

Salvation Can Be Yours

Text : Eph. 1: 18-21 , Matt. 28: 18-20

INTRODUCTION :

A. Various state governments in the U.S. are looking to give away 32 billion dollars.

1. The state of Missouri recently gave \$6.1 million to a woman in Iowa.
2. Virtually every state issues such checks, but historically in lesser amounts.

B. Though these checks are available, many never claim the money that's theirs.

1. Our state (*most*) has websites to assist people in finding and claiming their money.
2. Even so, billions go unclaimed and are confiscated by the states. (*Time Limit*)

C. Why would people just leave their money unclaimed and allow states to claim it?

1. Some don't find out about it until it is too late.
2. Most never knew they had an inheritance available to them.

ILL.- The woman in Iowa inherited stocks that had been purchased years before by a relative that she didn't know existed. She was his last blood relative.

D. How sad to see people who actually need the lost money unknowingly lose it, BUT .. there's a loss that's much greater and much sadder than even this.

1. God has made a precious inheritance available for all mankind.
2. The condition is that each person must individually claim their inheritance.
3. Though God's eternal inheritance (Heaven) is available to all, few people claim it.

WHY ?

It's the objective of this lesson to examine some reasons why so many people don't claim their eternal mansion in Heaven with God.

We will see that :

- 1 – Most are totally unaware that Heaven is available to them.
- 2 – Many who hear about it don't believe that it's true.
- 3 – Others think they have it, but don't.
- 4 – Some don't think they need it.

I. Most people don't know about God and the salvation that is in Jesus.

A. There is in excess of 6 billion people on the earth today.

1. Dispersed into 196 countries.
2. Worldwide, the average life expectancy is estimated to be 67, but I doubt that.
 - a. 89,552,238 die each year.
 - b. 245, 348 die each day.
 - c. 10,222 die each hour , 170 each minute, 2.8 each second

B. The observation of Jesus remains true.

1. **Luke 10: 2** – And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”
2. We have only about 450 missionaries in foreign fields. (Each = 12, 640, 906)
3. There are 13,000 congregations of all stripes in the U.S. (Near 2 Million people)
 - a. The population of the U.S. is 311, 591, 917 people.
 - b. Subtracting the two million who have obeyed the gospel.
 - c. In order to evangelize this country, each congregation must teach 23,814 people.
4. According to the last census, the population of Shelbyville is 4647.
 - a. More than half of those list no religious affiliation and don't go to church. 2323
 - b. Figuring our membership at 40, we must each teach 58 people in order to evangelize just the city limits. (county : 22, 335 / 40 = 558)
 - c. The number of births in the county averages in the range of 240.
That means we would each have to average 6 per year just to keep up.

C. This is a matter of such importance that God sent His son to die to correct it.

1. 90 million souls will perish every year without Jesus to cleanse their sins. (10K hr)
 - a. **John 14: 6** – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
 - b. *If there is one person in Heaven who did not get there via Jesus, then Jesus is a false prophet and we are all lost.*
2. One must believe and obey the gospel of Christ in order to be saved.
 - a. **Rom. 1: 16** – For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, ...
 - b. **II Thes. 1: 7-8** ... Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
 - c. **Matt. 7: 13-14** ... the gate is small and the way is narrow ... are few who find it.

D. The function of the Christian on the earth is to further Jesus' saving ministry.

1. Before leaving Jesus gave us (all disciples) very clear instructions :
Mark 16: 15 – And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”
2. Jesus also linked relationship with His disciples to their doing as He instructed :
John 15: 14 – You are My friends if you do what I command you.
3. The Lord's Apostle reminded us of our assigned task :
II Cor. 5: 18-20 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.
3. Thus, when we don't share the good news of salvation with others, we condemn both them and ourselves to “eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord.”
Remember : I Thes. 1: 8 – .. dealing out retribution to those who do not know God ..

II. Many who hear the good news about their eternal inheritance don't believe it.**A. Jesus knows that there are many who will not receive His offer of salvation.**

1. This was the message of the parable of the sower. (**Luke 8: 4-15**)
 - a. The seed was broadcast, not planted one at a time.
 - b. Only one out of four made a positive response.
 - c. The hearts in which the word did not grow were judged by their refusal.
2. Many did not receive Jesus, but He kept on teaching.
Luke 7: 31-34 To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another, and they say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’ ³³ For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon!’ ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’
3. Jesus anticipates that we will face many rejections by unbelievers.
Matt. 10: 24-25 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they *malign* the members of his household!

B. The Apostles had many who refused to hear them.

1. When Steven spoke (Acts 6-7) they put their fingers in their ears.
2. When Paul preached he got many responses :
 - a. **Acts 17: 32** – Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some *began to sneer*, but others said, “We shall hear you again concerning this.”
 - b. **Acts 17: 8-10** (*Ephesus*) And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, *reasoning and persuading them* about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some were *becoming hardened* and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This took place for two years, so that *all* who lived in Asia *heard the word* of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

(*Never give up*)

C. God has made it very clear that we’re judged on our faithfulness, not on others’.

1. **Ezek. 3: 16-21** ... Regardless of what response we get, we must warn.
2. No matter what the response, our faithfulness will be rewarded. (*Noah*)
3. Remember ... the power is in the gospel, not in the presentation. **Rom. 1:16**

D. The gospel only has power when it is believed.

1. **Rom. 1:16** (cf- **Heb. 5: 9**)
2. **Mark. 16: 15-16**

III. Many think they have the inheritance of God, but they don’t.**A. Some have grown up with a “form of religion”, but it is not according to His will.**

1. **Matt. 7: 21-23** ... They sincerely thought they were heirs, but they were lost.
2. **II Tim. 4: 3-4** ... Often it is because they grew up under the tutelage of ear ticklers.
 - a. In our modern “PC” culture, ear-ticklers abound.
 - b. Religion is increasingly being reduced to just a way of being made to feel good.

B. The Apostles warned us that Satan has sent out many false teachers. (**I John 4)**

1. Many with sincere hearts have been lead by those who were sincerely wrong. (**SAD**)
2. **Acts 18: 24-28** (*Remember : **Matt. 7:21-23***)
 - a. Apollos was zealous for the Lord, but was teaching error.
 - b. Aquila and Priscilla discreetly taught him more accurately.
 - c. He then became a valuable servant for God.

D. We must have the courage to stand up for the truth when we errors are taught.

1. We must be **wise** in the way we approach people. (*Be assertive, but not aggressive.*)
2. Aggressive confrontation seldom accomplishes the desired result. (cf- **Col. 4: 5-6**)
3. There are three keys :
 - a. Love
 - b. Patience
 - c. Persistence

IV. When offered God's inheritance, some don't think they need it.**A. Some think that if they're just "a good person" they'll be heirs of Heaven.**

1. No matter how hard one tries to be good, he still sins. **Rom. 3: 10, 23**
2. The consequence of that first sin is separation from God. **Rom. 6: 23**

B. Those who don't feel they need salvation will neither seek it nor be open to it.

1. Our "PC" culture frowns upon making anyone feel guilty or even uncomfortable.
2. Political correctness is based upon man being the highest standard of right & wrong.
 - a. "If I'm okay with it, who are you to condemn me ?" (e.g., *homosexual behavior*)
 - b. Their philosophy is : "As long as I'm not hurting you it's none of your business."
 - c. **TRUTH** : God reigns, sin hurts everyone and it brings judgment upon a nation.
3. The Apostle Paul understood the need to convict people of their sin.

II Cor. 7: 9-10 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

C. God is totally just.

1. His salvation is available to all.
2. He offers no other way for man to approach Him.
3. God want all men near Him, but He will not accept sin into His presence.
 - a. All men sin, so all who approach Him must be cleansed.
 - b. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse men from sin. **Thus : ALL NEED JESUS**

D. Everyone chooses .. Law or Grace. Jesus died to deliver us from law.

CONCLUSION :**A. We have seen that :**

1. Though some men think they're good enough, no one is pure enough to stand before God without first being cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
(*They need to learn about grace.*)
2. Others think they have God's promised inheritance, but have been misled by the errors of their teachers. (*Muslims, cults, some denominations*)
3. Many have been hardened by life experiences to the point that they don't have "**ears to hear**" God's invitation.
4. Most are lost because they have no idea that salvation is available to them.

B. As Christians we are sent out into the world as "ambassadors for Christ.**"**

1. Our assignment is to "**persuade men**" to be reconciled to God.
2. Sin is like many forms of cancer.
 - a. If not diagnosed, it will kill.
 - b. If ignored or denied, it will kill.
 - c. There is a medicine to treat sin, the blood of Jesus.
However, even this must be administered to affect a cure.
3. We are faithful so long as we keep on proclaiming the good news of the gospel.
 - a. Our instructions are to make sure every single person hears the gospel message.
 - b. If they refuse to claim the inheritance, they forfeit theirs, **but we still get ours.**

INVITATION :

A. Have you claimed the inheritance Jesus died to obtain for you ?

B. Are you remaining faithful in the assignment God left for us to accomplish ?

Lesson Texts :

Eph. 1: 18-21

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might **20** which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Matthew 28: 18-20

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”