

SAVED BY GRACE & LED BY HIS SPIRIT

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John 5:17-29

"But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.""

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"But Jesus answered them, My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." This is the beginning of a reply of Jesus' to the Jews who had witnessed a man walking and carrying his mat. The Jews were enraged that this man was carrying his mat on the Sabbath. Horror of horrors. Jesus had healed the man of an illness that prevented him from being able to walk, on the Sabbath. According to Jewish law, based on the 10 Commandments, no one was to work on the Sabbath. Before Jesus healed Him, He asked, "Do you want to be made well?" The man replied that no one was around to put him in the stirring of the waters of the pool of Bethesda when an angel would stir the waters to which the first person to enter the water would be healed. Jesus then told him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." Later on Jesus found the healed man in the temple and Jesus said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." Our passage of Scripture today is what Jesus had in reply to the Jews who were wanting to condemn the healed man for taking up his bed and walking on the Sabbath day. "But Jesus answered them, My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." It is similar to what Jesus had said to his parents when Jesus was

accidentally left behind in Jerusalem after the Passover celebration was over. When Jesus' parents had finally realized that Jesus was missing, after a day's journey, they went back to Jerusalem and found Jesus at the temple. His mother said to Jesus, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." Jesus answered, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Jesus was always about His Father's business. No matter what day of the week, even on the Sabbath day, Jesus was about His Father's business. The call we have is the call that Jesus gave to His disciples, saying, "Come, follow Me." In **Luke 9:23-26** Jesus said to those who would follow Him, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Believing in Jesus is also following Jesus. Following Jesus is doing the works of Jesus, not to **be** saved but because we **have been** saved. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (**Matthew 7:21**) Jesus was always about His Father's business. Jesus says, "Come follow Me!"

Yes, we are indeed saved by the grace of God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Believing on Jesus dying on the cross for our sins, taking on Himself our sins that we can be "born again" as Jesus said, walk in the "newness of life" as the Apostle Paul explained and then to continue from "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast," Paul continues by saying, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) We were created to be in Christ Jesus to be about the Father's business. That of course couldn't happen until we believed on Jesus and received the Spirit of Christ Jesus in our hearts. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:12-13**) "Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." (**2 Corinthians 1:22**) And then "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (**Romans 8:16**) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (**Romans 8:14**) When we believe on Jesus, we are believing as **John 3:16-17** says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

Too many people think that believing that Jesus died on the cross for their sins is good enough, that from there they can go back to living the way that they have always lived, in sin. That can not be so! For what point is it if you continue in sin after you have believed that Jesus died for your sins. Jesus Himself is recorded in **Matthew 4:17** as saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Later in **Matthew 9:13** Jesus said, "For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." One thing to be made clear. It IS Jesus who saves us and it IS Jesus who keeps us. It is by His Holy Spirit that leads us in repentance and good works. "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Once we believe on Jesus for saving us from our sins, He then gives of His Holy Spirit "to those who will obey Him." (**Acts 5:32**) To those who have been called to repentance, to no longer walk after the things of the flesh, the sins of the flesh, but to now be led in His Righteousness and good works. **Romans 8:1-9** says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Jesus is calling, "Come follow Me!"

God cannot and will not be mocked. Jesus said to the man He healed, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." If we continue in sin, if we continue practicing sin,

there is no more room for us to be saved, just what is said in **Hebrews 10:24-27**, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."

Some here may be thinking, why are you preaching to the choir. You, I, we all must encourage one another in the faith that brought us to where we are today. To those who are struggling in sin we must be praying for them first of all, but also, in love, warning our brothers and sisters that those who continue to practice sin is in danger of the judgment. The bad judgment. The great white throne judgment that is mentioned in **Revelation 20**. That is for all who rebelled against God and His will. His perfect will for us is this, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (**Romans 12:1-2**) And as the Apostle James said, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." (**James 4:17**)

Paul was saying, I beg you, **please** let the Holy Spirit change you and work in you. Otherwise you may not be saved. We are "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." (**Romans 8:29**) We are being made into the image of Christ, to be like Jesus! To be about our Father's business. Jesus said, "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" We are called by God to follow Jesus and Jesus was about His Father's business. To us that means to share the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who were the ones Jesus said was doing His will? In **Matthew 25** Jesus said, "'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." The Apostle Paul said, "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (**Galatians 6:9**) Remember, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." We will bear fruit in due time. We may not see

the fruit of our labor until we go to be in His glory but we must, must, must keep "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (**Hebrews 12:2**) This is God's plan, His purpose, He had His only beloved Son, Jesus die on the cross for our sins so that we can then have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (**Philippians 1:3-6**) Paul wasn't speaking to those still living in sin, to those who were rebelling against the will of God. He was speaking to those who were remaining in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sometimes the struggle is hard, the fight is fierce, and the trials are relentless. But God has brought us this far, Jesus paid the price for our sin, now we are just called to abide in Him, trust in Him. The battle belongs to the Lord, He is our Protector, He is our Help in time of need, He is our Lord God Almighty, and Savior and Friend. We can't put our hope and trust in man. They will eventually let you down. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (**Proverbs 3:5-6**) Amen!

If I gained the world, but lost the Saviour, Were my life worth living for a day?
Could my yearning heart find rest and comfort in the things that soon must pass away?
If I gained the world, but had no Saviour, would my gain be worth the lifelong strife?
Are all earthly pleasures worth comparing for a moment with a Christ-filled life?

Had I wealth and love in fullest measure, and a name revered both far and near,
Yet no hope beyond, no harbour waiting, where my storm-tossed vessel I could steer;
If I gained the world, but had no Saviour, Who endured the cross and died for me,
Could then all the world afford a refuge, whither, in my anguish, I might flee?

O what emptiness! - without the Saviour 'mid the sins and sorrows here below!
And eternity, how dark without Him! - only night and tears and endless woe!
What, tho' I might live without the Saviour, when I come to die, how would it be?
O to face the valley's gloom without Him! And without Him all eternity!

O the joy of having all in Jesus! What a balm the broken heart to heal!
Ne'er a sin so great, but He'll forgive it, nor a sorrow that He does not feel!
If I have but Jesus, only Jesus, - nothing else in all the world beside -
O then ev'rything is mine in Jesus; For my needs and more He will provide.

by Anna Olander