

## WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 26

### **ABUNDANT LIVING**

This is what Jesus said in John 10 when He was addressing the Pharisees. He said, “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10). “They” is referring Jesus’s followers. In John Chapter 10 Jesus is contrasting Himself as the Good Shepherd to the false teachers of Israel, the Pharisees.

We don’t get saved just so that we can miss Hell and have the hope of Heaven someday. Those are wonderful truths and I am thankful for them. God wants us to experience the abundant, victorious Christian life here and now. Eternal life (our life in Christ) starts, not when we die, but when we receive Christ as Lord and Savior. There is an element of that eternal life that we can enjoy now.

You all know John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son [Jesus], that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Now look at verses 17 and 18... “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

*[Question 9]* There are some things we are saved FROM. One of the things we Christians we have been saved from is the **Penalty** of sin. We are no longer facing the condemnation of Hell. That is one of the promises that Jesus made in those verses we just read. Our death sentence has been commuted. We receive mercy. That’s good news!

My wife and I like to watch movies together. A lot are Christian-based movies and some are old classics. The other night

we were watching the movie *Les Misérables* (1998) with Liam Neeson. In that movie the main character Jean Valjean is transformed from a no-good, hardened thief through the kindness, love and mercy that was shown to him by a Christian man – in this case a priest. As a result of the forgiveness shown to him, Jean Valjean goes on to show love and forgiveness to various people throughout the movie. There is a stark contrast presented between Jean Valjean (who has this new-found capacity to love and forgive) and the protagonist Inspector Javert. Inspector Javert is all about justice. He is totally incapable of showing any compassion to anyone at all. It's black and white. If they are in the wrong, they're punished. End of discussion. So, there is this contrast presented of these two men and their hearts. I love this movie because it is a wonderful picture of the contrast between Christians and those in the world. Because we have been forgiven much and freed from the penalty of our sin (that we deserved), we can then, in turn, forgive much.

So, we have been saved from the penalty of sin. That's good news, right? But it changes our lives!

That's not the only thing we have been saved from. There are two other things on the list that we have been saved from.

The very end of the book of Jude has this wonderful doxology: "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen" ((Jude 24-25). Then in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3 you have these words: "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one" (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

From these verses we see that the Lord keeps us from stumbling, from slipping away, and then He protects us from the

clutches of Satan, the evil one. So, we have been saved from the **Power** of sin.

There is a third promise that we have. We are saved from something in the future...

“Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be [future] has not yet appeared; but we know that when He [Jesus] appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2). John is looking forward to something in the future. “But our citizenship is in Heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will [future] transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).

So, we have been saved from the **Presence** of sin. This is future. It hasn't happened yet. We still have to deal with our sin nature. There is an ongoing battle. We have a nature still prone toward sin. We live in a fallen, sinful world with all its trappings and temptations. But at some point, in the future, this happens...

“Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Has that happened yet? No. This is future. Paul says that our physical earthly body filled with sin will one day be replaced by a glorified sinless body! We will get a body like Jesus has. That is something to look forward to, isn't it?

But what about today? What about now? What about the sin in this world and how things are getting worse? Just read the book of Revelation. It doesn't get better. It gets worse. Paul addresses this in Romans Chapter 6 very effectively. He is describing the process that takes place in a person's life when they get saved. He explains that we must deal with our sin nature, which we are still carrying around with us. We have two natures warring against

each other right now - (1) we have our old sin nature and (2) we have our new nature which resulted from our new life in Christ.

Here is the progression in a Christian's life that you need to follow:

"We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Romans 6:6).

*[Question 10]* A progression takes place in a Christian's life. First, we **Know** that we have been crucified with Christ. Theologically we know this. Hallelujah! Our old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Jesus. That is a good start, but it doesn't end there. Paul goes on...

"So, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

The word translated in the ESV as "consider" means to reckon or to count. It is an accounting term. So then, we **Reckon** ourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ. We go beyond knowing and we now apply this truth to our own life. Look, if we are going to have a relationship with a perfect, holy God right now, we have to do something about this sin nature that we are carrying around. This whole thing is a progression. He goes on in v 13 explaining this process...

"Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness" (Romans 6:13).

O, now we are supposed to do something. We are to **Present** ourselves to God. This is interesting because in the Jude passage we just read Jesus presents us blameless before the Father. Here in this passage, we are to present ourselves to God. So, we submit ourselves. We turn over all of our desires for our life to

Him. It gets back to that whole lordship concept. It is an ongoing process which involves regular confession of our sin and turning away from them. Paul goes on in verse 16...

“Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). It’s a question. Don’t you know this? You should.

The last thing is then, do it. **Obey** God. You know what to do. He has showed you what to do. He has convicted your heart about it. Now just be obedient to do what you know to do.

It all gets back to lordship. If He is indeed the Lord of our lives, we’ll do what He tells us to do. Jesus said Himself: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

Let me go back to “Victorious Christian Living – Studies in the Book of Joshua” (the book I referenced earlier by Alan Redpath). There is this great analogy that Redpath uses which ties into all of this. He points out that over and over again through the book of Joshua is this refrain: “And the Lord said to Joshua...” What happens then? Joshua does it. Now the people of Israel don’t always do what God tells them to do, but Joshua the obedient general of the Israelite army follows God. He obeys God. This is where the analogy is really good for us. The Lord is going to tell us things through His word and through the Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts. Do it. Be obedient.

David knew something about this battle with sin and how it impacted his walk with the Lord. We all know about David’s sin, so he battled with this issue. Psalm 37, written by David, speaks about our daily walk with the Lord and what happens as our faith and our trust in Him grows.

“Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb” (Psalm 37:1-2). Don’t be envious. Don’t worry about THEM.

*[Question 11]* Again, notice the progression in our daily walk with the Lord... First of all, **Fret** NOT. In other words, don’t worry! Then David goes on in v 3...

“Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness” (Psalm 37:3).

**Trust** in the Lord. This is an attitude. It is the foundation of our relationship with Christ. Then David goes deeper...

“Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4).

**Delight** yourself in the Lord. In the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) Jesus says, “Blessed are the [poor in spirit, gentle, merciful, peacemakers, etc.]” That word “blessed” invokes a deep sense of happiness and delight and complete satisfaction in the Lord. That’s what David has in mind here.

“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in Him, and He will act” (Psalm 37:5).

**Commit** your way to the Lord. Turn your plans and dreams over to Him. To use a poker term, you are “All in” with Jesus. Trust Him completely.

“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!” (Psalm 37:7). Verse 34 reinforces what was said in verse 7...

“Wait for the LORD and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; you will look on when the wicked are cut off” (Psalm 37:34).

**Wait** upon the Lord. That is hard. We are not patient people, are we?

In our class discussion we were talking about prayer, about how we don't always get what we ask for in our prayers. The comment was made that sometimes we don't get it in the timetable we want. We have to wait for it. That's the idea here in Psalm 37. Sometimes we have to wait for the Lord and His timeframe. God's time and our time are not always the same. We want God to act now, but it doesn't always work that way.