Christ. I come empty-handed and put my faith in Him. In John’s gospel 1:12, (I’m going to give you a bunch of verses to write down tonight) tells us that whoever “received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” There are some who kind of mock the idea of receiving Jesus Christ. I don’t really understand that because the Bible actually uses that term—whoever receives Him, to them they give or they are given the power, the right, the authority to become children of God. It’s usually those who are trying to avoid what has been given the title “easy believism.”

I wanted to talk to you tonight about salvation. I think that one of the things satan wants to do is keep people deceived about what real salvation is. It is true that there is a false gospel that you can just believe in Jesus and He’ll take you to heaven. Well, that’s true but not true. We have to define what it means to believe. We can’t just say believe in Jesus and you get to go to heaven. What does it really mean to believe? Is it referring just to an intellectual assent to some information and facts? If so, the Bible says do you know the demons believe that there is one God and they tremble? They even have emotion. They’re fearful, but they’re not saved. That’s why I believe that you can actually be right close to salvation and still not saved. You can tremble with fear, you can come under conviction, you can even believe in your mind that Jesus died for you on the Cross, but you have not yet trusted in Him. It’s kind of like going out on a runway believing that airplane can take you somewhere but you don’t get in the plane. Until you go up the gangplank, get in the plane, they shut the door, and the plane takes off, you haven’t really put your faith in that airplane. You haven’t really trusted in that plane. We can come so close, but if we don’t trust in Christ then it’s possible that we haven’t put on that helmet of

salvation.

I want to mention something, and perhaps I'll touch on it more. I'm opening up a real can of worms, I really am. I thought about this all day and thought, Man, should I really talk about this? I guess it's important to deal with stuff, but there is a popular kind of idea about salvation held by, taught by, preached by men that I believe to be evangelical orthodox in Christianity, brothers in Christ, but they're teaching what's called Lordship Salvation. That's the title that is given to this kind of teaching—Lordship Salvation. In a very simplified kind of nutshell, and you might say, "Well, I don't really represent them very well," but they basically believe that if you don't surrender your life to Jesus as not only Savior and Lord that you won't go to heaven, and it's necessary for you to surrender to Him as Lord in order for you to be saved. There's a very, very fine distinction but I don't fully agree with that. The question is: Lord of what? Lord of whom? I believe people can trust Jesus Christ as their Savior—I'm a sinner, He's my Savior, I believe He will forgive me and take me to heaven and give me eternal life. Naturally, Jesus is Lord whether I say He is Lord or not. Jesus is Lord whether I make Him Lord or not.

There is a thing called discipleship that I think they get confused with salvation. I think discipleship is a whole different subject. If you are a Christian you also become a disciple. The question is, to what degree and how quickly your life changes. In a very, very subtle but dangerous way there are those that would promulgate that unless you come to Jesus as Lord (and you'll hear that emphasized quite a bit) then you are not born again or you're not really saved and it becomes evident by your life. I'm going to talk more about that in just a moment, but I just wanted to introduce that topic because I think putting on the helmet of salvation is understanding what the Bible teaches about salvation.

Once you are saved, you need assurance (this is my second point). I believe this is the heart of what Paul is saying in this passage. Again, he says, "put on," or take on, "the helmet of salvation." He doesn't say what kind of salvation or aspect of salvation or whether it's justification, sanctification, or glorification. He doesn't specify it until he gets into the book of 1 Thessalonians and says it's the helmet of the hope of our salvation. Now, whether Paul means the same thing here in Ephesians we can't be absolutely sure, but listen carefully. Once you are saved, satan knows that he's lost you and wants then to keep you from knowing that you are saved. This is what is called the doctrine of assurance. I believe the Bible teaches that you as a Christian can not only be saved but you can know that you're saved; not only that God saves you from your sin, but that you have assurance—you are sure that you're saved and going to heaven. I believe the helmet keeps us from being deceived and being doubtful in our minds about our salvation. You cannot live the victorious Christian life, you cannot serve the Lord or be effective in your ministries if you haven't resolved that issue in your heart, I know that I know that I'm saved! I'll bet there are many here tonight that maybe often wonder, I don't know if I'm really saved. Maybe I wasn't really born again or Maybe if I died, I really wouldn't go to heaven or I'm not sure about my salvation. God wants you to come to absolute assurance that you are His child.

I want you to note the deception of the devil about salvation in two areas. First, he gives people

a false assurance. Again, what does that mean? It means that there are some people that are not saved and think they are. That's a bad thing. I don't want anyone to think that they're saved when they are not saved. There are people who have a false assurance, "Well, I go to church. I'm going to heaven." "Well, I've been baptized. I'm going to heaven." "Well, I live a good life—I don't smoke, I don't chew, and I don't hang out with those that do. I don't go to the Fuzzy Frog after work on the way home. I'm a good person, you know. I don't act that way." They have this false assurance, and that's a dangerous thing. There are times when we preach the grace and mercy of God that people can get a false assurance. We don't want any unbelievers to think that they're saved when they're not, but I believe the Holy Spirit's job is to convince and convict them, again, of their sin, unrighteousness, and their need for Jesus Christ.

On the other hand there are those who have a lack of assurance. There are those who lack assurance. You have unsaved who think they're saved, and you have saved who don't know they're saved. That again is a tragic thing as well. You have people who have a false assurance—they aren't really born again—and you have people who are saved and they don't really know it. How can you enjoy your Christian life if you don't know you're a Christian? How effective can you be in witnessing to people if you don't know you're saved? "You know what? Jesus will save you. I don't know if He'll save me, but I think He will save you." "You can be born again and go to heaven. I don't know if I'll go to heaven, but I think you might go to heaven. God might give it to you, but He doesn't give it to me." You're not really going to be effective unless you have that kind of assurance. You can't live a victorious Christian life if you lack assurance of your salvation.

Why do some Christians lack assurance? The list could be quite lengthy but let me mention a couple of things. First, they don't understand what the Bible teaches about salvation. I believe that you can be saved and lack a knowledge of what it means to be saved, what the Christian life is and involves, and if you're not beginning to grow in your knowledge of the Word and the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that you can sometimes lack assurance. They don't understand what the Bible teaches about salvation. That's a very important doctrine. It's very important for you to understand—what does it really mean to be saved? What does it mean to be regenerated? What does it mean to be in Christ? What does it mean to be the temple of the Holy Spirit? What does it mean that I have eternal life? All those things are so very important.

They also think that salvation can be lost. Again, as I said, I'm opening up a lot of controversial issues and a real can of worms, but there are many believers (and I believe they are believers and they are in the body of Christ and we should love each other and get along in the body of Christ), but I've come to the conviction (and I do call it a conviction) after years of preaching and studying God's Word (when early in my ministry preached the opposite), I've come to believe the other that once in Christ you'll always be in Christ. If you have been born of the Holy Spirit, you cannot be unborn. If you've been regenerated, you cannot be unregenerated. If you're a child of God, you'll always be a child of God. The great theologian, Jonathan Edwards said, "What begins with grace ends in glory." If you read Romans 8 (very clearly taught by Paul), it begins with no condemnation, ends with no separation, and in between there is no defeat for

those that are in Christ—whom He's justified, He's called, He sanctifies and will eventually glorify. It's a process that God does and, "...that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

A lot of Christians lack assurance because they believe that they can lose their salvation. In John 10:28-29 Jesus said, "I give unto them," that is, His sheep who hear His voice and follow Him, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." That's a very powerful statement of Jesus Christ. Some will say, "Well, you can remove yourself out of His hand," or "You can jump out of His Hand." For you to get out of Christ, (you didn't put yourself in Christ, by the way, the Holy Spirit did) the Holy Spirit is the only one that can take you out of Christ and there's no reason for Him to do that, and you would have to unregenerate yourself. I don't know how you do that. There's no clear teaching on that in the Bible. If you sin and lose your salvation, then you'd have to be born again again and born again again and again. You say, "No, no, no. You don't have to be born again again, you just repent and God will forgive your sins and that's okay." Well, if there is that possibility that you could sin and lose your salvation, where is the line? How many sins? Which sins? If you can't answer that question, then you don't have assurance because you'd never know, "Did I cross the line in that sin that I just committed? That thought that came through my mind, do I need to get saved again? Am I no longer a Christian? Do I need to be born again again?"

Remember when Jesus washed Peter's feet? He said, "Peter, you don't need a bath. You've already had a bath, all you need is your feet washed." I love that John 13 story of Jesus and Peter with his feet. "If I don't wash your feet you have no part with Me. You have no koinonia with Me," no fellowship with Me. Peter said, "Then, give me a whole bath. Just bathe my whole body." Jesus said, "Calm down, Peter. You've already had a bath." I believe it perfectly illustrates the Christian life of having been washed in regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit (having been born again and "had a bath") that my feet do get dirty, and I need to 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I don't lose sonship. I do lose fellowship, and I need to be brought back into that relationship. My sin can separate me from God, but only in that fellowship sense not in the sense of losing my salvation or that I'm no longer a child of God.

I propose to you that if you believe in the possibility that once you're saved you could be lost, then who decides when and where, at what point and how many sins do you lose your salvation? And, you really can't have assurance because you'd never know if you've been sinful or not. "Well, if you abide in Christ you're going to be fine." Well, how deeply should I abide, and how continual should I abide? How do you really define abiding in Christ? There are times where we may falter or fall, and that's why 1John (that Christian bar of soap) is there in the Bible, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Some people think that they're saved by grace and kept by works, and that will lead to a lack of assurance. "I know God saved me by His grace, but now I've gotta roll up my sleeves and work

for my salvation. Didn't Paul say to work out your own salvation?" Yes, but he went on to say, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," and to workout your salvation means that you live it out. I don't think we're saved by grace and kept by works, I believe we're saved by grace and we're kept by God's grace. Many times a believer stumbles and sins and because of that they believe that they have lost their salvation and are lacking assurance.

Going back to this so-called Lordship salvation, I believe that in their teaching which they deny the existence of what is called a carnal Christian (I don't know if you've ever heard that term), but there are large segments of Christians today who say, "You know, there is no such thing as a carnal Christian. If you're a Christian, spiritually you are not carnal," yet Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:1, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." They were brethren. I believe they were believers, but they were still acting like the world. They were still conducting themselves in a carnal way. There was strife, envy, and jealousies among them. I believe it's possible (and this is what causes a lot of confusion) for a person to truly be saved but not growing in their walk with the Lord. They are spiritual infants perhaps yielding frequently to the flesh and being controlled by the flesh. In Galatians, he talks about the flesh and the Spirit warring against each other. They were not really walking in the Spirit and could be classified as carnal or at least of having lapses of carnality in their Christian life that sometimes leads people to doubt whether or not they are truly saved.

My question is to those who teach that if you're truly saved you must make Jesus Lord and there will be fruit in your life. I believe that's true, but here's the question: How much fruit over what length or period of time? Who determines how much fruit and how long it takes to be fruitful in the Christian life? Sometimes people will ask me, "You know, this person accepted Jesus and they're doing this and that. Do you think they're saved?" My answer is: I don't know, only God knows their hearts. You can look at their life and say by the way they're living they don't seem to be saved, but God alone knows their hearts. We don't want to assume they're saved. We don't want to assume they're lost. We want to pray for and encourage them. The better thing to do is to grow in the Lord, to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, and have confident assurance that we are believers and have eternal life.

If you are saved, you can sin but you'll lose fellowship. I don't believe you will lose your sonship. I believe that you can have assurance. Now, you say, "Well then, that is a license to go out and sin." No, it's not. Having been saved by grace, knowing the grace of God and the goodness of God, I should want to walk in fellowship with God in a way that's pleasing unto God. I believe that understanding that my salvation is sure motivates me to be thankful, humble, to walk in fellowship with God, and want my life to bear fruit for His glory.

How does a Christian have confident assurance? Let me give you three basic things. This, again, is not exhaustive but I think important. We base our assurance on three things: 1) the Word of God the Father, 2) the work of God the Son, and 3) the witness of God the Holy Spirit. First of all, the Word of God the Father. It can be as simple as John 3:16. You all know John

3:16, right? You've read it on the In-N-Out cup (not in your Bible). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I believe it can be as simple as do you believe that? Have you believed in Jesus Christ? Have you trusted in Him? God has promised in His Word that you will not perish but will have, present possession, everlasting life; and I believe everlasting life is everlasting life. It begins the moment you are born again and trust in Jesus Christ. You're resting in the Word of God the Father. It's not your emotions or circumstances, but it's the Word of God. God said it, I believe it, so we retreat to the Scriptures.

The second foundation is the work of God the Son. This is Jesus' work for us on the Cross. Write down 1 John 5:11. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This is the record, God has given us something. He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12 . When Jesus died on the Cross He uttered seven statements. Of those seven statements one of them was tetelestai—it is finished or it is done or it is accomplished. When Jesus died on the Cross, He paid for your sins. His death was the substitutionary death. He took your place on the Cross, and He cried out, "It is finished." Then He said, "Father, into thy hands I commit My Spirit," and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. What salvation is is that you have received by faith that finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. You don't have to work to be saved. You don't have to labor to be saved. You don't have to be good to be saved—Jesus paid for your sins. He paid a debt He didn't owe. I owed a debt I couldn't pay, and I have by faith received what He has done for me. Jesus is the object of our faith. In Ephesians 2:8-9 (another classic verse) it says, "For by grace are ye saved...and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Thirdly, our salvation rests on the witness of God the Holy Spirit. This is important. In 1 John 5:10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." I remember when I first got saved how amazing it was to me that I could sense God's Spirit in my life. I could hear God's voice that God was witnessing to me that I've been forgiven, my sins were all carried away, I was now His child, and I had eternal life. Remember that initial euphoria and joy that you experienced when you came in repentance and called on the name of the Lord and He heard and answered your cry and saved you from your sin and took you from the pit and placed your feet upon a Rock and put a new song in your heart? Isn't that awesome! You just felt lighter; I felt like a weight lifted off my shoulders, the sky looked bluer, and everything was awesome! You know, after all the repentance and turning to God it's just like, "Wow! I'm alive!" and the joy that fills your heart! That's that inner witness of the Holy Spirit. You say, "Yeah, but it all drained out long ago. I don't know what happened to it." I believe that the Lord can renew that, we should have that, and God's Spirit can speak to us.

Remember, It's not just the inner witness, it's the Word of God. It's not just the subjective experience, it's God's objective truth—I know that I'm saved because God has promised it and God cannot lie. I know that I'm saved because Jesus died on the Cross. He paid the penalty for my sins. He actually prayed a prayer in John 17. He said, "Father, I will that they also,

whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me...before the foundation of the world." Did you know that Jesus paid for your sins and He prayed for you? He actually prayed for you. He said, "I want them in heaven with Me." It's an amazing thought and the witness of the Spirit in our hearts, that's what brings us the joy of the Lord! It's an amazing thought that God's Spirit is in us.

In Romans 8:16 it says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." You know, people say, "Well, how do you know you're saved?" You say, "I just know. I just know. I know because He lives in my heart." The Spirit Himself bears witness that I am His child. If you're here tonight and you don't have that witness, if you're here tonight and you don't know that you're saved, if you're here tonight and you don't know that you are His child or that you've been forgiven then don't leave church tonight without making a commitment to Jesus Christ, without trusting Him as your Savior, without receiving Him into your heart and into your life.

Thirdly, and lastly, the helmet is also the hope of salvation. Write down 1 Thessalonians 5:8. I've already mentioned it earlier, but in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 Paul talks about the Lord's coming and our living in the last days as the children of the light and how the world is kind of sleeping in the day because they're drunk but we're the children of the day and children of the light. He goes on to say, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love;" and here it is, "and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." You say, "Well, Pastor John, I thought that we were saved? You just got through teaching assurance." (That was a very abbreviated message on assurance, by the way.) "You just said that we can know we're going to heaven and now we're hoping? Now we've got our fingers crossed and we're holding our rabbit's foot and hoping I get to go to heaven when I die?" Do you know when the New Testament talks about hope that's not the kind of hope it's talking about? It's not talking about, "Oh, I hope I go to heaven. I hope I've been good enough." It's talking about an assurance, a steadfast, settled assurance of knowing that we will go to heaven.

I want you to understand that salvation involves three things and I'm going to wrap this up. I want you to listen carefully. First of all you've been justified (write that down). The moment you trust in Jesus Christ and you are born of the Spirit you are justified—saved from sin's penalty. That's your position in Christ. This is where I believe you were taken out of Adam and placed into Christ, and I believe that once you're in Christ you're always in Christ. Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." You need to understand, this is what it means to put on the helmet of salvation, you need to understand—I have been justified. This is my definition of justification: It is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner to be righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. That's what it means to be justified. It's God declaring you to be righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It's not God just saying, willy-nilly, "Well, I forgive you," but it's God declaring you to be perfectly righteous because you have trusted Christ and He paid the penalty for your sins. You're justified before God. That's your standing. It also means that you have been free from sin's penalty.

Secondly, we are being sanctified (write that down). We are being, present tense, sanctified—saved from sin's power. This is your practice, and because people get their justification confused with their sanctification, they can lack assurance. Because they haven't grown as much as they thought they should or because they stumble and fall into sin they feel like, "Well, I'm not really a Christian. I'm not that good," or "I'm not saved," or "I had an evil thought," or "I slipped and fell so I must not really be saved." No. You have been declared righteous. You're positionally in Christ. That happens instantaneously, the moment you are born again, and then starts a process of sanctification. It lasts from the moment you are saved until you go to heaven—a lifelong process of being changed into the image of Jesus Christ. I don't want to confuse anybody but in justification God declares you righteous; in sanctification God is making you righteous, but it's progressional and the goal of the Christian life is to be more like Jesus, is to be more holy and more righteous and more Christ-like as we yield to His Holy Spirit. That's the process of sanctification—free from sin's power.

Thirdly, we will be, future tense, glorified. We've been justified, we're being sanctified, and one day we will be glorified—saved from sin's presence. Let me put it in real simple language. That means you won't sin anymore! You should say, "Hallelujah!" to that. Some of you are looking like, "Oh, bummer. I kind of enjoy it." Why would you not, as a child of God, say, "Praise the Lord!" No more sin, no more sorrow, no more suffering, and no more tears! Can you digit? I can! That's when you're in heaven. I believe when Paul says, "...putting on the helmet as the hope of salvation," he's talking about that future sense, and trust me, this is something satan does not want you to grasp! He doesn't want you to understand that you've been justified and that you will be glorified because once that truth grips your heart you're unstoppable! Once that truth grips your heart you have the joy of the Lord, the confidence of the Lord, and the assurance of the Lord. You put that helmet on and you're ready to do battle. You have His peace and His joy, and he can't rob you of that assurance. You know that one day you're going to be with Him in heaven—the hope of salvation. It's the blessed hope of a glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ! I love this truth! Paul in Romans 8 so eloquently and powerfully explains it, "...and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." What can we say to this? God's work is so marvelous! That's salvation's hope.

Satan wants you to have a deceived mind confused about how to be saved. Satan wants you to have a doubtful mind to doubt whether or not you're save. Satan wants you to have a discouraged mind to doubt whether or not that when you die you're going to go to heaven. Put on your helmet of salvation. Paul says in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." That's the hope of salvation. How marvelous sometimes when we just have that flash of the reality of understanding all my sins have been forgiven and I've been justified! I'm not perfect yet, but He's changing me. I'm not what I used to be and I've got a long way to go, but He's changing me. One day I'll see Jesus face-to-face, and I will be changed in a moment, in an instant, into His image perfectly and all my sins will be gone! I'll never strive with sin again. What a glorious prospect that is!

Without salvation, you don't have your sins forgiven. You're not free from the power of sin, you're bound by sin's chains—these habits and sins that enslave you—and you don't have the hope that when you die you're going to go to heaven. There's no prospect of knowing that one day I'll be with the Lord. You don't have to be old to understand that you can die at any time and go to heaven. Young people die all the time, and you don't know when you're going to die. You need to be right with God and ready to know that when you die you're going to go to heaven. Amen?

I've been talking to the Christian tonight, but in closing, if you are here and you haven't believed on Jesus Christ and you haven't received Jesus Christ, or you haven't trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you need to do it right now. Before you leave this service tonight you need to invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart and forgive your sins and make sure that you're a child of God. It could be that you have a false assurance. Maybe you think you're going to heaven because you come to church. Maybe you think you're going to heaven because your parents are Christians. Maybe you've been in this church for years—that doesn't mean you're going to heaven. You must repent and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. You must invite Him to come into your heart and forgive your sins. A Christian is a person who has the life of God in their soul, and when that life of God comes into your soul the Bible says old things pass away and all things become new. He'll transform your life. Don't be afraid tonight. Don't reject Christ tonight. Jesus said if you are ashamed of Me, I'll be ashamed of you; but if you confess Me, I'll confess you before My Father and the holy angels.

If you're here tonight and you don't know for sure that you're a Christian, you don't know that when you die that you're going to go to heaven, I want to give you this opportunity right now to get right with God and to have your sins forgiven.