

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE WAY OF SALVATION— FAITH VERSUS LOVING GOD OR BEING BAPTIZED

During the past two weeks, we have seen man's need for salvation and God's preparation of this salvation. We have seen the problems God encountered when He prepared this salvation for us and how He completely solved all the problems of sin. We have also seen the way to receive salvation. Because men understood the Bible in an incorrect way, they came up with many conditions for salvation. Some want to have one condition, whereas others want to have another condition. We saw that man is not saved by the law or by works. He is not saved by repentance, prayer, or confession. Man is not saved by anything he has in himself. Other than these human ways, there are still two very common mistakes within the church. The first is the concept that in order to be saved, man has to love God: If a man does not love God, he will not be saved.

LOVING GOD NOT BEING THE WAY OF SALVATION

I admit that 1 Corinthians 16 tells us that a man has to love God. If he does not love God, he is accursed. This is a fact. But the Bible shows us clearly that man is saved by faith and not by love. Some think that there are evidences in the Bible that prove that man is saved by loving God, and that without loving God a man cannot be saved. There are some sinners, when the gospel of salvation by faith is preached to them, who would say that they cannot be saved because they do not love God at all. They think that if they really love God and are drawn to God, God will save them. To them man is saved by loving God. They do not realize that man is saved not because of loving God, but because God loves him. It is God who loved the world and gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes into Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). On God's side, it is love. On our side, it is faith. Man's side does not have to be the same as God's side. He does not have to love God as God loves him. It does not say that man needs to love God so that he would give his son to God, so that God would trust in him and cause him not to perish, but to have eternal life. We do not have such a Gospel of John. Thank God that He loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son. The Bible does not say that we first love God, but that God first loves us. The basis of salvation is not that we love God. The basis of salvation is God's loving us. If we put the basis of salvation on our love for God and our sacrifice to Him, we will immediately see that the salvation we would have would not be secure. Our hearts are like the sand of the sea that comes and goes with the tide. If our house is built on the sand, our fate will follow the flow of the tide. Thank the Lord. It is not a matter of our loving God, but of God loving us.

THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Although John 3 and other places may say what we have said, some may ask: "What about Luke 10?" Let us now read what Luke 10 says. Luke 10:25 begins, "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up." This man had a wrong profession. "A certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test." His motive was wrong. His intention was not right. "Saying,

Teacher." He had a wrong understanding. His understanding concerning the Lord was wrong. He did not know who the Lord was. "What should I do to inherit eternal life?" His question was wrong. This man was wrong in his profession, wrong in his motive, wrong in his intention, wrong in his understanding of the Lord, and wrong in the question he asked.

He asked, "What should I do to inherit eternal life?" What did the Lord Jesus say? "And He said to him, What is written in the law?" You are a lawyer. You should know what the law says. "How do you read it?" Something may be written in the law. But man can be wrong in reading it. The Lord asked a double question. What is written in the law, and what have you read from it? Sometimes the law is written one way, but man reads it another way. "And he answered and said." He answered what the law says, and how he read it. "You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole strength and with your whole mind, and your neighbor as yourself." This lawyer was well acquainted with the law. He knew that the sum of the law is to love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, and our whole mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. He could sum up the whole law in one sentence. This was an intelligent man. Probably everyone who comes to tempt is intelligent. Only the intelligent ones try to tempt. What is it to tempt others? Those who want to be taught ask questions, and those who come to tempt also ask questions. The ones who want to be taught ask questions because they do not understand. The ones who want to tempt ask questions because they do understand. Some ask because they do not understand; they come humbly to be taught. Some ask because they understand; they want to show you how much they understand. This is the meaning of tempting. This man came to the Lord asking how he could be saved. He said that he wanted eternal life, and that he wanted the life of God. What then must he do? The Lord said, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" The man could recite it by heart. He knew it long ago. One has to love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind, and has to love his neighbor as himself. He knew all these. That was why he recited them immediately. When he answered this way, the Lord told him to do it and he would be able to have eternal life.

Here is a problem. Whatever the Lord Jesus may have meant when He spoke to the lawyer, and whatever the circumstances may have been, all those who are not familiar with the truth and the meaning in God's word would say, "Is it not clear enough that to have eternal life, a man must love God and love his neighbor? If a man does not love God and his neighbors, is it not true that he cannot possibly have eternal life?" Although the Gospel of John mentions eighty-six times that eternal life is obtained through faith, some may say that the Gospel of Luke says at least once that eternal life is obtained through loving God. If a man does not love God or his neighbor, he cannot possibly be saved.

If that is the case, I would ask if any one of us has ever loved God this way, that is, with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, and our whole mind. No, there is no one like this. There is no one who loves God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind. No one can say that he loves his neighbor as himself. There is no such person. Since there is no such person, no one would obtain eternal life. We need to understand why the

Lord Jesus said that we should love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, and our whole mind. Thank the Lord that the Bible is indeed the revelation of God. There is absolutely no mistake in it. This is the reason I love to read the Bible. If this passage beginning from Luke 10:25 ended with verse 28, the truths of the Bible would contradict one another. If that were the case, man would have to love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind. None of these four "whole's" could be missing. But if that were the case, no one could ever be saved. Thank the Lord that after verse 28 there are many more verses. Let us read on.

It is fortunate that this man was quite bothersome. "But he, wanting to justify himself." He asked this question for no other reason than to justify himself. He said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Since the Lord said that he had to love the Lord his God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind and to love his neighbor as himself, it would have been awkward for him to ask who God was. Did he, a lawyer, not know who his own God was? It would also have been hard for him to ask who he was, for of all the men in the world, only philosophers do not know who they are. With nothing else to ask, he asked who his neighbor was. He seemed to say, "You are saying that I have to love my neighbor as myself, but who is my neighbor?" From verse 30 on, the Lord told him who his neighbor was. He began to tell him a story.

This story is one of the most common and familiar stories in the church. It would be good for us to read it together: "Jesus, taking up the question, said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who having both stripped him and beat him, went away, leaving him half dead. And by coincidence a certain priest was going down on that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. And likewise also a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the opposite side. But a certain Samaritan, who was journeying, came upon him; and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion; and he came to him and bound up his wounds and poured oil and wine on them. And placing him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And on the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, Take care of him; and whatever you spend in addition to this, when I return, I will repay you. Which of these three, does it seem to you, has become a neighbor to him who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

We are very familiar with this story. Let us spend some time to consider it. This man went from the place of peace to the place of a curse. Jerusalem means peace, and Jericho means a curse. He did not go from Jericho to Jerusalem, a journey that goes up. It was from Jerusalem to Jericho, a journey that goes down. He went from the place of peace to the place of a curse. This man was in a downhill condition. He met robbers on the way. It was not one robber, but a whole gang of robbers, who took away all he had, stripped him of his garments, and left him with no outward covering at all. They beat him until he was half dead; he was wounded in his very life. The Bible shows us that a man's garments are his deeds, and a man's being is his life. Here the shining deeds are stripped away and gone. The life that remains only has a body that is living; the spirit is dead. This is a man half dead. All readers of the Bible know that this is a description of our person. From the time man was tempted by the serpent in the garden of Eden, and since he began to sin, man has never experienced peace in his life journey. Man is continually tempted by Satan. The result is that all his outward deeds are stripped away. Even more his inward spirit is dead.

He is living as far as the body goes, but dead as far as the spirit goes. Man can do nothing about his condition. He can only wait for others to come and save him.

A priest came by. When he saw this man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. After he saw the man, he also passed by on the other side. The priests and the Levites are the two main groups of people in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the whole law is in the hands of the priests and the Levites. If you take away the priests and the Levites, there would be no law left. To a half-dead sinner, one who is bound by Satan, waiting to go to destruction, and having no outward virtue, there was nothing to do except to wait to die. What would the priests tell him? The priests would have said, "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole strength, and your whole mind, and you will rise up and walk." The Levite would also come and say, "That is right. But you must also love your neighbor as yourself." These are their messages. This is what a priest and a Levite would say to a dying man. "It is true that you are half dead and that your shining garments have been stripped away. But if you would do good, you can be saved." This is the meaning of loving God with the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole strength, and the whole mind. This is what it means to love God. If you see one who has not been beaten, that one may still have the heart, the soul, the strength, and the mind to do something. It would still be possible for him to love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind. It would have been possible to tell him this if he were still in Jerusalem. But the problem today is that he is no longer in Jerusalem. He is on a journey, and he is dying. These commandments cannot help him. Therefore, please remember that it is not a question of giving our "whole," but of getting some help. Here is a man who is dying of sickness. He is living in sin. He cannot do anything about his condition. If you tell the sinner to love God with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind, he would say that he has never loved God in his life. If you say that he has to love his neighbor, he would tell you that he has been robbing others all his life. What should you say to a man who is about to step into eternity? At this juncture, the priests and the Levites are of no help. They can only pass by on the other side. When they see this kind of man, they cannot help him.

The word about loving God with our whole heart, soul, strength, and mind, and loving our neighbor as ourself is not to help us to inherit eternal life. It is only to show us the kind of persons we are. If you have never heard a word about loving God, you would not know how important it is to love God. If you have never heard anything about loving your neighbor, you would not know how important it is to love your neighbor. Once you have heard the word about loving your neighbor, you will realize that you have never loved your neighbor. Actually, the words in the law such as loving God, loving the neighbors, not coveting or killing, are there only to expose our sinfulness. They show us our condition. The end of the law, as James has said, is simply to serve as a mirror. It shows you who you are. You do not know what your face looks like. But if you look in a mirror, you see what you look like. Formerly, you did not know that you do not love God. Now you know. Not only is there no love with the whole heart, whole soul, whole strength, and whole mind, there is not any love for God at all. Not only is there no love for God, there is not even love for one's neighbor. You have been robbed by the robbers already. Yet you still do not know what has happened. With the law, you know. You were beaten by the robbers, left half dead, and stripped of your garments, and you did not even know it. Now you know. What then did the priests and the Levites do? They came to say: "My friend, do you not know that you have been beaten by the robbers? Do you

not know that your garments have been stripped off? Do you not know that you are half dead?"

After a while, another one came. This was the good Samaritan. "But a certain Samaritan, who was journeying, came upon him." Unlike the other two, this one came journeying. The priest came by coincidence. The Levite also came by coincidence. But the Samaritan came journeying. He came purposely to save him. "And when he saw him, he was moved with compassion." He had love, and he had compassion. At the same time, he had oil and wine with him. Hence, he could heal the one beaten by the robbers. Who is this Samaritan? John 4:9 tells us that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Everyone mentioned in this story was a Jew. The one beaten up by the robbers was a Jew. The priest was a Jew. The Levite was a Jew. What do the Jews represent? And what does the Samaritan represent? The Jews represent us human beings. What about the Samaritan? The Samaritans have no dealings with the Jews. They do not mix in with the Jews. They are apart from the Jews and above the Jews. We know that this One is the Lord Jesus. One day when the Lord Jesus was on earth, a group of Jews criticized the Lord Jesus and reviled Him with two very strong statements, saying that He was a Samaritan and one who had a demon (John 8:48). Please notice that in Jesus' answer He said that He did not have a demon. The Jews said that He was a Samaritan and had a demon. The Lord denied that He had a demon but did not deny that He was a Samaritan. Hence, the Samaritan here refers to the Lord Jesus. John shows us that in type He is a Samaritan.

This Samaritan came purposely to this half-dead man. When he saw the man, he was moved with compassion, and he saved him with two things. One was wine, and the other was oil. He poured out the oil and the wine, put them on the wounds, and bound up the wounds. We have to see that this is after Golgotha and after Pentecost. This is not at Bethlehem. If it were at Bethlehem, it would have been the wine on the oil. But since Jerusalem and since the house of Cornelius, it is the oil on the wine. Wine represents the work of Golgotha. Oil represents the work on the day of resurrection and the day of Pentecost. Wine is symbolized by the cup at the Lord's table. When you become sick, what the elders bring to your house is the oil. What is represented there is what is spoken of here. In other words, wine is the work of redemption, and oil is the work of fellowship. Wine symbolizes the blood of the Lord in redeeming us, and oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit applying the work of the Lord to us. This is very meaningful. If it were only the oil poured without the wine, there would be no foundation for our salvation. If there were no oil, salvation would not have any effect. Without the cross, it would have been unrighteous for God to forgive our sins. It would mean that He was dealing with our sins in a loose way. It would mean that He was glossing over our sins. But without the oil, though God may have accomplished redemption in His Son and may have solved the problem of our sins, that work could not be applied to us; we would still be wounded.

Here we see that there is oil, and there is wine. Furthermore, the oil is mentioned first. It is the Holy Spirit who has applied the work of the Lord upon us. This is the procedure of salvation. It is the oil that is mingled into the wine. The Holy Spirit does nothing other than convey the Lord's work to us. How wonderful this is! Many of our sisters are nurses. We also have two brothers here who are doctors. Do you know that the function

of the wine is altogether negative? It is used as a disinfectant. This means that the redemption of the Lord is to deal with past filth and past sins. The oil is there to help the wine. Here, on the one hand, there is the removal of what was in the first Adam. On the other hand, there is the new life from the Holy Spirit. Only by this can the dying man be healed. I will speak more concerning this matter if I have an opportunity later.

After the good Samaritan bound up the wounds of the man beaten by the robbers, what happened next? He placed him on his own beast. The beast denotes traveling. With a beast, you can travel without exerting much effort. When there is a beast, I do not have to travel by my own effort; the beast will carry me. Where did the beast go? It went to the inn. This inn is the house of God. When this man is brought to God, God cares for him.

What is the meaning of two denarii? All the metals in the Bible have their meanings. Gold in the Bible signifies God's nature, life, glory, and righteousness. Brass in the Bible signifies God's judgment. All the places in the Bible that require judgment have brass. The altar was brass, the laver was brass, and the brass serpent was brass. The Lord's feet were as shining brass; they are for trampling. In the Bible iron signifies political authority. But silver throughout the Bible signifies redemption. Every time redemption is mentioned, silver is there. In the Old Testament, the money paid for redemption was silver. The two denarii here signify the price of redemption. The two denarii were handed to the innkeeper. This is our salvation. Because of this, God has accepted all those that trust in Him. Spiritually speaking, the inn signifies God's heavenly house. Physically speaking, it signifies the church. "Whatever you spend in addition to this, when I return, I will repay you." After we are saved, we are in the church, waiting for the Lord's return. These points are not my main subject, but I mention them in passing.

The lawyer asked the Lord, "Who is my neighbor?" After the Lord told him this story, He replied to the lawyer with a question, "Which of these three, does it seem to you, has become a neighbor to him who fell into the hands of the robbers?" If you listen carefully to this word, you will realize that the Lord is telling the lawyer that he was the one who fell into the hands of the robbers.

Many today apply this passage incorrectly. They think that the Lord Jesus wants us to love our neighbor as ourself. Whether it is the Bible schools, the Sunday schools, or the Sunday pulpits, they all tell people that one has to be a good Samaritan. You have to love your neighbors, to show mercy to them, and to help them. To them, who is the neighbor? It is the one who was wounded by the robbers. And who are we? We are the good Samaritan. But this is exactly the opposite of what the Lord Jesus was saying. What the Lord meant was that we are the ones wounded by the robbers. Who then is our neighbor? Our neighbor is the good Samaritan. We think that we are the good Samaritan. We can move. We can walk. When we see those bound by sin, we are able to help them. But the Lord Jesus said that we are not the good Samaritan. Rather, we need the good Samaritan. We are the man wounded by robbers on the journey. We are those who are waiting to die. We do not have any good works. Who is our neighbor? He is the good Samaritan. What is it to love our neighbor as ourselves? It does not say that we have to love others as ourselves. It means that we have to love the Savior as ourselves. It does not mean that

we must first love others before we can inherit eternal life. Rather, it means that if we love the Savior, the Samaritan, we will surely have eternal life.

The problem today is that man continually thinks of works. When he reads Luke 10, he says to himself: "Someone is wounded. Someone is dying. If I care for him and love him, I will be a good Samaritan, and I will have eternal life." We think that when we help others, we will inherit eternal life. But the Lord Jesus said if you allow someone to help you, you will have eternal life. None among us is qualified to be the good Samaritan. Thank the Lord, we do not have to be the good Samaritan. We have a good Samaritan already. This Samaritan, who formerly had no dealings with us, has now come. He has died and has solved the problem of our sins. He is now resurrected, and He has given us a new life. This One has bound up our wounds. He has given us redemption. He is helping us and is bringing us to heaven, that God would accept us and care for us.

Finally, we have verse 37: "And he said, The one who showed mercy to him." This time the lawyer answered correctly. He answered that it is the One who showed mercy to him. The One who shows mercy to me is my neighbor. My neighbor is the Samaritan who stopped to bind up my wounds with the oil and the wine, who put me on the beast and brought me to the inn. My friends, the whole question is not to be the neighbor of someone else. Rather, it is the One who showed mercy to you becoming your neighbor.

The Lord Jesus said, "Go, and you do likewise." This word confuses many people. They think that the Lord is telling us to help others. But what this word means is that your neighbor is the good Samaritan. Therefore you should accept Him as your Savior. Since your neighbor is the good Samaritan, you must be the one wounded by the robbers. This shows us that while we were lying there, He came and saved us. Never say that we can do anything ourselves. Never say that we have the way. He is showing us that we have to let Him do everything. We have to let Him pour the oil and the wine on our wounds. We have to let Him bind up our wounds. We have to let Him put us up on the beast and bring us to the inn. We have to let Him do the work of taking care of us. We have to be like the one wounded. We do not have to be like the Samaritan. Man's greatest failure is to think that he should do something. Man always wants to be his own savior. He always wants to save others. But God has not appointed us to be the savior. God says that we are the ones to be saved.

Hence, the Lord's word fully answered the lawyer's question. It does not mean that one should not love God with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole strength, and his whole mind. The question is whether or not he can do it. We cannot do it either. We have a wounded life. Actually, our real condition is that we are dead. Our body is living, but our spirit is dead. We need salvation. We cannot help God. Neither can we help man. If we think that we can do something, we will not experience the forgiveness of sins. The work of the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit will not come upon us.

Hence, remember that Luke 10:25-37 never tells us that man is saved through loving God. On the contrary, it says that the Samaritan was first moved with compassion before we could love. He loves first, and then we can love. Before He has loved, we cannot love. It is true that if any man does not love the Lord, he is accursed. In Luke 7, the Lord Jesus told Simon that he who has

been forgiven the most loves the most, and he who has been forgiven little loves little. Love comes after forgiveness. It is not a matter that he who loves much receives much forgiveness, and he who loves little receives little forgiveness. However much a person is forgiven, that is how much he loves. A Christian loves the Lord because He has saved him. If you cannot even love the Samaritan, then I do not know what I can say of you. There is no such person on earth. There is no one on earth who does not love the Lord at all; everyone has to love Him at least a little. The Lord said that he who has been forgiven little loves little. It does not say that there is no love. Everyone loves Him to a greater or lesser extent. However, the condition of salvation is not our love. If I am saved because I love the Lord, then one can see that this is very unreliable. Within two or three days, I can change so many times. I am one who has been wounded by the robbers. I am lying there. I can do nothing at all. I am at the end of myself. I do not love God with all my heart, and I do not love my neighbor. But now I allow Him to save me. After He has saved me, I can love Him. We love Him because He has first loved us. It is God's love in us that has produced our love for Him. It is utterly impossible for us by ourselves to produce a love for God.

SALVATION NOT BEING THROUGH BAPTISM

Now we have to consider another question. Some people say that a man cannot be saved without being baptized. Perhaps those among us would not say this. But some who have been affected by the poison of Roman Catholic tradition may be full of this kind of thought. Recently, a few co-workers and I met a few western missionaries in Canton. They all paid much attention to this matter of baptism. There is a certain missionary in Hong Kong who is very strong about this matter. They certainly have their scriptural basis, which is Mark 16:16: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned." Some would argue that this means if a man has believed but has not been baptized, he is still not saved, because this verse clearly says that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Here I would like to ask a question. What does salvation mean here? It says: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." But following this it says: "He who does not believe shall be condemned." From this we see that the salvation here must not refer merely to deliverance from condemnation. We must be careful here. The Lord says he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. The corresponding sentence should be that he who does not believe shall not be saved. But it is so strange that it says he who does not believe is condemned. Hence, the salvation in the first clause must not refer to the not being condemned in the second clause. We have to see that not only does salvation refer to a man's salvation before God, but it also refers to his salvation before men. Before God, it is a question of condemnation or no condemnation. Before men, it is a question of being saved or not being saved. Before God, all those who believe in the Lord Jesus are not condemned. He who does not believe is condemned already. This is the word of John 3:18. But one cannot say that he who believes and is baptized shall not be condemned. We can say that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but not that he who believes and is baptized shall not be condemned. This is because condemnation has to do with God. Salvation here does not have to do with God. Salvation has to do with man. That is why the question of baptism comes in. To be condemned or not is a matter before God. That is why there is only the difference between believing and not

believing. To be saved or not is not before God; it is something for man to see. That is why there is the difference between baptism and no baptism.

When we read the Bible, we have to take care of these distinctions. We will take John 3 again as an example. The Lord Jesus said in verse 5: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Then in verses 6 and 8, when it mentions this matter again, it mentions only being born of the Spirit, without mentioning being born of water. The reason for this is that there are two sides to the kingdom of God. One side is spiritual, and the other side is earthly. Spiritually speaking, if a man is not born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. This is a fact. But there is still the human side. On the human side, there is not only the need to be born of the Spirit, but the need to be born of water also. What is the Spirit like? It says the wind blows where it wills. We can also say that the Spirit blows where it wills. In the original language, wind and spirit are the same word. Both are *pneuma*. The Spirit blows where He wills. One does not know where He comes from or where He is going. Man cannot control the wind in the sky. When it comes, it simply comes. When it goes, it simply goes. Many times, we only hear the sound of the wind, and know that it is here, or that it is gone. We cannot control the wind in the sky, but we can control the water on the ground. I have no way to control the wind blowing on my face. But I can determine whether I want to go into the water or not. The wind blows where it wills, but the water goes where I will. I cannot order the Spirit in heaven to put me into the kingdom. But I can manage to get myself into the water. I can have a part in the kingdom of God on earth. When I am baptized, no one can say that I do not belong to the Lord. This is why the Lord said in Mark 16 that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

What is the difference between being saved and not coming into condemnation? Please remember that condemnation is something strictly before God, but salvation is relative; it is something before God and something before man as well. Whether I am condemned or not is a matter before God. But whether I am saved or not has to do with God and has to do also with man. Salvation is toward God and man; condemnation is strictly toward God. Once a man believes, he will not be condemned before God. He who does not believe has been condemned already. Those who are in Christ shall not be condemned. But those who do not believe have been condemned already. This is the question before God all the time. But thank the Lord, salvation is with God and with man as well. On the one hand we have to believe, so that we can be saved before God. On the other hand, we have to be baptized, so that we can be saved before man.

If there is a man today who continues to be a Christian secretly, should we acknowledge him as a Christian? He has believed and is no longer condemned before God. But one cannot say that he is saved before man. Before God we have to be delivered from condemnation. But before man we have to be saved. If there is a person who has genuinely believed in the Son of God and has genuinely believed in the work of the Lord's cross, yet he never confesses with his mouth, nor has he ever been baptized, others will not know if he is saved. There is only one condition to be saved before God and to come out of condemnation before God, which is to believe. But to be saved before man there is another condition, which is to be baptized. I am not saying that baptism is not necessary. We definitely need to be baptized. Baptism has to do with our salvation.

But this salvation is not what some people think. This is absolutely not a question of coming under condemnation. It does not say that if you are not baptized, you will be condemned. Rather, it says that if you do not believe, you will be condemned. Before God there is no question of baptism; there is only the question of faith. Once there is faith, everything is settled. Baptism is not for God. Baptism is for man. It is a testimony among men, testifying of the position that one stands upon. Are you a person in Adam? Or are you a person in Christ? This fact is testified by baptism.

Thank God that the thief next to the Lord's cross went to Paradise. At that time, Peter was not there yet. Neither was John or Paul. Right after the Lord went to Paradise, the thief followed Him. But he was not baptized. Before God, whoever calls on His name shall be saved. Why does a person call on His name? It is because he has believed. But whether those on earth will say that such a person is saved or not is another question. In the next few evenings I will make a clear distinction for you. It seems that in the Bible, justification, forgiveness, and coming out of condemnation are all before God. But salvation is before God and before man as well. If you are not clear about these things, you will create many problems. In the Bible, many places refer to what happens before man. Many other places refer to what happens before God. If we confuse the two, we will fall into error.

I have said that baptism refers to a man's coming out of Adam and into Christ. On one side is Adam. On the other side is Christ. We have to get out of Adam and into Christ. How do we get out? We were a part of Adam. How can we now come out of Adam and into Christ? Let me first ask one question: How did we get into Adam? If I ask how we can get out of Adam, some would say that they do not know. That is why I ask how we got into Adam. The way we enter in will be the way we get out. How did we get into Adam? The Lord Jesus said in John 3:6 that that which is born of the flesh is flesh. How did I become a part of Adam? I was born into him. Now that you know how you got in, you will know how you can get out. If you got into him by birth, you have to get out of him by death. This is quite obvious. But how do we die? God crucified us when the Lord Jesus was crucified on the cross. Therefore, in Christ we have died to Adam. How then do we get into Christ? The Lord goes on to say that that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. I get into Christ by birth. Peter said that we are regenerated through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead (1 Pet. 1:3). Hence, it is His resurrection that has regenerated us. Here we see two things: through the death of the Lord, we are delivered from the family of Adam. Through resurrection, we have entered into Christ. Through death, we are delivered from the first Adam. Through resurrection, we have entered into the second Man. All of these are accomplished by the Lord Jesus. He has died on the cross. As a result we also have died. He has resurrected. As a result we have entered into the new creation.

The death is spiritual, and the resurrection is also spiritual. But our baptism is physical. What then is baptism? Baptism is our acting out. Through His servants, His apostles, the Lord Jesus told us of His work: When He died on the cross, we were also included in His death. What should we do after we have heard this? According to history, this happened two thousand years ago. We were already crucified two thousand years ago on the cross of our Lord Jesus. His word is now preached to us. It tells us that we have died. What then should we do now? I once asked a village woman this question. She answered, "If the Lord Jesus has crucified me, then I need to buy a coffin." This is altogether right! The Lord Jesus has crucified me. Why should I not buy a

coffin? Since He has crucified me, I must hurry to bury myself. Baptism is my request to be buried in the water because I have been crucified by the Lord. Baptism is a response to God's crucifixion of us. God has preached the gospel to you and told you that you are dead. Your response is that since you have been crucified, you will find someone to bury you. Hence, baptism means that we are dead in Adam already. Others are taking me out to be buried. Now we are on the ground of resurrection. Hence, death is our exit from Adam, and resurrection is our entrance into Christ. Baptism is our burial. Death is the termination of Adam, and resurrection is the new beginning in Christ. Baptism is the bridge between these two sides. Through baptism we pass from death to resurrection.

My friends, the Lord Jesus has accomplished everything. There is no condition required for us to be saved. All we have to do is to simply believe. To believe is to receive. I need only to receive because the Lord has done everything. I no longer have to do anything. Baptism is through faith. It is an acting out. Let me ask: If there is no plot, how can we perform? Do we have a plot first and then an act, or do we have an act first and then a plot? All plays exist because there was a plot already. Because there is a spiritual fact before God already, we can act it out through baptism.

May the Lord be gracious to us and show us that nothing other than faith can be a condition for salvation. Baptism has absolutely nothing to do with salvation or condemnation before God. We come out of condemnation before God through faith. Our acting out at baptism is only for our salvation before man. May the Lord be gracious to us and make us clear about our salvation.