**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

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**You Can Live So As To Be Saved Eternally**

There are those who have concluded that they cannot be saved and go to heaven. Because of their sins and weaknesses they believe they cannot live the kind of life that is necessary to please God and to go to heaven. And believing they can’t, they don’t even try. These people need to see that they can live so as to be saved eternally. This is the focus of our lesson today. I want to emphasize today that it is possible for you to live so as to be saved eternally.

When we conclude that we cannot live so as to be saved eternally, part of our problem is that we spend too much time looking at self, and too little time looking at God. I believe when we come to understand who God is, what He has done, what He continues to do, and the power that He has, we will then be able to see that we are able to live so as to be saved eternally.

What happens when we primarily focus in on ourselves? When we look at self we see human frailties. We all have them. You may not see my frailties, but I do. We see tongue problems. We all have said, “I wish I hadn’t said that.” We say things and then five minutes later we wish we could take it back. We struggle with heart problems. Someone has done us wrong and we find ourselves becoming bitter and hateful. We may be jealous of someone over something. We may have a problem with lust. We have problems with addictions, drug addictions, sexual addictions. A person thinks he has it under control, but then gives in, and he thinks, “what’s the use in trying? I’m lost.” He then gives up.

The preacher says we ought to be good, and then I look at myself and I’m not very good. The preacher says I must live by a high standard, but I conclude I can’t live by that standard. I think, there is no way I can be saved.

Part of our problem may be is that we are focusing too much on self, and too little on God.

When we look at God what do we see?

First, we see One who is merciful and forgiving. Do you remember the story of Jonah? You may remember that he was the one who was swallowed by the great fish. But there is much more to that story. God had told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and cry out against it because of its wickedness (Jonah 1:2) Jonah did not want to go. Do you know why Jonah did not want to preach to Nineveh? You see, Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. Assyria was the enemy of Jonah’s people, the Israelites. Jonah wanted God to destroy them. He knew that if he went and preached to them and they repented, God, because of His love and mercy, would spare them. Jonah did not want that to happen. That is a reason that when God told him to go to Nineveh and cry against it, he got on a ship going to Tarshish, which was in the opposite direction. Later, Jonah did do what God said and went and preached to the city. And as a result the people of the city repented and God spared the city. Jonah was very much displeased and became angry. Notice what Jonah said. It says in Jonah 4:2, *“So he prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.’”*

Aren’t you glad that our God is a God of mercy and lovingkindness? God wants to forgive us of our sins because He loves us. If we will turn to Him He will forgive. Joel 2:12-13 says, *“‘Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.’ So rend your heart, and not your garments;*

*Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness;*

*And He relents from doing harm.”* This is stated over and over again in the Bible. 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God *“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* This is the God we serve. We need to rid ourselves of the concept that God is there standing with a club just waiting for us to step out of line so that He can get us. That is NOT the God of the Bible. Yes, He is a demanding God, but He is a loving God, a forgiving God, a God who wants to save us.

Also when we look at God we see a God of Justice. It is true, when sin is committed the penalty for sin has to be paid. Justice demands it. *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23). God being a just God cannot ignore the penalty for sin. But God desires to forgive us of our sins. How can God forgive us of our sins and be just in doing that? That is where the death of Christ comes in. When we look at God we see Jesus and His death on the cross which is a statement of God’s justice? God understood that His Own Son was the only One who could pay the price for sin so that man could be forgiven. The death of the Son of God was the only thing that could meet the demands of justice, and God was willing to pay that price. 1 John 4:9-10 says *“In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* Jesus, in His death atoned for our sins, and therefore, God can be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Read Romans 3:24-26) Paul said in Romans 5:6-8, *“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* You look at yourself and you are neither righteous nor good, but then you look at God, and you see Jesus Christ, the One who paid the price for our sins.

Also when we look at God we see One who will Help us in our struggles, and who has the power to help us. 1 Cor. 10:13 says, *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”* Notice, God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. You see, God is in control, not Satan. God limits what Satan is able to do. God also provides a way of escape from what Satan does do. Why? -- Because He loves us. He wants us to be saved.

God also provides us with His power to overcome Satan’s temptations. In Ephesians 6 beginning with verse 10 Paul says, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”* He says in verse 13, *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* We can stand in the evil day, the day of temptation. We can stand because we have access to a power that is far greater than the power of evil. We have God’s power. God wants us to grow and be strong against the powers of the devil , and He has provided the means whereby we can be strong.

And also when we see God we see His Promises, His promise of forgiveness through the death of Christ,

His promise that we will not be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, His promise of a way of escape when we are tempted, His promise of power to overcome, His promise of help in time of need, His promise of the resurrection, His promise of eternal life. And God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He always fulfills His promises. I may make a promise, having every intent to fulfill it, but I sometimes forget it and do not follow through. Not God. He always fulfills His promises. We CAN live so as to be eternally saved.

Dear listener, God wants us to live in confidence and assurance of our salvation. God does not want us to live with doubts and uncertainty. John says 1 John 5:13, *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”* We can know that we have eternal life. Peter says in 2 Peter 1:10, *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...”* Notice, we can make our call and election sure. God wants us to live with that assurance.

But the Lord also tells us that this assurance is not for those who are lazy and careless. In the passage we just read, Peter tells us that diligence is required. Look at it again, *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...”*  Earlier in this passage Peter had listed various qualities we must add to our faith. In verse 5 he says, “*giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,”* and he continues to list other qualities. In verse 8 he said, *“For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Notice, “IF these things are yours.” And then in verse 10 he says, *“Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble...”* Our call and election can be sure, but we must give diligence.

And so we do need to look at ourselves and make sure we love and trust God, and that we are diligent in showing that love and faith. We do need to own up to our sins, repent and seek God’s forgiveness. We must turn from our sins and give our all to doing His will. We must never stop striving to grow and be what our Lord wants us to be. We must put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. One of the great challenges to those of us who preach regularly is to help people see that God’s grace is extended, but His grace is not a license to sin, and to carelessness and laziness. Let me illustrate: when my children were at home, occasionally at our dinner table someone would knock over a drink and cause a big mess. Regrets were expressed. The person who did the deed was forgiven. Grace was extended. But let’s say that one of my children asked me if he or she could knock over a glass of water. I would say, “No! Absolutely not.” And if carelessness developed, we would correct the careless one. In a similar way, when a Christian commits sin and repents, God forgives him by His grace, but God’s grace doesn’t give the Christian permission to commit the sin. Is God a God of grace? Yes! Is He a God of forgiveness? Yes indeed! But if I think God’s grace means that I can sit back in my chair of ease and serve God when it is convenient and not serve Him when it is inconvenient, do what is right in my own time and on my own terms, then I have completely misinterpreted the grace of God.

If you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and are striving to show that love in your service to Him, then you can know you have eternal life. You can be confident of salvation in the end. Why? It is not because you are perfect in your service. You know you are not. But you know that you love and serve a God who is merciful and forgiving. When you repent and strive to do better, you know He forgives. And you know He is a God who will help you through your struggles, and has provided you with power to overcome the onslaught of your enemy, the devil. And you know that He never reneges on a promise. He will be with you and will give you eternal life. Yes, you can live so as to be saved eternally.

We want to invite you to check out our website. On this website you are able to hear sermons on a variety of Bible topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com, that’s sjchurchofchrist.com.

Our time is gone for today, but before we close I want to announce a special series of meetings that will be conducted by the St. James church of Christ in St. James. The dates are April 10-13. Colly Caldwell from Temple Terrace, Florida, will be with us and will present lessons from the Book of Ephesians. The Theme of these lessons is, “What Is My Purpose for Being and How is it fulfilled in Christ?” That’s April 10-13. We will be meeting at our regular times on Sunday and then at 7:00 each evening Monday through Wednesday. Come and be with us. The church’s building is located at 685 Sidney Street in St. James, where Sidney Street and Highway B intersect.