

The First Church: Worthy Traits



Acts 2:41-47 TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL HELPS

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THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF THE CHURCH, [Acts 2:1-7:60](#)

The First Church: Worthy Traits, [Acts 2:41-47](#)

([Acts 2:41-47](#)) **Introduction:** this is the first look at the early church. It shows us the traits that characterized the daily lives of believers. It should prick the conscience of the modern-day church.

1. **A people who received the Word—gladly (v.41).**
2. **A people who continued—steadfastly (v.42).**
3. **A people who stirred souls with a godly fear (v.43).**
4. **A people who were together—sharing in ministry (v.44-45).**
5. **A people who were unified (v.46).**
6. **A people who worshipped and praised God—daily (v.46-47).**

1. ([Acts 2:41](#)) **Word of God:** the early believers were a people who received the Word gladly.

1. This is the basic trait, the very first trait of a true church. It actually defines a church. A church is a people, a body of people who have received *the Word of God*.

They were not receiving.....

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. a set of ideas | 4. a human philosophy |
| 2. a man's thoughts | 5. a position |
| 3. a set of rules and principles | 6. a religion |

They were receiving the Word of God, the very revelation of God Himself. God had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ to His disciples. And Peter, the spokesman for the disciples, was proclaiming the Word about Jesus Christ. God had spoken to the world through His Son Jesus Christ, and the early believers had received His Word. (See below [Deeper Study #1, The Word—John 1:1-5.](#))

DEEPER STUDY #1

([John 1:1-5](#)) **The Word— Jesus Christ, Son of God:** the *Word (logos)* is Jesus Christ. John faced a serious problem in writing to the Gentiles, that is, the non-Jewish world. Most Gentiles had never heard of the Messiah or Savior who was expected by the Jews. The idea was foreign to them. However, the Messiah was the very center of Christianity. How was John going to present Christ so that a Gentile could understand?

The answer lay in the idea of the *Word*, for the *Word* was understood by both Gentile and Jew.

1. The Jews saw a word as something more than a mere sound.

A word was something active and existing. It was power—it possessed the power to express something, to do something. This is seen in the many Old Testament references where *The Word of God* was seen as the creative power of God, the power that made the world and gave light and life to every man ([Genesis 1:3, 6, 11](#); [Psalm 33:6](#); [Psalm 107:20](#); [Psalm 147:15](#); [Isaiah 55:11](#)).

2. The Gentiles or Greeks saw the *Word* more philosophically.

- a. When they looked at the world of nature, they saw that things were not chaotic, but orderly. Everything had its place and moved or grew in an orderly fashion, including the stars above and the vegetation below. Therefore, the Greeks said that behind the world was a mind, a reason, a power that made and kept things in their proper place. This creative and sustaining mind, this supreme reason, this unlimited power was said to be the *Word*.
- b. The *Word* was also seen as the power that enabled men to think and reason. It was the power that brought light and understanding to man's mind and enabled him to express his jumbled up thoughts in an orderly fashion.
- c. More importantly, the *Word* was the power by which men came into contact with God and expressed their feelings to God.

3. John grabbed hold of this common idea of the Jews and

Gentiles. He proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the *Word*. John saw that a word is the expression of an idea, a thought, an image in the mind of a person. He saw that a word describes what is in the mind of a person. Thus, he proclaimed that in the life of Jesus Christ, God was speaking to the world, speaking and demonstrating just what He wanted to say to man.

John said three things.

- a. God has given us much more than mere words in the Holy Scriptures. God has given us Jesus Christ, *The Word*. As *The Word*, Jesus Christ was the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of what God wished to say to man. The very image within God's mind of the *Ideal Man* was demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the perfect expression of all that God wishes man to be. Jesus Christ was God's utterance, God's speech, *God's Word* to man. Jesus Christ was the *Word* of God who came down to earth in human flesh to bring man into a face to

face relationship with God (cp. [John 1:1-2](#)). Jesus was the *Word of God who came to earth to live out the written Word of God.*

b. Jesus Christ is the Mind, the Reason, the Power that both made and keeps things in their proper order. He is the creative and sustaining Mind, the Supreme Reason, the unlimited Power (cp. [John 1:3](#)).

c. Jesus Christ is the Light, the Illumination, the Power that penetrates the darkness of the world. He, the Life and Light of the world, is what makes sense of the world and enables men to understand the world (cp. [John 1:4-5](#)).

2. **Note the word "received."** The word "received" (*apodechomai*) means "to take fully, to welcome, to approve fully, to accept". A true church, a true body of believers, does not just hear and listen to the Word. They are not just present to join the crowd and see what is going on. They do not sit with wandering minds and closed hearts.

A true church receives the Word of God; they.....

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. welcome it | 6. hold on to it |
| 2. believe it | 7. hunger for it |
| 3. take it in | 8. joy and rejoice in it |
| 4. practice it | 9. share it |
| 5. experience it | |

3. **Note the statement:** "They that gladly received his word." To "gladly" (*asmenōs*) receive means "with pleasure, to embrace with anticipation". Not everyone present received it. Some were there for the wrong reasons and others were closed-minded and disinterested. Still others simply refused to believe and rejected the Word. **But they who received God's Word became the very first body of believers, the first church.**

4. Note that they were baptized: the idea is immediate baptism (see below [Deeper Study # 2, Baptism—Acts 2:38](#) for discussion). Note also the large number: three thousand "were added" to the 120 disciples.

"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" ([Acts 4:4](#)).

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" ([Acts 6:7](#)).

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" ([Acts 17:11](#)).

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" ([Romans 10:18](#)).

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" ([1 Thes. 2:13](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 2

([Acts 2:38](#)) Baptism: is the outward sign, the immediate sign of repentance. It is the physical sign that a person is identifying with Christ. It is the immediate sign that a person is to show before the world that he is really repenting and is now going to obey and live for God.

Baptism and repentance are both.....

1. outward signs.
2. signs that have to do with behavior.
3. signs that show the world that a person is turning his life over to God.

Repentance is a command to change one's life. Baptism is a command, the very first command to follow Christ. Baptism is the first command given to those who are repenting. The person who is really repenting must be baptized. He must give testimony to the world and confess to the world that he is repenting by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (cp. [Matthew 28:19-20](#)). Baptism is not an option. It is as much a command as repentance.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" ([Matthew 28:19](#)).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" ([Mark 16:16](#)).

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" ([Acts 2:38](#)).

"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" ([Acts 10:48](#)).

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" ([Acts 22:16](#)).

Now, note a critical point that is often overlooked and neglected. Just because a person changes his life (repents) and is baptized does not mean he is saved. A person can change his life

by the **power of his own will**, by **discipline** and **self-control**, by his **own effort** and **works**. And he can very simply request to be baptized. Many people have and will continue to do this. Many live what society calls a **good**, **upright**, and **moral life** and they have been baptized.

But there is more to being saved than merely changing one's life and being baptized. **What is it?** It is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit:

It is the essential of faith, of believing "in the name of Jesus Christ."

A person who truly believes and really trusts Jesus does repent and is baptized. But just because a person lives a disciplined and controlled life (*repents*) and has been baptized does not mean he is truthfully trusting Jesus as his Savior.

True faith—the inward work within the heart, the inward work of really believing *in the name of the Lord Jesus*—is the one absolute essential for being saved.

Now note another critical point that is also overlooked and neglected.

1. Just because a person says he believes in Jesus does not mean he is saved. A person can say and claim anything, and that person can be baptized. But profession and baptism do not save a person anymore than a changed life and baptism save a person.

There is more to being saved than professing faith and being baptized. What is it? Again, it is the very basis, the very essential to true salvation, to being truly forgiven and receiving the Holy Spirit.

2. It is the basis, the essential of *repenting* and of doing the very first act of repentance, being baptized.

There is no faith *without true repentance* and there is no forgiveness by God *without trusting or committing* one's life to God's dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the very first act of following Jesus is that of repenting and being baptized. A person who honestly believes in Jesus Christ will do what He said, repent and be baptized.

This is what Peter was saying in this passage. He did not mention faith, but he was not omitting faith nor eliminating belief in the Lord Jesus as essential to salvation. The rest of Scripture

cannot be ignored in looking at this verse just as this verse and others like it cannot be ignored by the passages that stress faith alone. Common sense tells us that a person who truly believes something acts upon that thing. *Behavior follows true belief*. But similarly, common sense tells us that behavior can be changed by raw effort and discipline. A person can change because he thinks he should change and not because someone else demands change.

Paul stressed the same point in that classic passage of his ([Romans 6:3-4](#)), and the point is very significant. A believer (*true believer*) is said to be "**baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ.**"

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized [immersed] into the death of Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" ([Romans 6:3-4](#)).

Now note what Paul has just said: when a person is baptized, he is "**baptized into His [Jesus'] death**" in the same way he is immersed (identified) into the resurrection of Christ. Baptism is an act by which one identifies with Christ. He counts himself as having died *in* Christ's death and as having risen *in* Christ's resurrection; as living and moving and having his being *in* Christ even as Christ lived and moved and had His being in God. Christ's death and resurrection and life becomes the believer's death and resurrection and life. The believer treats and judges himself as having been "**crucified with Christ, nevertheless living; yet not himself, but Christ living in him**" ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

In conclusion, history has shown that this point needs to be stressed and restressed.

1. A person can repent, change his own life and be baptized (**by his own effort and works**) without ever trusting Christ, without really believing in Christ.

2. But a person cannot trust, cannot really believe in Christ without repenting and following Christ in the very first act of repentance, that of being baptized. True faith and honest belief always mean that a person repents and is baptized. To believe is to follow (obey) Christ and to be baptized.

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" ([Hebrews 5:9](#)).

"He that believeth not [ho apeithon, obeys not] shall not see life" ([John 3:36](#)).

2. ([Acts 2:42](#)) Stedfastness: the early believers were a people who “continued stedfastly” in four things.

DEEPER STUDY # 3 ([Acts 2:42](#)) Continued stedfastly (*proskarterountes*)

([Acts 2:42](#)) Continued stedfastly (*esan proskarterountes*): to continue, persevere, endure, stick, persist. A person does not quit, back off, fade away, or slip back. He continues on stedfastly.

DEEPER STUDY # 4 ([Acts 2:42](#)) In doctrine (*didache*)

([Acts 2:42](#)) In doctrine (*didachē*): the teaching, the instruction of the apostles. This would include both what Christ taught and His death and resurrection and ascension or exaltation.

It would be the same teaching and instructions.....

1. that are shared in the New Testament.
2. that the disciples wrote to various churches and bodies of believers.

The teaching would be no different. There is only one message, only one Word that saves and roots and grounds people in the Lord—the Word of God Himself, the message of the New Testament. On the day of Pentecost, the persons who were saved needed to be grounded in the faith. And the only message that could ground them was the message found in the New Testament. It was that message, that doctrine they were taught.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)).

"Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things" ([Luke 24:45-48](#)).

Thought 1. Note a striking fact: we can be saved and rooted and grounded in the *very same message*. God has given us the very

same doctrines and instructions to root and ground us. We can have a true, dynamic apostolic experience and maturity in the Lord. We can grow and know the Lord as intimately as the early believers knew the Lord. In fact, we come short if we do not, for we have the very same doctrine, teachings, and instructions that they had.

DEEPER STUDY # 5 (Acts 2:42) Fellowship

(Acts 2:42) Fellowship: the fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighborly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God.

The distinctiveness is this: the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and molding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together.

Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, [Acts 2:41-42](#)).

2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life. Their fellowship is maintained because they "**continue stedfastly**" in the Scriptures and in worship. **An unattached Christian life is just impossible.**

a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.

b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.

c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (**one who is set apart unto God**), but Christianity is made up of *saints*—plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons—*saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular. **Christianity is Christianity because the saints *study the Scriptures together and worship together*.**

d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, longsuffering, and love; **but the believer can do this only in association with others.**

e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (the church), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual.

3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.

a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized—to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must **"receive His word" ([Acts 2:41](#)).**

b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed—to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed ([Acts 2:42](#); [Hebrews 10:25](#)).

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" ([Acts 2:42](#)).

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" ([Romans 12:5](#)).

"For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" ([1 Cor. 10:17](#)).

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" ([Galatians 3:28](#)).

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:13](#)).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" ([Hebrews 10:25](#)).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1 John 1:7](#)).

"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" ([Psalm 119:63](#)).

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" ([Malachi 3:16](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 6 (Acts 2:42) Lord's Supper

([Acts 2:42](#)) **Lord's Supper**: the phrase "breaking of bread" means the early believers observed and remembered the Lord's death. They set aside some time to observe what churches call communion, or the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist. Note they observed the Lord's Supper daily ([Acts 2:46](#)). **Why did they observe it so often?**

1. The Lord's Supper was the one ordinance Christ had given to symbolize His death. And it was His death that had saved them.

Because of His death, they were now.....

- a. reconciled to God.
 - b. in fellowship with God.
 - c. made new creatures in God.
 - d. infilled with the Spirit of God.
 - e. bearing all the fruit of God
- ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

All they now were and had was due to the death of Christ. They wanted to remember and thank God for His great love demonstrated in the death of His Son, and to do it often.

2. The Lord had commanded His followers to observe the Lord's Supper often.

Thought 1. What an indictment against so many of us who observe the Lord's Supper so little! We can, of course, remember and concentrate upon the death of Christ without the symbol of the Supper. **But** Christ gave us the ordinance and commanded that we use it as the primary symbol to show His death until He comes ([1 Cor. 11:26](#)).

"This do in remembrance of me" ([Luke 22:19](#); [1 Cor. 11:24-25](#)).

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes" ([1 Cor. 11:26](#)).

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" ([Mark 14:22-24](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 7 (Acts 2:42) Prayer

([Acts 2:42](#)) **Prayer**: the early believers were a people who persevered in prayer—the idea is church prayer, united prayer with the whole body of believers.

1. Through prayer they were brought into the most intimate fellowship and presence of God. They could get no closer to God than when they were *drawing nigh* to God through prayer.

"The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" ([Psalm 145:18](#)).

"But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works" ([Psalm 73:28](#)).

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" ([Hebrews 7:19](#)).

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" ([Matthew 18:20](#)).

2. Through prayer they received things from God. They received His provision for both their souls and lives.

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" ([Matthew 21:22](#)).

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" ([John 16:24](#)).

3. (Acts 2:43) Fear, Godly— Church: the early believers were a people who stirred souls with a godly fear.

Fear (*phobias*) does not just mean terror or fright.

It means.....

1. a godly fear, a fear of God, of His displeasure and judgment.
2. a holy sense of God's presence.
3. a consciousness that God is working.
4. a reverence for God and for what is happening.
5. a sense of awe and wonder.

Note what it is that stirs the public to be so aware of God: the signs and wonders being done by the *apostles*.

And note: there were *many*.

"His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation" ([Luke 1:50](#)).

"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" ([Acts 10:35](#)).

"What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose" ([Psalm 25:12](#)).

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" ([Psalm 31:19](#)).

"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God" ([Isaiah 50:10](#)).

4. (Acts 2:44-45) Church— Unity— Ministry: the early believers were a people who were together and who shared in ministry.

It is critical for the church to pay close attention and heed what is being said in this point.

1. The *professing believers* were true believers. They were those "that [truly] believe" (see below [Deeper Study # 8, Believe—John 2:24](#) for discussion that shows true belief is the commitment of all one *is and has*).

DEEPER STUDY # 8

([John 2:24](#)) **Believe— Commit:** the word "commit" (*episteuen*) is the very same word "believe" (*episteusan*) (cp. [John 2:23](#)).

This gives an excellent picture of *saving faith*, of what *genuine faith* is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent. It is not just *believing the fact* that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, *who* and *what* He is, that He is the *Savior* and *Lord* of life. It is a man giving and turning his

life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

3. Saving faith is commitment—the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he *is and has* to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. **The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny).** He entrusts his whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus.

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage. ([Romans 10:16-17](#))

1. **There is the step of seeing ([John 2:23](#)) or hearing ([Romans 10:16](#)).** A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

2. **There is the step of *mental assent*.** A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

3. **There is the step of *commitment*.** When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of ***commitment, a personal commitment to the truth***. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life.

2. The believers were "**together**" (*[ἔσαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό](#)*). This *means* they were together in the same place ***because they were of the same call, mind, and purpose***. It does not mean just being in the same location and place. They would not have been ***together*** unless they had been of the same spirit and purpose. This is critical to God's call.

3. The believers sold their possessions and goods and used the money to minister to the poor and needy.

Now note:

Why would they go to such a drastic extreme to minister? There is one critical reason: Christ commanded it. The church too often denies and ignores it, but denial of the truth does not do away with the truth. (See below [Deeper Study # 9—Acts 2:44-45](#)).

Now note: Who are the rich and who are the poor?

- a. A rich person is anyone who has more than what others have, more than what the vast majority of the world has.
- b. A rich person is anyone who has anything to put back beyond meeting the true needs of his own family.

This is exactly what Christ and the Bible say time and again (cp. also [Mark 12:41-44](#); [Luke 21:1-4](#); [Acts 4:34-35](#); etc.).

In a summary statement, who is rich? A rich person is anyone who has anything beyond what he needs. What Christ demands is that we give all that we *are and have* to meet the needs of those in such desperate need. We are to hold back nothing. This is often the great complaint against Christians that we just do not believe, not really. The evidence of our unbelief is seen in the insistence of Christ, the demand that we give all we have to feed the starving and meet the desperate needs of the poor and lost of the world. But we don't. Gandhi, the great leader of India's independence, is said to have never embraced Christianity for this very reason. **How many others have rejected Christ because of our hypocrisy?**

"Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" ([Matthew 19:29](#)).

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" ([Matthew 6:21](#)).

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" ([Matthew 22:39](#)).

"But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you, Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" ([Luke 12:31-34](#)).

"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" ([Luke 19:8](#)).

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" ([John 13:35](#)).

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" ([John 15:10](#)).

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).

"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" ([1 Cor. 10:33](#)).

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)).

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" ([Ephes. 4:28](#)).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" ([1 Thes. 3:12](#)).

"Let your conversation [life, behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Hebrews 13:5](#)).

A final matter is this: Christ demands that we *give all we are and have* if we are to follow Him (see below [Deeper Study # 10—Luke 9:23](#)). Any attempt to *water down* what He often said fails miserably before an honest heart reading His Word

Thought 1. Just imagine how long ago the world would have been reached with the gospel if *professing* believers had been honestly committing their *total* lives to Christ, giving all they were and had to His cause of world evangelization!

DEEPER STUDY # 9 (Acts 2:44-45) Stewardship—Commitment—Self-denial—Possessions

(Acts 2:44-45) Stewardship—Commitment—Self-denial—Possessions: Christ demands that we give Him all we *are and have to enter heaven*. This is the reason the early believers gave what they had to meet the needs of the world. Christ had demanded it of the rich young ruler and *of His disciples*.

In our struggle to protect the glorious truth that man is saved by grace and grace alone, we often forget and neglect another great truth: to *follow* Christ is to serve and minister to our neighbor. To follow Christ is to deny self completely, all that we are as well as all

that we have. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, then we show that we truly love God. If we do not love and minister to our neighbor (**above self**), then we do not love God.

When we deny self by giving all we are and have ([1 John 4:20](#)), then and only then do we receive heaven and the treasure of heaven. To deny self, to give all we are and have is a hard saying, but Christ demands it. Our attempts to soften it do not annul His demand.

It is love of the world that makes us unwilling to give up the possessions we have obtained (**comfort, esteem, recognition, power, position**).

By refusing to take and give what we have, we make the fatal mistake of showing (demonstrating).....

1. that we love the things of the world more than we love people; that we prefer hoarding and extravagance, living sumptuously and comfortably to helping those who are so needful, so desperately needful.
2. that we love the world more than we love the hope of eternal life.
3. that we love the position, recognition, esteem, and power of the world's possessions more than we love Christ.

Now note a critical fact that we must heed: this point is often made a point of controversy. Men use every explanation possible to ease their consciences and to keep from having to give everything. There is a reason for this, and it is this that is so critical. Possessions pull a person away from God. It is difficult for a person who has possessions to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Why? There is a lure, an attraction, a force, a power, a pull that reaches out and draws any of us who look at or possess wealth. There are pulls so forceful that they will enslave and doom any man who banks and hoards and fails to turn and embrace God.

1. Possessions create the big "I" (cp. [Matthew 19:16, 20](#)). The man who *has possessions* is usually **looked up to, esteemed, honored,** and **envied.** Possessions bring **position, power, recognition.** They boost ego, and make a person self-sufficient and independent in this world. As a result there is a tendency for the rich person to feel independent and self-sufficient, that he needs nothing. And in such an atmosphere and world of thought, God is forgotten. It is forgotten that there are things that money cannot buy and events from which money cannot save.

Peace, love, joy—all that really matters within the spirit of man—can never be bought. Neither can money save a person from disaster, disease, accident, or death—the trials that are sure to come upon all.

2. Possessions tend to make one hoard (cp. [Matthew 19:21](#)). The Bible lays down the principle of handling money for all men, even for the poor:

"Let him labor...that he may have to give to him that needeth" ([Ephes. 4:28](#)).

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself " ([Matthew 19:19](#); [Matthew 22:39](#)).

The world reels in desperate need. People are starving, sick, unhoused, and unclothed by the millions. Teeming millions are spiritually lost and without God in this world, and they are doomed to die without ever knowing Him. When any of us sit still and objectively look at the world in its desperate plight, we ask: "**How in this world can any man hoard and not help—even to the last available penny? Why would any man keep more than what he needs for himself and his family?**"

As God looks at any man who banks and hoards, He is bound to ask the same question. In fact, His questions are bound to be more pointed and forceful. This is exactly what Christ said to the rich young ruler:

"Go and sell [all] that thou hast; and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" ([Matthew 19:21](#)).

Riches tend to make a man selfish. For some unexplainable reason, the more we get, the more we want. When we taste the things of this world and become comfortable, we tend to fear losing our possessions. We struggle to keep what we have and to get more. True, many are willing to make contributions, but only a certain amount, an amount that will not lower their overall estate or standing or level of comfort and possessions. There are few who give all to Christ, all they are and all they have to meet the needs of the world.

As Christ said, it is very difficult for the rich (**meaning those who have anything in comparison with most of the world**) to enter heaven. If we do not have compassion and take care of our brothers (**fellow man**) when they are in desperate need, how can we expect God to have compassion and take care of us when we face the desperate need for heaven?

It is foolish to think that a loving and just God will meet our need for eternal life when we would not meet the need of our fellow man for physical life. The rich (all of us who have anything in comparison with the rest of the world) have the means to help and to save human life, if we only would.

3. Possessions attach a person to the world (cp. [Matthew 19:22](#)).

Possessions enable a person to buy things that.....

- a. make him comfortable
- b. please his taste
- c. stir his ego
- d. expand his experience
- e. challenge his mental pursuit
- f. stimulate his flesh
- g. stretch his self-image

If a man centers his life upon the things of the world, his attention is on the world and not on God. He tends to become wrapped up in securing more and in protecting what he has. Too often, he gives little if any time and thought to heavenly matters. Wealth and the things it can provide within this world can and usually do consume the rich.

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" ([Luke 12:33](#)).

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" ([Acts 20:35](#)).

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" ([Romans 12:13](#)).

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" ([Galatians 6:10](#)).

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" ([1 Tim. 6:18](#)).

"But to do good and to communicate [give] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" ([Hebrews 13:16](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 10

(Luke 9:23) Cross—Discipleship: people in Jesus' day knew what it meant to "**take up**" a cross. They saw scores of criminals bearing the cross to the place where they were to be executed, and they witnessed scores of crucifixions, some even by the side of the roads that led in and out of the cities.

The cross does not mean merely bearing one's particular hardship in life, such as poor health, abuse, unemployment, invalid parents, an unsaved spouse, a wayward child. The cross is always an instrument of death, not just an object to carry or bear. The Christian is to die mentally and actively. He is to deny himself daily. He is to let the mind of Christ, the mind of humbling himself to the point of death, be in him and fill his thoughts every day (**Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 10:3-5**). He is to put his will, his desires, his wants, his ambitions to death. In their stead, he is to follow Jesus and to do His will all day long. Note this is not negative, passive behavior. It takes positive, active behavior to *will*, to *deny self*, to *take up* one's *cross*, to *follow* Christ. A person has to act, work, get to it, be diligent, consistent, and enduring in order to die to self.

There are several ways the believer dies to self. **Romans 6:11-13** spells out the ways as clearly as they can be.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:11-13**; cp. **Romans 6:2-10**).**

1. The believer reckons or counts himself crucified with Christ.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin" (Romans 6:11a**).**

"Knowing this, that our old man is [was] crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6**).**

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20**).**

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" ([Galatians 5:24](#)).

2. The believer reckons or counts himself dead to sin, but alive to God.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord ([Romans 6:11](#)).

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" ([1 Peter 4:2](#)).

3. The believer does not let sin reign in his body.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" ([Romans 6:12](#)).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" ([Col. 3:5](#)).

4. The believer does not yield his bodily members as instruments of sin.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" ([Romans 6:13a](#)).

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" ([Romans 8:13](#)).

5. The believer yields himself to God—as much as those who are alive from the dead are yielded to God.

"But yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" ([Romans 6:13b](#)).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" ([Romans 12:1](#)).

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" ([Romans 13:14](#)).

6. The believer yields his bodily members as instruments of righteousness.

"But yield...your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" ([Romans 6:13c](#)).

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" ([Galatians 5:16](#)).

It should be noted that one's hardship or burden can bring a person to the place where the Lord can deal with him. It is then that the hardship becomes the cross and denial of self that Jesus is talking about. With an act of self-denial, the Christian can then reckon himself alive to God ([Romans 6:13](#)). He can then follow Jesus. This is an act which can be described as committing all that one is and has to Christ. It is an act that needs to be repeated every day (cp. [Matthew 10:38](#)).

5. ([Acts 2:46](#)) Unity: a people who continued with one accord.

([Acts 1:14](#)) One Accord (*homothumadon*): means "to have the same mind or spirit; oneness of mind and heart". It means to be one in spirit and purpose. *Homos* means "same" and *thumos* means "spirit or mind". The believers, all 120 of them in the upper room, were of the same spirit, of the same mind. The idea is they were after the same thing, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were focusing and concentrating their thoughts and energies upon seeking God for the promise of His Spirit.

The word is used only eleven times in Scripture, ten of those times are found in Acts, one is found in Romans.

1. One accord in prayer ([Acts 1:14](#); [Acts 4:24](#)).
2. One accord in one place ([Acts 2:1](#)).
3. One accord in daily worship and the Lord's supper ([Acts 2:46](#); [Acts 5:12](#)).
4. One accord in obedience ([Acts 8:6](#)).
5. One accord in a business meeting ([Acts 15:25](#)).
6. One accord is needed to glorify God ([Romans 15:6](#)).

The phrase "**one accord**" is also used to refer to the unity of unbelievers and enemies of the gospel ([Acts 7:57](#); [Acts 12:20](#); [Acts 18:12](#); [Acts 19:29](#)).

6. ([Acts 2:46-47](#)) Church—Worship: a people who worshipped and praised God every day.

Note five things.

1. The believers were worshipping in the temple, praying and attending the regular hours of worship and prayers (cp. [Acts 3:1](#)).

2. The believers were worshipping in their homes, moving from home to home. They were sharing together in fellowship meals and in observing the Lord's Supper, remembering their Lord's death. (See below [Deeper Study # 11—Luke 9:4](#) for discussion stressing that the home was to be the center of ministry.)

DEEPER STUDY # 11

(Luke 9:4) Church, In Homes: the method Christ chose for evangelizing was the method of home evangelism (cp. [Luke 10:5](#)). Note this, for it should speak loudly and clearly to us. The disciple was to carefully investigate and search out a receptive family and home. He was to make that home the center for ministry.

Note several things about this method.

- a. It emphasizes the family, making it the very hub of ministry.
- b. It stresses stability, security, and settledness. Nothing on earth is to be any more secure and stable than the family. By placing the center of ministry in the home, the Kingdom of God becomes secure and stable.
- c. It centers preaching and ministering in the community, right where people live and walk. It makes the presence of Christ visible to all in day to day living.
- d. It serves as the center from which the message can move out in an ever widening circle, spreading from family to family.

Thought 1. The most ideal form of evangelism is probably this method given by Christ: a selected home and family serving as the center of witness within a community or town. The early church was definitely centered in the homes of committed believers ([Acts 5:42](#); [Acts 12:12](#); [Acts 16:40](#); [Acts 20:20](#); [1 Cor. 16:19](#); [Col. 4:15](#); [Philemon 2](#)).

3. The believers were worshipping with gladness and singleness of heart. The word "singleness" (*aphelotēti*) means "sincere, without hardness". Their hearts were soft and tender, easily touched and giving. There was no selfishness or withholding on their part. Where there was need, they gave.

Note their attitude was *gladness, joy, and rejoicing*. They were more than glad to worship and minister as the Lord had instructed.

Thought 1. Just imagine the radical, transformed behavior of these early believers. What could have caused such radical behavior? The proclamation of the *pure, unadulterated Word of Christ*. The giving of all we are and have is absolutely demanded.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" ([Luke 9:23](#)).

"Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord" ([Acts 11:23](#)).

4. The believers were praising God.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Romans 15:6](#)).

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" ([1 Cor. 6:20](#)).

5. **The results were twofold:** they gained favor with the people, and the Lord added souls to the church. **Note the word "saved"** (*sōzomenous*). It is in the present tense, "**such as were being saved.**" Salvation is a present experience of the believer as well as past and future (see below [Deeper Study # 12—1 Cor. 1:18](#) for discussion). The idea is that those who were being saved were being added to the church day by day.

"Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" ([Acts 4:4](#)).

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" ([Acts 5:14](#)).

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" ([Acts 6:7](#)).

"And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" ([Acts 11:21](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 12

([1 Corinthians 1:18](#)) **Salvation—Perishing:** men are placed into one of two categories here, *perishing* or *being saved*. A man goes through life having one of these two experiences: he is either perishing, moving ever downward toward the grave; or he is being saved, moving ever upward toward eternal life.

In the Greek, both words are continuous action; that is, **a man is perishing or is being saved**. The words are not static; a man is not sitting still. He is ever "**perishing**," more and more being gripped by the flesh and being conditioned to accept a perishing, dying world; or he is ever "**being saved**," more and more being freed to walk righteously and godly in this present world. The man who is saved is being conditioned to break loose from a perishing, dying world and to look for the glorious appearing of the new world. (See [Deeper Study # 13, Salvation—Romans 1:16](#).)

1. The terrible word *perishing* means to be lost, to be utterly destroyed, to lose eternal life, to be spiritually destitute, to be cut off.

- a. Perishing means to be in a lost state in this world.

It means to be.....

1. aging, deteriorating, decaying, dying.
2. without life (purpose, meaning, significance).
3. without peace (assurance, confidence, security in God's keeping).
4. without hope (of living forever).

- b. Perishing means to be in a lost state in the world to come.

It means.....

1. having to die
2. facing judgment
3. being condemned
4. suffering separation from God and from all loved ones
5. experiencing all that is hell

2. The great word **salvation** is used in Scripture to describe at least three experiences for the believer.

a. **The *once-for-all* experience of salvation.** It is an experience that has happened sometime in the past: "**Ye have been saved**" ([Luke 7:50](#)). It is the initial act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is receiving Christ into one's heart and life as Lord. It means being saved or delivered from sin, death, and hell; and being given the assurance that one will never be separated from God—either in this life or in the world to come.

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" ([John 17:2](#)).

"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish" ([2 Cor. 2:15](#)).

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)" ([Ephes. 2:5](#)).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" ([Ephes. 2:8](#)).

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" ([2 Tim. 1:9](#)).

- b. **The *continuous* experience of salvation.** It is an experience that is occurring right now, in the present. "**Ye are being saved**" ([1 Cor. 1:18](#)). It is a description of God's work day by day in the believer's life. It is the Holy Spirit of God working within the believer. (Cp. [Romans 6:14](#); [Romans 8:2](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Phil. 1:19](#); [Phil. 2:12-13](#); [2 Thes. 2:13](#).)

1. To guide and teach him and to deliver him through all the trials and problems of life.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" ([John 14:16-17](#)).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" ([John 14:23](#)).

2. To fill him with a heart of love, joy, and peace—all the fruit and resources necessary to live life to the fullest.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

3. To conform him more and more to the image of Christ.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" ([2 Cor. 3:18](#)).

4. To stir and equip him to live and witness for Christ day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, and moment by moment.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" ([Acts 1:8](#)).

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" ([2 Tim. 1:7-8](#)).

- c. *The redemptive experience of salvation that is to occur in the future.* **"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" ([Romans 13:11](#)).** This future reference to salvation points to the day of redemption—to the day of Christ's kingdom—to the day when Christ shall usher in His kingdom upon this earth—to the day when God will create a new heavens and earth and bring about His perfect will and rule throughout the universe.

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" ([Romans 8:21-23](#)).

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" ([1 Cor. 15:42-44](#)).

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" ([1 Peter 1:5](#)).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" ([2 Peter 3:10-13](#)).

DEEPER STUDY # 13

([Romans 1:16](#)) **Salvation** (*hē sōtēria*): means "deliverance, made whole, preservation". From what does man need to be saved and delivered and preserved? Scripture paints five descriptive pictures of salvation, showing man's great need.

1. **Salvation means deliverance from being lost.** Man is pictured as wandering about in the forest of life trying to go someplace, but unable to find his way. He is lost, and if he continues to stumble about through the forest of life, the underbrush and thorns of the forest will sap his strength and prick him to the point that he lies down and dies. His only hope is for someone to notice that he is lost and to begin seeking for him. This is where the glorious gospel of salvation comes in. God sees that man is lost and He sends His Son to seek and to save man.

Salvation means that Christ.....

1. seeks and saves man from his lost condition.
2. sets man on the right road that leads him to eternal life.

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?" ([Matthew 18:11-12](#); cp. [Luke 15:4](#)).

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)).

"Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" ([John 5:14](#)).

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" ([John 10:9](#)).

- 2. Salvation means deliverance from sin.** It means deliverance from mistakes, from corrupt ideas and thoughts, from moral impurity and from a crooked and perverse generation.

Sin is like.....

1. an infection, a disease for which man has no cure.
2. a master that enslaves and will not let go.
3. a crooked and perverse world that man cannot straighten out.

Man's only hope is for someone to discover a cure, someone with the intelligence and power to do it. This is where God steps in with His glorious salvation. God knows all about man's infection and enslavement by sin, all about his crooked and perverse world; so He sends His Son to save man, to cure him and liberate him and straighten out his world.

Salvation means that Christ saves man from the terrible tyranny of sin, from.....

1. the infection of sin.
2. the enslavement of sin.
3. the crooked and perverse world of sin.

Salvation also does something else. It frees man from the pricking and burden of guilt and shame, and it plants within man's soul a deep sense of health and peace with God.

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" ([Matthew 1:21](#)).

"And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace" ([Luke 7:50](#)).

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" ([John 3:17](#)).

"These things I say, that ye might be saved....And ye will not come to me that ye might have life" ([John 5:34](#), [40](#)).

"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" ([John 12:47](#)).
 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" ([Acts 2:40](#)).
 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" ([Ephes. 2:8-9](#)).
 "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" ([2 Thes. 2:10](#)).
 "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" ([2 Tim. 1:9-10](#)).
 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" ([Titus 3:5](#)).

3. Salvation means deliverance in the future from all evil and corruption: from aging and wasting away, deterioration and decay, death and hell. It is the complete redemption of man's spirit and body at the end of the world. It is salvation from the wrath of God—salvation that saves a man from being separated from God eternally. It is the life and exaltation which believers will receive at the final triumph of Jesus Christ. It is the salvation that will keep a man safe and preserve him both in time and eternity.

Man and his world are pictured as having a *seed of corruption* within their very nature, a seed of corruption that eats away causing them to.....

1. age and waste away.
2. deteriorate and decay.
3. suffer destruction and die.

Again, man is hopeless. He cannot stop himself and his world from death and destruction, but God can. God can save both man and his world; God can deliver them from the terrible fate of death and destruction. This is the message of salvation.

God loves man and his world and wants to save them, so He sent His Son into the world to save them.

Salvation is.....

1. the complete redemption of man's body and soul in the future: a redemption that saves man from the process of aging and wasting away, deteriorating and decaying, dying and being condemned to hell.
2. the perfect deliverance from the wrath of God: a salvation that saves man from being separated from God eternally.
3. the gift of life and exaltation: a salvation that will be given to believers at the final triumph of Jesus Christ.
4. the presence of perfect assurance: a salvation of security and preservation both in time and eternity.

"We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope"
([Romans 8:23-24](#)).

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" ([1 Thes. 5:9-10](#)).

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me [save me, deliver me] unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" ([2 Tim. 4:18](#)).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" ([1 Peter 1:3-5](#)).

"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" ([1 Peter 1:9](#)).

4. Salvation means deliverance from enemies and dangers. Man is pictured as walking in a world lurking with enemy after enemy and danger after danger. Man has to confront all kinds of enemies and dangers that attack both his body and soul, his mind and spirit. He faces all kinds of problems and difficulties, trials and temptations.

No matter how much he may long for peace and security, he is forced to combat.....

1. a hostile environment
2. a savage world of nature
3. an unknown universe
4. an uncertain future
5. unregulated urges
6. inevitable aging and dying
7. a lust for more and more (possessions, fame, wealth, power)

8. an evil pride and ego
9. greed and covetousness
10. unpreventable accidents
11. dreadful diseases

Man is seen as helpless in overcoming all the enemies and dangers that lurk in the shadows of this world. But God is not helpless—God can *save* man; He can gloriously deliver man as he journeys along the road of life. This is exactly what salvation means. God delivers man from the enemies and dangers that war against him. But note the next paragraph, a crucial point.

Salvation does not mean that God delivers man *from* experiencing difficulty and danger, not in this present world. God does not give a life free from the nature and circumstances of this world. What salvation does is deliver one *through* the difficulties and dangers of life.

Salvation means that.....

1. God gives *security and peace* of soul, no matter what happens.
2. God gives *safety* independent of circumstances and environment.
3. God gives *inward strength and courage* to bear the onslaught and attacks of danger.

"And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" ([Matthew 8:25-27](#)).

"When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" ([Matthew 14:30-31](#)).

"[God] hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David....That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us" ([Luke 1:69](#), [71](#)).

"Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health [salvation]: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you" ([Acts 27:34](#)).

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" ([Hebrews 11:7](#)).

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are

therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation" ([2 Peter 3:10-15](#)).

5. Salvation means to make well, to heal, to restore to health, to make whole both physically and mentally.

Man is pictured as a suffering creature, a creature who.....

- 1. gets sick**
- 2. becomes diseased**
- 3. struggles against deformities**
- 4. wears out from aging**
- 5. suffers infirmities**
- 6. has accidents**

Salvation declares that Christ is concerned with man's suffering. Christ saves and delivers man, rescues and restores man in body as well as in spirit. He takes a man who suffers and makes him whole.

"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour" ([Matthew 9:20-22](#)).

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" ([Mark 10:51-52](#)).

"If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" ([Acts 4:9-10](#)).

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" ([James 5:15](#)).