



Salvation Stories

SALVATION IS A "BEFORE AND AFTER" EVENT!

What is salvation? One of my earliest memories of considering salvation was sitting in a community church in Greenwood, Indiana, USA. The congregation was singing the words of the song Amazing Grace, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me... when we've been there 10,000 years... we've no less days to sing God's praise, than when we first began. I thought what is this heaven, and would I really like to go there? At the age of six, I thought "No." After all, I wanted to do what I wanted to do. Singing for 10,000 years was not something I was interested in.

About two years later at the age of 8 I understood that heaven was a good place (Revelation 21:4) and that I would like heaven. I gave my life to Christ for a selfish reason... to get to heaven. As I grew older and learned what it meant to be saved, although I questioned my faith several times.

At the age of 12 I had the privilege to live in Uzbekistan and travel through Thailand. During this time, I learned about both the Muslim faith and Buddhism. I understood that we all have the problem of sin (Romans 3:23) and want to do things to try to make it better but as much as I tried to do good things (Romans 7:19), I realized that I could not be good enough. The better I did, if I did it for myself so I wasn't really better (Isaiah 64:6). I was doing good things for selfish reasons, trying to make myself look good. Because my view on salvation was works-based, I was always uncertain if I could ever really be good enough.

I began to understand the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is not works based but relationship based (Ephesians 2:4-7). At the age of 16 I ended up in a British boarding school in Pakistan and at that point in my life my faith became real and my relationship with Jesus began with clarity (Matthew 16:25). From that time on I have never questioned where I will be eternally.

I realized that heaven is not a far-off place but a relationship that can start today. I was baptized as an infant but had no memory of it so I was baptized again at an older age in the Baptist church. But I realized that as much as I thought that I chose God, He worked in me from an early age (Romans 8:30). I began to see that baptism is a work of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation



My understanding of good works changed. If you do good, you do it for the Lord. Your motivation for good deeds needs to be to glorify Him out of a relationship with God through Jesus, not to build yourself up (Matthew 10:42). Without that relationship even the good I try to do is not good. My perspective had changed, my goal was now to glorify God and could start today and go for 10,000+ years. No matter what I do or where I go, I can do it for His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31). It is not my works that are saving me but they are a byproduct of my relationship with Him. I hope this encourages you that you do not have to earn your salvation but that it is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9) and that as you have an active relationship with God and glorify Him heaven will be a great place to be. Will you die to self (Mark 8:34-36)? Will you join me? I would love to hear your story.

Key Scriptures in New International Version (NIV):

Revelation 21:4 - He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 7:19 - For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do this I keep on doing.

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Ephesians 2:4-7 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 16:25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.

Romans 8:30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Mark 8:34-36 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

