

You Have to Be Saved to Know How Great It Is!

Several years ago I received a phone call from a troubled young man. It was late at night and I really didn't feel like going out, but I could tell from the tone of his voice, it was urgent. He was married to one of the finest young ladies in our church. As a matter of fact, this newlywed couple would have been categorized in my mind as some of our more faithful members. This would be a lengthy but very interesting story, if I were to tell you their journey toward Christ together from their high school courtship until now, but that is not my mission in this article today. Suffice it to say, on that night at approximately 11:00 p.m. Scott and Beverly Brinkmeyer gave their hearts to Christ. I only thought I had good church members, they quickly moved to "the top of the class." In their humility, they would give all the glory to God.

Scott and Beverly have not turned back and have kept their proverbial "hand to the plough" and grown in grace. Just recently Scott and I were talking and he said, "Pastor, people have no idea how great the Christian life is until they get saved." I could not agree more! He was overwhelmed with the power supplied by the Lord to live this new life. We can (and should) testify and we can (and should) evangelize, but truly the Christian life cannot not be adequately explained by us mortals. The glory of Christ and the glorious transformation that takes place is so wonderful that adjectives and adverbs fail us, examples and metaphors can only illustrate - even acquaintance with the most saintly Christians cannot duplicate experiencing Christ and His salvation first hand. With that said, please afford me the opportunity to try to explain why we who know the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation are convinced this is the greatest life to be lived on earth.

1. All our sins are forgiven.

All of our sins, past, present and future are forgiven for His name's sake. Some have argued, "How can our future sins be covered?" I have answered that with a simple question, "How many of your sins were in the future when Christ died?" The answer is always, "All of them." Paul said, "... *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered*" (Romans 4:7). John said, "*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake*" (I John 2:12). The writer of Hebrews said, "*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*" (Hebrews 8:12). Micah said, "*He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*" (Micah 7:19).

Yes, we may backslide, but because we are God's child, upon our repentance, he quickly restores us and we don't lose our standing in Christ because the Heavenly Father has allowed Christ to fully pay for that sin. This is why Christ Himself represents us, even at this moment before the Father. "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (I John 2:1).

2. Power to live the Christian life is supplied.

Living the Christian life is not a difficulty, it is impossibility! Without Christ moving by the Spirit into our heart and life at point of salvation we cannot consistently say yes to "right" and "no" to wrong. The Bible promises:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). What a discovery Scott made when he found that Christ was right there when tempted, coaching him, directing him and showing him how to do right. How liberating to be free from the bondage of besetting sin (Hebrews 12:1). "...*I have written unto*

you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (I John 2:14). The promise is as good today as when it was written: *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Philippians 4:13).

This verse explains why some do not operate in the power of Christ: *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us”* (I John 2:19). But with the strengthening Christ within us says, *“...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* (Hebrews 13:5). Our response is: *“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:6). Our declaration is: *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Romans 8:31).

3. We live within the community of faith.

There is no company like God’s people! We have a fellowship that is second to none. It is a fellowship of life: *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death”* (I John 3:14). It is a fellowship of light: *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (I John 1:7).

Like salvation, this fellowship is not earned - it is as free as our salvation. When a person is saved he or she enters the family of God and it is an acceptance that cannot be denied, *“...He hath made us accepted in the beloved”* (Ephesians 1:6).

The little boy was so afraid on the stormy night that he cried out in fear. The father ran into his room and assured him that God loves him and that Christ Himself was in the room, even during the storm. The boy calmed down and just as the father was leaving, the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled one more time and the boy cried out. The father rushed back into the room and before he could say anything to the boy, the boy said, “Dad, look I know God loves me and I know Jesus is in this room with me, but right now, I need somebody with some skin on.” And this is another reason why the experience of knowing Jesus is so rich - because of the community of faith, who takes on the life of Christ and represents Him not only to a lost and fallen world, but to each other. Like no others, God’s people encourage us, rebuke us in love and are simply there when the world walks out.

I agree with Scott. You can take my word on it but you have to be saved to know how good it is. So if you’re not saved, get saved. And for those who are saved, rejoice in this *“...so great salvation”* (Hebrews 2:3).

- Pastor Pope

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