

A SAVIOR FOR YOUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

By Titus Chu

Verses: Ezek. 18:4b; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 3:23; Eccl. 1:2; Rom. 7:19; 1 Tim. 4:10; Gen. 3:19b; Phil. 3:21

Those who are Christians know that we have a marvelous Savior. Those who do not yet believe, need this marvelous Savior. As a young person, I did not know I needed a Savior. I thought that the world was within my grasp. But now that I am older, I realize that I don't even hold myself in my hands. I fully realize now that I need a Savior. But today many young people are only told how wonderful and "talented" they are, so they don't realize their need. They think they know how to handle their own life. I want to tell you, if you are not a Christian, you need a Savior. If you are a Christian, you need a Savior even more.

A SAVIOR FOR YOUR PAST

Because All Have Sinned

We all need a Savior because we all have sinned. Even if you feel that you are a good person, you are still a sinner. As a young person growing up in China, 40 years ago, I was never exposed to all the evil and immoral things that young people encounter today. You may think that compared with today's generation I was such a good person. How could I think I was a sinner and needed a Savior? The Chinese have a story about two soldiers fighting on the battlefield. When the enemy came, they both ran away. One ran 50 steps; the other ran 100 steps. The first one turned to the second and called him a coward. Yet they both ran away. Both were cowards. Whether you have committed a little sin or a big sin, you are still a sinner. Even if everyone else around you is doing something, it can still be a sin. In the sight of God, sin is sin. So the Bible is very bold to say, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

What Is Sin?

A sin is to fall short of the glory of God. All have sinned. Whether you committed murder or you thought an angry thought, no matter what kind of sins a person has committed, the result is the same. Everyone has fallen short of the glory of God. Man was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27), so man was made to express God. But man has fallen short of God's intention.

Let me give you an illustration. Suppose a large family goes out to eat in a fancy restaurant. The mother will dress each of the children in their best and make sure they look presentable. If the children do not behave properly, the parents will be embarrassed because that will diminish the family's glory. Our God is a glorious God, and He has a glorious purpose, so He created man. You are here because God created you, in His image and after His likeness. God, who is Spirit, even put His element within man. No other creature on this earth has the element of God in them. Only human beings have a spirit to contact God. But something happened that put distance between us and God. That something is sin. The result is that man has fallen short of the glory of God.

Sin doesn't have to be something terrible or evil. Sin is simply not matching God. If you are one with God and match God, then both you and God are satisfied. Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man, and died on the cross for our sins. He shed His blood to cleanse us from all our sins. He bore the judgment of sin, which is death, for us. So He is the Savior of all sinners. If anyone desires to believe in Him, He will save him to the uttermost.

Jesus Took Care of Our Sins

Ezekiel 18:4 tells us, “The soul who sins, he shall die.” But 1 Peter 2:24 says, “Who Himself [Jesus] bore up our sins in His body on the tree [that is, the cross], in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.” Not only Jesus died on the cross, but we also died with Him. He died on the tree, and shed His blood to cleanse us. When we believe into Him, we enter into this fact that we have died to sin and we live to righteousness.

To be saved is very simple. It doesn't take a lot of knowledge. Just say, “Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I don't know how many sins I have committed, but one thing I know, I fall short of the glory of God. Oh Lord, save me. Lord Jesus, I receive You as my Savior.” In this simple way, you receive the Lord Jesus.

Some people want to study more because this way seems too simple. You should study more, but while you are studying, still believe. For example, you may realize that with all the pesticides and chemicals in food today, you should study what is in your food before you eat it. Otherwise what you eat may be very harmful. Surely this is right, but if you just study and don't eat, you will starve. So, study while you eat, and eat while you study. It is the same with the Lord Jesus. You may not know who Jesus as your Savior is, and you would like to study more. You should and you must study. As you are studying, believe in Him. Receive Him as your Savior. He is your Savior and He will save you. He will come into you and regenerate you when you open your heart to receive Him. After you are saved you will have a whole lifetime to study.

A SAVIOR FOR YOUR PRESENT

Because Your Life Is Full of Vanity

Not only is the Lord Jesus a Savior for your past to save you from your sin, He is also a Savior for your present. The book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament was written by King Solomon, who had experienced all there is to experience of wealth, fame and wisdom in this life. He began the book with this verse, “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher [Solomon]; Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2). This is your present life. Your present life is just vanity. It doesn’t matter what you try or how hard you try. It doesn’t matter what you want or what you have. All is vanity.

Basically, all human beings struggle for three things: money, power, or fame. If you want to be first in your class, that is fame. If you want to drive a Mercedes Benz, that is money. If you want to be president of a club, that is power. You may only care for your name, not power or money. Or you may care only for power. But most of us only care about money. After the recession of the 1990’s, medical school applications increased significantly because people figured out that doctors were the only ones who didn’t get laid off. Thirty years ago, biochemistry and nuclear physics were very popular majors. If you had one of these degrees you would get a lot of money and a good name. But as you try for money, power or fame, eventually you have to realize that not one of these has lasting value.

Suppose you compare a rich man and a poor man. They both can only eat so much food. They can only drive one car at a time and live in only one house. They both sleep in only one bed, and they can only wear one suit at a time. The only difference is the quality of their possessions. The rich man may drive a Saab and the poor man may drive a Buick. Whatever you have, according to Solomon, is vanity. A lot of money is vanity. Power is vanity. Fame is vanity. Everything is vanity.

A SAVIOR FOR YOUR PRESENT

Because Your Life Is Full of Limitations

The Power of Sin Limits You

These limitations include the power of sin, and the world. The Bible shows this in Romans 7:19: “For I do not do the good which I will; but the evil which I do not will, this I practice.” This shows us the power of sin. We have all been raised up to know that certain things are right and others are wrong. But it seems that no matter how hard we try, we are driven by a force to do what is wrong. For example, you may really like to go to movies. But you may have a big test in school the next day. You know you should stay home and study, but it seems that you can’t help but go to the movies instead. Even if you have already seen the movie and you only want to see a certain part and then leave, you will stay until the end. When you get home you may be very frustrated with yourself, and vow to never do that again. But the next chance you get, you will be back at the movies. This is true also for evil, damaging things. You know certain things can damage your body and shorten your life, but the power of Satan within drives you.

The World System Limits You

We also need to be saved from the world. The world is a system. Right now it may be popular to get an MBA. So everyone goes out and gets an MBA. Then, it becomes more profitable to be a computer engineer, so everyone tries to be a computer engineer. Then the trend changes to becoming a medical doctor, so everyone goes to medical school. Even the most popular specializations in medical school are constantly changing. Now, the whole world wants to buy stocks. And it is very popular to travel. If you don’t have the money to travel, you can always rent a travel video and pretend you are travelling. The world system has a way to catch people.

In the 1970's, to be a hippie was to be a philosophical person. The hippies had the strength to tell their parents they didn't agree. They wanted to mold their own generation. Then the hippies turned to the Jesus movement because they were so empty. But there were no churches to hold the Jesus movement, so they became yuppies, with lots of money and a cottage in the country. Now it is popular to be a "dink," an acronym meaning: double income, no kids. It seems that when the world was a hippie world, you had to be a hippie. When the world was a yuppie world, you had to be a yuppie. Sometimes you just have to be a "dink" because the world is a "dink" world. Whether you like it or not, the world carries you.

Jesus Can Take Care of the Vanity and the Limitations

If you live on this earth, these things, the power of sin and the world system, will limit you. This is why the Bible tells us, "Because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10). If you are not a Christian, believe into Him. Repent and receive Jesus now. He is the Savior of all men. Even we who believe have to tell the Lord, "Lord, You are a marvelous Savior. Save me from the world system, and save me from the power of sin." I can surely testify that Jesus is the real Savior. He has saved me from all these things. It seems that the power of sin and the drive of the world will never go away, but there is always a Savior to save us from all this unhealthiness.

A SAVIOR FOR YOUR FUTURE

Finally, you need a Savior for your future. If you are not a Christian, this is your future: "dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19b). As a Christian, the Bible tells us, "Who [Christ] will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil. 3:21). This transfiguration will occur when the Lord returns. When Jesus comes back, we Christians who are being saved today will experience the transfiguration of our body, from a body of humiliation into a body of glory. This is our Savior.

We have a Savior for our past, to cleanse us from all our sins. We have a Savior for today, to save us from the vanity of power, money and fame, and to save us from the limitations of the power of sin and the world system. And more than that, this very Savior will eventually bring us into glory.

This stanza from a hymn describes the joy we have in our wonderful Savior:

*O the joy of having all in Jesus!
What a balm the broken heart to heal!
Ne'er a sin so great, but He'll forgive it,
Nor a sorrow that He does not feel!
If I have but Jesus, only Jesus,
Nothing else in all the world beside
O then ev'rything is mine in Jesus;
For my needs and more He will provide."*

PRAYER

Jesus, You are the Savior. Lord, I desire You to be my Savior. Lord, I need a Savior. I confess my condition to You. I'm a sinner who needs to be saved. Lord, wash me in Your blood. Wash away every sin and iniquity. Lord, save me from the vanity of my life. Save me unto Yourself, Lord. I open to receive You. Lord, I really need You. Lord, come into me and become my life. Lord, I receive You. Thank You, Jesus. Amen.

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