

LESSON - 21

A SALVATION - How to Experience It?

References : *Luke. 15 : 11-32*

Memory verse : *Rom. 10 : 9 10*

Objective: To experience salvation personally and to live as witnesses of Christ.

Introduction: What is the greatest need of man who is living under sin and curse? Until and unless a man gets right with God and obtains salvation, he cannot live in peace or happiness. That is why everyone has an internal cry for salvation. But few people understand that salvation is God's gift and that no human efforts are useful for getting salvation. For attaining Gods gifts, all we need to do is approach Him in Gods own terms . God has certain requirements in the Bible which we must meet.

FAITH AND WORKS:

We see that people have found out various ways by which they think they can get saved. Some people find various stages of yoga as a means to get saved. Some others count on such practices as prayers, fastings (Lent), giving alms, pilgrimages etc.. Even among Christians, many people hold the view that salvation can be attained through sacraments and charitable works, whereas some people stress on the way of works. They contend that salvation can be attained through rituals and practices or good deeds. It was Cain who marked the beginning of this evil way. For we read that Cain brought a sacrifice which seemed good to him but was against Gods way. He fancied that he could please God by the fruit of his own work. But the consequence, we see, was that he not only lost God's favour and blessing but became a murderer and object of curse. Cain, in so doing opened a self righteous way in which a large number of people are still going. Jude says about

them. "Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain (Jude. 11). How pathetic is the way of many people even today.

Look at Abel who by faith brought God a better sacrifice than that of Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous (Heb. 11:14). Abel was justified by his faith. Abel represents those who take the path of faith.

Notice the clear teaching of the scriptures that Salvation is not by means of works but by faith. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, Not of works lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8). Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us" (Titus. 3:5) A man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law (Rom. 3:28, Rom 4:1-7, Gala. 3:10-13). All righteous deeds of men are like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). Salvation is God's gift given to man solely by grace. The only way to obtain the salvation is by faith (Rom. 3: 24-25. Jn 3:16, 5:24, 6:29, Acts. 16:31, Eph. 2:8, Rom. 10:9-10).

Now let us think how one gets this faith that leads to salvation. From the parable of the Prodigal son recorded in Luke's gospel (15:11-32) we find that there are four our stages of this faith.

1 Self - realisation:

We look for water when we are thirsty. Similarly, a man longs for salvation only when he is convicted of sin. It is the Holy spirit who brings conviction in man through the Word of God. Jesus said about the work of the Holy spirit. "When He has come He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of Judgement (Jn. 16:8). Faith comes by the hearing to the Word of God (Rom. 10:17) When anyone listens of the word of God, the Holy spirit brings conviction into his heart, which leads him to salvation. This conviction that a person is a sinner and that he needs a saviour is self-realisation.

When the prodigal son lost everything and starved, "He came to himself and said, "How many of my fathers hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Here the son realises his own condition. He finds himself as a wretched being perishing because of rebellion towards his father. He realises as well the goodness of the Father, His love, generosity, richness etc. Similarly, the hearing of the word of God brings conviction in the heart of a sinner and gives him a revelation of the Loving God. This is the first step towards the saving faith.

2 Return - Repentance:

The self-realising prodigal son rises up and goes to the Father (Lk. 15:18,20) When a sinner realises his own condition, he can not stay where he is. Instead, he will turn to God saying goodbye to sin and all sinful circumstances. He begins to disgust the old friendship and old living circumstances. Hurriedly, he returns home to the father and gets restored in the relationship with the Father. In other words he comes to **repentance**. This is the second step.

3 Confession:

The returning son confesses his sins feeling sorry for them. His confession is described this way: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. And I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. (Lk. 15:18, 19). Deep conviction of sin and penitent confession are steps leading to saving faith. Also he trusts the father to receive him and surrenders himself to his will all the rest of his life.

RECONCILIATION:

The Father saw the returning son from afar off. He had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him (Lk. 15:20) This is the picture showing how God receives a penitent sinner. God reconciles the sinner to Himself through Jesus Christ (2 Cori 5:18). "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, much more, having been reconciled we shall be saved by His Life" (Rom. 5:10) How joyful and safe it is for us to be in the fathers home.

We attain salvation through faith in Jesus Christ who offered Himself as a sacrifice. The four steps of faith that lead to salvation discussed above are: **realisation, return and repentance confession and reconciliation**. Having been reconciled this way, we must grow spiritually every day in constant communion with God.

EXERCISE -21

Answer the following questions

- 1 Why do people have a yearning for salvation?
- 2 What are the various ways in which people think that they can get saved?
- 3 According to the scripture, how can we get salvation?

- 4 Who bring conviction in man and through what?
- 5 What is self- realisation?
- 6 What does a sinner do when he realises his own condition?
- 7 What are the steps leading to the saving faith?
- 8 Explain these steps in comparison to the experiences of the prodigal son in Luke 15.



LESSON - 22

SALVATION - Related Spiritual Experiences

PART - 1

Repentance, Rebirth and Justification

- References** : *Mar. 1: 1-15*
 : *Rom. 3 : 24-5 : 18*
 : *John. 3 : 1 -16*

- Memory verse:** *Acts. 17 :30*
 : *Rom. 5 :18*
 : *John. 3 :3*

Objective: Understanding the depth and breadth of such spiritual experiences as Repentance, Justification and Rebirth which are the basic preliminaries of the vast subject of salvation.

Introducton: Remember what you have studied about the vast subject of salvation! What is salvation? Why is it that we need salvation ? What are the aspects of salvation to the three tenses. Can you name a few experiences related to salvation? There are several experiences related to salvation. Important among them are repentance, Justification, rebirth, sanctification, glorification etc. Let us study about in brief.