

Confirmation Lesson 33 - "What Is 'Salvation'?"

Lesson Preparation

Possibly meet in Arden Forest?

- Purpose:** To give the class a basic understanding of salvation as both **relational** - restoring our relationship with God - and **actual** - empowering us to be better people.
- Core Teaching:** Justification and sanctification, forgiveness and liberation, relational and actual, both - together - constitute salvation.
- Small Group Resources:** **Copies of "The Word On Salvation"** for each class member. **Bibles; flip chart and a marker, roll of Life Savers**
- Preparation:** **masking tape, markers, Small gift wrapped package** to use in total group session. **Butcher paper on front wall** to build "Salvation" word collage.
- Scripture:** **Romans 13:11**
*"Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For **salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;***

Luke 19:8-10

*All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house**, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."*

II Corinthians 5:20-6:2

*So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, **now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!***

Large Group

- Singing:** Music team sings 2-3 high energy songs.
- Offering:** Two students bring the offering collection box to the leader.
- Doxology:** Sing Doxology
- Affirmation of Faith:** Have the class join together in reciting the "Apostle's Creed".

Confirmation Lesson 33 - *“What Is ‘Salvation’?”*

Large Group

Introduction to the lesson: 1) Activity #1: Game - “Hug Tag”

Have the class go to an open area. Everyone is to link up arm and arm in groups of two. Make sure that the groups are spread out so that there is plenty of running room between. Break one couple apart. One of the two is “it” and tries to chase and tag the other person. If this happens, the person tagged becomes “it” and chases the other person. The person who is being chased can become “safe” (or “saved”) by linking arms with one of the couples. Once they are linked, the person is safe.

The problem is that no more than two people can be linked. Once the person being chased links to a couple, the member of the couple who was not linked to must break free and run. Of course, all this new person has to do is to find a new couple near by and link up - and create a new person being chased.

In the game, as long as you are linked and connected, you are safe. Once you are on your own, you are not safe - to are vulnerable (and chase-able). The parallels between this game and the Christian understanding of salvation are obvious - stay linked (to God) and stay safe (saved).

Play the game for a few minutes, then have everyone sit down and debrief the game.

- Ask:**
- 1) *In the game, when are you safe?*
 - 2) *When are you vulnerable and chase-able?*

Share with the class that - at a very simple level - this is what the Christian faith means by “salvation”: a long as we remain connected to God we are safe, saved, in good shape. When we become disconnected from God and from other, we have problems.

2) **Build a group collage on what we know about salvation.**

See example below:

What I Think Of When I Hear The Word “Salvation” or “Saved”

Confirmation Lesson 33 - "What Is 'Salvation'?"

Large Group

Ask: *What do you think about when you hear the words "salvation" or "saved"?*

Write: the group's answers on newsprint. Try to get as many answers up as possible. Adults are also encouraged to give ideas and answers

Let the class know that today we will be exploring what we mean by the words "saved" and "salvation".

Prayer: Large group leader closes with prayer.

Dismiss to small group: Students follow small group leaders to their respective locations.

Small Group

Opening Prayer: Begin the small group session with a prayer. You may want to do a sentence completion prayer, a "build a prayer", or ask for a volunteer to pray. The main idea is for the youth themselves to pray. This is how they learn and how they become comfortable with prayer.

Discussion: **Take a few moments to discuss the opening.** Ask the group some of the following questions.

Option A

- 1) *What was it like playing the game?*
- 2) *What's good about being connected to someone in the game?*
- 3) *What is the risk when you are unconnected?*
- 4) *Before today, what was your understanding of what "being saved" meant?*

Share with your group that when we are "saved" we are always saved **from** something and **for** something. See if the group can identify what we are **saved from** in our relationship with God and in our relationship with others. Then see if they can identify what we are **saved for**. If it's helpful, you might want to use the flip chart and draw a line down the center of the page. You could write "saved from" on one side and "saved for" on the other and then write the group members responses. Feel free to add your own.

Saved <u>From</u> . . .	Saved <u>For</u> . . .

Confirmation Lesson 33 - *“What Is ‘Salvation’?”*

Let the group know that we are now going to look at how the Bible uses the image of “saved” (or salvation) to talk about our relationship with God.

Biblical Snapshots of Salvation: **Take the roll of Life Savers and pass it around** the group so that each member can get one. As you do this, ask the group:

How many of you have seen the movie Titanic?

Why did so many people die?

Share with the group: one of the problems was that there were not enough life boats. Life boats and life vests, and life savers (rings shaped like the ones we are eating) are designed to save people when they are in trouble in the water.

Share with the group that today we are going to look at a different kind of “life savers” - stories where the Bible talks about what it means to be “saved” in our relationship with God. Pass out the cards and have group members read them in numeric order. After the scriptural ‘life saver’ is read, have the reader ask the group the question to help the group understand how our faith understands salvation.

The Word On Salvation: Hand out copies of *“The Word On Salvation”* to your group members. Repeat the process you used last week on *“The Word On Jesus”*. Go around the circle and have everyone read a section round robin style until you are done. Then briefly discuss the statement. Or, if you think this is over the group’s head, just lift up and summarize parts of the sheet.

1) What gets your attention in this statement?

2) What - if anything - surprises you?

3) How does this understanding of salvation differ from what we’ve been taught?

4) What parts of this are new to you?

5) According to this, what does being “saved” mean?

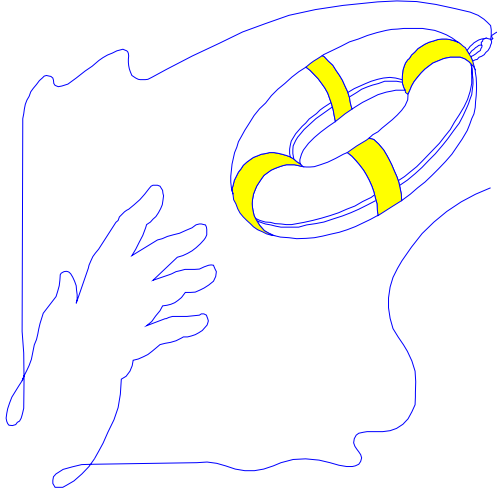
6) What do you think about this understanding of salvation?

Prayer: Large group leader closes with prayer.

Dismiss to small group: Students follow small group leaders to their respective locations.

Scriptural Life Saver #1

Salvation Has A Future Component (Romans 13:11)



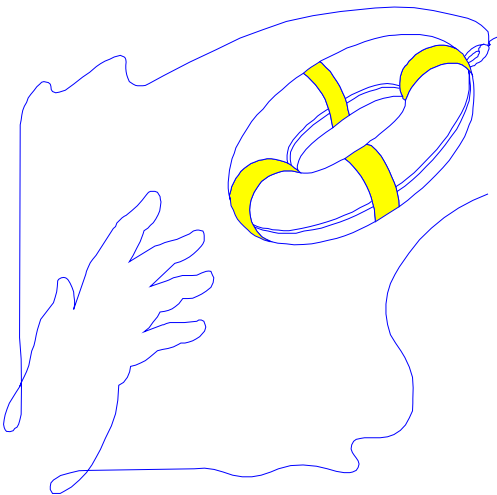
*"Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For **salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers**;*

Ask the group:

- 1) *What does the Apostle Paul mean when he says "for salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers"?*
- 2) *If Jesus has already come, what is still in the future for us?*

Scriptural Life Saver #2

Salvation Has A Present Component (Luke 19:8-10)



All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

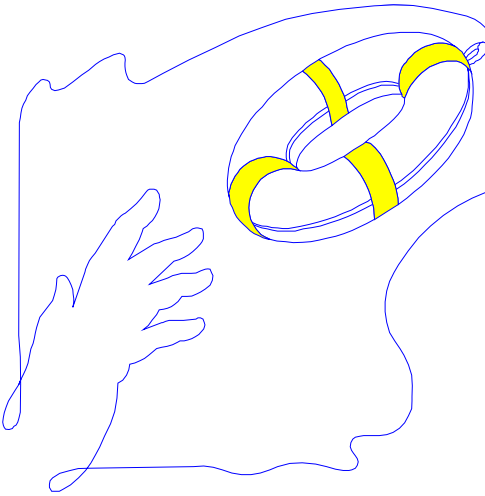
Ask the group:

- 1) *What does this passage say about salvation?*
- 2) *What does it add that was not said before?*

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Scriptural Life Saver #3

Salvation Has A Future Component (II Corinthians 5:20-6:22)



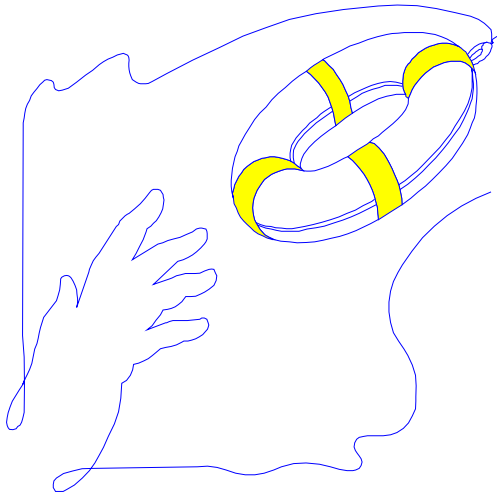
So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

Ask the group:

- 1) What does this passage say about salvation?
- 2) What does it add that was not said before?
- 3) How can salvation be both future and present?

Scriptural Life Saver #4

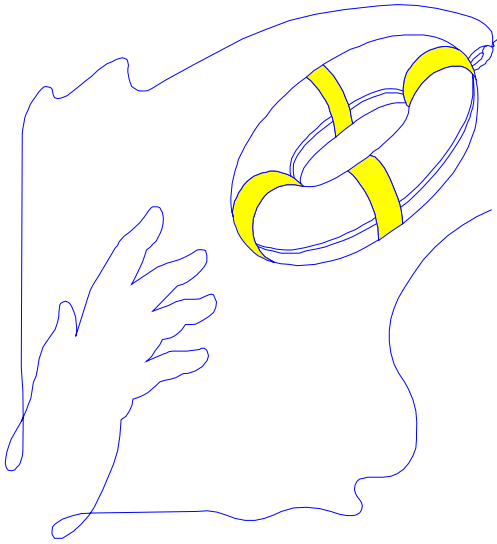
A Story Of Salvation: Luke 7: 36-50



⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Scriptural Life Saver #5

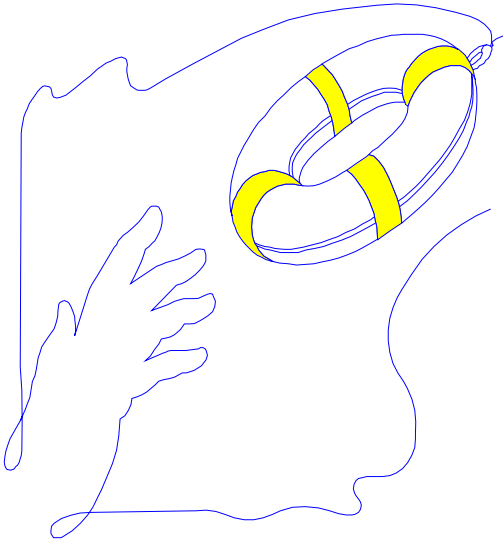
A Story Of Salvation: John 3:16-17



¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Scriptural Life Saver #6

A Story Of Salvation: John 10:7-10

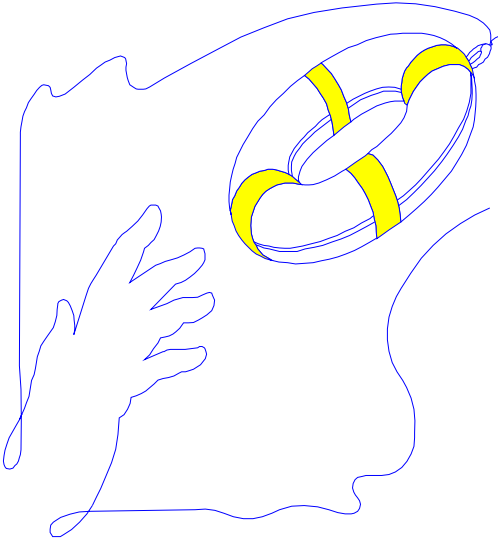


So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Scriptural Life Saver #7

A Story Of Salvation: Ephesians 2:1, 4-10

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, . . . ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.



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The Word On Salvation

Think back two weeks. Do you remember our lesson on sin? Do you remember the Apollo 13 clip and the Garden of Eden clip and the skit? In each case we had a “problem” that had certain symptoms. We also talked about sin as being the basic problem we have as human beings. Sin is about not trusting God and trusting something else to be God and then basing our lives on this false foundation.

Salvation is God’s answer to the problem of “sin”. To use an image from two weeks ago, Salvation is the “cure” for the “disease” of sin. So, what - exactly - do we mean by “salvation”. If someone asks you if you are “saved”, what are they asking, and what do we answer? For Christians, salvation is related to what Jesus did for us and what God continues to do for us through the Holy Spirit.

Salvation really tells us two things about God’s love for us: 1) it tells us that God forgives and accepts us, and 2) it tells us that God works in our lives to empower us to become better people. In the Bible the word for God’s forgiving and accepting love is “justification” and the word for God’s empowering love is “sanctification”. Together, these two make up what the Bible means by salvation.

Salvation is God’s answer to the problem of sin, to the problem of broken relationships - a broken relationship with God and a broken relationship with other people. Salvation has to do with restoring our relationships - with God and with others. Salvation has two parts: justification and sanctification. Here is the difference between the two.

Justification (forgiveness)	Sanctification (empowerment)
God’s act of declaring us “not guilty” of our sins	We are no longer controlled by sinful natures, but by the Holy Spirit
<p>God forgives us, pardons us, accepts us, (reconciliation)</p> <p>Is through Jesus (the cross)</p> <p>Atonement (at-one-ment), redemption</p> <p>Restores our relationship with God.</p> <p>It is a relational change.</p> <p>Is the cure for “Sin” (the disease)</p> <p>Overcomes the guilt of sin. (We’re forgiven.)</p> <p>Is what God does for us.</p> <p>What God has already done (in Christ)</p> <p>Requires God (to offer forgiveness)</p> <p>And us (to accept the gift)</p>	<p>God empowers us, renews us, frees us. (liberation)</p> <p>Is through the continuing work of the Holy Spirit</p> <p>Rebirth, transformation, holiness (being ‘born again’)</p> <p>Helps us to grow more like God wants.</p> <p>It an actual change.</p> <p>Is the cure for “sins” (the symptoms)</p> <p>Is what God does in us.</p> <p>Overcomes the power of sin. (God helps us change.)</p> <p>What God continues to do (in Holy Spirit)</p> <p>Requires God (to work within us)</p> <p>And us (to work with God)</p>

What we’re really talking about is **a life long process** that begins when we are born and continues throughout our life. God calls us to holiness - to be more Godlike, more like God wants us to be. When we are born we are born into God’s grace and love. This is God’s prevenient or preventing grace. Then God works in our lives to bring us into right relationships. What Jesus did on the cross makes this possible. But we still have to accept God’s love (just like any relationship). At the point we accept God’s gift, we are “justified” (in all the things that means). At that moment the process of sanctification begins - and it will continue the rest of our lives. God will continue to work in our lives. Salvation is not just an event, no matter how special that event may be. It is a life long process that includes many special events in our lives. No one event, no matter how powerful, “saves” us. Salvation is also not just something that happened to us in the past. It contains elements of past, present, and future. God’s work in our lives - throughout our lives - is salvation. And salvation is not the same thing as “going to heaven”. Salvation is about our lives here and now, not just the distant future.