



Gravity

John 6:68 NIV

Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

What Pulls on You?

Recently I was asked by a teacher for whom I had substitute taught if I considered going back to school to get my teaching credential. She contended that I was a talented teacher and it would be a benefit to my family financially if I changed careers. As I considered her suggestion, I wondered if I was a better teacher or preacher. Was I more fit to be a pastor or work in a classroom? The case could be made that I would be of greater worth teaching kids than serving in a church and some would contend it is so. As I sat in my office thinking about my work and calling, the question arose. Who really is Christ to me and what part does His salvation play in my life? This was not a rhetorical question nor even a theological one. It was one of great concern for me and I had to make a clear determination what my answer was if I was to make sense of careers and vocations and life work.

Let us consider this question squarely. What part does salvation play in your work? How does it determine the sort of work you do and how you do it? What about at home, with your family? What does salvation bring to your home and your interactions with your family members? Does salvation impact your spending habits, the way you prepare for Christmas, how you behave online? Is salvation important to your shopping or even your diet? What part does salvation play in your life?

Gravity is the force that pulls matter together and salvation is the gravity of God's Kingdom. It holds the rightness and goodness and truth in place and establishes them in the human heart. Salvation is the power of God working in the soul, creating holiness and eternal life. As Peter put it, **"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is ""the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."** (Acts 4:10-12 NIV) There really is nowhere else to turn for salvation but Jesus, and His salvation is the force of God to make broken and morally lost people perfect in every way.

There is an example of how the salvation of Christ functions in the New Testament and it is one of the loveliest of all accounts. Christian ditties have been written about Zacchaeus and sometimes the almost comical description of His effort to climb above the heads of the crowd to get a look at Jesus distracts us from noticing the full power of Christ salvation at work. His transformation was nothing short of miraculous. As a tax collector, he was given the opportunity by the Roman government to cull from the people as much revenue in taxes as he could squeeze out of them. The Romans expected a certain sum of money to be

sent to them and the tax collectors could keep what ever they gathered in excess of that. When salvation came to Zacchaeus, his personality was completely reworked by God. The change was immediate. **But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."** (Luke 19:8 NIV) Salvation brings a moral transformation that drives out all sin and lust. No longer is there a craving for what is not of God but a growing desire to live a holy life. Jesus quickly affirmed the change in Zacchaeus and who the generator of that force was. **Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."** (Luke 19: 9-10 NIV)

The gravitational force of salvation results in an unshakable loyalty to Christ and His Kingdom. It is difficult to reflect on a particular decision made by the Apostle Paul and not be amazed by it. As Paul was returning to Jerusalem after his extended missionary journey, he met with the elders of the Ephesian church. He shocked them with his certainty of what awaited him in Jerusalem. **"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me."** (Acts 20:22-23) Paul explained to them why he needed to go to Jerusalem anyway, despite knowing what awaited him there. **However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.** (Acts 20:24 NIV) Later, when Paul arrived in Caesarea, a short distance from Jerusalem, a prophet of the church approached him and warned of the danger of Paul continuing to Jerusalem. **After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"** (Acts 21:10-11 NIV)

Although the church members wept at the prophecy and begged Paul not to continue to Jerusalem, the Apostle refused to relent. **"Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."** (Acts 21:13 NIV) What we see here is the loyalty to Christ that salvation generates. It pulls the Christian to Jesus by supernatural force that cannot be explained by natural causes. Paul, in his will, decided to go to Jerusalem out of loyalty to Christ, trusting Him with whatever awaited. The Christian, with salvation, develops a trust in God that cannot be shaken by circumstances. The knowledge grows that it is better to stay faithful to Jesus than do anything else that comes to mind.

Here are some examples of how salvation affects the way a Christian thinks. Honesty is more important than achieving personal goals. Mercy is of greater value than getting your way. Forgiveness rises above making others pay. Love supersedes progress. Faith in Christ conquers complaining and worry. Salvation pulls Christian people together into a union with God that makes perfect peace and joy the end result. The more you let Jesus rule in your heart, the greater the work of salvation in your soul. At some point, Jesus Christ Himself will mean more to you than anything and it will be then that you will discover why you exist and what your purpose is in life.