

SAVING FAITH

The only way the scripture declares anyone can be saved is by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. This faith is not something only some people have and some do not. Everyone has this faith, but some refuse to believe. Since this faith cannot carry with it any works, many say this is too easy, too simple. Oftentimes, the very ones who say that salvation is too easy, have refused to do the very thing that is so easy--to believe. Therefore, they reject God's perfect salvation and look for a gospel that makes more sense to them.

In all truth, salvation is easy. It should be easy when the scripture says it is a free gift given in grace. Although it is easy, there is one condition that **MUST** be followed to the letter. Since this is so, we must qualify the word easy. It is easy as long as we adhere to the divine rules for salvation. It is not easy in the sense that everyone will be saved, on the contrary, it is so easy, it will be missed. "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*" (Matt 7:13, 14). We would do well to examine the words of our Lord carefully. What is the narrow or small gate that leads to (eternal) life? Jesus dogmatically declares to the entire world of unbelievers "*I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" (John 14:6). Jesus was not a liberal, he stated that he was the only way. Jesus also gets more specific: "*I tell you the truth I am the gate for the sheep.*" (John 10:7). With such clarity Jesus sets forth the only way of salvation, and again, "*I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved...*" (John 10:9). You enter the gate by means of faith or believing. "*for by grace you have been saved through faith and that (matter of salvation) is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works lest and man should boast.*" (Eph 2:8, 9).

The key to why the gate is narrow is that the matter of salvation is *not from yourselves*. This is in perfect keeping with what faith means. Faith looks away from self to Jesus Christ who is God's provision. It is arrogance to add the slightest of works to a perfect plan of grace; therefore, salvation is not from the source of human works which leads to boasting or glorying in man. Even if they say they are doing their works to the glory of God, they are still saying that God **MUST** recognize who and what they are doing for their salvation. God has already said "*there is none righteous, not even one...no one seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.*" (Rom 3:10-12). This is God's attitude toward the unsaved.

In arrogance, man disregards this testimony (which is the only reality) and adopts his own, which is a divorcement from reality, and this is the definition of arrogance. Since man is the one lost, and in need of salvation, helpless to do anything, he would do well to listen carefully to what God has to say regarding salvation.

What is this wide gate or broad road the masses of humanity take that leads to destruction? It is everything that Satan has devised, and seems reasonable to man. Simply put, it is anything other than putting your complete and total trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. All the religions of the world have the same common denominator. They have some system of human works to get God's approval. This can only create and lead to arrogance, self righteousness and legalism. Satan has cleverly propagated his religious systems to ensnare man. While they are working to get the approval of God, Satan is their god (2Cor 4:4). Satan is said to have "*blinded the minds of unbelievers.*" Notice they are not ignorant of the gospel but are unbelievers, those who reject the gospel. Satan simply seeks to keep them in his dominion using all his systems of religion and human arrogance. Satan's systems appeal to the human nature of man (which is corrupt), and make man feel important, worthy and righteous because of their works. This is attractive to man's fallen nature and is called the broad way that *many* enter into. The broad gate mentality says further, "how can Jesus Christ be the only way of salvation?" The broad way is anything but faith alone in Christ alone.

Many think salvation is a gimmick, if only you say the magic words you will be saved. It is no such thing. A person must rely upon Jesus Christ totally. Man in nature is arrogant. The Holy Spirit is constantly trying to turn the heart of man to God. Constant and determined resistance to the grace of God will develop the hardness of heart so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. Believing in Christ has a certain humility involved that allows us to look away from ourselves. Not committing our lives to Christ for salvation, but committing the matter of the salvation of our souls to Jesus Christ. A spiritually dead person does not have anything to commit to God. Therefore, it does not matter what a person says, but what is going on inside is what counts. Have you ever, just once, believed in, relied on, depended on completely Jesus Christ for your Salvation? Without any works of any kind? If you have, the scripture declares you to be saved. If you have not, you can do so now. In the privacy of your own soul, you can tell God the Father that you believe in Jesus Christ and in this moment eternal life is yours!

A word of caution. If you add works of any kind to your faith, you cancel grace (Rom 11:6) and may think you are saved, but only deceive yourself. If you think you can lose your salvation for any reason, you have added works to salvation and may not even be saved. Eternal security is a part of the gospel! Normally

people who say they can lose eternal life believe they can fail or turn away from God in some way. They don't believe God will fail, but they might. Again salvation to them is nothing more than a system of works, to be gained or lost at their whim. If you think you can lose salvation, then all your time should be spent making sure you are in fact saved! You will never have the assurance of salvation, you will never know for sure, but can you? YES, if you depend on the word of God and not your opinions. *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1John 5:13).* The ground or basis of receiving salvation is no works. God will not change His mind and require works FOR salvation. Ultimately their salvation depends on them and what their works will be; not the perfect work of Jesus Christ. This is Satan's gospel, directly opposed to the gospel of grace. God will never compromise on this point, and will not in love overlook those who have so carelessly treated the Son with disdain and neglected His word.

God is love and that love expresses itself by giving the *"only begotten Son, that anybody who believes in him will never perish but have eternal life."* He shows He is love because *"he who did not spare his only Son, but gave him up for us all..."* and *"God demonstrates his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* God provided a way for man to have an eternal relationship and fellowship with Himself. Believing in Christ means you quit believing in yourself for salvation, you cannot have it both ways. Christ is everything to us. Even after salvation the scripture declares *"Apart from me, you can do nothing."* Read Galatians 1:6-12, where Paul confirms to us the warning against perverted gospels. Give up on yourselves and cling to the only Savior Jesus Christ.

Douglas E. Presley

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