

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT SIN?

PRESENTED BY

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GREEN LAWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

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OUR LESSON TONIGHT DEALS WITH THE SUBJECT, "WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT SIN?" TO ASK THE QUESTION IS TO MAKE A PRESUPPOSITION. TO ASK THE QUESTION IS TO PRESUPPOSE THAT I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT SIN. HOWEVER, THIS IS PERHAPS A PRESUPPOSITION THAT WE ARE NOT AT LIBERTY TO MAKE WITHOUT SOME OTHER DISCUSSION, BECAUSE THERE ARE THOSE IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD WHO BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT SIN, THE PRESENCE OF SIN IN HIS LIFE, IN RELATION TO ITS REMOVAL BY THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST. THE REASON THERE ARE THOSE WHO SO FEEL, IS BECAUSE IF MAN HAS ANY RESPONSIBILITY, IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT MAN CAN DO OR MUST DO, THEN IMMEDIATELY SOME OF THEIR BASIC DOCTRINES ARE FOUND TO BE INVALID. IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT MAN CAN DO OR MUST DO THEN SUCH DOCTRINES AS PREDESTINATION, SUCH DOCTRINES AS SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE, SUCH DOCTRINES AS ORIGINAL SIN, SUCH DOCTRINES AS THE DIRECT OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE AT ONCE FOUND TO BE UNTRUE. NOW IT IS NOT OUR PURPOSE TO GO INTO A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF EACH OF THE DOCTRINES IN RELATIONSHIP TO THIS DISCUSSION, FOR WE HAVE GONE INTO EACH OF THE DOCTRINES IN OTHER LESSONS IN THIS SERIES, AND I WOULD SUGGEST IF YOU CANNOT OR DO NOT REMEMBER SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WERE SAID THAT YOU GET THE SERMONS THAT HAVE BEEN PRINTED AND READ THEM OVER IN ORDER TO REFRESH THESE MATTERS IN YOUR MIND.

MAY WE JUST SUGGEST SEVERAL THINGS HERE IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE THOUGHT THAT MAN CANNOT DO ANYTHING IN ORDER TO BE SAVED, BUT INSTEAD OF MAKING IT A NEGATIVE STATEMENT, "MAN CANNOT DO ANYTHING," LET US MAKE IT A POSITIVE STATEMENT AND SAY "GOD MUST DO IT ALL." IF GOD MUST DO EVERYTHING RELATIVE TO THE SALVATION OF MAN THEN IMMEDIATELY THOSE WHO CONTEND FOR SALVATION BY FAITH ALONE ARE UNDERCUT BECAUSE FAITH, YOU SEE, IS AN ACT OF MAN. FAITH IS A RESPONSE THAT MAN MAKES TO WHAT GOD HAS DONE, AND IF EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON GOD THEN IMMEDIATELY THE NECESSITY OF FAITH IS ELIMINATED AND SALVATION IS NOT BY FAITH ALONE, IT IS NOT BY FAITH AT ALL, BECAUSE IT ALL DEPENDS UPON GOD AND GOD HAS DONE EVERYTHING THAT HE CAN DO IN ORDER TO BRING SALVATION TO MAN. IF ALL OF MAN'S SALVATION DEPENDS UPON GOD THEN IMMEDIATELY THE FREE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN IS ELIMINATED, FOR IF GOD MUST DO IT ALL AND MAN IS NOT ACTIVE, THEN WHAT GOD DOES MUST BE DONE IN SPITE OF, OR IN ABEYANCE OF, THE FREE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN. FINALLY, IF THE DOCTRINE THAT GOD MUST DO EVERYTHING IS TRUE, THEN IMMEDIATELY WE ARE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A DILEMMA FROM WHICH WE CANNOT ESCAPE WITH A GOD SUCH AS THE GOD OF WHICH WE READ IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IF EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON GOD, THEN WE WIND UP WITH EITHER THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION WHICH SAYS THAT EVERY MAN IS GOING TO BE SAVED, OR WE WIND UP ON THE OTHER HAND WITH THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION WHICH SAYS THAT GOD HAS ARBITRARILY CHOSEN SOME AND HE HAS TOLD THESE INDIVIDUALS, THE CHOSEN FEW, THAT THEY SHALL BE SAVED, AND HE HAS ARBITRARILY DENIED ACCESS TO SALVATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN SO CHOSEN OR SO PREDESTINED. NOW EITHER ONE OF THE CONCEPTS MEANS THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A GOD OF LOVE. EITHER ONE OF THESE CONCEPTS IMMEDIATELY ELIMINATES THOSE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD WHICH ARE MOST PRECIOUS TO THOSE WHO HAVE READ AND BELIEVED THE REVELATION OF GOD AS WE HAVE IT IN THE BIBLE. FOR INSTANCE, IF ALL MEN ARE GOING TO BE SAVED, THAT IS ONE HORN OF OUR DILEMMA, THEN OBVIOUSLY SINCE ALL MEN ARE NOT CHRISTIANS THERE ARE GOING TO BE SOME MEN SAVED WITHOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, AND IF SOME MEN COULD BE SAVED WITHOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, IT NECESSARILY FOLLOWS THAT ALL MEN COULD BE SAVED WITHOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, AND IF ALL MEN COULD BE

SAVED WITHOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, THEN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST BECOMES NOT A NECESSARY, VICARIOUS ATONEMENT, BUT IT BECOMES AN UNNECESSARY ACT TO WHICH GOD COMMITTED HIS SON THOUGHTLESSLY. GOD IN THAT CASE IS NOT A GOD OF LOVE. SO IF WE TAKE THAT HORN OF THE DILEMMA, THAT ALL MEN ARE GOING TO BE SAVED, WE ELIMINATE THE LOVE OF GOD.

BUT LET US TAKE THE OTHER HORN AND SEE IF WE FARE ANY BETTER. LET US LOOK AT THAT DOCTRINE WHICH SAYS THAT ALL MEN WILL NOT BE SAVED BECAUSE SOME HAVE BEEN PREDESTINED TO ETERNAL LIFE AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN PREDESTINED TO ETERNAL DAMNATION. THIS SAYS THAT GOD HAS ARBITRARILY CHOSEN SOME OF HIS CREATION AND THIS CREATION, EITHER IN THE ABSENCE OF LOVE OR IN SPITE OF GOD'S LOVE WILL BE RELEGATED FOREVER TO AN ETERNAL HELL. IF THIS DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE LOVE OF GOD, IT ELIMINATES THE EXERCISE OF THE LOVE OF GOD, AND WHEN EITHER THE LOVE OR THE EXERCISE OF THE LOVE IS ELIMINATED, WE NO LONGER HAVE A GOD OF LOVE. SO, TO SAY THAT EVERYTHING THAT IS NECESSARY TO MAN'S SALVATION IS DONE BY GOD, IS TO ELIMINATE ANY CONCEPT OF A LOVING GOD AND THEREFORE TO ELIMINATE THAT GOD WHICH IS REVEALED TO US IN THE BIBLE.

THE REASON THAT SOME MEN HAVE SAID THAT MAN CANNOT DO ANYTHING IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN SWAYED BETWEEN TWO WRONG EXTREMES. ONE OF THESE EXTREMES IS THAT EXTREME WHICH SAYS MAN CAN DO EVERYTHING. IN REACTION AGAINST THAT WRONG EXTREME OTHERS HAVE SAID THAT MAN CANNOT DO ANYTHING. AND SO LET US LOOK AND SEE VERY CAREFULLY WHAT MAN CANNOT DO. THERE ARE VERY OBVIOUSLY SOME THINGS THAT MAN CANNOT DO IN ORDER TO OBTAIN OR RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN. BUT THEN LET US ALSO LOOK AND SEE, IF IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH MAN CANNOT DO, THERE ARE NOT YET SOME THINGS WHICH MAN MUST DO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE SALVATION OF GOD.

WHAT IS IT THEN THAT MAN CANNOT DO? FIRST, MAN CANNOT BE SAVED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW OF MOSES. I THINK THIS IS TOO WELL DOCUMENTED TO NEED ANY REAL DISCUSSION, AND I DOUBT NOT BUT THAT EVERYONE HERE ACCEPTS THE FACT THAT BY THE WORKS OF MOSES LAW NO FLESH SHALL BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT. BUT WE CAN GO A STEP FURTHER AND WE CAN SAY THAT MAN CANNOT BE SAVED BY HIS OWN WORKS, BY WORKS OF MAN'S OWN DEVISING. THAT IS TO SAY THAT MAN, IGNORANT AS WERE THE JEWS OF OLD OF WHOM PAUL SPOKE IN ROMANS 10, THAT MEN BEING IGNORANT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD CANNOT GO ABOUT TO ESTABLISH BY THEIR OWN DEVISINGS THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. THEY CANNOT AS THE PHARISEES OF OLD SET UP A RIGID GROUP OF LAWS OR A RIGID STANDARD WHICH MAN MUST MEET, WHICH IS ESTABLISHED BY NO HIGHER AUTHORITY THAN THAT OF MAN, AND SAY UNDER THESE MANMADE RULES, UNDER THESE MANMADE LAWS, "YOU MUST EITHER SUBSCRIBE OR YOU MUST BE CONSIDERED TO ETERNAL TORMENT."

MAN CANNOT, THEN, BE SAVED BY THE LAW OF MOSES. MAN CANNOT BE SAVED BY WORKS OF HIS OWN DEVISING. BUT WE CAN ALSO GO A STEP FURTHER AND WE CAN SAY THAT MAN CANNOT BE SAVED SIMPLY BECAUSE HE HAS DONE THAT WHICH GOD HAS TOLD HIM TO DO, THE WORKS THAT ARE COMMANDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ITSELF TO ENABLE ONE TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN. NOW WHY DO WE SAY THAT? WE SAY THAT NOT TO ELIMINATE, AS WE SHALL SEE IN A MOMENT, THE NECESSITY OF MAN'S OBEDIENCE, BUT WE SAY THAT IN ORDER TO EMPHASIZE THAT EVEN WHEN MAN HAS BEEN OBEDIENT TO THE LAWS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN, WHEN MAN HAS MET THE STANDARDS THAT GOD HAS SET, WHEN MAN HAS SUBSCRIBED TO THE DIRECTIONS THAT JESUS HAS GIVEN, HE STILL HAS NOT EARNED, HE STILL HAS NOT MERITED HIS SALVATION. HIS SALVATION IS STILL BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH. HIS SALVATION IS STILL BY MERCY. HIS SALVATION IS STILL BECAUSE OF THE DEATH THAT JESUS SUFFERED UPON THE TREE. MAN CANNOT PUT AWAY SIN IN HIS OWN LIFE AND MAN CANNOT PUT AWAY SIN IN THE LIVES OF OTHER INDIVIDUALS.

BUT DOES THIS FACT MEAN THAT THERE IS NOT, THEREFORE, ANYTHING THAT MAN CAN DO OR MUST DO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S ATONING WORK. I WOULD SUGGEST UNTO YOU JUST HERE THAT IF THERE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN NOT ONLY CAN DO BUT MUST DO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE ATONING BENEFITS OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, THEN THERE ARE SOME PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH DO NOT HAVE ANY MEANING AT ALL. FOR INSTANCE, TURN TO MATTHEW 7:21-27. IN THIS CONTEXT JESUS IS TALKING ABOUT THOSE WHO SAY UNTO HIM "LORD, LORD," WHO SAY, "WE

HAVE PROPHESED IN THY NAME AND CAST OUT DEMONS, AND DONE MANY MIGHTY WORKS." JESUS INDICATES THAT UNTO THESE HE WILL SAY, "NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." NOW IF THERE IS NOT A WILL OF THE FATHER WHICH MUST BE DONE, THEN THE SETTING OF THIS STANDARD OF DISTINCTION BY WHICH GOD SHALL DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHO SHALL GO INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AND THOSE WHO SHALL NOT, DOESN'T HAVE ANY MEANING AT ALL. TO FURTHER EMPHASIZE WHAT HE IS HERE TEACHING, IN THE CONCLUDING VERSES OF THE CONTEXT JESUS TELLS THE PARABLE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS. HE SAYS CONCERNING THE FOOLISH BUILDER THAT THIS IS THE MAN WHO HAS HEARD THESE SAYINGS OF MINE AND DOETH THEM NOT. THE WISE BUILDER IS THAT MAN WHO HAS HEARD THESE SAYINGS OF MINE AND DOETH THEM. AND SO AGAIN I SAY IF THERE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN EITHER CAN DO OR MUST DO THEN THIS TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST HAS NO MEANING.

IN JOHN 14:15 JESUS SAID, "IF YE LOVE ME KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS." HERE JESUS SAID AT LEAST ONE, I DO NOT SAY THE ONLY ONE, BUT HE SAID AT LEAST ONE OF THE BASES BY WHICH DISTINCTION SHALL BE MADE BETWEEN THOSE WHO LOVE HIM AND THOSE WHO DO NOT, IS THAT HERE ARE SOME WHO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS AND HERE ARE SOME WHO DO NOT. AND IF MAN CANNOT OR MUST NOT KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD THEN THIS TEST TO DETERMINE THOSE WHO LOVE GOD HAS NO VALIDITY. IN THE 15TH CHAPTER AND THE 14TH VERSE WE FIND THE SAME PRINCIPLE INVOLVED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THOSE WHO WOULD BE THE FRIENDS OF CHRIST. IT SAYS, "YE ARE MY FRIENDS, IF YE DO WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU."

COMING INTO REVELATION 22:14 JESUS SAID, "BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS (OR THE AMERICAN STANDARD SAYS "BLESSED ARE THOSE THAT WASH THEIR ROBES"), THAT THEY MAY HAVE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY." HERE DISTINCTION IS BEING MADE BETWEEN THOSE WHO SHALL ENTER IN BY THE GATES INTO THE CITY AND THOSE WHO SHALL NOT, AND THE BASIS IS, IN THE KING JAMES, THOSE WHO HAVE DONE THE COMMANDMENTS, AND IN THE AMERICAN STANDARD (AND PROBABLY A BETTER RENDERING) THOSE WHO HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES. BUT NOTICE THAT EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS STILL MAINTAINS THE VALIDITY OF THE PRINCIPLE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING THAT A MAN CAN AND MUST DO (THAT IS TO EITHER DO THE COMMANDMENTS OR WASH HIS ROBES, BEING A SPECIFIC COMMANDMENT) BEFORE HE CAN ENTER IN BY THE GATES INTO THE CITY.

IN LUKE 6:46 JESUS ASKED THIS QUESTION, "AND WHY CALL YE ME LORD, LORD, AND DO NOT THE THINGS WHICH I SAY?" DOING THE THINGS THAT JESUS HAS SAID DETERMINES THOSE WHO CAN PROPERLY CALL HIM LORD.

IN PHILIPPIANS 2:12 PAUL SPOKE OF THE NECESSITY OF MAN'S ACTION AND HE TOLD THE PHILIPPIAN BRETHREN TO "WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING." IN ACTS 2:37 THE JEWS CRIED OUT AND SAID, "MEN AND BRETHREN, WHAT SHALL WE DO?" THE FORTIETH VERSE SAYS, "AND WITH MANY OTHER WORDS DID HE TESTIFY AND EXHORT, SAYING, SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS UNTOWARD GENERATION." NOW IF THERE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT MAN MUST DO IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE SALVATION THAT GOD OFFERS TO GIVE, THEN THIS STATEMENT, "SAVE YOURSELVES FROM THIS UNTOWARD GENERATION," MUST TEACH THAT MAN CAN EARN OR MERIT SALVATION, AND IT DOESN'T TEACH THAT, SO OBVIOUSLY THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR IT TO TEACH IS THAT MAN MUST DO SOMETHING IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE ATONING BENEFITS OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

HEBREWS 2:3 ASKS THE QUESTION, "HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION? NOW WHAT DO WE DO WHEN WE NEGLECT? IT MEANS SIMPLY THAT WE FAIL TO DO. WE ARE NOT GUILTY PERHAPS OF COMMITTING SINS OF COMMISSION, BUT WHEN WE NEGLECT WE ARE GUILTY OF THE SINS OF OMISSION. WE HAVE NEGLECTED, WE HAVE LEFT UNDONE, AND THE IMPLICATION OF THE QUESTION IS THAT THOSE WHO LEAVE UNDONE THE THINGS THAT RELATE TO THE SALVATION THAT CAME BY JESUS CHRIST SHALL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THAT SALVATION.

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THUS FAR TWO THINGS. FIRST, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT MAN CANNOT DO, BUT SECOND, YET WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED THAT IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS MAN CANNOT DO, THERE ARE YET SOME THINGS THAT MAN MUST DO, FOR IF THIS IS NOT SO THEN WE HAVE IMMEDIATELY ELIMINATED ANY MEANING OR ANY REAL APPLICATION FOR MANY NEW TESTAMENT VERSES, A PORTION OF WHICH WE HAVE READ TONIGHT.

NOW THAT LEAVES THIS QUESTION. IF THERE IS SOMETHING THAT MAN CAN DO, IF THERE IS SOMETHING THAT MAN MUST DO, WHAT IS THAT THING? WHAT IS THAT THING? PERHAPS THIS QUESTION IS MISLEADING, FOR TO ASK THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS THAT THING?" IS PERHAPS TO INDICATE THAT THERE IS BUT ONE. IF ONE HAD A PROPER CONCEPT OR UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS USE OF CERTAIN WORDS THIS WOULD PERHAPS BE A PROPER UNDERSTANDING. WHEN, FOR INSTANCE, YOU UNDERSTAND THE DYNAMIC CONCEPT OF FAITH AS THE APOSTLE PAUL USES IT IN SO MANY INSTANCES, THEN EVERYTHING THAT MAN MUST DO IS WRAPPED UP IN THE WORD, "FAITH." BUT LET US FOR OUR PURPOSES IN THIS LESSON GO BEYOND THE CONCEPT OF FAITH, FOR IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE AS THAT TERM IS USED IN OTHER NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES, TO HAVE FAITH THAT WILL NOT SAVE. JAMES 2 IS A VIVID ILLUSTRATION OF THIS POSSIBILITY, AND SO, GOING BEYOND THE CONCEPT OF FAITH, LET US GO TO THE CONCEPT OF THE EXPRESSION OF FAITH. I THINK THIS IS A LEGITIMATE STEP FOR IF JAMES 2 TEACHES ANYTHING, IT TEACHES THAT FAITH UNEXPRESSED IS NOT THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH. THEREFORE, FAITH EXPRESSED IS THE RIGHT KIND OF FAITH. SO LET US LOOK AND SEE WHAT MAN MUST DO, THEN, BY WAY OF EXPRESSION OF THAT FAITH. LET US TURN TO HEBREWS 5:8,9. "THOUGH HE WERE A SON, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED: AND BEING MADE PERFECT, HE BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM." NOW LET US STATE JUST HERE THAT HIS OBEDIENCE EVEN UNTO DEATH DID NOT MAKE HIM PERFECT IN THE SENSE IN WHICH WE USE THE WORD. FOR HE WAS PERFECT IN THAT SENSE ALL OF HIS LIFE. BUT IT DID PERFECT OR COMPLETE, IF YOU PLEASE, THE WORK THAT HE CAME TO DO IN ATONING FOR MAN'S SINS. THROUGH HIS OBEDIENCE, HIS COMPLETION OF THAT OBEDIENCE, IN THE ACT OF DEATH WHICH CROWNED HIS WORK JESUS BECAME THE AUTHOR OF SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM.

NOW, WHAT IS NEW TESTAMENT OBEDIENCE? IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO GO THROUGH SOME OF THE ACTS WHICH ARE REQUIRED OR COMMANDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WITHOUT RENDERING OBEDIENCE TO THE LORD? YES, IT IS. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO WALK THIS AISLE AND IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO STAND BEFORE THIS ASSEMBLY AND TO SAY, "I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD." IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO GO INTO THE WATERS OF THIS BAPTISTRY AND BE IMMersed AND STILL NOT HAVE RENDERED ANY ACCEPTABLE OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD. THE REASON IS THAT A MAN MAY GO THROUGH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE ACTS WITH AN IMPROPER HEART, AND AN IMPROPER HEART RENDERS THE WHOLE PROCESS NULL AND VOID. THIS IS NOT WHAT THE WRITER OF THE HEBREW LETTER HAD IN MIND WHEN HE SAID JESUS "BECAME THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM." OBEDIENCE, REAL OBEDIENCE, IS A COMPREHENSIVE TERM WHICH TAKES INTO ACCOUNT NOT ONLY ACTS RENDERED, BUT THE MOTIVE WHICH PROMPTS THAT ACT. WE NEED TO BE VERY CAREFUL THAT WE DO NOT MAKE THE EXACT OPPOSITE ERROR THAT SOME OF OUR RELIGIOUS NEIGHBORS ARE MAKING. THEY HAVE ASSUMED THAT A PROPER MOTIVE SANCTIFIES AN IMPROPER ACT. THIS IS NOT SO. BUT I WONDER SOMETIMES IF WE HAVE NOT ASSUMED THAT A PROPER ACT SANCTIFIES AN IMPROPER MOTIVE, AND THAT IS NOT SO, EITHER. TRUE OBEDIENCE, ACCEPTABLE OBEDIENCE, INCLUDES BOTH AN ACT AND THE MOTIVE THAT PROMPTS IT. IN II THESSALONIANS 1:8 WE READ, THAT JESUS WILL COME "TAKING VENGEANCE ON THEM THAT KNOW NOT GOD, AND THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." I THINK THESE TWO VERSES ARE ENOUGH TO EMPHASIZE THE PROPER PLACE THAT OBEDIENCE, OR IF YOU PREFER THE EXPRESSION "FAITH EXPRESSED," HAS IN THE RECEPTION OF THE SALVATION THAT CHRIST WROUGHT FOR MAN. AND WHEN WE SPEAK OF THE RESPONSE OF MAN, OR TO MAKE THE TERM MORE COMPREHENSIVE, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN, WE DO NOT IMPUGN THE SUFFICIENCY OF GOD, NEITHER DO WE PROCLAIM THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF MAN. BUT WE SIMPLY STATE THE NECESSITY OF MAN'S COMPLYING WITH THOSE CONDITIONS THAT GOD HAS SET FORTH IN ORDER FOR HIM TO RECEIVE SALVATION AND IN ORDER FOR HIM TO REMAIN IN THAT SAVED STATE.

I THINK THERE IS ONE WORD WHICH MIGHT ADMIRABLY SUM UP THAT WHICH IS EXPECTED OF MAN IN RECEIVING SALVATION WHICH GOD HAS TO OFFER. THAT ONE WORD IS THE WORD FOUND FIRST, AND FOREMOST, IN THE INVITATION THAT JESUS EXTENDED WHEN HE SAID, "COME." "COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY-LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST, TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU AND LEARN OF ME FOR

I AM MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART AND YE SHALL FIND REST UNTO YOUR SOULS." JOHN 6:35 EMPHASIZES THE SAME THING. "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE: HE THAT COMETH TO ME SHALL NEVER HUNGER; AND HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME SHALL NEVER THIRST." HEBREWS 7:25. "WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE ALSO TO SAVE THEM TO THE UTMOST THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM, SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTER-CESSION FOR THEM." BUT THIS "COMING," YOU SEE, IS MORE THAN AN INDIVIDUAL'S SIMPLY STANDING UP AND SAYING, "I BELIEVE IN GOD." COMING IS THAT FAITH WHICH IS EXPRESSED. HEBREWS 11:6 WOULD INDICATE THIS. "BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM; FOR HE THAT COMETH (SEE, HERE IS THE COMING) TO GOD MUST BELIEVE (THE BELIEVING PRECEEDS THE COMING) THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS THE REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM."

THIS LEAVES THE ALL IMPORTANT QUESTION, "HOW DOES MAN COME UNTO GOD?" JOHN 6:44 SAYS "NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER WHICH HATH SENT ME DRAW HIM: AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP IN THE LAST DAY." IT SEEMS TO ME THAT JESUS IS HERE STATING SOME IMPOSSIBILITY WITH MAN. "NO MAN CAN COME UNTO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER DRAW HIM." SOME READING THIS PASSAGE CAN READ INTO IT ALL KINDS OF MIRACULOUS OPERATIONS, BELIEVING THAT UNTIL YOU REACH THAT MOMENT WHEN YOUR HEART BEGINS TO PATTERN, UNTIL YOU REACH THAT MOMENT WHEN YOUR PULSE BEGINS TO BEAT, UNTIL YOU REACH THAT MOMENT WHEN YOU CAN REACH OUT AND CRY, "IT'S MY TIME," YOU HAVE NOT BEEN DRAWN TO THE FATHER AND YOU CAN'T COME TO GOD. NOTHING IS FURTHER FROM GOD'S TRUTH TONIGHT. NOTHING IS FURTHER FROM GOD'S TRUTH THAN THAT DOCTRINE WHICH STATES THAT YOU HAVE GOT TO WAIT UNTIL THE SPIRIT COMES IN SOME DIRECT OPERATION ON YOUR SOUL. NOTHING IS FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH THAN THAT DOCTRINE WHICH STATES THAT YOU HAVE GOT TO PLEAD WITH GOD TO SAVE YOU AND UNTIL YOU HAVE "PRAYED THROUGH," YOU CAN'T COME TO GOD.

WELL, IF THESE THINGS ARE NOT SO, IN WHAT SENSE THEN DOES THE FATHER DRAW THEM? "NO MAN CAN COME UNTO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER THAT SENT ME DRAW HIM AND I WILL RAISE HIM UP IN THE LAST DAY. IT IS WRITTEN IN THE PROPHETS, AND THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF GOD. EVERY MAN THEREFORE THAT HATH HEARD, AND HATH LEARNED OF THE FATHER, COMETH UNTO ME." THAT'S HOW THE FATHER IS GOING TO DRAW US. THE FATHER IS GOING TO DRAW THROUGH THAT WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, AND THAT WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT WHICH IS BASED UPON A "THUS SAITH THE LORD." THE ONLY THING THAT CAN DRAW YOU UNTO GOD IS THAT WHICH IS REVEALED IN HIS WORD. THE REASON THIS IS TRUE IS BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST IS REVEALED HERE, WHO SAID, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE AND NO MAN COMETH (AND WITHOUT DOING THAT ANY VIOLENCE, WE MIGHT READ IT "NO MAN CAN COME") UNTO THE FATHER EXCEPT BY ME." THE ONLY THING THAT IS GOING TO DRAW YOU UNTO JESUS CHRIST TONIGHT, UNTO GOD, IS THE REVELATION THAT IS MADE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THIS BOOK THAT I HOLD BEFORE YOU. ALL OF THE DRAWING POWER THAT YOU ARE GOING TO FEEL YOU FEEL IN THIS WAY, AND IF YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR SOME MOMENT WHEN YOU FEEL YOUR TIME HAS COME, IF YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR SOME MOMENT WHEN YOU FEEL THAT YOU JUST KNOW THAT GOD HAS NOW OPENED ACCESS, YOU NEED WAIT NO LONGER. TONIGHT, IF THERE IS ANY MEANING TO THE INVITATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH SAYS, "TODAY, IF YE HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART," WHICH SAYS, "NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION," IT MEANS YOUR TIME HAS COME.

WE CAN PUT TOGETHER THIS LESSON AND THE LESSON OF LAST LORD'S DAY EVENING AND WE CAN KNOW THAT EVERYTHING THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR YOU HAS BEEN DONE. CHRIST HAS DIED, THE BLOOD HAS BEEN SHED, ALL OF THE TEARS, ALL OF THE GRIEF, ALL OF THE AGONY, ALL OF THE ANGUISH WERE HIS AND WE ARE NOT ASKED TO BEAR THOSE THINGS. BUT JESUS BORE THEM IN ORDER THAT YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE TO BEAR THEM. THE IMPLICATION OF THAT IS THAT IF YOU REJECT WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE IN YOUR STEAD, THEN YOU MUST DO IT FOR YOURSELF, AND YOU CAN'T DO IT FOR YOURSELF. THE ALTERNATIVE LEFT TO YOU IS ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM THE FATHER.

OH, HOW SMALL, HOW SMALL, IS THAT WHICH THE LORD ASKS OF YOU TONIGHT IN RELATION TO WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR YOU. I AM CERTAIN THERE IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL HERE WHO HAS REACHED VERY FAR IN STUDIES IN SCHOOL, PERHAPS STUDIES IN BIBLE SCHOOL, BUT WHO HAS STUDIED OF THE MOTHER IN THE COUNTRY OF INDIA, WHO TAKES HER NEWBORN INFANT DOWN TO THE GANGES RIVER AND

STANDS AT ITS BANKS AND THROWS THAT CHILD TO HIS DEATH. AND YOU AND I SAY IMMEDIATELY, "HOW TERRIBLE." BUT YOU SEE SO OFTEN WHAT WE DO, AND HAVE DONE IN THIS CASE, IS TO CONDEMN BEFORE WE CONSIDER, TO CONDEMN BEFORE WE HAVE LOOKED INTO THAT MOTHER'S HEART TO SEE WHAT HER MOTIVE MIGHT BE. FOR AFTER ALL, IS SHE NOT A MOTHER? FOR AETER ALL, HAS NOT GOD PLANTED IN HER HEART THAT MOTHER'S LOVE WHICH CHARACTERIZES ALL MOTHERS? AND HOW BITTER MUST BE HER AGONY. HOW BROKEN MUST BE HER HEART. TO STEP TO THE WATERS EDGE AND TEAR HER BABY FROM HER BOSOM AND THROW IT TO ITS DEATH. BUT YET TO EXAMINE IT, IS TO FIND, EVEN IN THIS ACT, ONE REDEEMING TRUTH. FOR YOU SEE, WHAT THIS MOTHER IS SEEKING TO DO IS TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION THAT WAS IN HER BOSOM BEFORE THAT BABY WAS BORN, AND THAT QUESTION IS, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED." THIS IS THE ANSWER WHICH IN IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO HER, AND IT IS NOT BECAUSE SHE LOVES THE BABY LESS, BUT BECAUSE SHE LOVES HER GOD MORE THAT SHE IS ABLE TO DO WHAT ABRAHAM WAS COMMANDED TO DO IN THE LONG AGO--TAKE THE LIFE OF HER CHILD. GOD DOES NOT ASK YOU TONIGHT TO SURRENDER YOUR CHILD. ALL THAT MUST BE DONE, IN ANGUISH, JESUS HAS DONE. TO YOU HE SAYS, "HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED." "IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH GOD, SEEK THOSE THINGS THAT ARE ABOVE WHERE CHRIST IS SEATED ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." SURELY, SURELY THIS YOU ARE WILLING TO DO. WILL YOU COME TO DO IT WHILE WE STAND AND WHILE WE SING?