

# SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

## “Questioning Our Salvation”

Scripture Reading: PHILIPPIANS 1:6

- ) **SLIDES 1-6.** Bible Jeopardy!
- ) Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 7.** Today we will conclude our sermon series “*Shepherd the Flock.*” I have titled today’s message “*Questioning Our Salvation.*”
- ) I belong to a Facebook group called “*The Daily Spurgeon Group.*” This group shares sermon quotes from Charles Spurgeon that great 19<sup>th</sup> century preacher from England who preached reformed theology as I do. Members also post questions they may have about theology and personal concerns they may have about Christian living.
- ) As your pastor who has the responsibility to shepherd this flock, I thought that I would share a FB post I recently read that was posted on this Spurgeon group. I thought it would be very appropriate to end this series by encouraging all of us to have joy in our Christian walk. And I want to use my spiritual gift of preaching to edify you today.
- ) **SLIDE 8.** Here is the post a young lady wrote to the group: “*I have wrestled whether knowing if I’m saved or not. I said the sinner’s prayer when I was 12 and got baptized. There have been times I’ve felt very close to the Lord but all I do is question it. How can I know for sure? Please pray for me. The last thing I want is to go to hell.*”
- ) I’m convinced that this lady is sincere in her plea for guidance. She has doubts and she needs some answers. So, how would you respond to this young lady’s situation?

- ) **SLIDE 9.** I cannot say everything this morning that I would like to say. We don't have enough time. But I would like to point you to a 5-week sermon series I delivered back in 2009 titled "*Am I Saved?*" This is a more in-depth look for anyone who may question their salvation.
- ) So, this morning, let's do the abridged version. Let's dissect what this lady wrote, look at the Word of God, and draw some quick Biblical conclusions.
- ) My first concern is the genuineness of her salvation. Is she truly saved now? Is the Spirit of God dwelling within this woman? I don't know the answer to that question. I am not the judge.
- ) According to her own words, she seems to be basing her salvation on two events that occurred in her life when she was 12 years old. And I do not know her age now, but she appears to be in her mid-40s by her FB picture.
- ) **SLIDE 10.** Many people base their salvation on a **PRIOR** act in their life. This lady says 1) she said the sinner's prayer and 2) she was baptized.
- ) **SLIDE 11.** Some others may say similar things like 2) all the other kids were doing it, 3) I went forward at the altar call, 4) I raised my hand at the invitation when all eyes were closed, and all heads were bowed, 5) I signed the card in the pew.
- ) So, I ask. Was this event in the life of this lady genuine? That is the big question now, isn't it? I don't know. First, let's look at this from the negative point of view first.
- ) There is a trend going on in Christianity today by some very well-meaning Christians that salvation and eternal life are extremely easy to obtain. How? Because there's a formula. Just say the sinner's prayer. Repeat after me. Then go and get baptized, and you're all set for eternity. "*Welcome to the family of God!*"

- ) I assure you, there are many people walking the face of this earth who think their eternity is secure and they are right with God because, at one time in the past, they said the sinner's prayer and were baptized. It's a one-shot deal and I am good.
- ) **SLIDE 12.** Is it that simple? What does the Bible say? First of all, there is no such thing as the sinner's prayer. The Bible does say, however, that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (ROMANS 10:13).
- ) What does that look like? That moment of calling on the name of the Lord looks different for each and every one of us. It is not a canned prayer that one can repeat. It is a work of the Holy Spirit in what we call regeneration when the old has gone and the new has come. And for some, that transformation cannot be narrowed down to one specific time or event. And that's OK. Everyone's conversion story is unique.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** The Bible also teaches this. 2COR 13:5 tells us this: "*Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?*"
- ) The apostle Paul is encouraging the people at this church in Corinth (and us) to take a test. And not just to test ourselves when we had some kind of emotional experience when we were twelve years old and we said the sinner's prayer. No. Test yourself today. Test yourself again tomorrow.
- ) Every Sunday I encourage everyone in here to test themselves before we partake in Communion. Right? We must do a self-examination to make sure we are right and in the faith.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** If our self-examination only leads us back to a prior act, then we probably **FAIL** the test. Is that really all you are standing on? One event that happened decades ago? Again, there's a whole lot more that I could say right now about this conclusion, but time does not allow for that. (sermon series)

- ) **SLIDE 15.** Now, let's look at this from a positive side. Let's assume this lady is a genuine Christian. There was a genuine conversion in her life from an old creature to a new creation in Christ. Why does she have doubts? Why does she feel like she falls short? Why is she questioning her salvation?
- ) You know there are many genuine Christians who feel this way. Maybe you do too. I want to take the remainder of our time this morning and give you good news on how you can be assured of your salvation.
- ) Because the last thing I want you to do or this lady to do is go to hell when they die. But I'll say it again. As your shepherd, I am responsible to you. But I am not responsible for you. So, why do some Christians question their salvation?
- ) **SLIDE 16.** Some Christians question their salvation because they believe their **SIN** is too great for God to forgive. Some people believe they are unforgiveable because of the sin or sins they do in their Christian walk. I committed adultery so I must not be a Christian. I cheated big time on my income tax so I must not be a Christian. I had an abortion so I must not be a Christian.
- ) Have they ever thought this; I gossiped so I must not be a Christian. I felt anger towards my spouse so I must not be a Christian. I had a lustful thought about that other woman so I must not be a Christian. Don't think so. We rate our sins and the really major ones may bring our Christianity into question, but the minor ones never do.
- ) God does not rate our sins. One is just as offensive to a holy God as the next one.
- ) Or they base forgiveness on human forgiveness (or the lack of). If others cannot forgive me, then God cannot forgive me either. My sin must be far too great. Listen. God is in the forgiveness business. That's what the cross was all about.

- ) The apostle Paul knew who he was and what he was. Yet he was still convinced that God had forgiven him.
- ) **SLIDE 17.** Some Christians question their salvation because they feel like they can never be **GOOD** enough to be accepted by God. They try and they try, and they try. Again, they base their salvation on their human performance and what they have experienced in human relationships.
- ) Sometime during their life, they were always trying to please another person—a parent, a spouse, a teacher, a boss, etc. And they never measured up. They and their performance were never good enough. So how can I possibly please God when His expectations must be so much higher?
- ) The Galatians had this same problem and Paul had to correct them. He says this in GALATIANS 3:3: *“Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?”*
- ) The Galatians were trying to perfect their faith by works. And that will never happen. Is the Christian called to do good works? Certainly. EPHESIANS 2:10 says this: *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*
- ) But doing good works and striving for perfection are two different paths. Do not expect to be perfect. We all fall short. That is not giving anyone a license to sin. It does mean that no one is righteous and that’s why we all need a Savior.
- ) Let me sum up both these views with a conclusion and how I responded to this lady.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** Some Christians question their salvation because they fail to base their salvation on the **WORK** Christ has already done. It is so human to inject ourselves into the salvation equation. There must be something we contribute in some way because that is what life has taught us.

- ) To buy a car I must provide the necessary funds. To have better health I must diet and exercise. To find a spouse I must meet his/her expectations. To get a job I must have certain qualifications. Everything in life is man centered.
- ) **SLIDE 19.** But salvation has never been man centered. It's always been God-centered. What do I mean by that? Salvation is not based on what man can do. It is based on what God has done. HEBREWS 10:19-22 says this.
- ) Have you truly trusted your soul, your eternity to Jesus Christ? Only you, like this lady on FB, only you know the answer to that question. Get out of the way and allow God to transform you from an old creature to a new creation in Christ. Call on His name today. This is no formula and there is no canned prayer to recite. It's between you and God.
- ) Do you believe and trust in the work Christ has already done by His death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins and His resurrection from the grave for your eternal life?
- ) **SLIDE 20.** If so, as your shepherd, I want to share with you these words of encouragement today from PHILIPPIANS 1:6: *"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*
- ) So, you question your salvation? Do not place any confidence in you. Place all your confidence in Jesus Christ.

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