

## I. Introduction and Recap of Mary's Worship

I remember back when I was just a kid, just got my life turned around to the Lord. I heard one of the old evangelists that are long gone now, Dr. R.G. Lee, one of the last of the Philadelphia preachers. I had just gotten right with the Lord and was sitting there listening and taking it all in. I had never heard him preach before, and everybody said that he was the master of preaching in evangelism. He was a great old Southern Baptist preacher from the old days, who could really preach the Word of God.

The choir, before he came, sang the song, "Throw Out the Lifeline." He preached a message that night on throwing out the lifeline, which is a salvation message. I will never forget, I was so glad that night to be able to absorb what he was saying, because I knew that at that point in my life that I was saved. He actually walked down while the choir began to sing, as if he were throwing out the lifeline to people. As I sat there that night, I thought to myself, I was so glad that in my life I had grabbed that lifeline, and that I knew the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior.

Last week, as we were coming through John chapter 11 and 12, we looked at Mary. What an incredible chapter it has been, if you have been following along. We took an in-depth look at Mary and her relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in particular, defining the concept of worship. Without a doubt, the story of Mary is one place in the Bible that really defines and shows us what John 4:24 is really talking about when it says:

*John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

This means your human spirit in the truth of the Word of God. In this story, she is an incredible picture of that by taking a very precious ointment, the Bible says, that was very costly, and then anointing His feet.

We talked about the three aspects of truly understanding the biblical concept of worship within our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I showed you by what she did. The first thing she did is she took this very costly ointment and she anointed His feet. I showed you how that is the part of worship that starts going God-ward. She took something that was hers that cost her a lot of money and she simply gave it all to Him. That is the first act of our worship; it has to go God-ward.

Then what she did is that she took her own hair and she began to wipe His feet with her hair. That is a beautiful picture of her getting involved now with what she is doing in her worship. That is where it is a picture of the first one was God-ward, the second one is inward. Now she is part of the worship; she is doing with her very life what she has. We talked about the hair and what it represented.

Then the Bible says that the odor of the aroma of the ointment filled the room. I showed you how that real biblical worship in your life and my life has these three parts to it. When you and I begin to worship God—first, God-ward—and then we get involved and take it on and get part of the

process inward, it is only a matter of time before everybody in your life sees it and it goes outward. The Bible says that the aroma filled the house.

You will also see how that in this story God will begin to unfold the Bible in so many different ways. The Bible has so many layers to it that in every story, many times in every verse, there are so many things that you can just peel back and begin to go with a direction of study. This story will open us up to so many things that will help in time put your Bible together.

We talked briefly, we did not get into it, but a study of feet in the Bible and how that feet are an incredible study in the Word of God, from the fact that Jesus's feet prepared for the gospel to Ephesians 6:15 where it says that we should have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I then showed you that there were two places in the Bible where somebody specifically told Moses in the Old Testament in Exodus and then Joshua in Joshua that they were specifically told to take the shoes off their feet. That is such an important study because what you do when you get those two places—one of them is on Mount Sinai, the other one is in the Mount of Olives there right at the outside the eastern gate over Jordan—it marks the beginning and the end of the route of the Second Coming of Christ. What an incredible fact; you can, we have done it a few times, you can actually start there and work through the whole Old Testament and find every city and place that He is going to go through.

We talked about smells and odors in the Bible and how that it is a sweet savor to God and how that our relationship with Him should be like the Garden of Eden and have the beautiful perfume of a relationship. We talked about the table and how that that is a picture of our fellowship and talked about the supper where we sit down around the fellowship of the table and then enjoy the feasting on the Word of God. It is amazing how one study like this could open up so many other studies and there are so many other things we could talk about, but that is what the Bible is. The Bible is our unsearchable riches. It is eternal. It never ends. There is always something. If you would read the Bible through a thousand times in your lifetime and then you read it through a thousand and one, you would find so many things you missed the first thousand times through because God, it is a living Book and it keeps revealing itself.

## II. Lazarus: A Picture of the Unsaved Man

Today, I want to talk about our third character in this study. If you have been following along, we know we talked about Martha and we all love Martha. Then we saw last week Mary, and now today I want to look at Lazarus. Lazarus will be a great study for all of us. I told you when we looked at it from a doctrinal standpoint that Lazarus is a picture of the nation of Israel, how that he is dead like Israel spiritually, and he gets resurrected like Israel does. I gave you all the verses in Romans and the Old Testament.

Today, we are going to look at it from a practical standpoint. I want you and me to see how it impacts us because Lazarus is going to be a picture for us of an unsaved man or an unsaved person in general. He is dead, much like we were before we got saved, much like it was before we grabbed that lifeline. We were dead in trespasses of sin. There was no light in our life. There was no fellowship with God in our life. We were dead in the trespasses of sin. In our story, Christ

comes to Lazarus, this dead man, which is a picture of me and a picture of you, and then gives him life and brings him out of the darkness of death into the glorious light of the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. This story will now be that picture of our salvation, the day we trusted Christ as our own personal Savior.

I want to read for you, we are going to bounce around here a little bit today, but I want to read for you starting in John chapter 11, verses 32 through 44.

*John 11:32-44* Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You today for the Lord Jesus. Lord, I understand that I have nothing to say, nothing to give these folks that is going to be any different in their life because I am just like them. But Lord, it has to be the Holy Spirit of God through the Word of God. Lord, I ask today that You would put us all under the blood, that You would put a cordon of angels around this place today, that nothing would interfere with the clear, plain message that I want to give today. Help me to articulate, help me to understand, help me to keep myself out of it, help me, forgive me, put me under the blood, that I might be able to open up the scriptures for those that are here today and see this great story about a man that was dead and then God brought him back to life. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. The Significance of "Jesus Wept"

Now, there is something I want you to see here for you Bible students, and you will want to get this in your Bible before we jump into this. Look at John 11:35:

*John 11:35* Jesus wept.

That is the shortest verse in the Bible. If you ever do a Bible drill someplace at camp or whatever, remember, Troy used to do that, and somebody would say, "What is the shortest verse in the Bible?" Now you know, "Jesus wept." That is not why I am telling you that. I mean, it is, but it is not. There is more to it than that. This is another key that Lazarus, from a doctrinal

sense, is a picture of the nation of Israel, because there are only two times where Jesus weeps in the New Testament. One of them is here with Lazarus, and the other one is in Luke 19:41, where He is looking over Jerusalem, going through the agony, and He is weeping for them. So that is, you want to get that in your Bible. That is a picture of how that Lazarus is the type of the nation of Israel.

## IV. Understanding Biblical Salvation

As I said, this story today, and we are going to look at it inspirationally, will be a picture of any man getting saved, any woman getting saved, anybody who is dead in sin and then comes to a new life in Christ Jesus. I want this message to be very clear and plain and easy to understand today, because it would be hard today to get any crowd of people together this size, and certainly on the website who are tuning in today, it would be really hard to get everybody who is listening to this that everybody has truly been saved from a Bible standpoint.

When we talk about salvation, and this is why I want to be very clear with this, this is probably the best salvation message anywhere in the Bible. So I do not want to blow through it. I do not want to focus on everything else and miss the point. I want to come right down to it so we can all understand it. When we talk about salvation, obviously we get into some terminology about salvation. Sometimes it can be confusing. The day and age that we live in, it can be misleading and confusing if it is used wrong, and many times it is.

You will ask a person, if you are witnessing to somebody or you meet somebody and you talk to them after a while, you will ask the person if they have ever been born again or ever been saved. That is common Bible terminology that we all use and for the most part understand. That can and will be an issue if those that you are speaking to do not really understand how it is defined in the Bible, because many times, especially today in Christianity, the world defines things in Christianity differently than the Bible. You should know that.

So I never ask that. I learned years ago that you can ask somebody if they have been saved and they do not fully understand. That means a different thing to them than it does to me, or born again. So I never ask that. I always cut right to the issue. I will always ask them, as I will ask you this morning and if you are listening today, I do not say, "Have you been saved? Have you been born again?" Here is what I ask: "If you died right now, if you fell over in that pew, if you died this very instant, do you know for a hundred percent sure that you are going to go to heaven when you die?"

That is it. There is no question about that. It is either yes or no. You can say, "Well, yeah, I have been saved," and maybe you have not been saved the way the Bible says. I have talked to a lot of people that say, "I am saved and I am born again," but they still do not know for sure if they die a hundred percent they are going to go to heaven. I want you to know something that nails it. It is yes or no. It is the key to it all.

People think today that baptism saves you. People think today that just living, doing good works saves you. People believe today that if you are a good moral person, that will save you. Of course, there are some people who think that if you just join a church and go to church that that

will save you. Some people believe that if you just teach the Ten Commandments that is enough to get you to heaven. I have had people say, "Well, yeah, I am going to heaven. I never murdered anybody," or, "I have never done this or I have never done that." A guy told me one time, "Well, I have kept the Ten Commandments the best I could." I always gave him that verse over there that says, if you keep the law at all points and break it on one, you are guilty of it all.

In other words, I am asking you, if any of these things could save you, if getting baptized could save you, if joining a church could save you, let us just use common sense for a minute. If living a good moral life could save you, if anything else could save you, why in the world did He have to come down and die on the cross? Why did He not just say, "Join this church?" It would have been this one. Why did He not say, "Get baptized?" Why did He not say, "Do this, do that?" If that would get you there, if that would be enough, if that would pacify God in His wrath for sin, why? I ask you, why?

Do you know the agony on the cross that He went through? Do you know how He suffered? How they ripped His back open with a cat of nine tails? How that they kicked Him and pulled out His beard? It is all in the Bible. How He had to carry a 200-pound cross. How that when they put the nails in His hands and His feet, they laughed at Him, they made fun of Him. They put a spear in His side. If just joining a church or getting baptized or doing some good work would cut it with God, why did God put His Son through that? Do you want the answer? The answer is because those things will not save you.

In the Bible, there is a clear, simple plan of salvation. When you really get saved, God's way, born again, when it is the real deal, you now know for sure a hundred percent that if you die at any instant, you know for sure you are going to heaven.

## V. The Assurance of Salvation

My favorite passage in the Bible today is 1 John 5:11-13. I think it is the greatest passage in the Word of God that tells you and me that you can know for sure where you are going when you die. It says this:

*1 John 5:11-13 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

The reason why that verse means so much to me is because in my own personal life, I was supposedly saved when I was five years old. Sharon, you will remember, I remember the day that you went down to get saved and Mom was crying, Dad was crying. It seemed like the thing to do, so I cried. My sister is older than me, so she went down and she trusted Christ as her own personal Savior. I went down either that same day or the next week. I was very young, probably five, maybe six years old. I remember to this day the lady who opened up her Bible. I remember she had the verses marked in red. I went through the whole nine yards and I did what everybody told me to do.

We quit going to church sometime after that. My mom, we lived right across the street from the old Canton Baptist Temple, and my mom and dad quit going to church, and she would dress me up and send me across the street to go to church. That did not last very long, which is a great principle: you cannot send your kid to church, you need to take your kid to church. So anyway, I quit going after a while and I really got out into the world. I was at that age where I got with the wrong crowd and I did not care anything about God, and that was true all the way up through my high school years. When I went into the army it was true, and when I got out of the army, God put some circumstances in my life. My father went home to be with the Lord. He was a saved man, as my mom was, and it really rocked my world. God used that.

I told you before how that I got right with the Lord and I started going to church and doing all those things. But the devil just kicked me six ways from Sunday. I would struggle with things like we all do, and the devil would say, "See, you are not saved." I would try to argue with it. Let me tell you something else: the last thing you want to do is try to argue with the devil. I would say, "Yes, I am," and he would say, "Where were you saved?" I said, "Back then." He said, "You did not know what you were doing back then." It bothered me because I do not think I did.

So here I am going through this great struggle: Am I or am I not? I never told anybody. I was embarrassed. It was stupid, but I just did it. Then one night I was living by myself. Mom got remarried and moved out, and I was living in a house by myself there. It was about two o'clock in the morning and I was reading my Bible, and I was having some tough times with the devil just kicking me around that I really was not saved. So I was reading through 1 John chapter 5 and I hit this passage:

*1 John 5:11-12 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

Then it hit me:

*1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

When I saw that, it is just like God turned the lights on. I kicked the dog off the bed. I could not believe it. I found that I could know, and I did not know. Do you know what I did? It was so simple. I just crawled out of bed, got on my knees by the end of that bed and I said, "Lord, I do not know what I was doing when I was five. Maybe I was, maybe I was not. I do not know, but I am struggling with it. But I am asking You right now, Lord, if I am not saved, if I did not do it right, if I did not know what I am doing, I believe You died." I went through the whole thing and I said, "Right now I ask Jesus Christ to come into my heart and save me."

I have been asked many, many times over the years if I really thought I was saved back then or I got saved that night. To this day I can only tell you this: I do not know, but I will tell you this, I got it now. I never doubted it past that night. The next time that old devil came to me and said, "You are not really saved," and he will, this time I had a record. The Bible says, "This is the record."

You cannot do anything in life without a record, especially your birth certificate. You could go to college someplace or join this or join that and they want to see your birth certificate. The fact that you are standing there is not proof enough that you have been born. They want to see that piece of paper that validates that you have been born. My dogs have dog licenses. I have a record in Jackson County in Raytown, the millennium place of Missouri where they might have a record of their whatever. My vet has the record of their shots. You buy a car, you get a receipt, you have a record, you have a title. You cannot go to Quick Trip and get a cup of coffee or one of your latte lamellatos and ask them, "Do not they say, 'Would you like a receipt?'" You cannot really do anything in life without the record of your birth certificate. You cannot do anything in life spiritually without the record of your spiritual birth certificate.

God gives us a record. The record is the Word of God. The Bible says the record is God hath given to us eternal life. God has made salvation available. Then it says, "And this life is in your baptism. This life is in your church membership. This life is in your good work." No, this life is in His Son. Then the clearest verse in the Bible that either you have Him today or you do not:

*1 John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

These things He had written unto me that I may know, that you may know, that we have eternal life. I am telling you, you can know 100%. So I do not ask a person, "Have you been saved or born again?" Everybody has been saved or born again in their own mind. I want to know this right now, this very second, if you slipped on into eternity, do you know for sure you would go to be with Him?

## VI. God's Plan for Salvation

God's plan for the salvation of man. Now let me show you something here. First of all, God wants you and me to be saved. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:4:

*1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

God wants us to be saved. We talk about the concept of hell and a man dying and going to hell and a person spending eternity in hell. Yet when you study your Bible, you will find out that the Bible tells us in Matthew 25:41 that hell was never created for you and for me. It was created for the devil and his angels. God never intended for you or me to ever go to that place. Now a lot of people will go to that place, but it is not because God wants you to go there. God did everything in His power to get you not to go there. He came down and died on the cross. He paid whatever price. He put this incredible plan of God's love and salvation together for you. Forget me. Forget the person sitting next to you, for you personally. The Bible says that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Let me tell you a story here if I may, and I want to make this very clear. You may go to hell and you may die and split hell wide open. I pray you do not, but I am going to tell you this: if you do, it will not be because I did not tell you the truth. It would be because you rejected the truth.

Let me tell you a story here about the plan of an eternal God who wants to create man and women to have a relationship and fellowship with Him. The story we all know starts back in the

Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Who does not know that story? You may not know all the details of it, but it is like Noah's Ark. You know there was a big boat, a bunch of animals got on it, and there was a flood. Everybody knows the story of Adam and Eve. You may not understand the particulars of it, but that story starts in Genesis 1, 2, and 3.

God made Adam, created Adam out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Then Adam created Eve. He put them down in a garden. That garden is called the Garden of Eden. What you got back there is God made a perfect world. It had perfect weather. It had perfect animals. We show up from church here today and right across the street here, there is a Golden Retriever. Her name is Linda. She stands out there waiting for people to come to church. She runs over here this morning with her tail wagging and just happy to see me and bouncing all over the place. I tried to get my bag out. I thought she was going to get in the car. Then I opened up the church door and she almost came into that. She just, you pet her, she is the sweetest dog in the world.

I always think to myself, back in the garden, lions did that. Bears did that. You know how people get killed in zoos and get maimed? They get in the wrong dispensation. They go to the zoo and they think that they go, I mean, what lion laying there does not seem like he would love you to hug him? What bear is not the cutest thing you ever saw in your life? So these idiots will climb over the fence, reach through there or get in with them and become dinner. But I am going to tell you, there was a time when you could do that.

I have always thought about Daniel when they threw him in the lion's den. Those lions were down there to rip everybody apart. And they had. This is another great story. They throw Daniel down in the lion's den and he probably had the best night's sleep he ever had. The king did not have a very good night because he knew he did wrong. But could you imagine a body heat of 112 degrees for an animal like that? Eight or nine of them all snuggled around purring and snuggling while you are sleeping there. Somebody said, "The lion's den was a terrible place." I will tell you something. Being thrown into the lion's den is never an issue when the Lion or the King of the tribe of Judah is with you. The Lord standing in the corridor and He says, "Now boys, I know we are in the wrong dispensation. You are like eating these things. In fact, one of the Roman guys went in the other day and says, 'I do not know what we are going to do about all these lions. They are eating up the prophets.'" And He says, "But I am telling you, My man Daniel is going to come down to shoot here in a moment and everybody is going to really go back to the garden mindset." Daniel came in and those lions just all curled up there and got the best night's sleep he ever got. That is the way it was in the garden. By the way, that is going to be the way it is in the millennium.

That is the way it was in the garden. God made everything perfect. He made the animals perfect. He made the weather perfect. Who wants to get really excited about getting up at five o'clock to go to work in the morning in the garden? You did not have to. He did not work. He walked around. He did not have to labor for his food. It was on the ground. It was right there. If he wanted some apples high up, he just told the giraffe to put his head up there and knock them down and he got everything he wanted. It was a beautiful place. The Bible says that Adam and Eve fellowshiped with God. He wanted that fellowship with His creation.

But I need to tell you something else. God will not force you to love Him. That is an uncharacteristic concept of a holy God. God wants us to choose to love Him. This is called free will in the Bible. So He put two trees down in that garden and He told Adam, "Do not do this one. If you do not do this one, you can have this one. This is the one I want you to get, but do not do this one." Do you know what Adam and Eve did? Same thing you and I would have done. Took the wrong tree.

Do you know why we got the problems we got in life? We all have some problems. If you are saved here, your problems have now the ability to be fixed. But if you are not saved, do you know why you got the problems you got? You got the wrong tree. You just took the wrong stuff. When they did that, it destroyed God's world. That perfect environment. Everything was now a mess. Now the animals are going to eat you. The earth has a curse on it. That sin that came in because they chose by a free will, because God will not force you to love Him, He wants you to choose to love Him.

Most of you are married or none of you are married. Some of you younger guys are going to get married. Some of you, your wives are older than you. But would you really want to have a wife or a husband who you had to give some kind of drink to every day that they would keep loving you? The moment you did not give them love potion number nine, then they did not love you anymore. No, we all want people to choose to love us. We want them to look at us, see us and say, "I do not know, but I am going to love them anyhow." We want people to choose. God wants you to choose. He is not going to come down and make a robot out of you. There is no fellowship with robots. God wants a free moral agent, a human being who has a desire to be with God, who has a love and a passion for God, who wants to spend an eternity with God because they understand how God is good for them and what He has done for them.

The Bible says that sin that Adam and Eve, it separated them from God. The Bible tells us:

*Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Now we are alienated from God. We cannot have fellowship with God. We are separated from Him, never to be part of anything He is doing because we are now, Romans 5:10, because of that decision that we have all made to be distanced from God. Now there is nothing we can do. This is where the mindset, "Well, if I go to church or I do something or I do this or I do that," I am going to tell you something, there is nothing you and I can do. He has to do it for us.

Somebody says, "God is love." Yeah, He is love, but I do not think you probably understand. So he said, "Well, God is love. He loves everybody." I understand, "For God so loved the world," but let me give you a definition of God's love. God's love is the fact that He came down and died on the cross for you and for me. That is God's love. The Bible says:

*Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

*Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

There is none that does good. No, not one. There is none that understands it. There is none that seeks after God. All of our righteousness, as Isaiah 64:6 says, is as filthy rags in the sight of God and that there is none that is righteous. No, not one. This will be the experience of condition of every one of us before we truly found salvation, headed for, destined for the lake of fire.

Let me be clear here. I want to separate myself. This modern-day Christianity stuff, there is an ad on television that they are trying to win people to Christ and it says, "Heaven or not." Have you ever seen that one? "Heaven or not." Then you call this number. I looked at that when I first saw it and I thought to myself, "That is it right there." Do you know why they say "Heaven or not?" Because they just cannot use the word hell. It is not heaven or not. It is heaven or hell, but they cannot say that word. It is not popular today. Common sense: the unsaved world uses it a million times a day, but God's people cannot. It shows you the mess we are in.

I want to tell you something. There is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun. When a man used to preach, old Bob Jones Senior, he would preach on hell. He would preach, and those guys would preach hell so hot you could feel the heat. Somebody said one time, "Well, I do not think you ought to preach. You are trying to scare people." He said, "I would rather have people hell scared than hell scorched." A lot of truth to that. Hell is real. It is where men and women stay in their sin because they have rejected Christ. I do not have time to get into the reasoning behind that, an eternal fire with an eternal soul and eternal sin. But then Romans 6:23:

*Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

God made a way. We did not deserve it. Nothing we could do to get it. God made a way. Listen to me. He loved His creation so much, you and me, that when Adam and Eve did what they did and threw the world into the mess that it is in today and alienated all of us from God and our fellowship with Him, God then said, "I love My creation so much. Here is what I am going to do. I could not trust Adam and Eve to do it." Every man in the Bible that was a great man—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, you name them—every one of them failed and fell into sin.

Do you know what God said? "I am going to fix this thing. I am going to have to do it Myself." The Bible says that God took on a body of a man. God manifested in the flesh. He came down to this earth. He lived for 33 years. Then He went to that cross and He paid the price. The Bible says where one man brought sin into the world, the first Adam, the second Adam paid the price and took it out. Then He made a way for all of us. He made a way for you. You sitting here today, if you do not know for sure, a hundred percent, if you die, you go to heaven, He made a way for you. He made a way for me. He made a way for everybody in this room today.

Yes, sin came into the world by one man, but by God sending Himself down to take on a body of man, the Bible says in Romans 5:8:

*Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

He looked down through eternity. He saw every one of us, every one of you. He saw me struggling in this world headed for the lake of fire. He loved you and loved me so much that in that love, God commended His love toward us. He died for us. He paid the price. Where Romans 5:10 says:

*Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Now I have the ability to be reconciled. How? By the death of His Son. Romans 5:1 says:

*Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

Do you know what that peace is? That peace is knowing where you go in this life or what happens in this life that when you die, you are going to heaven to be with Him. It is just that simple. Peace with God. I cannot stand up here and tell you what the future holds. I know not, but I can tell you and introduce you to the One who holds the future. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is your record. That is what He has for you. He wants you to know He loves you so much. The death of Christ on the cross in our place, my place, your place. Nothing else will give you that peace with God. For us, there is no other way I can have my sins forgiven and know a hundred percent that I am going to heaven when I die.

Forget about being saved. Forget about the terminology. Ask yourself the question: If you would die right now, this very second, where would you spend eternity? If you do not know for sure, it comes down to, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling." On that cross, He took my place. He took your place. He paid whatever price you and I pay.

Do you not know that on the cross, when He is hanging there, He says, "I thirst?" That is a picture of you and me in the lake of fire, like Luke 16, when a rich man just wanted Lazarus to touch his finger to the water to his tongue because he thirsted. We would have screamed our lungs out, "I thirst." He screamed them out for me. Then when the sixth to the ninth hour, when darkness was on the face of the earth and the sun would not shine and the clouds rolled in and the earth quaked, He looked at His Father who loved Him. He looked at His Father who loved Him and He says, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Do you want to know the answer to that question? You, me, everybody in this room. God could have come down and taken Him off. Back in the Old Testament, one night, one angel came down, one angel, and killed 186,000 men. I have a theory, and it is my own personal, and if you do not like it, I do not care. It means something to me. I know how much God loved His Son. I know when He is on that cross, and God is looking down and He is going through the agony and they beat Him and they whipped Him and they put the nails in His hands and His feet, He asked for water and said, "I thirst," they gave Him vinegar.

I bet you, I bet you God is just about ready. When that Roman soldier walks up, they are casting dice for His robe. When that Roman soldier sitting over there watching this thing, got a hot date tonight, Bethlehem, he says, "Watch this, boys, watch this." He picks up that big old spear and he looks up there and he throws that spear and it goes up into His side. I bet you at that moment of

time, God had had enough. I bet you at that time, God raised His hand to send down 10,000 angels to take His Son off that cross and wipe out the world. But at that moment, His Son said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And God's hand was stayed. God knew that if He did, Bob Alexander could never go to heaven. He knew if He took Him down that cross that you could never get to heaven. He knew if He copped that thing and processed as angry as He was as He watched His beloved Son, whom He was well pleased, be brutalized, agonized and just treated unbelievably. But He stopped for you and for me.

## VII. The Call to Repentance and New Life

Now salvation, if you are ever going to get it, if you are ever going to accept it, have you noticed I have not even gotten to the text yet? This is an incredible introduction. Our salvation has to be about our personal sin debt. Too many people get saved for the wrong reasons. They do not get saved to fix this or fix that. We get saved, and you need to understand that we get saved because you and I have a personal sin debt to God that must be paid. The only way you can pay it is to allow Him to pay it for you. You cannot pay it yourself.

So when you get saved, Paul says in Romans chapter 7, your sin needs to become exceedingly sinful. You need to see it as a personal accountability to Almighty God. When you get saved, you need to understand the word repentance. The word repentance is a very confusing word today. People always think it means you repent, that is getting saved. That is not exactly correct. Repentance and salvation go together, but salvation is one thing, repentance is another. When you understand repentance, you realize that repentance in the Bible means you turn to a different life. You do not go down the same old road again.

Too many of God's people get saved today and their life does not change from the world. They still care about the things in the world. They still smell like the world. They drink like the world. They do everything the world does. There is really no difference in their life. Repentance is a change of direction that you are going to now, because you are saved, go in a different direction of life to be His disciple. In our church here, we have a discipleship program, a number of lessons that will bring you through and show you once you get saved, how to set that course for a new direction in life. The Bible says very clearly in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

You show me somebody who still holds onto the old things? Four days in the Bible you want to remember. 1.) The day of the Lord. That is God's day. 2.) The day of Christ or Jesus Christ. That is the rapture. That is Christ's day. 3.) The day of wrath. That is Israel's day. 4.) The day of your salvation. That is my day.

Your spiritual record that you grabbed the lifeline, 1 John 5:11-13. On Sunday morning, we do birthdays, we have a lot of fun, we are just a big family here. We go through birthdays, but we also go through spiritual birthdays. That is the day you got saved. That is the day your thinking in life is now changed. Your direction in life is now changed. Your affections in life are now

different. Your eternal destiny now is different through salvation and then repentance, turning to another direction in your life.

Salvation is not complicated. Romans 10:9-10 says:

*Romans 10:9-10* That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

There are simply two aspects to a man or a woman getting saved. One is a head knowledge and the other one is a heart knowledge. You believe in your heart that Jesus died on the cross and paid your price and He died in your place like we have been talking about. Then based on that, through the head knowledge, you confess and ask Him to come into your heart and save you.

*Romans 10:13* For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The next question is, the obvious question, "When should I get saved?" As soon as you hear the gospel message. You see, 2 Corinthians 6:2 says:

*2 Corinthians 6:2* (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

*Proverbs 27:1* Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

You are not promised tomorrow. You are not promised this afternoon. You are promised right now.

## VIII. The Baggage of Delay: Three Examples of Resurrection

With all that I said, finally, let us look at Lazarus in John chapter 11. I want to show you an amazing thing. Why, if you are listening to me here this morning, you are sitting here this morning, you need to be saved biblically. I want to show you an amazing thing about the story in the Bible dealing with dead people. Dead people who picture us in dead trespasses of sin, who then get life from the Lord Jesus. It is a picture of us. For you today, hopefully it will be your day of salvation.

In the New Testament, you will have three people who represent unsaved people who get saved. Three dead people. The amazing thing about it is when you look at these, it brings an incredible study that you need to see today. In their story, you will see the absolute importance of trusting Christ as your personal Savior as soon as you hear the gospel. The gospel is the good news that Jesus came, died, was buried, rose again the third day according to the scriptures. His death on the cross to pay for my sin, your sin, our personal sin debt. You will see in these three examples, the longer you wait to be saved, the harder it will be to get saved. There may come a time in your life when it is impossible for you now to be saved. Not because God will not save you, as you will see here in a moment, but because we have put so many things in our life for so long. Allow me to show you.

> 1.) *Jairus's Daughter: The Tender Heart (Mark 5)*

The first person I want to look at here will be in Mark chapter 5. We are going to pick it up in verse 22.

*Mark 5:22-24* And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

Between Mark 5:24 and 5:35, another little story comes in here; it is the woman with the issue of blood. We do not need to worry about that, but pick it back up in Mark 5:35, back to our story about this girl.

*Mark 5:35-42* While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Our first example here, and I want you to note a few things, is a young girl that is 12 years old. I want to say this to you before I make my point here: the best time for you to get saved is around that time. This is close to the age of accountability, a little bit over maybe for most people, but very young in her life. As soon as you know the truth, you need to get saved. Jesus said in Matthew 18:3:

*Matthew 18:3* And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He is always focused on little children. Did you ever see that? I did not get right with God until I was 20 years old. Let me tell you, those first 21 years did me no favors. I am telling you, the longer you wait, the more baggage you accumulate. That is the key word in our study right now, the word baggage. The longer you wait, the more baggage you are going to fill up. You open up those bags. When we do discipleship here, that is what a lot of it has to do with. We bring somebody in, they just got saved, and we open up those bags. Some of the stuff you can keep, some of it has got to go.

This little girl here has always been interesting to me. The Bible says, and this is what I want you to focus on, the moment He said, "Arise," straight away she arose and she walked. She has got no baggage. She is 12 years old. She has not set the pattern of deception in her life yet that we have. She has not set the pattern of doing what we want to do. She is still tender. I am telling

you, the greatest time in your life to get saved is when you are still tender and the world has not tainted you. Because the longer you wait, the more baggage you accumulate, the harder it is. This girl here, she straight away gets up and she walks. Then He says, "Feed her, feed her, feed her."

I have said it many, many times. We have a host of you young men and ladies in our church that are in your late teens, 20s, 30s, most of you teens, late teens, high school kids. I tell you all the time, this is the greatest time in your life to get your head screwed on straight to serve God. Most of you have not learned yet how to be deceptive. You have not learned how to lie to God. You are still tender. It is an amazing thing. I drive by John Knox Village every day and we went down to retirement homes for a while there. I guess we are going to get to start that back up now that the COVID has gone away. But do you ever notice how the devil never attacks old people? I mean, if you walk down John Knox Village, I do not think there has ever been a drug bust at John Knox Village. You may walk down the halls about 11 o'clock at night, but you better do it a little earlier than that. You might hear a little Willie Nelson coming under the door.

Do you ever notice the devil does not go after those people because he has already got them? Do you know who the devil goes after? You kids. You young people. Do you know why? He knows something you better figure out. You are at the best part of your life right now. You are the strongest. You are the smartest. You have not got into the world too deeply yet. You are like that girl. You can get saved. You can stand up, arise, and you can walk and we can feed you. And off you go. Off you go. The longer you wait. I watched from the Bible Explorers up through the Timothys, the Zach and Jenny in the high school, we try to take you kids and get you indoctrinated into everything that you need to know to keep you. Because we all know that the devil wants to shift you. He wants to take you and destroy you. He wants to take that innocence from you. He wants to take those years from you. He wants to open up your duffel bag and put as much garbage in it as he can. If at a time you are 50, 60 years old, you need to have a tractor trailer to haul it around. Now is the time. This first little girl, 12 years old, arose. She is up and goes. Then He says, "Feed her."

> 2.) *The Widow of Nain's Son: The Burden of Years (Luke 7)*

Here is our second example. This will be in Luke 7:11-15.

*Luke 7:11-15 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

The Bible says in Luke 7:14 that this was a young man. In Bible chronology, that would put him a young man as somebody that is actually in their 30s or 40s. The Bible looks at it differently than we do today. I want you to note that he is in a casket. A casket is a box with a lid on it that traps you inside where there is no light. He is not like the 12-year-old girl. This guy needs help when he comes back to life.

What a time that must have been. I can just see this funeral procession coming down the road. All the weepers and mourners and Jesus has compassion on them. It is like I gave you last week. He learned to survive, then He thrived, and then He got passion and now He has got compassion. We have seen it twice already. He is watching this little funeral procession. The guys are carrying a casket and He sees the mother, knows that she is all by herself, her husband is dead, and He stops it, comes over there and He says, "Do not," and He puts it. What a great thing to be there and see Him put His hand on that casket and said, "Young man, rise!" That casket flew open. That young man sat up, but he had to be delivered. Somebody had to help him get to his mother.

You see, he had 30, 40 years of baggage. He had 30, 40 years of bad influences, bad thoughts, bad actions that would fill a few suitcases. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4:12 that a three-fold cord is not easily broken. You can take a little piece of thread, just like some of you ladies do when you sew something, and you can wrap your both hands around and just snap that thing. Just a little piece of thread. Look at that one piece of thread as one sin, one bad choice, one this, one that. You take that same spool of thread that you could so easily break just one strand and you wrap it around your two fingers 50, 60, 70, 80 times. You will die before you break it. You take the cords of this old world. You do not get saved when you are young and you are still tender and you wait for a while and you keep filling up those things. By the time you are 30 and 40, you have got some things wrapped around your fingers that you just cannot get rid of. He sits up and he begins to speak, but he has to be delivered. The little girl did not need any deliverance. She just got up and walked. Now he is in a casket, a box with a lid, something that he is enclosed in, that somebody had to come and open that casket before he could get out. After 30, 40 years of a life in this world, there will be some things that will lock you up and keep the light of God from coming into you. You see, the one little girl, 12 years old, she is up and on her way. This guy is 30 or 40 years old or somewhere in there. He has to be delivered.

> 3.) *Lazarus: Bound by Graveclothes (John 11)*

Then our last guy, our third example. Now we will come to John chapter 11 with old Lazarus here. Jesus said, you know the story we read up there, they are up to the tomb now. Jesus said in John 11:39:

*John 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.*

Martha, good old Martha. She says, "Do not open that stone. Now he smells bad. He has been dead for four days." Let the stink of the dead keep the miracle from God from happening. Jesus says unto her, "Shut up, Martha."

*John 11:40-44 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

Do you see in our progression here, the issue with putting off salvation? It is one word: baggage. The longer you wait, the more unrighteousness you put in your life and it wraps you in filthy rags of unrighteousness. Lazarus here is probably 70, 80, maybe older than that. Our first guy was 12. The second guy was maybe in his 30s. This guy is probably 70, 80, maybe older than that. He has been wrapped up in 80 years of the grave clothes, all the things of unrighteousness that he has wrapped himself in, which is represented by the grave clothes that they wrapped him in, in that cave.

Note in his life, his filthy rags now cover him. John 11:44 says, and this is a great example, the longer you wait, the harder it is because when he is 80, 70 years old, it is covering his face. He cannot see the things of God anymore like he could when he was 12. He has been blinded by some things. He has now spent 60, 70 years alibiing and getting out of the conviction that God has put him under and he is blinded to it. So his righteousness in his filthy rags cover his face. 50, 60, 70 years of having your eyes exposed to the wrong things. When you get to that point, it is hard to see God doing anything because you cannot see what He has done because He has not done anything for you.

Then look at John 11:44. Jesus says, "Lazarus, come forth." I heard a preacher one time say that God was so powerful and Jesus was so powerful that when He went into that tomb where obviously it was a graveyard with other dead people, He says, "Lazarus, come forth." If He would have just said, "Come forth," everybody in the graveyard would have come up. I kind of like that myself. But he is bound not only his face, but his hands and his feet with grave clothes. Now you just cannot go and serve God like a little 12-year-old. Now you cannot even be delivered. Now you have got to be unwrapped. Now at this age, you have to undo a lot of things you did not have to undo when you were younger. These in the Bible are called strongholds. Now strongholds have taken over completely what you do with your hands, where you go with your feet and what you see and say with your face.

This is not a criticism at all because it does not matter to me. I have seen guys that were saved, women who were saved for 10, 15 years and could not give up smoking cigarettes. It is not a criticism. I have told the people with the working with the Sunshine ministry, I know most of those ladies smoking, sometimes they do not want to come for a long time because they have got to have a cigarette. I get that. I told Charles and him to say, "If they have to go out and have a cigarette, just do not smoke in here. I do not care. I am not going to let you not get the gospel because of something that you have addicted yourself to." It is a thing where, but that is what happens, is it not? One little thing like that can control your life. I have seen it with drugs. You have all seen it with drugs. You all know people in your world that are addicted to drugs. I have seen it with alcohol. I have seen it with gambling. I have seen it with pornography. It does not matter. You wrap yourself in those things for those many years and it takes over your face, your eyes, your mouth, it takes over your hands and it takes over your feet and you are trapped. When you get saved, if you do get saved, you need unwrapped. The men have to unwind all those things in his life.

I do not know how many times I have spent with people who are older, 50, 60, 70 years old, who do get saved, but boy, they struggle. There are things they try to undo and they cannot. They just

fight it all the time. I understand it and I am sure God understands it and it is not a criticism. But my point is this, you need to get saved as quickly as you can. The younger you are, the more tender you are, the less baggage you have, the better off you are going to be. It is just not simple.

Did you ever notice this? When Jesus was born in Matthew chapter 2, did you ever notice that the Bible says they wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger? Do you know what swaddling clothes are? They are grave clothes. They are the same cloth that they wrapped Lazarus in. Do you know what that tells me? That tells me from the very moment He was born, He was destined, wrapped in my unrighteousness that I would not have to be. Folks, it does not get any better than that. It just does not get any better than that. I am telling you, the longer you wait, the less chance you are going to have. It will be one thing if it was just you, but you have an opposing opponent that wants you in the lake of fire that will make sure the longer you wait, the harder it is, and that will be the devil. He will work overtime to get you. Christ already did the work on the cross. You need to let that work come into your life to know for sure. A hundred percent, if you died right this moment, you would go to heaven to be with Him.

## IX. The Danger of Procrastination

In the Bible, there are two examples of men who put it off. In the book of Exodus, you have Pharaoh in Exodus 8:10. He was faced with the power of God like probably no man ever was faced with it. He saw it all. He understood things he could not explain, all because God wanted him to let God's people go out of Egypt. That is a picture of a man's salvation of accepting what God wants to do. Do you know what Pharaoh said? He says the same thing I have heard a thousand unsaved men and women say in my 50-some years in the ministry when I confront them with what I am talking to you about. Do you know what they say? "Tomorrow." Pharaoh said, "I will let them go tomorrow." You will talk to somebody about their salvation and going and trusting Christ and getting to heaven and knowing for sure. "Tomorrow." Do you know what happened to Pharaoh? Tomorrow never came. He died. Do you know what will happen in most cases? Tomorrow will never come.

Then the other one was over there in Acts 26:28. This is Paul when he is up against King Agrippa. Paul, it is a great study. He is laying it out to him like nobody ever got it. Now get it, Paul is in prison. He is in chains, standing before King Agrippa. When you read the story, it is hard to determine who is captive here because old Paul is putting it to him. Do you know what King Agrippa says? Same thing that so many people have said. Old Paul laid out the salvation that God was doing and the plan that God was doing and King Agrippa was looking at this thing, sweating bullets, just under conviction. At the end of that thing, he says, "Almost, almost you persuaded me to be a Christian." And he died and went to hell.

I have laid this story out to you as simple and clearly as I could today. The Gospel of John, we saw when we started in John 20:31, was a book that God wrote for man to find God's salvation. Now with all that I have said, I ask you one final time, do you know a hundred percent for sure if you would die right this second that you are a hundred percent sure you would go to heaven to be with the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the question. That is the question of your eternal destiny and

that is the most important question you are ever going to face. Every head bowed and every eye closed. I waited to do this message.