

W441_Salvation_6.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book and is number six of the series on the word salvation. It is our custom at this meeting. To read a portion of scripture together. And those of you who are listening, if you care to join us, will you switch off for a moment or two and read the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the first? First Epistle to the Corinthians. First chapter. First Epistle to the Corinthians. We have been giving consideration in the past few of these studies to that great word, salvation. And there are some who have a feeling that you reserve the word salvation for the gospel meeting in the evening. But it hasn't got very much place in the believer's meeting in the morning. But when you come to study the scriptures, you find that it begins and is the middle and the end of all things. For without salvation. There is no possibility of studying the word or any reason to do so. Without salvation. It's not possible to think of putting into practice any part of the Word of God. And without salvation, no purpose could be performed by a righteous God. But what would be just judgment and condemnation so that let's think for a moment. The way in which salvation is used in the scriptures just in passing. We think of old Simeon, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel. And he went into the temple and there he saw Joseph and Mary bringing the infant Christ.

[00:01:50] We took him in his arms and he said, Lord. Now it is the servant depart in peace. So mine eyes have seen thy salvation. And if your salvation and mine doesn't focus always and continuously in a person, it's not the salvation of God. Salvation is not a matter of doing something or even believing something. It's the work of a person in wonderful, condescending love that we believe and that we understand and that we preach to others. What again, when you think of the Samaritan woman raising the argument with our savior as to whether you should worship at this place or that place. That's very often a question that's raised by somebody who's feeling a bit uneasy. I have a feeling that a poor Samaritan woman was getting a bit uneasy. This one who was speaking to her seemed to know a bit too much about her. So it was sort of a red herring across the tracks. What do you say to us? Salvation is of the Jews. That seems a strange answer. She said, I'm not talking about salvation. I'm talking about worship. Is it? It's no good bothering about Jerusalem or Somalia or the Chapel of the Open Book or Saint Paul's Cathedral or anywhere else. Worship. Without salvation, it is utterly impossible. And again, you see, we get the apostle. Saying when he stood up in the

synagogue at Antioch and they said, if you have anything to say, say on neither is there salvation in any other, said Peter.

[00:03:34] And Paul echoes it. And he said. To you is the word of this salvation Saint. And when in Acts 28, he comes to the point where he's going now to bring all the glorious truths that we think of in Ephesians and Colossians, the wonderful revelation of the mystery, the church of the One body, the heavenly places accepted in the beloved. He said, The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it. That's all. It's a wonderful word, isn't it? That it contains all that and so much more. The word salvation. It also provided providing us with the garments of salvation. Do you remember that? And if you are in danger, you got a helmet of salvation. You remember that? Seriously. It clouds us. It equips us. Not only does it save us in the first instance, but it saves us right the way through. Now, the apostle said. And this is where we're making our start this evening, that it's worthy of all acceptation. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am now. I think it's been misunderstood. Some people take that and then they stand up before their fellows. And if they can't think of anything wicked they've done, they have a vivid imagination. The apostle didn't say he was the worst of sinners. He said, I'm the first, not the worst.

[00:05:13] The same word the first. I'm the first. Of a new company who had been converted by the immediate presence and work of Christ. And my salvation is a pattern of those who should afterwards believe unto life eternal. I think we got away that over a lot more before we can quite say we understand the purpose of that particular passage, but we can still come back to the other piece. This man. Who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees and trusting in himself as he had. When he began to realize what salvation involved and what it meant, he said, It's worthy of all acceptation. Surely we can say amen to that. Worthy of all acceptation. And this word accept gives us in another form, gives us the word to receive. I've got a note of three passages in the acts of the apostles that I'd like to link together while we've got this thought of how do you receive the Word of God? It says in Acts seven, this is where Stephen is rehearsing the prerogatives of Israel. At 738. This is he that was in the church, in the wilderness with the angel, which spake to him in the Mount Sinai and with our fathers who received the lively oracles to give unto us. That's how he speaks about the Old Testament scriptures, and particularly the Covenant, the Ten Commandments and all those things with which

we associate the name of Moses. This is a word which in another form enters into the word acceptance.

[00:07:02] It's something you welcome, something you receive. Look at the eighth chapter and the 14th verse. Now, when the apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God. You see, that's what it means. Will you believe it? You receive it the same as the question of life. You believe as you receive. In a major fight is putting the hand out to receive the gift of God. So it's a word that began to be used many times. Of those who were believers, they had received the word of God. And in the Chapter 11, as we've still got the acts in front of us, Chapter 11, verse one. We get another instance. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God. And so the story goes on and you could come right up to the present day. And those of you who are listening to me, if you are believers in Christ, you also are those who have received the Word of God. It's worthy of all reception, worthy of all acceptance. And then one more passage to complete this little word. James, The first chapter gives you a very salutary word and chapter one of James verse 21. James. 121. He says, wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.

[00:08:56] How you are to receive it. Receive with meekness. For surely when you're standing in the presence of the living God and we have in our hands, even though it's the authorized version or any other version, we have a book that's come down these years, come down against all opposition. Come down through the fires of martyrdom. And it has been translated more than any other book in more languages and printed more than any other. Here it is. So let us ever adopt an attitude. A casual attitude. I think every time we sit in our study ordered our desk or at our table or even stand here like this in a pulpit, we should remind ourselves, take off our shoes from off thy feet. For the place where I now to stand is holy ground. So this is the word of the living God. Well, that's enough. Perhaps just to introduce the thought that this is a wonderful book and a wonderful theme, and this great subject of salvation is before us, and we are going to now continue. Now salvation is from and it is to. And it is by this gate a few passages together to help us to see the sweep of this salvation. And as we had James in front of us, I think we'll look at chapter 520. Chapter five of James 20. He says,

speaking about somebody who has erred from the truth, let him know that he which converted a sinner from the error of his way.

[00:10:51] Shall save. A soul. From death. Surely that's a solemn issue, isn't it? You. May be addressed by James in this way. You may have the privilege and the responsibility. Of meeting someone. And if only some word that you drop or some attitude that you assume with regard to these things shall be blessed of the Lord. To convert a sinner from the error of his way. For the way he's going leads to death. The reason why that seems right unto a man. But the ends thereof are the ways of death. If you could only say, Oh no, this is the way. Walk in it and point the reason and the purpose and the great underlying basis. The finished work of Christ to save a soul from death. What a wonderful thought that it is possible for such as you and I to be associated with such a miracle of grace. And then the epistle to the Romans. Chapter five not only says saving from death, but it speaks about saving from wrath. He is. Suppose you may look at Romans five. Six, verse six for when we were yet without strength. In due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man. Will one die yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being now justified by his blood.

[00:12:46] We shall be saved. From wrath through him. Saved from death. Saved from wrath. For the wrath of God is manifested, it says in the first chapter. Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. So salvation, you see, has a wide sweep with regard to its effectiveness. And then we have that passage in Titus chapter two, which stresses the living and looking for a savior. But you'll see what it says from. Titus Chapter two, verse 14. He spelled verse 13 looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity. So he saves us from death. He saves us from wrath. He redeems us from all iniquity. And that also gives us the next step. He saves us to something and purifies unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. So it saves from and it saves to you. Go back to the Book of Exodus. You find that is emphasized. Shall we turn back for a moment not just to our memories. Exodus Chapter three and Chapter six. Chapter three. God says he has heard their cry. Verse eight. And I am come down to deliver them out of see, out, out of the hand of the

Egyptians and to bring them up out to that land unto a good land and large unto a land flowing with milk and honey. Unto the place of the Canaanites unto.

[00:14:59] That's the character of God's salvation. He doesn't leave you half way. Moses didn't say to the world, You've cut out under the Passover lamb, you've gone through the Red Sea, you're out of Egypt. Well, good afternoon, gentlemen. I'm leaving you. He was with them 40 years in the wilderness, and so was the cloud. Day and night. Oh, yes. He was going to take them in under Joshua, who led them out under Moses. And in chapter six, you get the repetition of this verse six. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people. And not only so in verse eight, and I will bring you in unto the land concerning which I did swear he takes out in order to bring in. In fact, you could say the whole Bible. The whole purpose of the ages would be a tremendous piece of machinery put into work to accomplish. What if there wasn't a goal? God hasn't redeemed us just because he wanted to redeem us. He's redeemed us because we were in bondage. And he has said he set us free and he's got a purpose of the ages beyond our conception to which we are moving.

[00:16:28] So we'll turn to another passage where we have this salvation, which is to, in Hebrews Chapter 725. Hebrews Chapter 725. This is speaking of the priesthood. And the contrast between the priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of Israel. And in Chapter seven. The difference is that these priests died one after another. But Christ has never had a successor appointed for him. He doesn't need it. Blessed be God. And in Chapter ten, when it picks up the same expression. But this man, he said the priests never sat down in connection with their ministry. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down. So there's a double contrast between earthly priests, however good they were, and the one priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Well, let's look at this one. Verse 23 of chapter seven. And they truly were many priests. Because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man. Because he continued it ever. Has an unchangeable priesthood. And I change that word because the word unchangeable. But doesn't quite say what it means here. It doesn't mean the priesthood that was going to change into something else. It's a priesthood that could never be passed on to anybody else. So let's put the other word in that this man,

because he continued with ever hath an in transmissible priesthood. That's not too big a word, is it, for us to use? It's a good one and it's what it means.

[00:18:25] No successor to the son of God. Isn't that the distinctive character of his work and all others that have followed or been before him? Now he goes on to say, wherefore this man at the right hand of God, wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him seeing he ever liveth to make intercession body. He saves them from the uttermost because he died for them on the cross and he saves them to the uttermost because he ever lives for them. We can't get away from Christ and we don't want to. His life, his death, his present session at the right hand. All for one great purpose to fill out the meaning of that word salvation. And while we've got this passage open, the word uttermost contains in it one of the great key words of Hebrews, one of the great key words of Hebrews, is going on unto perfection. No perfection by the Levitical priesthood. And this word uttermost doesn't look like that on the surface of an English word. But when you know that the word teleos is the word perfect, and when you know the word uttermost is Pantelis, you say, Oh, is that got the word in it? Yes. The word perfect in the epistle to the Hebrews is not getting better and better, but going right on and touching the tape at the end. So it's the very word that Christ used when he said it is finished.

[00:19:57] I've reached the end for which I came. So he's able to save unto all perfection right through to the end. Over all problems. Over all difficulties. Over all setbacks. Friends don't think you've done what I say when you leave the meeting where you first were converted and don't think you've done with it. When you can rattle off every book of the Bible and give a fine testimony at any meeting, you need him right to the end of the road, friends. And he's always there. He's always available. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. And he is able to save to the extreme limit all that come unto God by him. It's a salvation that's worth boosting, isn't it? A salvation about which we need not be ashamed, but rather that we should glory in it as the testimony gives us a warrant to do in the Word of God itself. Now, should we just refresh our minds by the way in which this salvation is implemented? The little word by. How is it brought to us? Well, we looked last time at the problem that comes in Ephesians two, verse eight. By grace, are ye saved through faith And that not of yourselves. And we found that it was not right to say that faith is the gift of God so that a person can stand and say, Well, if God hasn't given me faith, I can't believe the gospel.

[00:21:25] So I'm I'm not responsible. Now, that passage says that the whole scheme of salvation, the grace by faith, salvation, that is the gift of God. And I would remind you that we looked at that word gift, and we found that in every other occurrence of that word gift in the New Testament, it is someone bringing a gift to God. It was the wise men bringing their gifts to the infant Christ. It's the priesthood. Hebrews bringing a gift to God. And this is the one exception. Isn't this a breathtaking that instead of you or me bringing a sacrifice to God, it's God who stoops down and makes an offering to us. The offering of his beloved son whose name means salvation. And here it is, a grace by faith, salvation which is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. So that's one way in which it's brought to us. And then we have the emphasis upon grace in Romans, the 11th chapter, which I always think is worthwhile keeping in mind. Chapter 11, verse six. I don't think it's right for us to be slick with the Word of God. You can meet with some people who trot it out and you wonder whether it means anything to them. But on the other hand, in the pressure of the days in which we live, it's sometimes good to have what we might call classic passages, some passage which will more particularly stress whatever you're wanting to say than any other chapter, you know.

[00:22:59] But if you want to get one verse only, which will give you some little conception of what God means by grace, it's Romans 11, verse six. And watch it both ways so that you can't make a mistake. And that's a good thing when you're speaking to anybody. You tell her what to do and then you tell them what not to do. And you know that that happens in everyday life sometimes. I know the time when somebody told me to take the first turning on the right and they forgot the little turning that I stood and looked at. And I thought, Well, this must be the one. Here I go. I never got there. So whatever you do. You confess and you deny not. You see, like John the Baptist, you put it both ways. So it says here, Romans 11, six. And if by grace. Then it is no more worse. Otherwise, Grace is no more grace. Well, you could have left it there, but he says, Oh, no. I know some people who could only understand it if you put it backwards. So it is. But if it be a works. Then it is no more grace. Otherwise, work is no more work. But if you can't see it now, friends, I don't know what we can do. Surely the insistence is that if it's by grace, there is no possibility of merit at all. You cannot earn it.

[00:24:18] It's the gift of God. Well, that's a good text to keep in mind. Romans 11 six. Well, then again. Not only do we have the grace by faith, but we have it is through the

instrumentality, particularly of the Word of God. Do we need to turn to two Timothy Chapter 315. That from a child there is known the Holy Scriptures which are able to save you? No. No. The Bible is saved. Nobody. But it makes you wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. It's Christ Jesus who's the Savior. And it's the office of the Bible to point to him. John the Baptist is a good picture of what the Bible is doing every time a person opens its page. John the Baptist, seeing Jesus coming to him, he said, Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And there are very few chapters in the Bible, but what somewhere or another there will be a hint that this is preparing the ground for the mind for or something for this Lamb of God to appear in some form or another. So when Timothy was being taught by his mother Old Testament scriptures, for there were no New Testament scriptures when Timothy was a boy. He was being made wise unto salvation. Through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. The faith which was in Christ Jesus came afterwards, but he was being made wise. He was being taught on the Word of God that he needed a saviour.

[00:26:02] And the moment the Saviour was presented to him, he could receive him. It's a character of the Apostle Paul Salvation. He was a man steeped in scripture. He could have beaten any of us by repeating passages of the Old Testament and chapter and verse, and he's allowed to put into the scriptures concerning his own character that touching the righteous requirement of the law, he was blameless. But he wasn't a side man. Then he was stricken down on the road to Damascus and in the very same chapter and the next few verses, he's publicly confounding the Jews and proving that Jesus is the Christ. He got it all, you see, except the one person that was necessary to bring all together. And there was no doubt about it. You couldn't argue Paul out of that. So this is a comfort for any of us. Any of you at any time have little children under your care? Don't you be bullied into making them make confessions. Make confessions to you any time you like to ask them. But you be sure that you're laying this foundation that God will honor, that you're giving them the scriptures that make them wise unto salvation, and you'll have the joy of seeing the dawning come on their little faces, when one day the Scripture and their need meet in that presentation of Christ. That'll be the real thing. And so here we have this emphasis.

[00:27:28] And when you know that it says from a child there's about six different words in the New Testament that can be translated child and Brephos means a child on its mother's knee. So you needn't wait until the child can read Shakespeare or something

or the other. You can start straight off the moment they can say hi diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle. They can say, The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. Oh, yes, they are. Poor little brains won't be overworked by that, as some people think. The Word of God is able to make us wise unto salvation. So there's the word by the word. And then, of course, we had that passage in one Corinthians 18 read just now all the place of the cross occupies. Let's remind ourselves again one Corinthians, chapter one. Verse 18 for the preaching of the cross. Is to them that perish. Foolishness. What can be more foolish than speaking in a world that was governed by might like Rome in a world that was dominated by Greek philosophic thought wisdom? What could be more foolish than to point to a crucified man who was being put there? To die a death that was meted out to a runaway slave. And so that's the power of God unto salvation. People are so believing, doesn't it? Until the grace of God illumines the truth and opens the eye to see that he says here, for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.

[00:29:15] But unto us which are saved. It is the power of God. Here. You got the two words foolishness over against power. You say, Well, I thought foolishness would have been over against wisdom. But sometimes the apostle in his writing, he runs away with himself. I can sympathize with him. Because he might have put it in two verses. He might have said over against foolishness was wisdom, and then started again. Weakness was power. But he got that in mind for, he says, in this very selfsame argument. Boris is. The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. And we are definitely told in Corinthians that our savior was crucified in weakness. It is a marvel of it is that Corinthians tells you is the weakness of God and the foolishness of God and the poverty of Christ. That's the basis of our salvation. And you say, well, what's the idea? Well, friends, he hasn't started yet. Really? If is foolishness and his weakness and his poverty can bring us to glory. What will it be when he put forth his power and his wisdom? And he. So we'll be overwhelmed when that day comes. We will say then, if we've never said it before. Like the Queen of Sheba. Behold, the half was not told me. This is salvation, friends. When you stand before the throne dressed in beauty, not your own, it'll still be salvation.

[00:31:04] You are saved at once. You are saved continually right through by his life. And you are saved at the end from the power of death, from corruption, and from all the possibilities of evil ever again. Attacking you. Salvation. Let's look again for this. You may remember that we read in Romans the fifth chapter. Didn't pause on it then, but we

will Chapter five, verse ten. He says in verse ten, for if when we were enemies. I don't know whether you've noticed the transition of words in description of the believer who needs a savior. In verse six, he is just without strength. And in verse ten is an active enemy as all the difference in the world. Between a person who's too weak to save himself and a deadly enemy who's got to be dealt with. But don't you see, friends, you'll be lost if you can't save yourself. So we start right at the very extreme without strength. And in due time, Christ died for the ungodly at a negative ungodly. Just ungodly. Now it starts a positive. It says in verse eight when we were yet sinners. That's positive. And in verse ten, when we were enemies, that's positive. So it moves from without strength to active, rebellious enmity. If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son. Don't forget that Christ lives now, will you? And he's still there on your account.

[00:32:53] He shall also be saved by his life. We've been saved by his death once and forever. But we are being saved by his life. And salvation will not be entered until we look for the Savior who shall transfigure us to a body like unto his body of glory. That's salvation from the gutter. Most somebody put it to the uttermost. I don't know what Guttermouth means, but it sounds a good opposition to uttermost, doesn't it? And that's what he's done. From the lowest of the low to the position. Far above all. Salvation is there. And it's here. And it's there. The three Psalms that come together. The cross. Psalm 22, The Crook. Psalm 23. The Crown. Psalm 24. The shepherd in each one, but having a different aspect. Well, now, once more, we come back to the book. And. I noticed there's a passage in James that I think we might turn to, to round this off, which sometimes has been mistaken. I'm sorry to say, there is one publication which adheres to the Word of God has spent its strength in its translation that speaks very much against James. And there are some who think that James contradicts himself when he says. As we as he does, that you're not saved by faith only you're saved by works. You will find that really speaking about being saved by works. He places his argument on Genesis 22 and when Paul is speaking about being saved by faith, he builds his argument on Genesis 15.

[00:34:52] A simple thing, isn't it? Before ever, you start arguing as to whether Paul is contradicting James and James is contradicting Paul, it wouldn't be a bad idea to see whether you're contradicting yourself. So shall we see in James the second chapter? He says in verse 21, was not Abraham, our father, justified by works? That's where they

take it up. Oh, no, no, no. Paula's definitely said. How is he saved? How is he justified by works? No. Works are excluded. Only by faith. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. So James is wrong. So they say. But you see. Genesis 15, friends. Comes before Genesis 22. He can't help itself, can it? Years between the two here in Genesis 15, a man stands like that in the presence of God, and he believes that which is almost a physical impossibility. He believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness and he didn't do a single thing about it. Now years go by and now God, says Abraham. Take now thy son thine only son Isaac, whom thou lavished. Now, this is at the other end of the story. And when he did it, his hand was this is now I know thou fearest God. Did you see? James is quoting Genesis 22. And the scripture was fulfilled, which says Abraham believed God. Did you see Genesis 22 fulfilled? Genesis 15? It's easy for a man to say, I believe God and then go away and forget all about it.

[00:36:37] But by the time you reach that mountain and Genesis 22 and you still go on with it, you fulfilled the early promise, haven't you? So it says, and the scripture was fulfilled, which says Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. So he says, you see, a man is justified by his works, subsequently to his justification, simply by an act of faith. Well, I think that's about as far as perhaps we can go with this analysis without going more intimately into the subject. But I think you'll agree with me that it won't be very possible for us in this chapel and in this series of tape recordings to get very far away, either from the savior or from his great salvation. And if ever we get to that point, I think it will be time to let the whole lot run down in dew. So I now commend this to your prayers that it may be a word in season to somewhere at the beginning of things or it may be a little word to those who have to stand up and minister the gospel to others and might send us back always and continuously, not to the opinions of men, not merely to the tape recordings, but may they be an instrument in the hands of God and sending back to the lively oracles, to the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Amen.