



The BASIC Good News

SALVATION

Issue 3

Discovering the Essentials of the Christian Faith

The Color RED symbolizes that we are SAVED eternally only by the gracious sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

"S" is for SALVATION

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God's Son Bought What We Could Not

The Christian view of **SALVATION** is amazing for a couple of reasons. First, it's so un-religious and then it's so inflexible.

It's un-religious because it is not about *anything* we human beings do for ourselves or for God. Religion is about being good, doing good works and religious rituals to get God's attention and earn His favor. It's about going to church, saying your prayers and giving a fiver to the man begging coins outside Taco Bell. The thing is, none of this stuff has any bearing whatsoever on us getting saved, rescued from hell or ticketed for heaven. The truth is, earning such a reward would take way more than any of us has—we haven't the cash, merchandise, hours, days, knowledge or wisdom. And, more to the point, none of us has it

within us actually to *want* to spend ourselves to get such a reward. We'd rather go for the ashes and dust waiting for us behind door number two (see the previous issue of this newsletter). We *could* never and



would never earn our own eternal salvation. And no religious system, no code of conduct and no threat of harm will change this. If we're going to be **SAVED**, Somebody Else is

going to have to do it for us. And that's the second amazing reality concerning Christian Salvation (which is simply a way of saying *real* salvation). Somebody *has* done it for us. One Somebody. Only One and not any other. Inflexibly, Jesus Christ. God's Son. There's no wiggle room on this. There is no Savior Smorgasbord where we get to pick the flavor we like best. Jesus Christ, the Carpenter from 1st-century Nazareth, died to save us. He came down from heaven and was nailed to a Roman cross where He died in agony. Thus, he took away our deserved condemnation. Thus, He paid for our sins. Thus, He purchased our salvation. No one else did this. No one else could.

B.A.S.I.C.

- **BEST (GOLD):** The BEST of everything is found from, through, in and to the Living God.
- **ALIENATION (BLACK):** Sin has ALIENATED people from God and His best for them.
- **SALVATION (RED):** We are SAVED eternally only by the gracious sacrifice of God's Son Jesus Christ.
- **IDENTIFICATION (WHITE):** We recover our true and best IDENTITY by *admitting* our need, *believing* in Jesus and *calling* on God.
- **COMPLETION (GREEN):** We *grow* as we live by faith, trusting and glorifying our God who is making us COMPLETE.

Whoever You Are, This Gift's for You!

One of the saddest misconceptions in all the world happens when a person who genuinely understands himself or herself to be a wretched sinner, in no way deserving of any blessings from God, least of all a free pass to heaven forever, believes for this reason that they do not belong in Church. Church, they think, is where pretty good people (not like them), rightfully gather to worship God who welcomes them to His house because they are pretty good people (just look at

their nice clothes, clean kids & big cars!). Nothing could be further from the truth. Nobody in church, starting with the preacher, is truly good. It's an act, a pitiful charade. What do Church people have going for them? Jesus. That's it. Who does God welcome to His house? Wretched sinners. That's it. There aren't any other kind of people available. And, wonder of wonders, these are the kind of people God delights to help and glorifies Himself by sav-

ing. Being lost is the only pre-requisite for getting found. Finding yourself in trouble is the only requirement for getting rescued. Empty hands is all you need for God's grace to get hold of you. Knowing yourself to be unworthy is the wisdom that leads to eternal life. Jesus doesn't ask us from the Cross why we think He should bother being there for us. All He asks is this: Will you receive the salvation I'm dying to give you?

Romans 1:16-17 & 5:1-8 — Our Salvation: Christ's Death



¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Peace and Joy

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disap-

point us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Questions to Ask:

1. What is it about the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ that makes it powerful?
2. Whose righteousness is demonstrated in the sacrifice of Christ?
3. What did people do to earn their salvation? What condition were people in when Jesus died for them?
4. Do you suppose we, then, can earn our salvation for ourselves?

Luke 19:10 — What Jesus, the Son of Man, Came to Do

“...the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

Questions to Ask:

1. When do people seek something that is lost? What does this suggest about how God feels about people?
2. Other than seeking and saving, what other things might people suggest Jesus was really trying to do?
3. What does a person have to be in order to be found? To be rescued?



“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!”

I Corinthians 15:3-8 — Matters of the Greatest Importance

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^a: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After

that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Questions to Ask:

1. What does the Apostle Paul, writer of this letter, say are matters of “first importance?”
2. Everybody dies, but Paul attaches great significance to Jesus’ death. Why does he say Jesus died? What does this mean?
3. What difference does it make that He was seen alive after he died?

Acts 4:8-12 — A Scandalously Unique Savior

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel:

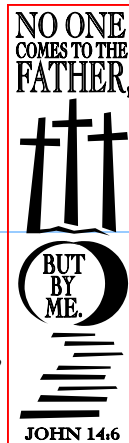
“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

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. 11 He is “the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.” 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name

under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Questions to ask:

1. How does Peter say he and John were able to heal the crippled man?
2. How does Peter identify Jesus in relation to the rulers and to God?
3. Why is Peter’s statement about Jesus being the only source of real salvation hard for people today to hear and accept?



Revelation 12:10-11 — The Defeat of Evil



10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day

and night, has been hurled down.

11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

- Questions to ask:**
1. How does the Apostle John, whose vision is recorded in the Book of Revelation, say people are able to overcome the evil one (the “accuser”)?
 2. What does “the blood of the Lamb” mean? How does it relate to “the word of their testimony”?

Ephesians 2:4-9 — God Saves Dead People

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in

Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from your-

selves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

- Questions to ask:**
1. Why does God make people alive?
 2. How does Paul describe the condition people are in before God makes them alive with Christ?
 3. What does grace mean? Why is it important to understand that people are saved by God’s grace rather than their own works?
 4. What difference does this make to you?



SALVATION



Reaching Out with
the Message and
Love of Jesus Christ



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Our Mission

Covenant Presbyterian Church is a Christ-centered church whose members seek to: reach out to others with the message and love of Christ, enable people to become faithful, mature disciples of Jesus, and help people discover and use their spiritual gifts through meaningful worship, nurture, prayer, education and service to our members and beyond.

Our Focus

Teaching the Word of God

Our Vision

To proclaim, teach and live the Word of God so that our members, their families and friends, and our neighbors in the community receive and respond to God's Word by coming to know Christ as their Savior and Lord, growing in their relationship with Him and with one another, fulfilling God's unique purpose for their lives, and sharing their faith with others.

We Share with You the Good News...

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... (I Corinthians 5:3-4)



The Basic Gospel Bracelet

✝ That Christ died for our sins

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; & the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

✝ And that He was buried

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19) ...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)

✝ And that He rose again

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (I Corinthians 15:22)... Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives & believes in me will never die..." (John 11:25-26)

🔔 Humanity's Need

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)... for all have

sinned and fall short of the glory of God... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)

🔔 God's Remedy

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

➡ What shall I do, Lord?

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved... for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9-13)

♥ Choose Life

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)... Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. (Isaiah 55:6)