

Why we are saved

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[0 : 0 0] Simeon, Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, may grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Well, may God bless his word to us this morning, richly bless his word to us, and we'll come back to that after this next hymn.

Just pick up from where we left off last week. Last week was everything to do with how we were saved. But there's another question that needs to be asked after how we were saved, and that is why we were saved.

And how we were saved is a very different question with a very different answer than why we were saved. I mean, most people, when asked, why were you saved, they'll probably give the how answer.

[2 : 3 8] They'll probably go to, well, Jesus died on the cross. Well, that's how you were saved. The question we're asking is, why are you saved? Okay? Not how did it happen, but why did it happen?

And in a simple way, I simply want to say at this point that the eternal kingdom that you will enter into, finally, in its completed state, has a dress code.

Now, I know some of you like shopping. And I know, you know, some of you make an effort every Sunday, unlike your pastor. Do you know, it's very easy to have one shirt, one pair of trousers, and one jacket, because I don't have the difficulty of ever thinking, what am I going to wear?

I know exactly what I'm going to wear. It was the same that I wore last week and the week before. And, well, it's been the last several years. But for those of you who like dressing up, you need to understand that there is a dress code for heaven.

And there's only one place to get the right item to wear, and it's God. God doesn't have a store by which you go and purchase it.

[3 : 50] Rather, it's already been purchased for you. In Psalm 110, it's called a huli garment. In the New Testament, it's often referred to as clothed in righteousness, holiness, and godliness.

God is making you ready this very morning to enter into the kingdom. God is getting you dressed, as it were, in the appropriate clothing to meet the king.

Now, the trouble is, is if you think that some people take a long time to get dressed, or now that I have three daughters and two boys, I have no trouble with the boys. But the girls seem to occupy one of the rooms in the house for unusual lengths of time.

And, you know, and then you walk in there, and you can't see anything until the mist clears. Or if it's very hot, and you're opening the windows, and they come out, and there's towels everywhere, and what have you.

But, well, what did you expect, you know? So, if you think that some people in this life take a long time to get ready before they go out, wherever it is they're going out, I want to indicate this morning that it takes a lot longer for God to get you ready to enter into his kingdom.

[5 : 06] Okay? In other words, the Christian life is a life, if you can imagine it in this way, where you're getting dressed bit by bit. Okay? There is no shame here.

It is a slow process because of who you're actually going to meet. And it says in 1 John that when Christ appears and you see him, you will become like him because you will see him as he is.

And this simply unfolds the biblical reality that we only ever become what we worship. We only ever become the very thing that we attach our life to.

We only ever become the thing that we love the most. But what you love the most may surprise you. In Psalm 115, in Jeremiah 2, in Isaiah 6, in Matthew 13, Jesus again and again and again makes the point that people who worship idols become like their idols.

They have eyes but they cannot see because the eyes made of wood and stone have eyes but cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear because the thing that they're worshipping is made of wood.

[6 : 14] And so, biblically, godly, he's simply putting across a picture where you will always become what you worship.

And therefore, what you worship is supremely important. And you've heard me say this a lot over the last several years of being here. So, the issue that needs to be addressed this morning is why did God save you?

Or why are you saved? God, who's in need of nothing, doesn't even need you to be saved. So, why are you saved?

I'm not asking how were you saved. That's what we addressed last week. What I'm addressing this week is why are you saved? Now, salvation is really important to God for the very simple reason.

You cannot enter into his kingdom without it. You cannot enter into his kingdom without the new birth. You cannot enter into his kingdom without the new life. In fact, Jesus says you can't even see the kingdom or anything regarding the kingdom unless you're born again.

[7 : 18] Unless you have this spiritual birth, you can't even get close to comprehending the things that are being spoken about here. You're going to have difficulty understanding what I'm saying. Or even if you don't have the difficulty of understanding what I'm saying, you're certainly going to have the additional difficulty of not being able to receive it.

Not being able to take it home and make it your very own. So, what Peter is concerned with here is that you understand that the past and the future have the same thing in mind.

That when God looks at the past and the future, he knows what he's doing. He doesn't go, oh, well, I had to start again at that point. No, everything is according to plan.

God has a future for you, but the future entails him making you ready for it. There's a dress code. And the dress code isn't items of clothing.

It's virtues. It's qualities like righteousness and holiness and godliness. All of which can only be given if you first have been given life.

[8 : 23] Now, I said this in a Bible study a couple of weeks ago. That I saw a picture once of this beautiful log cabin on the side of a lake in Canada, surrounded by trees and nothing else.

And I thought, take me there. And let me stay there for a long time. And then I thought to myself that if my brother went, he seems to come up smelling of roses, whatever he does.

And if he managed to get it, I'd be jealous of him getting it and not me. Why him and not me? I'm the Christian, after all. Surely it should favor me.

But the world doesn't work like that. Now, I can understand that I would be jealous of him, but I've never been jealous of the log cabin that's there all year round. I've never been jealous of the grass that's there all year round, or the trees that are there all year round, or the lake that's there all year round.

They're always there. But I've never been jealous of it. Why? Because it takes life to enjoy blessings. And you could argue that the trees are life in a kind of a way.

[9 : 28] But we understand that life precedes all the other blessings. So when God gives you life, this new life, it is the necessary precondition to everything else that he has to give you.

Because it takes life to be able to enjoy all these other things. And that's what God has for you. Now, here's the problem. Peter, only a short while, in terms of history terms, after the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, comes across a church full of people who have forgotten it.

Who have forgotten why they were saved. They have forgotten, verse 9, you'll notice, that they have been cleansed from their former sins.

Now, if you ask them the question, you know, what happened to Jesus? They could reel it off. Well, he lived, he died on the cross, he rose again. But that's not the question that Peter is asking.

That's not the issue that he's addressing. The issue that he is addressing is the why, not the how. Here's a group of people who have forgotten why they are saved. Not how they are saved, but why they are saved.

[10 : 46] And forgetfulness is a problem. Okay, when you forget your keys and you're late for work, that's a minor problem. But it is a problem nonetheless. But if you've got amnesia, then you forget who you are.

Okay, you forget where you work. Okay, that's a much bigger problem. And so within the Christian family, within the Christian life here, you have degrees of forgetfulness that can lead to different consequences.

But to forget that you have been cleansed from your sin, well, that's probably about as worse that it can get. And we must remember, we must remember that forgetfulness, biblical forgetfulness in the Old Testament, okay, is a sin.

So children, just listen to this. If you ever say to your parents when they've asked you to do something, I forgot, okay, okay, that doesn't get you off the hook.

And it doesn't get us adults off the hook either. Because when God tells us something, it is a command to remember. Remembering is a responsibility that God gives us.

[11 : 55] Forgetting is the failure to uphold that responsibility. It's not an absence of mind. It's a failure to take hold of the responsibility that God has given you. So people go, I just forgot.

You didn't forget. You're not responsible. Okay, and that's the issue here with these adult Christians who should know better. So we're going to look at this in a couple of ways.

First, we need to understand that we are the receivers of God's promises. You'll notice in verse 3 and 4, it says that God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

Okay? All things that pertain to life and godliness. Through the knowledge of him. That's how you got it. Okay? Who called us into his own glory and excellence.

By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises. In other words, this is how you became a Christian.

[12 : 55] God, you are a product of the promise of God. God made a promise to save you, and God kept the promise, and here you are saved. And the new life that you have been given by God, with everything that's included in it, is something that pertains to life and godliness.

In other words, it's a particular type of life that God has given you. It's not like the old life. It's not like the one you had before. Godliness is what you're going to be wearing when you enter into the kingdom of God.

But more importantly, it's not just an outward change. You'll notice here, it says that he has given us so that we may become partakers of the divine nature.

The very great promises, verse 4, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

Simply put, God who is in need of nothing, doesn't need you to be saved, doesn't even need you to be holy, gives you his divine nature so that you can be.

[14 : 12] He wants you to share in him. And that's the purpose of the Christian life, that what God gives you in salvation is a share in the very nature of God.

Okay? God who is in need of nothing doesn't need to give you anything. I mean, he's not missing out on anything, but you will be. And so God, this is the reason why you are saved, that you may come to share in the divine nature.

Not how you were saved, but why you were saved. You were saved so that you might come to share in the attributes of God, so that you might come to share in the virtues of God.

Not in the same way, you don't become God, but you come to share in them. Okay? Your knowledge, some of the knowledge will be the same, some of the holiness will be the same, but it's only the same because you belong to Jesus.

It's only because, you only get them because you've been given the divine nature in Jesus. So salvation has two things. How am I saved?

[15 : 20] The cross. Why am I saved? To be holy. Okay? Holiness without which no one can enter the kingdom. No one can enter heaven.

Okay? No holiness, no heaven, as one author once put it, which is a very simple way of stating the truth. No holiness, no heaven.

But the point here is, is that when God gives you the new life, he gives you the holiness. Okay? You don't have to get it on your own. God gives it to you, and this is how he gives you it, by promising it to you, and then fulfilling his promise.

Now, the other issue here is for you to realize that God, even though God is independent, and even though God is in need of nothing, means that he could step back and not give you anything, and perhaps you would be none the wiser until the end.

But in this meantime, the God who is self-sufficient doesn't want you to be self-sufficient. The God who is independent doesn't want you to be independent. The God who is omnipotent doesn't want you to pretend that you're omnipotent.

[16 : 30] Okay? The God who has all the authority doesn't want you to go around pretending that you have all the authority. What he does is he enters you into his presence, the one who has all authority.

You come to share in God. So the person who is saved is not the person who now thinks, I have all these things to do now that I'm a Christian. Now I have to pray.

Now I have to read my Bible. Now I have to go to church. They're additional blessings. But what you have actually been given is not a set of rules. What you have actually been given is not a new list of a to-do list that you must fulfill.

What you have actually been given is a new nature, is a brand new nature. Let me try and explain it in this way. There's an old parable of the scorpion and the frog.

Okay? The forest is on fire and the scorpion needs to escape. The frog is sat on a nice green lily pad able to hop across the river to the other side where there is no fire. And then they have this debate.

[17 : 32] They have this debate. And the scorpion says to the frog, well, let me jump on your back and you can take me across to the other side and I can escape the fire.

I won't die in the fire. And the frog says, if the frog can speak, of course. You need a little imagination here. Come on. And the frog says, well, I'm not going to do that because you're a scorpion.

I can go across to the other side all by myself and survive. And the scorpion, well, I will die. And the frog says, but if you get on my back, you will sting me. And the scorpion says, I'm not going to sting you because if you die and go under the water, then I'm going to die and go under the water.

So I don't die by the fire. I die by drowning. And the frog thinks about this for a while, not taking into consideration nature. He just takes into consideration the logic. That makes sense.

The trouble is, is nature matters more than logic. Okay? Nature matters more than logic here. So the frog says, jump on board. A few hops across the lily pads, halfway across, he feels this sharp pain in his back.

[18 : 41] And the frog turns around and says, I thought you wouldn't sting me. Now we will both die. And the scorpion says, yes, I know, but I can't help it.

It's in my nature. People who have a nature that is corrupt will kill themselves. People who have that nature that is not holy or godly will be the very reason to their own end.

They can't help it. Even if it doesn't make sense, it doesn't matter. It's in your nature. So what is crucially important here is a nature change. It is crucially important that God in the new life changes your nature so that you don't continue to do the things that you previously did.

The sinful desires, Peter says, is the problem. Not the actions. It's the desires that precede the actions. Okay? That's the issue.

So the reason why you were saved, it is to save you from, you could say, from your sinful desires so that you can be given brand new desires so that you're able to enter into the kingdom.

[19 : 57] Okay? The issue is not the action. The issue is what precedes the action, your desires. So we must be given a brand new set of desires. And the only way we can get that is if we have been given a brand new nature.

So God says, the reason why I'm saving you is so that you can become partakers in the divine nature. A nature that doesn't lead you down a path of self-destruction.

Okay? There's a lot of people in the world who do things that don't make sense. And let me just give you a heads up. Even us Christians, at times, are going to do things that we never thought were imaginable because sin is a real problem.

Okay? It is something that we have to mortify, kill, get rid of every day. It is a serious issue that should not be joked about or thought cute in children.

Okay? It is devastatingly damaging. So what God gives us is a new nature. Here's the second point. Don't forget that.

[21 : 10] Don't forget it. You'll notice here that Peter is speaking to people who have forgotten that they have been cleansed from their former sins.

And as I said before, that forgetfulness is serious enough. But what they're forgetting is not the how. They're forgetting the why. If you were to ask them the question, how are you a Christian?

They would say, well, the cross. They would point to it. But that's not the issue. The issue here is not how were you saved. The issue here is why are you saved. They need to know why and they've forgotten it.

So I'm going to, I'll give you a few examples of just how serious this might be. A person who forgets why they are saved will forget who they are. They will actually forget that they are a Christian and therefore they'll end up living a different life.

Not because they can't recall Jesus died for them on the cross, but they can't recall why Jesus died for them on the cross. That they might give a generic answer like, to save me, and then they'll go, saved me from what rather than saved me for what.

[22 : 16] And there's a big difference between being saved from and being saved for. If I ask you the question, what did God save you from? You might come up with a couple of answers like hell or judgment, both of which would be right.

But if I ask you, what did he save you for? You might scratch your head. Well, the saved for is the reason why. The reason why you're saved.

You're saved for life and godliness. You're saved for to enter the kingdom of God. So let me turn, give you a couple of illustrations by way of imagination.

Imagine a father and a husband who awakes in the morning with complete amnesia to a degree. Complete amnesia to a degree.

And he turns over and all of a sudden he's not lying in bed with his wife, according to him, who's his wife, and he's not lying in bed. Can you imagine the frightfulness of that? And then he goes downstairs and his children are eating breakfast at the dinner table or whatever it may be and he just sees children in this thing called a house if he can remember what children are.

[23 : 25] And suddenly he begins to be completely different towards his wife, who he doesn't know is his wife. He begins to be completely different towards his children, who he doesn't know are his children, because he has amnesia.

Now the thing to point out here is that the children haven't changed overnight. They're still the same children they were the day before, the week before, and the day after. They haven't changed a bit. And the wife hasn't changed either.

Okay? She's gone to bed with her husband like she normally does, wakes up the following morning with her husband like she normally does, and she hasn't changed a moment. But the husband's changed. And it's because the husband has changed, now his relationship with his wife has changed, because to him she's no longer his wife.

The children are no longer his children. And suddenly he can't help but behave differently because he doesn't have the memory as to why they are his children. He knows how children come about, he knows what marriage is, but he doesn't remember getting married.

He doesn't remember having children. He understands the biological procedure for all of that to happen. He understands, you know, the marriage court and what have you and the ceremony.

[24 : 37] But what he doesn't understand is how any of this happened to him. So here he is downstairs sitting around a table which to him are complete strangers. All because he suffers from this form of spiritual amnesia.

Just like the Christian. The Christian who forgets why he is saved suffers in exactly the same way. Why am I singing this?

Why aren't I praying? Am I meant to pray now? I'm reading the Bible but it's, I'm not getting anything out of it. It just seems foreign to me.

Well the issue that you got going on there is that spiritual amnesia is already set in. You have forgotten exactly what Peter's saying. You have forgotten why you're saved.

And so when that happens in the same way with the husband and the father, what needs to happen to cure him? Well maybe he needs another bump on his head or maybe he needs to be taught all over again.

[25 : 41] Let me give you another example of how this might work. Christians who forget why they are saved fill their time, they don't fulfill it. Christians who forget why they are saved fill their time, they don't fulfill it.

And the difference here is seen in the purpose. the father who wakes up forgetting that he is a father, the father who wakes up and forgets that he is a husband to the wife doesn't fulfill the duties of a husband.

He fills his day whatever he wants to but he cannot fulfill the duties of a husband because he doesn't see himself as that. He cannot fulfill the duties as a father because he doesn't remember that he is one.

And so the person who has forgotten why they are what they are cannot fulfill any of the reasons for why they are the Christian because they can't remember. So what they end up doing, and you see this a lot in the church, is that Christians who have forgotten why they are saved end up getting other interests and those other interests then begin to take them away from the church and then they begin to define Christianity all for themselves.

This is what church means, this is what reading my Bible means, this is what fellowship means, this is what commitment means and suddenly there begins this, well this must mean what it means because I'm saying it is.

[27 : 04] And that's the very issue that Peter is dealing with here. Christians who are filling their time, not fulfilling their time as God has given it to them because they have forgotten who they are.

They've forgotten why they are saved. They know that they're saved. They've just forgotten why. And Peter says the danger of this, if you look verse 10, therefore brothers be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure.

If you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The next thing to happen, almost guaranteed, the next thing to happen for a person who forgets why they're saved is the question, am I saved? Am I saved?

Am I really elect? Am I really called? Am I really, am I? What's happened is that the forgetfulness is so deep and rigid now, there then becomes a whole new set of questions.

[28 : 16] Am I God's anyway? And the reason you don't recognize that you're not God's is because you're not practicing any of the qualities back in verses 5 through to 7.

You know, the knowledge, the goodwill, the self-control and all of these things. And you can't fulfill your life with them because you've forgotten why you were saved. So the problem, instead of getting better, gets worse.

And that's the reason, dare I say it, just because I'm the pastor, why we must come under the word of God. Because we cannot figure out who we are or why we are what we are without the word of God telling us.

I can't understand why I am a Christian without God telling me why I am a Christian. I cannot know how I am saved without God telling me how I will say.

I can't get there by myself. I need to sit down and have God tell me. I'm not big enough, wise enough, strong enough to do it all by myself. I need to sit under the word of God and be told.

[29 : 15] But what I'm being told is good news for me. It's not burdensome, it's good news and life giving. So here's the conclusion, here's the exhortation as we close.

Everything that God gives us pertains to life and godliness. And the reason why it does is because God is getting you ready to enter into the eternal kingdom.

God is making you ready to enter into his presence once and for all. God has given you a life to be godly with.

God has given you a life in order for you to fulfill the dress code of holiness, righteousness, the virtues that are mentioned here. So as verse 5 says, make every effort to put on these qualities.

Verse 8, make every effort as it were so that you increase in these qualities so that you do not become ineffective or unfruitful that can then lead to spiritual amnesia where you forget who you are and then you wonder whether or not you were ever that person in the first place, whether or not you were ever gods in the first place.

[30 : 29] It seems more than a slippery slope. The reformers used to call this the perseverance of the saints. We don't use the term anymore but it simply means exactly what Peter is saying here.

Supplement your faith with these qualities. In other words, the faith that saves you is completely alone but the faith that saves you is never alone.

That doesn't make any sense. That makes complete sense. The faith that you're saved by is all of God. But what comes with that faith is all of these qualities that you are to supplement it with.

Not because the faith is ineffective but because as I said life is the very thing that precedes all the other blessings. So remember this.

God has made you but what has he made you for? He's made you for holiness. He's made you for godliness. He's made you not for corruption but for life everlasting.

[31 : 34] He's made you and have given you a share in his divine nature so that you may never taste death again. Psalm 110 says that he has clothed you in this way.

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in holy garments from the womb of the morning to the dew of your youth will be yours.

In other words, heaven has a dress code. The eternal kingdom has a dress code and God through the course of your life is getting you ready dressed as it were to meet him.

You're going to meet God so what shall you wear? You've asked that question. You know if you're going to meet someone who's earthly important what will you wear?

Well, it's such an irrelevant question compared to this one. You're going to meet God and what are you going to wear? Well, you're going to wear the clothes that God gives you.

[32 : 39] God is making you ready this very day to enter into his kingdom and never ever forget that. Okay? Never forget that.

That God this very day despite all your troubles, despite all your sin, despite everything else that is going on in your life, still takes you by the hand and dresses you ready to meet the king.

That's what's happening in your life. Never ever forget that. Amen.