

Are You Sure You're Saved?

For many years after I began studying the Holy Bible and realized that it was the inerrant Word of God, the subject question troubled me greatly. I came to the firm belief that Jesus was Lord and Savior, and that it was only through Him and His work on the cross that anyone could be saved.

Yet for some reason, I didn't feel saved. Something was severely lacking, and for several years I couldn't discern what it was. Surely I believed all that Scripture seemed to tell me. In my first "Christian Musings" book, I wrote many commentaries on the subject. The essay called "The Professor and the Professoer" was one of the many attempts to distinguish between those who "profess," that is those who believe that they have the saving faith, and those who "possess" that is, those who really have the saving faith. Even as I wrote that, I wasn't certain to which category I belonged. I seemed to have at least all of the external evidences normally attributable to a saving faith, and yet I wasn't sure. I read the writings and heard the sermons and teachings of many prominent Evangelicals who delivered excellent scripturally accurate messages on the subject. I am sure that the vital nugget that I needed was spoken of many times, yet the full appreciation of whatever it was, was not ready to penetrate.

Penetrate, that's the key word! I believe I had most of the intellectual aspects of the saving attitude well entrenched in my mind, but I couldn't tell whether or not they had penetrated my heart and soul. For the first three years after I began to read Scripture, read and listen to the recordings of good biblical expositors, I had yet to meet a Christian, or even attend any Christian assembly. Having been all my life a confirmed introvert and loner, my normal approach to nearly everything was to never ask questions, even in school, nor seek help from anyone for anything. Thus I didn't even have the testimony of others. If there is a good side to this, it is that I was well prepared to spend all of the time it took to find in the Scripture the answers to verses I could not understand. I also benefited from the analyses of others, but soon learned that they were not 100% reliable.

I found that intensive prayerful and diligently searching through the Scriptures was the most reliable way to find the real truth about all things spiritual. However, I soon learned that this could not happen until the awesomeness of God and His Word severely humbled me. It was then that I realized that to obtain the meaning of some of the more subtle and less evident truths required absolute sincerity, single-mindedness, and recognition that only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit could any of them be revealed.

What I believe is not sufficiently emphasized by most evangelicals, is the most important pre-requisite to salvation. There can be no saving faith unless one comes to the horrible realization that he or she is doomed to eternal damnation unless one can find a Savior who can be trusted to rescue them from this inevitable fate. Think about it. How can anyone possibly put their faith and trust in the Savior unless they fully realize that they are in desperate need to be rescued from what their fate surely will be without Him. We must know with absolute certainty that we are doomed otherwise. There can be no equivocation or hope for any other way except through Jesus. Until that is fully entrenched in our hearts, all the professing of faith, trust and belief avail nothing. Our Lord and Savior will save no one regardless of how sincere is his profession of faith unless that person is fully convinced that he or she is absolutely in dire need of a Savior, and then recognize that Jesus is the One and Only One who can save. The belief that through your own “virtuous life” or “good works”, you can in any way mitigate that fate, must be completely abandoned.

For only through some miracle can you escape that fate. That miracle is the vicarious suffering death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Again until and unless this fact fills your mind, heart and soul with the full understanding of the horrible fate that is otherwise before you, I don't believe that salvation is obtainable. Is that too harsh a statement? I don't think so. I believe that many professors of the faith believe they are saved simply because they have heard the Gospel and believe it, but are not sufficiently aware of what they have need to be saved from. Many who have lived good and honorable lives don't seem to understand that they are just as much damned because of their “minor” sins as is the most hardened lifelong criminal. From God's point of view, the very least sinful

human that ever lived is as damned as was Hitler, absent Jesus as their Savior. If somewhere in your Christian walk you have not experienced that “fear and trembling” (2Corinthians 7:15, Philippians 12:12) then it is probably time that you look again at your “professed” faith.

That was the missing element in my faith. I long believed every Word in our God-Authored Holy Bible. However, I failed for a long time to fully understand the absolute importance and consequences of even these minor sins. I pray that others who may read this, and who share my previous lack of appreciation of this vital need, will find my story useful in solidifying the certainty of their own salvation.