

## **GOD YOU ARE**

### ***“God You Are My Savior”***

#### **Psalm 25:4-7**

#### **Introduction**

Last week we began this new sermon series, **God You Are**. In this series we are looking at four ways that God has revealed Himself to us. This will help us to have a better understanding of our relationship with Him.

Last week we looked at God being our Creator. God created you in His image; He created you unique, one of a kind; He created you on purpose and for a purpose; He created you for eternity.

Today we will look at God being our Savior. As our Creator, God has given us life. As our Savior, God has given us eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Even though we normally refer to Jesus as our Savior, and He is, and the Bible refers to Him as our Savior, there are numerous places in the Scripture where God is referred to as our Savior.

One such place is David’s reference in **Psalm 25:4-7**.

As our Savior, God saves us from something.....

#### **1. God saves us from our sins and from hell**

Having a Savior implies that we need saving. Do you think you need to be saved? Some people don’t. **U.S. Gold Medalist Vonetta Flowers reflected on becoming a Christian- “Before I became a Christian I didn’t feel like a bad person, but I was lost.”**

Now you might be a pretty good person morally, but no one is perfect, just as the Bible declares.....

***“There is none righteous, not even one; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” – Romans 3:10 & 23***

Because of our sin, none of us are perfect. Because of our sin, all of us fall short of God’s standard for qualifying for heaven based on our own merit. Because of our sin, we lost our way to heaven. We are lost spiritually and we need saving. That’s why Jesus declared that His purpose in coming to earth was to seek and save the lost...that’s you and me.

Being saved communicates being saved from something. **For example, people are saved from drowning....from a fire...from embarrassment....from loneliness.** Spiritually, God saves us from two things. The first of which is our sins.

Sin. We don’t like that word much, do we? It’s not used much any more. Sin makes us think of God...of judgment...of there being a moral absolute. If there is sin, then I am accountable for my sin.

**Here is the dictionary definition of sin- “Sin is a transgression of divine law. Any act regarded as such a transgression, especially a willful or deliberate violation of some religious or moral principle.”**

Sin communicates that I did it on purpose. My actions were willful. I knew it was wrong when I did it. When I talk about sin I don’t feel good about myself. When I think of myself as a sinner, I begin to think I’m a bad person. And I don’t like thinking of myself in that light, so I don’t use that word.

So we use another word. That word is mistake. We like this word much better than that other word, sin.

**Here is the dictionary definition of a mistake- “A mistake is an error in action, calculation, opinion, or judgment caused by poor reasoning.”**

A mistake is more of an accidental happening than a willful act. When I make a mistake, I just wasn’t thinking straight. Or I’m just being careless. Or I had insufficient knowledge- “I didn’t know better”.

A mistake is something that you did not mean to do. A mistake is no big deal. Whereas I may need to apologize for a mistake, I certainly don't need forgiveness for a mistake. A mistake is not my fault. You and I don't feel guilty about mistakes. That's why so many people talk about making a mistake instead of admitting that they have sinned.

If I just made a mistake, I'm not a sinner. If I'm not a sinner, I don't need a Savior. If there is no sin, then there is no guilt.

But if that's the case, then where is all your guilt coming from? It's coming from your sins. Deep down inside, you knew what you did was wrong. You knew it when you did it. You weren't making a mistake. You were committing a sin.

Sin falls into one of two categories. There are sins of commission and sins of omission.

Sins of commission are the bad things we do, we commit. They are the breaking of the "Thou Shalt Not's" in the Ten Commandments and violations of God's other commands and principles.

Sins of omission are the good things that we omit, that we leave out, that we don't do. James wrote:

***"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." – James 4:17***

You see, God's got us coming and going when it comes to being a sinner. All of us have done some things we knew were wrong. And all of us have neglected to do some things that we knew we should do.

If you are having trouble thinking you are a sinner because you are a really good moral person, the sins of omission should convince you that you are like the rest of us, a sinner in need of God's grace!

Make no mistake about it! Our sin is no mistake. That makes each and every one of us a sinner who needs saving. Until you embrace the fact that

you're a sinner, you're not open to embracing the fact that God sent you a Savior. And you won't be forgiven and you won't be saved until you admit that you are a sinner.

**Jesus told a story that illustrates that God will forgive us but we need to admit our sinfulness. It's a story most of us are familiar with. It's the story of the Prodigal Son.**

**In the story, the younger of two sons goes to his father and asks for his inheritance ahead of time. He goes off and wastes his inheritance on a sinful lifestyle.**

**When he is broke and destitute, he decides to go back to his father. He realizes that he does not deserve to be welcomed back into the family as a son. He doesn't deserve to be treated like a son. He decides to ask his dad to let him come home and be treated like one of his father's hired men.**

**As he is coming home, his father sees him while he is still a long way off. The father, I believe, was keeping a vigil, watching for his son's return. The father runs to greet his son. The son begins his repentant plea, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son."**

**The father interrupts his son and calls on his servants to bring the best robe and put it on his son....bring a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. Kill the fatted calf...let's grill some steaks. My son who was lost is found.**

**Sometimes overlooked in this story is the son's confession. We are so enamored with the father's forgiveness, which is wonderful. But don't miss the son's confession. The son didn't say, "Dad, I made a mistake. I made an error in judgment. I really didn't mean to do what I did." No, he simply said, "I have SINNED against heaven and against you." He owned up to his sin.**

Owning up to and admitting our sin is what opens the door for God to forgive us, as John wrote:

***“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” – 1 John 1:8-9***

The sooner we will admit our sinfulness, the sooner we will receive God’s grace and forgiveness.

When God saves us, He saves us from our sins and He also saves us from hell, which is the eternal consequence for those who go into eternity without having their sins forgiven. Romans 6:23 says:

***“For the ways of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 6:23***

The death that Paul speaks of there is spiritual death, eternal separation from God in a place that the Bible calls hell. Along with sin, another reality that we don’t like to accept is the reality of hell.

**I witness this denial all the time when I am around people at funerals. Every person at every funeral I have ever attended or conducted, will try to bring themselves a measure of comfort by saying what... “well now they are in a what? A better place.”**

**People will say that about someone who was not a Christian. People generally believe that all people go to a better place when they die.**

**“The better place for ALL people” is a lie that Satan has got a lot of people to believe in. It’s a lie that he has spread because if every one automatically goes to a better place when they die, then there is no need to accept Jesus as one’s Savior.**

But what does the Bible say about this? The Bible does not acknowledge “a better place” for everyone, regardless of their relationship to Jesus. The

Bible teaches that there are one of two eternal destinies that people will wind up in, depending on one's relationship with Jesus.

The Bible does promise heaven for those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior. Heaven will be a better place than the suffering here on earth.

But the Bible also teaches about the reality of hell. Hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. But it will also be the place of eternal existence and suffering for those who reject Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Jesus taught as much or more so about hell than he did about heaven. And the picture he paints communicates that hell will not be a better place. Jesus' description about hell is rather graphic. He describes hell as being a place of outer darkness....weeping and gnashing of teeth, in other words, anguish of soul....an eternal fire...fire never goes out.

Now does that sound like a better place to you? No. So, some people when they die, because they never accepted the Lord Jesus Christ will be in a much worse place than what they had here on earth.

Even as Christians, sometimes we focus so much of our thought and talk on heaven that we tend to forget what God has saved us from. He has saved us from going to hell, plain and simple. That's one reason why we should rejoice in our salvation!

Not only has God saved us from something, but He has also saved us for something.....

## **2. God saves our souls for heaven**

Being saved implies that something has been saved. **For example, one's life can be saved. Sometimes a person's reputation is saved. Someone's home is saved from foreclosure or fire. Sometimes, someone's job is saved.**

When God saves us, He saves something important. He saves our souls.

The Bible tells us that we were created living souls. Spiritually, we have a soul. It is the essence of who we are.

We have a body. But our bodies are not who we are. Our soul is who we are. We were created a living soul. Jesus commanded us to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Our soul is the essence of who we are.

It is our soul that God saves. The Bible speaks about the potential loss of one's soul. In the book of Ezekiel, the Lord says:

***“For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son, both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.” – Ezekiel 18:4***

Jesus spoke about the danger of gaining the whole world and forfeiting one's soul in the process. When God saves us, He saves our souls. He saves us, the person that we are!

God saves our souls so we can live with Him forever in heaven. Heaven is God's better place prepared for all of us who have received Christ Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

**Turn with me to Revelation 21:1-4 for a description of heaven.**

In heaven, we will be with the Lord, which is what makes heaven, heaven. Heaven will include the new earth on which we will live.

In heaven, God will wipe away all tears. The hands that were nailed to the cross for your sins will comfort your sorrow and wipe away every tear.

In heaven, there will be no more death. We will live eternally. There will be no more mourning the death of a loved one. There will be no more crying, no more things to make us sad.

And there will be no more pain. No more physical pain, no more chronic illnesses to suffer from. No more emotional pain. In heaven, your heart

will never be broken again. No more mental pain, no more mental anguish to deal with or mental illness to cope with.

God saves our souls for heaven! Praise God for His salvation!

So far we have looked at what God has saved us from and what God has saved us for. But how does God save us?

### **3. God saves us by His grace**

In Psalm 25, David spoke of God's mercy and love. He declared that his hope was in God his Savior. David knew that he could not save himself. He realized that the only hope of salvation that he had was in trusting in God to save him.

Because of our sin, we fall short of God's standard for heaven. We cannot get there based on our own merit. But that's the way many people think they will make it to heaven.

**In June of 2006, Warren Buffet, the world's second-richest man at the time, announced that he would donate 85% of his \$44 billion fortune to five charitable foundations. Commenting on this extreme level of generosity, Buffet said, "There is more than one way to get to heaven, but this a great way."**

Warren Buffet apparently believes that you can buy your way into heaven. But he is wrong. He is also wrong about there being more than one way to get to heaven.

A lot of people believe like Warren Buffet believes. But no amount of generosity, good works or good moral character is going to earn any one a place in heaven. You cannot buy your way into heaven, you cannot work your way into heaven and you cannot qualify for heaven on the basis of your character.

There is only one way we will get to heaven and the apostle Paul tells us what that way is:

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

God saves us by His grace. God’s grace is Jesus dying on the cross, in our place, for our sins, enduring the punishment for our sins. Peter wrote:

***“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” – 1 Peter 3:18***

Faith in Jesus whereby we trust in His death to save us, is the one and only way that we will get to heaven. Jesus told us that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He said that no one comes to the Father, gets to heaven, except through Him.

When Jesus died on the cross, He brought about forgiveness of sins for everyone who will place their faith in Him and His death to save them. That is how great God’s salvation is.

David prayed that God would not remember his sins nor his rebellious ways. And that is one of the greatest blessings of our salvation, the fact that God will not remember our sins. Hebrews 10:17 gives us this promise of God for those who are a part of His new covenant through Christ:

***“Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” – Hebrews 10:17***

That past sin that haunts your conscience, God has completely forgotten about it. When it comes to our sin that He has forgiven, God has a terrible memory. He totally, 100% forgets about it. He will never remember it ever again. **Max Lucado calls this “God’s gracious forgetfulness.”**

We are saved by God’s grace. **When Paul and Silas were in prison in the city of Philippi, the Philippian Jailer came to them and asked, “what must I do to be saved?”** What must a person do to receive God’s salvation?

There are five things we need to do in response to God’s grace. Four of which are what we need to do to receive salvation and the fifth thing is our

grateful response to God saving us. These five things are what we will talk about for a moment or two as we look at.....

#### **4. Receiving God's salvation**

The first response to receive salvation is to.....

##### **a. Believe**

**The first thing that the apostle Paul told the Philippian jailer to do was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved.** The apostle Paul told us in Ephesians 2:8 that we are saved by grace through faith. Jesus died for everyone but salvation is only for those who will believe in Christ as their Savior.

If you know it and you believe it, **recite John 3:16** with me. Belief is the first response to receive salvation. The second response is.....

##### **b. Repentance**

Repentance is a Biblical term that simply means to turn. You turn away from your sins and you turn to God. Repentance is where you do a **spiritual 180** in your life. The third response is....

##### **c. Confession**

We need to confess Christ as our Lord and Savior, as Paul wrote:

***“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” – Romans 10:9***

Confession is where you declare the faith that is in your heart. Confession is a verbal commitment to follow Christ. The next step is.....

##### **D. Baptism**

Baptism is a necessary and essential part of our response to receive God's gift of salvation. For it is in baptism that our sins are forgiven. It is in baptism that we are united with Christ and His death. It is in baptism that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In our baptism we die to our sin, declare our allegiance to God and are born to the new life God has for us.

Now once we have received salvation, we need to respond with.....

### **e. Christian Living**

Christian living is not what saves us. That would be salvation by works and we have already seen that we are saved by grace. Christian living demonstrates our salvation. We live for Christ not to be saved, but because we are saved.

Living for Christ means that we are grateful for our salvation. Christian Living is the grateful response to God's grace.

In Psalm 25, David spoke about learning God's truth and following God's ways because God was His Savior. Likewise we should learn from God, grow in our faith, live out the Christian life and serve the Lord because God is our Savior and we are thankful for our salvation.

**Tim Keller, pastor and author of *The Reason for God* summed up the gospel this way- "Here's the gospel: you're more sinful than you ever dared believe; you're more loved than you ever dared hope."**

This morning if you want to accept God's love for you and allow God to save you from your sins, I invite you to respond to God's grace as I have just outlined it for you. You can come in faith and repentance this morning to confess your faith and be baptized.