Saved by Christ, Living with Christ, Waiting for Christ

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References: 1 Timothy 1-6, 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Timothy 6:14; Matthew 24:35; Acts 1

Introduction

Welcome and greetings to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and marvelous salvation we have because of the wonderful and marvelous Savior that we have. Greetings to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ from the saints in Singapore as well as the Emmaus Worldwide team.

The reason why I'm passing through Vancouver is because we had a global conference for all the Emmaus workers in different countries last week in Dallas. This is only my second time in Canada and also in Vancouver, so I really treasure the time with you this morning and also with our fellowship later.

Just a little bit about myself: I'm a third-generation Chinese who grew up in Singapore, and it's really the work of God. I grew up in Sunday school. I went to Sunday school with my two older sisters and my parents who brought me there. For many years, I thought that just by going to church, just by memorizing the verses in Sunday school, being a good student of the Bible in Sunday school, that I was a Christian.

However, when I was doing a children's Bible course from eight years old to ten years old, at ten years old I was doing this particular lesson which said exactly the opposite of what I believed for the first ten years of my life. It basically said that we are not Christians just by going to church, doing good works, or trying to be a better person, but all of us still have sinned. Even if I had been going to church when I was four or five years old, even if I was a very good student, I'm still a sinner and I still need the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and to accept the completed work of salvation that He had done on the cross for myself.

So only at ten years old did I really look at my own life. I really saw that I had very inward sins which no one else knew, and these sins are anger, jealousy, and pride. These are very, very big sins. In the eyes of others who may not be so godly, maybe these sins are not

serious. But in the eyes of God, we read in His Word that pride is actually the biggest sin, and this is a sin which no one else sees. At ten years old I realized that, and therefore I believed, and I knew that I needed the Lord Jesus' redemption and what He has done on the cross for me. I believed in Him then, and from then on, I'm very happy to share that even though there are so many ups and downs in a Christian's life, through His grace, through His guidance, through His wisdom, He has helped me all the way to now.

Let's turn now to our first passage. Basically, I want to highlight three passages in the letter of 1 Timothy, and you can see together that the Lord Jesus is really with us all the way.

1 Timothy 1: Saved by Christ

First, let's turn to 1 Timothy 1, verse 15:

> [1 Timothy 1:15 NKJV]
> This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

I've also put just the main points and the key Bible verse in Chinese. As we read this statement, maybe you'll be surprised that the Apostle Paul writes this: that it is deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is His main mission, both at His first and second coming. We know that at the first coming, the Lord Jesus came as the Lamb of God. He came to sacrifice Himself, and He came as a humble servant of God. But when He comes again a second time to complete our salvation, to completely deliver us from the power and presence of death and hell, He will come as the reigning King and He will come as the victorious deliverer of His people.

So in such an assurance, it is a trustworthy statement coming from the witness and the life of the Apostle Paul. He realized that he is a sinner, and he also needed the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He even said in the last phrase, he is the foremost of all sinners. If you look a bit at the Greek, this is an interesting word. Whether we are doing a design model or we are doing an engineering project, this word, "I am foremost," you can think of it as a prototype—the prototype, the first type of anything. The Apostle Paul realized that before a holy God, all his righteousness was really filthy rags. This is the same as what I experienced when I was ten: that all my righteousness is filthy rags.

Yet, to hear this statement from the Apostle Paul is very important for us to reflect even deeper. Who am I compared to the Apostle Paul? Definitely he was more righteous than me,

and yet he considered himself as the first type of sinners. If we look a bit deeper into the Apostle Paul's life, because of his pride in what he had learned, he persecuted the early church and he was even approving of the death of Stephen. That was a blindness, a pride that prevented him from knowing God personally. So let's reflect: even such a super-religious person like Paul wrote to say he is the prototype of sinners. Can we be more righteous than him?

If any of you have been coming to church, you have been hearing the Word, you may be even helping out and giving treats or providing food and refreshments, but are you sure you are saved? Do you know Christ personally? This is the first reflection I will give you: that really all of us before God are sinners that need His grace.

1 Timothy 3: Living with Christ

That is the past. For those of us who have already believed in Jesus, we first know Him as our Lord and Savior. But as we progress on in life, it is such a comforting thought that we can continue to know Him because He was revealed in the flesh. Every Lord's Day, and especially at Christmas time, remember the incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

Again, when the Apostle Paul writes about this in 1 Timothy 3, verse 16:

> [1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV]
> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

He says it is by common confession that nobody can deny it. It is such a well-known fact that God became man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is the mystery, right? When we talk about the mystery in the Bible, it's not a real mystery that you need to solve, but rather it was previously hidden, not fully revealed in the Old Testament, but fully revealed in the New Testament when the Lord Jesus Christ came. How can both God and man be one body? He is totally sinless. He is far above all of us. Truly, He is the Lord Jesus. He is the prototype of all men. He is greater than Adam, who was sinless at the start, but then quickly fell into sin.

Yes, the Lord Jesus was revealed in the flesh and He was always filled with the Spirit. All the works—and we've considered a bit this morning in John's Gospel—all the works and all the words of the Lord Jesus were spoken in the Holy Spirit. Even when the disciples and Mary

and the other women standing by the cross had given up all hope when they saw the Lord Jesus give up His ghost—He gave up His Spirit—on the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the grave. Truly, throughout the Lord Jesus in His pre-incarnate state, in His incarnation, in His perfect life on earth, in His death on the cross, in His resurrection from the grave, in His ascension back to heaven, He is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Here we see that truly the Lord Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, but they are all God, equal to each other, and yet cooperating perfectly with each other. What a mystery, but what a wonderful blessing for us that in our salvation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three members of this perfect and holy Godhead—are involved in our salvation and involved in our spiritual life even now.

Last week, one of the speakers at the Emmaus conference was Brother Scott DeGroff, and he gave us three messages very focused on Christ. He shared with us that he regretted that he served God for the first twenty years of his ministry without truly enjoying the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoying the eternal life that already has been given to us when we believed. When we first believed that we were sinners and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we already had eternal life to enjoy now. This is the encouragement that we can get: that when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ and we walk and live with Him, we can truly trust Him even when we need to be proclaiming Him among the nations.

Again, just a bit of testimony from my life: I studied computing in the National University of Singapore. When I went into university, I thought that I would do very well in computing because I had done very well in high school in this subject. It was really difficult in high school; for my high school graduation exam, I needed to program software as well as excel in my written examination to get an A, and by God's grace and help, I did that. However, throughout my university life, I struggled in my favorite subject, and I also struggled in this subject which I thought I was good in.

By God's grace, I graduated after three years, and I went on to go for many mission trips to learn from overseas missionaries and learn from their life testimonies how they trusted God through very difficult circumstances in their family, in their ministry, in their own health, and in the development of the missions in reaching out to people of a different culture and of a different language. I was very encouraged by all these testimonies. As I heard more and more about the testimonies, I myself was encouraged by the Lord and led by the Lord to not only pray for these missionaries, to not only visit these missions, to not only partner with them in short-term missions, but also to be a missionary myself.

The Lord Jesus is proclaimed among the nations. He is a living and real person. He's not just a legend who is being proclaimed among the nations. He's not just a spirit who cannot eat.

That was one of the tests which He showed the disciples at His resurrection: that He could pass through the wall and appear in the midst of them, but He could also eat the fish and fellowship with them. What a marvelous, glorified body! This is the same Jesus who is proclaimed among the nations and is believed on in the world. Even as I look upon the brothers and sisters gathered here, many people from different cultures and languages and nations, we praise God because someone preached. Someone shared the gospel to you, and you are here this morning as we worship the Lord together.

Then the last point: the Lord Jesus taken up in glory. The Lord Jesus also gave another big test to the early disciples and the early church. I had a similar question when I was saved at ten years old: I wondered why the Lord Jesus didn't take me back to heaven immediately upon salvation. That was just one of the funny questions as a ten-year-old, but I sincerely hoped that the Lord would take me back to heaven immediately at that time. When the Lord Jesus started the early church, He wasn't around physically, but He left the Holy Spirit to the disciples.

The Lord Jesus was taken up in glory to heaven, to the right hand of God, as we read in Acts 1. Last Tuesday at a prayer meeting, I shared online on the three passages in Hebrews that the Lord Jesus is both our victorious Redeemer, our great High Priest, and the One who is coming again. He's sitting at God's right hand at the most powerful place and seat of authority in the whole universe. That's where, even though we can't see Him, we can be encouraged that He continues to intercede for us from heaven.

Let us persevere in faith, persevere in sharing the gospel, persevere in prayer, and persevere in coming to the breaking of bread and worshipping God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Just a general reflection as we consider 1 Timothy 3:16: are we really living together with the risen Christ, enjoying the eternal life that He has already given us? We don't need to wait until death, or we don't need to wait until the Rapture to enjoy the presence and the guidance and the leading of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout our earthly journey, whichever stage of life you are at or whatever circumstance you're facing, we can live together with Christ and be assured of the victory that He has given us.

1 Timothy 6: Waiting for Christ

Let's continue on with the last passage from 1 Timothy 6:14. As was mentioned many times this morning by the various brothers, the Lord Jesus is coming again. He will judge the living and the dead. This is the encouragement which the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy at the end of this chapter, at the end of this letter:

> [1 Timothy 6:14 NKJV]
> that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,

We know that when the Apostle Paul preached to the Gentile people, he went to Greece, he went to Turkey, he went to Italy. He was many times rejected, chased after, beaten up, and left to die, but God kept him. Yet he leaves this same commandment to young Timothy, his own son in the Spirit: that Timothy persevere with the commandment, especially as there was the issue about false teachers and the other problems with the church at Ephesus, where Paul had left Timothy to be the leader, to be the elder, and to care for the flock and protect the flock.

The Apostle Paul had left Timothy there, and Paul now exhorts and encourages Timothy to keep the commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. In hindsight, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ didn't appear or come back the second time in the first century or in Timothy's time. But for Timothy, it was for him to hold on to this truth, to hold on to the example of the Apostle Paul—how God and the living Christ had led Paul and helped Paul through all the many toils, dangers, and snares, even as we sing many times in the hymn, Amazing Grace. Timothy persevered to the end because he had such a good example in Paul, he had the Word of God to strengthen him and teach him, and he had this hope that the Lord Jesus Christ would come again.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only King of kings and Lord of lords, who dwells in light which we cannot approach. That is in the context of 1 Timothy 6. When you have time, please go back and read the whole letter again. I trust that these key points in the letter to 1 Timothy will help us to really learn and grow closer to Christ, and really enjoy the blessing of eternal life that He has given us.

Conclusion

This is the reflection that we have for 1 Timothy 6. As we read the rest of the chapter, we realize that there's a big choice: what do you leave the next generation? Whether earthly riches or eternal life, which the Apostle Paul had written to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6. If we want to leave eternal life to the next generation, we should continue and persevere in the things of God. We should be active and intentional to pass on this precious biblical truth of the gospel. It's all by grace alone; none of us could have saved ourselves.

What is a million dollars or even one billion dollars to the God of this universe? It is something that we really cannot imagine. The Lord Jesus says that the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than all because of our position in Christ. Let us be prayerful; let us depend on the Word of God, especially as we see the world has so many challenges and distractions for your children, for the young people, and for ourselves. It is very hard to persevere in faith if we don't keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

As a summary:
- In 1 Timothy chapter 1, we are **saved by Christ**.
- In 1 Timothy 3, we are **living with Christ**.
- In 1 Timothy 6, we are **waiting for Christ**.

What an assurance that whether in the past, the present, or the future, Christ is with us! He is forever.

If we consider the world, many of you know about Forbes magazine. Every year they publish the world's ten richest billionaires and the world's richest men. Every year it changes, and the net worth changes. What is this person worth? How many billions of dollars does he have? When we consider the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ has given to us, can you imagine that all of us, redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, have a net worth way, way above any of these people with earthly riches? Our net worth is the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the life of One who is God and man at the same time.

This is the eternal covenant He has given to us. This is the reason why we take the bread and the cup only until He comes, because when we have the real Person, we no longer need the symbols. And when we have eternal life, we no longer need to depend on uncertain riches.

This should change our lives and change how we teach the next generation. As we challenge ourselves and challenge them also: first of all, don't just come to church; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ yourself. Realize that all of us have truly sinned before a holy God. Encourage them to continue in the Word, the Bible study, the Bible reading, and the prayer reading, because these things last for eternity and everything else will fade away. Our Lord Jesus said:

> [Matthew 24:35 NKJV]
> Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Thank you. Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks once again for what a wonderful Savior we have. He is the most precious and the most valuable Person in both heaven and earth, Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that through Him, all peoples of all nations and of all cultures can have this common salvation, that He came not just to save the Jews, but all the Gentiles as well.

We give thanks again for what He has done for us individually. We continue to pray for all brothers and sisters and the families represented here, and we continue to pray and commit the rest of the meetings into Your hands. We continue to give thanks for all that God has given to us. We pray that You will bless Your Word to us and help us to read Your Word alive as a living Word. We give thanks and pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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