

6-20-2021 Weekly Message

Meditation of the Week: Psalm 91:1-16

Text: Ephesians 2:1-9

Sermon Title: **Faith giving salvation by grace, and faith in vain not to be saved**

Apostle Paul testifies by the Holy Ghost of the gospel of Christ by grace giving eternal life. He preached the gospel saying, even though anyone who has lived like the child of the devil in the world is to be saved by grace only if he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, when a thief who was crucified with Jesus saw him and confessed, "**Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.**" (Luke 23:42), Jesus said to him. "**Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**" (Luke 23:43).

When he called Jesus "Lord," he believed in Jesus Christ as the Christ and savior coming as King. Upon knowing his faith, Jesus answered him saying he shall be with him in paradise that day. Jesus knew all that he had done all kinds of sin as a child of the devil, but the moment he called Jesus as the Lord, he saw his faith and saved him by grace.

The thief must have believed in Jesus as the Lord who is the only one that forgives his sins. He called upon Jesus as the Lord with sincere repentance. If he had been released before he died on the cross, he would not have given up his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ until he died. Jesus knew that his faith was not in vain, so he forgave all his sins and saved him by grace. He was saved not by any works of his own, but only by grace. Therefore, he had nothing to boast himself of the salvation he received.

Apostle Paul testified very concisely and accurately to the Ephesian church members about the gospel of grace:

"**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Even when he wrote to the saints in Rome, he clearly testified of the salvation by grace and not works of the law:

"**Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin..... Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**" (Romans). 3:20,28)

He also testified of the reason why Gentiles are saved, but Jews who followed the righteousness of the law are not:

**"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."** (Romans 9:30-33)

Therefore, regardless of Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, rich or poor, no matter what kind of wicked or sinner are, if man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ who died for him on the cross is to be saved to be child of God.

Meanwhile, Apostle Paul left a warning message to the Corinthians thinking there may be someone who believes in vain:

**"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; 5And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:"** (1 Corinthians 15:1-5).

When Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church members, he reminded them saying, "**if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.**" He conveyed a message of concern that among those who profess to believe in Jesus, there may be some who do not hold fast to the gospel and believe in vain. These people are saying that they believe in Jesus with mouth, but they may not be saved by grace. In other words, they go to church and worship every Sunday, but they are only religious people who are not regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

The parable of the sower that Jesus told, reminds us once again of the true and false faith:

"**And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? 10And he said, Unto you it is given to know**

**the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.**

**12Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.**

**13They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.**

**14And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:9-15).**

According to the parable Jesus told, the first three kind of people cannot be saved because their faith in vain. and it is clear that the fourth one is saved because he holds fast to the word of God, and brings forth fruit with patience.

Regarding those who bear fruit in the word of the gospel, tApostle Peter testified:

**" Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1 Peter 1:23-25)**

Then, we need to meditate deeply of the faith in vain not giving salvation. This is because so many people who confess to believe in Jesus have no choice but to go to hell after attending church for the rest of their lives just because of their faith in vain. The parable of the sower teaches us that even if only one fourth of those who claim to believe in Jesus are saved to bear the fruit statistically. This means that only small number of people are to be saved. But we cannot help thinking pessimistically of much fewer than one fourth of Christians looks to be saved in reality in the end time.

It is necessary to think deeply about how many people who confess their faith in Jesus and believe that they will go to heaven after death attending church service every Sunday to say hello God with their eyes to comforting themselves. Those who profess to believe in Jesus may worship and

praise Jesus while confessing with their lips that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, but before confessing that they believe in Him, how desperately they realize that they are miserable sinners? This is something that they should ask themselves and answer unto themselves. On the other hand, the thief, who was crucified with Jesus, grievously realized that he used to be the enemy of God, and cried out to Jesus, “Lord!” If we imagine how much loudly his shouted must have been, his voice must have been like as degree of a thunder shaking heaven and earth.

However, we need to know how desperately those who profess to believe in Jesus cried out before Him as they repent their sins. Perhaps most people think they are cleaner than the thief on the cross with Jesus.

Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes, who considered themselves righteous, that the sins in them were no different from the sins of the thief. But they did not understand it. Most people who confess to believe in Jesus today are not aware that they are same kinds of sinners:

**"And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; 19Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. " (Mark 7:18 -23)**

When we look again at how the faith in vain of the three kinds of people in the parables of Jesus, if they realized that they were wretched sinners lived as the enemy of God, how would they let the evil take away the word of God, and how they could give up their faith because of persecution from others? How they can exchange their faith with riches and the pleasure of life? Their faith is totally in vain to be cast into hell.

Most people living in the last days, including those who claim to be Christians, love themselves, love money, and love the world, but do not know that they are enmity with God. Even in the churches, it may not enough to count true Christian with our ten fingers. Jesus said, when he come again how he can find out some one in faith? Amen. Hallelujah!