

## A Salvation Worth Boasting About

Recently an inmate in a local prison was rejoicing that he had “heard the truth” and all his sinful desires had been taken out of his heart, including his addiction to pornography. A minister who was scheduled to preach later in the service openly corrected him. “No, my brother! We are all sinners! I am a sinner just like you! I sin every day that I live.” The inmate did not argue, but reached out and took the minister's hand, saying, “Can we pray right now?” Confused, the minister said, “Yes, but what do you want to pray about?” The answer was immediate, “For your salvation.”

Without entering an argument of whether the inmate was right or wrong in this incident, it does raise a valid question. If “believers” are still “sinners” who must “sin every day,” what is the advantage of becoming a “believer?” Sin-laden Christians not only bring shame upon themselves, but upon God also. When Israel was scattered throughout the nations because of their iniquities, God said, *“they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land.”* Ezekiel 36:20. God was insulted that these were still being called his people. He told them *“...be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.”* Ezekiel 36:32. If we rejoice in a “salvation” that leaves us in sin, aren't we boasting in something God would be ashamed to be identified with?

The apostle Paul addressed this issue in his epistle to the Hebrews; *“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats (doctrines), which have not profited them that have been occupied therein”* Hebrews 13:9. The doctrine of the modern “church” has deteriorated from the truth to the extent the gospel which was preached by the apostles sounds “different” and “strange” in this twenty-first century. It seems we have arrived at a time in which many in the churches are neither “believers” nor “unbelievers;” they are what I call “unbelieving believers.” They proudly raise their hands to indicate “I am a believer,” but when the truth of the gospel is preached, they cry with one voice, “I don't believe that!”

Salvation is “by grace,” which means it is a “free gift.” It is received *“through faith,”* which tells us that “believing the truth” is the channel through which the salvation of God comes to us. Salvation is *“not of ourselves,”* meaning we cannot save ourselves. Salvation is “the gift of God,” which means we cannot purchase it. Finally, salvation is *“not of works, lest any man should boast.”* This last phrase offers proof that our “salvation” is something to be highly admired and greatly desired. It is the greatest cause for boasting a person will ever know, yet it gives no place for boasting in ourselves.

Many years ago as a very sincere young minister, I would

fast for thirty days at a time specifically seeking “crucifixion” or “sanctification.” There were three years in which I fasted more days in the year than I ate, but I never received anything I could boast in. The truth is, in the eyes of onlookers, I had much to boast in, because they had never seen anyone “fast and pray” as much as I, but it never brought me what I was seeking, and in time I was back in open sin.

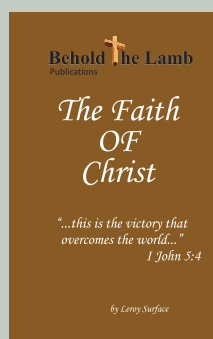
Twenty six years ago, when the knowledge of the truth concerning the shed blood of Jesus shined into my heart, I received in a moment what I had failed to attain in years of fasting and praying. I was free! My heart was purified, my mind was washed, I was made *“free from sin”* in a moment of time, but I could not boast in anything I had done because I had done nothing except believe the truth of the gospel. It was not that I had “finally arrived,” because the path I traveled so many years before did not lead to sanctification, but only to more self-righteousness. This freedom and sanctification was the work of Christ alone and my boasting could only be in him.

Many teach “who” and “what” we are “in Christ Jesus.” Most often, such teaching leaves the student trying to be what they are told “they are.” Oh what a confusing trip to take. The real revelation is “who” and “what” Christ is “in you.” The apostle has previously revealed that God has chosen the “foolish,” the “weak,” the “base,” the “despised” and the “nothings” <sup>1</sup>1 Corinthians 1:27:28 Of this world to *“destroy the wisdom of the wise”* and *“bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent”* <sup>1</sup>1 Corinthians 1:19.

Only those who truly understand they “are nothing” without Christ and can “do nothing” without the Holy Ghost, can Christ be fully glorified in. They have nothing of themselves, but only Christ to boast in. Unto them, He is *“wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.”* Therefore, because of him, they are “wise, just, holy,” and “redeemed.” So far from being “sinners,” the “redeemed” are “as He is” <sup>1</sup>John 4:17, even in this present world, and Christ “is glorified in them” <sup>II</sup>Thessalonians 1:10-12. Oh, let the rejoicing begin!

*“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth (boasts), let him glory (boast) in the Lord.”*  
<sup>1</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30-31

*“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.”* Ephesians 2:8-9



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