

# SUCH A GREAT SALVATION

PART 3



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A REVISION STUDY FROM  
THE FELLOWSHIP OF AILBE

Such a Great Salvation: Part 3  
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The Fellowship of Ailbe

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## Welcome to *Such a Great Salvation: Part 3*

If we're not going to neglect our great salvation, we're going to have to work.

Working out our great salvation requires work, the commitment of time and energy to realizing more of that full and abundant life of grace that Jesus has achieved for us.

We need to set our minds on working out our salvation, and to nurture fear of God, love for His Law, and a vision of all things in our sphere of influence being renewed for Jesus Christ.

Jesus has sent us to the world on a mission to bring near His Kingdom and great salvation. We dare not neglect this calling, or the great salvation that fuels it.

*ReVision* studies are designed as brief introductions to the subject under consideration. We hope they will enlarge your worldview, help you to become more firmly rooted in Scripture, equip you to minister to others, and stimulate you to want to learn more about the Word of God and the Biblical worldview.

We're happy to provide this study at no charge. If you find these studies helpful, we hope you'll consider sending a gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, to help us in making these resources available to others.

May the Lord bless your study of His Word.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Make Up Your Mind to Work

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...* Hebrews 12.1

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...* Philippians 2.12

*It's all of grace...*

We who believe in Jesus Christ are the beneficiaries of a great salvation, the intent of which is to fill the world with the presence of Jesus unto the knowledge of God and His glory (Eph. 4.7-10; 1 Cor. 10.31). Like light, our salvation penetrates everywhere, overcoming darkness and bringing goodness and warmth to the world. Like salt, our great salvation resists every decaying and corrupting tendency or word, and creates a thirst that only the Spirit of God can quench. Like leaven, our great salvation grows and spreads and surrounds and suffuses and transforms everything, making whatever is unpalatable or merely potential into that which is wholesome and edifying and beautiful and good.

And this great salvation comes to us as a gift of grace, freely, bountifully, completely, and continuously.

But while it comes to us by grace, it does not come without *works*, beginning with the works of our Lord Jesus Christ. By His righteousness, He weaves garments of salvation to fit each one who believes. By His death, He canceled the debt of sin we have run-up against God the Father. By His resurrection and reign, He opens the way to our great salvation through the outpouring of salvation and the gift of faith.

Because Jesus *worked* and even now continues *working*, our great salvation is sure.

But our salvation necessarily reflects the character of the Savior Who achieved it. Therefore, while it comes to us by grace, it does not come without *work*. Salvation, Paul reminds us, is unto *good works* in line with God's Law and all His Word (Eph. 2.8-10). We must *learn* these works. We must discipline our hearts to *be zealous* for doing these works (Tit. 2.14), and we must be diligent and careful to *maintain good works* at every opportunity (Tit. 3.8, 14). It is in stretching ourselves in serving others by good works that we grow into our great salvation, and realize more of the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit that our great salvation affords.

*...so let us work hard at it*

We are *saved* by grace so that we may *work* by grace to fill the world with Jesus and the knowledge of God's glory. But this will not just happen. As Paul reminded the Philippians, we must *work out* our salvation, like running a marathon race, cultivating a field or raising a barn (1 Cor. 3.9-15), building a beautiful temple and dwelling-place for God (Eph. 2.19-22), or fighting a continuous battle against powerful forces that would rob us of our great salvation (Eph. 6.10-20).

We are warned not to *neglect* the great salvation we have received. If we do neglect it, we will surely drift from it, and the danger in this is that we may be discovered, at some point, not really to have been saved at all, but merely to have *tasted* of the Lord and His salvation (Heb. 6.4-8). The Greek word for *neglect* is ἀμελέω. It means to not *think about*, and thus *not respond appropriately* to, to *disregard*, to *pay no attention to* that great salvation we have received. The *Oxford English Dictionary* echoes this meaning in its definition of *neglect*: to disregard, to pay little or no attention to, to leave unattended or uncared for, to fail to perform or to discharge a duty.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are *duty-bound* to let our light shine (Lk. 17.10), our salt preserve and flavor, and our leaven transform everything the Lord brings into our life. Only if we *think* more about our salvation,

*pay more attention* to it and all its vast scope and prospect, *respond* as the Lord commands, and *care for* our salvation continuously – only then will we be able to perform those good works and discharge our duty to show Jesus to the world, to the praise of His Father and ours.

*Time to get to work*

It's time to get to work, therefore. And if I may remind us, all work requires at least three things.

*Work requires time.* We must find time to work out our salvation; first, to engage those disciplines and exercises which will enlarge our *understanding* of salvation and enable us to *see more clearly* what the Lord has in store for us, so that we will *hear Him* more eagerly and *desire more of His salvation* every day. If your present practice of spending time with the Lord is not accomplishing those ends, then it's time either to overhaul that practice or to adopt new practices that will allow you to tap into your great salvation at greater depths and with greater fruitfulness.

Also with respect to time, we must learn the disciplines for bringing our great salvation *into all the time of our lives*. Salvation is not some separate time zone we need only pay attention to when we're traveling in it. Salvation reaches across and down into all the time of our lives, so that all of it can be redeemed and invested with work that brings our great salvation to light in our world.

*Work requires intention.* You have to make up your mind *not* to neglect your great salvation. And you have to do that every day, and very often throughout the day. We must be continually renewed in the spirit of our minds to remember that this salvation is greater than we know or ever have known; that it encompasses and infiltrates and refurbishes every area of our lives; that it is fraught with power for newness, compassion, love, and courage to make all things new. We must remember these things, and call them to mind frequently (Phil. 4.8). And when we do, we must resolve again that nothing shall hinder or deter us from gaining more of our great salvation every day, for every aspect of our world.

*Work requires exertion.* Working out our salvation means taking deliberate steps in the direction of what Jesus has accomplished and God has provided for us, getting out of the boat every time Jesus beckons, and walking on water toward Him as an act of obedient faith. We must learn new skills. Take more initiatives. Embark on projects that are presently beyond our experience or perceived capacity, trusting that, if the Lord has laid these on our heart, He will meet us there to enlarge our great salvation as we exert ourselves in His Name. And we must continue working at the fundamentals and foundations of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3.18).

And we must not grow weary in so doing.

By grace we have received a great salvation, and if we will seek the Lord daily and rely on His Word, we will by grace realize and enjoy more of that great salvation with every passing day.

*For reflection*

1. How could you tell when someone was beginning to neglect his salvation? What would that look like in your own life?
2. Do you desire to increase in the possession and enjoyment of your great salvation? What do you think that will require of you?
3. Where's the best place for you to begin in working out your great salvation more deeply and consistently? Why is this the best place for you?

*Next steps – Preparation: Reflect on your answers to the questions above. Use your answers to lead you into a time of silent*

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*meditation and prayer, waiting on the Lord to convict, affirm, and direct you as He will. Share with a Christian friend your answer to the last question.*

## 2 Set Your Heart to Fear

*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.* Hebrews 12.28

*Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,  
That glory may dwell in our land.* Psalm 85.9

### *The end of salvation*

As believers, we understand that the end of our salvation – the ultimate reason why we have been saved – is that God may be glorified, that the riches of His wisdom, goodness, love, mercy, and power might be on display to the world through us, His people. God is glorified by those who are saved as they, receiving grace upon grace from Him, serve Him acceptably in every area of their lives. Our great salvation brings life, light, and newness to all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities, turning our world increasingly rightside-up for Jesus.

Saved by grace, led by grace, and strengthened by grace, we who are saved go into our appointed place in the Lord's field to sow, cultivate, and harvest Kingdom seed, so that the rule of King Jesus may come on earth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. We have received this unshakable Kingdom, and the power that goes with it, so that Jesus may rule and renew our souls, transform our lives, and fill our world with Himself, to the glory of God the Father (Eph. 4.7-10).

To emphasize: Salvation is not merely something we receive so that we may feel relieved, forgiven, assured, loved, and safe. Salvation is given to us so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, as He makes Himself known in every facet and place of our lives.

And this happens as, seeing how great our salvation is, we do not neglect it, but attend to it faithfully, diligently, seeking day by day to realize more of this great salvation and to shine its light, shake its salt, and knead its leaven into every part of our world, serving God and the people around us in good deeds of love.

But we will do none of this without meeting the primary condition for knowing more of our great salvation. And that condition is the fear of God.

### *The beginning of salvation*

God's glory is the end of salvation, and the fear of God is its beginning. When we come to salvation, we realize how utterly undeserving of this grace we are. We recognize our deep and pervasive sinfulness, and that we are confronted by God All Holy and Almighty, and are exposed for the wretches we are. We know that God hates sin. We know that He has often consumed and destroyed sinners, and that in doing so He is altogether just and to be praised.

Yet here we stand before Him, robed in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, filled with the joy of forgiveness, and assured that no condemnation awaits us because our lives have been hidden with Christ in God (Rom. 8.1; Col. 3.1-3).

Still, we cannot help but fear this God, Who is a consuming fire. And this is precisely as God intends. As He spoke through Jeremiah, the new covenant God enters into with us through Jesus demands that we live before Him in *fear*: "They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me" (Jer. 32.38-40).

Let me say this more pointedly, and in line with what God Himself says here: If you have no fear of God in your heart; if you do not fear Him with reverence, awe, and a measure of fear that only God can provoke (Greek: *δέος*), then you should carefully consider whether you have entered God's new covenant at all. If our hearts are not united in all their affections by the fear of God, then we do not know God truly (Ps. 86.11-13), and we have no part in His great salvation.

*Embrace the fear of God*

The fear of God should grow in us as we increase in the knowledge of God. How can we not fear this One Who holds in His hand every facet, particle, moment, and portion of our lives, to do with as He pleases?

This great God – the mere edges of Whose ways we glimpse in storms and galaxies and powers of creation so fearful we tremble for our lives – this God *owns* us, having purchased us through the precious blood of His own dear Son. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price. And God may do with us as He pleases, and whatever He pleases to do with us will be right and just and holy.

The beginning of wisdom is to fear God (Ps. 111.10). By fearing God, we determine to obey and serve Him, thus giving ourselves to the very purpose of our salvation, that He might be glorified. As we obey and serve Him, we discover the infinite supply of His grace that flows to us and through us to others, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5.1, 2). Then, as God is glorified in our lives, and we realize that He has been pleased to use us to show His Son to the world, our love for Him increases – the other side of the affective coin of fear – and we want nothing more than to fear, obey, serve, love, and delight in Him more and more (Deut. 10.12, 13, 20, 21).

As Solomon put it so succinctly at the end of his meditations on the purpose of our lives: “Fear God, and keep His commandments; this is what it means to be a human being” (Eccl. 12.13, my paraphrase).

If you would attend to your great salvation, and grow increasingly in it, then you must learn to fear God, and continue to fear Him – with wondrous freedom and joy – every day of your life.

*For reflection*

1. The fear of God is more than reverence and awe. Explain.
2. Why is the fear of God so important to realizing more of our great salvation?
3. What can you do to nurture more of the fear of God in your heart?

*Next steps – Preparation: Decide on some daily exercises that will help you to grow in and sustain the fear of God. Put these into practice immediately.*

### 3 Salvation and the Law

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works...* Hebrews 10.24

*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.* Romans 3.31

*Salvation is far from the wicked,  
For they do not seek Your statutes.  
LORD, I hope for Your salvation,  
And I do Your commandments.  
I long for Your salvation, O LORD,  
And Your law is my delight.* Psalm 119.155, 166, 174

#### *The neglect of God's Law*

By now you are well aware of the widespread but mistaken opinion that believers think they no longer have any obligation to learn or obey the Law of God. That was then, we are told; now we have a different law, a law of love and toleration and understanding.

Whatever that means.

The neglect of, indeed, among many who claim to be followers of Christ, the *scorn* for God's Law does not correspond with the attitude of Jesus and the apostles, nor of the fathers and teachers of our faith down through the ages. Jesus condemned to obscurity those who refuse to learn, obey, and teach God's Law (Matt. 5.19). The apostle Paul emphatically established the Law, not as a means of salvation, but as the path along which our salvation unfolds. The apostles James, John, and Peter affirmed the abiding validity and importance of the Law of God.

Those preachers and theologians today who deny the Law's relevance for our salvation are pushing a lie on the people they serve; and those who endorse and submit to their teaching are willfully blinding themselves to the truth that makes us free, leads into holiness, fosters righteousness, promotes goodness, and empowers us for love.

To neglect the Law of God, therefore, is not only to neglect our great salvation, but it is to encourage wickedness to flourish, to eviscerate our prayers, to deprive us of the favor of the Lord, and to cheat the world of God's love (Prov. 28.4, 9; Matt. 24.12).

Realizing more of our great salvation depends on the extent to which we learn, delight in, love, obey, and proclaim the holy and righteous and good Law of God (Rom. 7.12).

#### *The beauty of God's Law*

There is a simple reason why this is so. The Law of God is beautiful. That is, the Law of God refracts the essential beauty, goodness, and truth of God, showing us how, in social and cultural settings, to fill our world with the knowledge of God and His glory. Consider just these five characteristics of the Law of God. And as you do, please note that each of these characteristics is asserted in the *New Testament*:

*The Law is the Law of liberty.* The apostle James commands us to live in all our ways as though we were going to be judged by the "law of liberty" (Jms. 2.12), because we certainly will. By nature, we are slaves to sin and captives to the father of lies. Apart from Jesus and His Law, we only know how to sin, and we only tend ever to lie, because this, we assume, will be in our best interest. Only Christ can liberate us from this bondage; but when He does, He does not liberate us into a moral vacuum. Instead, He sets us free from the law of sin to

live within the Law of liberty.

*The Law is holy.* Paul says the Law is holy and righteous and good (Rom. 7.12). It is holy because it expresses in human terms, and for all manner of social and cultural contexts, what the holy and perfect will of God looks like when human beings embody it. God has called us to be holy; Jesus insists we are to be holy; Peter declares that God has made us a holy people. We cannot possibly grow into the holiness of God, to which our salvation would deliver us, so long as we neglect the holy Law of the Lord.

*The Law is righteous.* Jesus is righteous. His perfect righteousness is the means whereby we are acceptable to God. Jesus calls us to follow Him, and the apostle John tells us that the way to do this is to walk the path of righteousness Jesus walked, which is the path of God's commandments (1 Jn. 2.1-6). We are to be a people who are growing increasingly into the image of the righteous Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18), and we cannot do this if we neglect the righteous Law of the Lord.

*The Law is good.* We are called to do good, to be zealous for good works, to be careful to maintain good works, and to consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works. The Law of God is good. In its goodness it speaks to the will of God for the flourishing, not only of His people, but of all creation and culture. The goodness of God can come to light in the land of the living if God's people will study, learn, delight in, and obey the good Law of the Lord.

*The Law is the Law of love.* Finally – and this is merely introductory – the Law shows us what God means when He commands us to love Him and our neighbors. All the Law and the prophets can only be understood rightly when they are seen as beacons of love for God and others (Matt. 22.34-30) and pointers to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the very embodiment of love (Jn. 5.39). When we neglect the Law of God, love grows cold (Matt. 24.12). The world will only know the love of God that makes all things new, as we His people learn and love the Law of love, which is the Law of God.

#### *God's Law and our great salvation*

Here is not the place to elaborate on all the details concerning how we are to obey the Law of God, or which of the laws are still valid, and how we must interpret and apply the Law in our day. Suffice it to say that, if we wish to attend diligently to and grow more fully into our great salvation, we must make room in our walk with the Lord for daily reading and meditation in the Law of God; and we must reflect back on our day and plan the next in the light of that Law, that we may discover ways to know more of the Lord's freedom, express more of His holiness and righteousness and goodness, and show more love to Him and our neighbors.

Our prayer is that this brief overview will liberate you from the lies of those who neglect and scorn the Law, and counsel you to do the same; and stimulate you to that quintessential good work, the good work of learning and obeying God's Law.

#### *For reflection*

1. Meditate on Psalm 1. To what extent does this psalm describe your relationship to the Law of God?
2. Meditate on Matthew 5.17-19. Can we expect to grow in our great salvation apart from learning and obeying the Law of God? Explain.
3. What can you do to begin giving a greater place to the Law of God in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*Next steps – Preparation: Lay out a plan for spending more time reading and meditating in God's Law. Share your plan with a Christian friend.*

## 4 Salvation That Restores

*But we see Jesus...* Hebrews 2.9

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.  
Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the dumb sing.  
For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert.  
The parched ground shall become a pool,  
And the thirsty land springs of water...* Isaiah 35.5-7

*"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...* John 7.37-39

### *The Spirit within*

The great salvation, which is ours in Jesus Christ, comes as a mighty and mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. He opens our eyes to see the truth that is in Jesus, and He unstops our ears to hear the Good News. He tears out our heart of stone and replaces it with a heart of flesh – living and malleable, beating with the spiritual life-blood of His Law and His strength (Ezek. 36.26, 27). He opens our dumb mouths to confess God as our Father and Jesus as our Lord and Savior (Gal. 4.6), and He takes up residence within us (Jn. 14.15-18), an ever-flowing fountain of grace to bless us and, through us, the people to whom God sends us each day (Ps. 46.4-7).

This is a one-time work of the Spirit which translates us out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, the Kingdom of light and life (Col. 1.13), where, seeing Jesus, drinking of Him and believing in Him, we begin to want to be like Him (Ps. 36.7-9; Phil. 3.7-11).

But this is just the beginning of the Good News. Our salvation is not merely great enough to effect these miraculous changes in us at once and for all time; it is also great to *continue* that work, improving our sight and hearing, strengthening our bodies for service, enlivening our tongues to worship and confess, and making us fountains of grace in the deserts of our world, to quench the thirst of many and renew the world with the goodness of God.

And all this increases as we focus on Jesus, seeing Him, knowing Him, delighting in Him, desiring Him, following and obeying Him, and being conformed increasingly to His world-filling image and glory (Eph. 4.7-10; 2 Cor. 3.12-18).

### *The restoring of sight*

Our great salvation continually restores our sight, making it possible, day by day, for us to see new truths and enhanced vistas of salvation, revealed in the Word of God, and new opportunities for serving Jesus in the world to which He sends us.

As our vision of Jesus expands and becomes clearer, and we see ourselves seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2.6) – where He upholds the cosmos by His powerful Word (Heb. 1.3), puts His enemies under His feet (Ps. 110.1), calls and gathers His elect (Matt. 11.28-30), builds His Church (Matt. 16.18; Eph. 4.11-16), and makes the world He has reconciled to God increasingly new and beautiful (Rev. 21.5) – we begin to see our lives and our world differently. We see with the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2.16) areas where the touch of Jesus' grace or some word of truth can enlighten, leaven, or salt the world. We see people differently, as

neighbors deserving of our love; and all the places we go become venues in which to advance the rule of King Jesus and the goodness of the Lord.

As we continue to see Jesus, He continues restoring our sight, so that the world we inhabit presents itself anew each day as fraught with opportunities for bringing the goodness and glory of God to light in the land of the living (Ps. 27.11-13).

*The restoring of our hearing*

This renewed vision increases and becomes sharper and more constant as the Lord opens our ears to hear His Word. Knowing that He has promised to do so, we spend more time reading the Word, meditating on its truths, listening for the Spirit to enable us to hear great things and mysteries we've never heard before (Jer. 33.3), and to guide us more deeply into the truth that is Jesus.

We feed eagerly on the Word of God (Jer. 15.16), ever seeking more of the solid food of the Word (Heb. 5.14), to enhance and expand our vision of Christ and the world, and to prepare the members of our bodies for those good works that show the righteous, peaceable, and joyous reign of Jesus to the world (2 Tim. 3.15-17; Rom. 14.17, 18).

And we are circumspect throughout the day, listening for the Spirit to fill and guide us in every situation, so that we might live and apply the words He is teaching us in the wisdom of God and for His glory (Eph. 5.15-21).

*The restoring of our bodies*

The more clearly we see and hear, the bolder and more joyous and consistent we will become to worship and witness for Jesus and to serve Him with all our strength. The opportunities that appear before us in our world become invitations and exciting challenges to use our mouths for praise, testimony, and witness, and our hands and feet for creative and loving service. The Spirit empowers us to will and do of God's good pleasure in the world (Phil. 2.13), with an indwelling power that is exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think (Eph. 3.20). There are no limits to what we may aspire to and work for in seeing the Kingdom of God come in and through us on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10).

The progressive and ongoing healing of our eyes, ears, mouths, and strength means that we become increasingly pure and clear, ever-flowing fountains of grace and truth to the people around us, as our great salvation wells up within us and overflows to bring refreshment and renewal to the deserts and people of our world.

We are not simply given sight and ears and hearts and mouths to confess as a once-for-all chorus, to be repeated over and over, as the extent of our salvation. We are being restored and transformed into the image of God, the image of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we expect to grow and worship and witness and serve and create and transform our world by good words and good works, greater even than what He did when He was among us (Jn. 14.12).

That is, if we are not neglecting our great salvation, but attending to it diligently, daily, and deliberately.

So we need a plan. We need to know what the goals are, and what disciplines will help us to lay firmer hold on our great salvation, so that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ can come on earth in and through us with greater presence, promise, and power every day of our lives.

*For reflection*

1. How have you experienced the increasing healing of your eyes, ears, mouth, and body for the glory of Christ and His Kingdom?

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2. Meditate on Ephesians 5.15-17. Can we “make the most” of every opportunity if we are not growing in our great salvation? Explain.
3. What do you aspire to, and what do you hope to accomplish for the Lord, as His great salvation increases in you?

*Next steps – Preparation: Review your answers to the three questions above. Spend an extended time in prayer to improve your answer to question 3. Share the results of this exercise with a Christian friend.*

## 5 Salvation for Your World (1)

*But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6.9-12*

*We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 2 Corinthians 10.13*

### *A sphere of influence*

We have a great salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ has broken the hold of the enemy of our souls; liberated us into His Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit; and sent us into the world, which He has *reconciled* to God, that we might bring our great salvation to bear on every place, person, and thing in the world.

Of course, you and I cannot bring salvation to the whole world. But we *must* work hard at our salvation, in the fear of God and the power of His Spirit, so that we may realize increasingly the exceedingly abundantly *more* of our great salvation for every aspect and area of *our* world – your world and mine.

Paul mentioned his having a *sphere*, appointed to him by God, within which he was to live and work out the great salvation he had received from Jesus Christ. Paul's sphere was geographically vast and ethnically and culturally diverse; but it was united by language and law, and doors opened to Paul wherever the Spirit led him throughout his sphere.

Our sphere is probably neither as vast nor as diverse as Paul's. But it is ours. How can we identify our sphere? Jesus used the term, *πορευθέντες*, “as you are going,” to help us determine the measure of our sphere (Matt. 28.19). As we are going each day, day after day, we leave our footprints and establish our presence in a variety of places – home, neighborhood, workplace, school, gym, church, marketplace, and other places where we pursue recreation, diversion, community services, or professional advancement. We go to many of these places, if not every day, at least every week. We see the same people there. We experience the same environment and conditions. And Jesus sends us there as a fragrance of Him, as light in a world of darkness, to fill *our* world with *His* presence (Eph. 4.7-10).

As we work out our great salvation, we must seek and wait on the Lord to show us how He intends us to affect the *places* to which He sends us each week with the Good News of His Kingdom and glory.

### *Places*

Think of all the places you go each week. What are they? What are they like? What do you do there? What opportunities are available to you to bring the fragrance of Jesus – by your deeds and words – into those environments?

Jesus was certainly sensitive to the places God had sent Him. Think of Him in the temple, contemplating the commerce and longing for more prayer. Did He just walk away from that environment, as though He, the Savior of the world, could do nothing about it?

Think of Him in the home of the Pharisee, where a woman has broken a vial of sweet-smelling liquid over His head, and people are beginning to grumble about the waste. Did He simply sit by and let them humiliate her? Or did He commend her for the beauty she added to that place – beauty that ultimately drew people's

attention to Him?

Think of Paul, writing to believers about their workplaces. Doubtless most of those places were fairly dreary and unadorned, and the people, many of whom would have been slaves (75% of the Roman world were slaves), dirty and grumbling and doing as little as possible. Did Paul tell them just to lay low and put up with this lack of excellence, diligence, and industry? Or did he instruct them to do their work heartily, as unto the Lord, with a view to earning enough to meet their own needs and to help others?

Think of Martha, and the way she employed her energies in her home to make people feel at home – to ensure they were as comfortable and at ease as they could be. Jesus did not condemn her diligence as a homemaker; He merely reminded her to keep it in a proper perspective.

Jesus came to this world – His place – and He so affected it that cultures, societies, even languages and institutions and whole cities and nations, were forever changed. The great salvation Jesus brought to His followers has impacted all kinds of places, in every age of history, in ways that have brought the goodness of God to the world with lasting effects.

Is that your vision for the places Jesus sends you each day?

#### *Gearing up*

We must not neglect our great salvation where it can bring the goodness of God into the places of our world. We need to think more “savingsly” about the places we go each week. Together, these constitute the *sphere* appointed by God to us, where He expects us to bring the salt, light, and leaven of our great salvation to bear on anything and everything that needs some shoring-up for *good*.

What does excellence in all things require of us in these places? How can we bring the joy of our great salvation into the merely mundane, ordinary, soulless world of the places we go each week? How can the hope that is within us – of knowing God in His glory and showing that glory to the world – radiate from within us into the places we go, putting those places on notice that a new world is coming, and we are its *avant-garde*?

The place to begin impacting the places of our sphere with the reality of the Kingdom not of this world, is in prayer, and in the Word of God, searching the Scriptures and listening for the Lord to show us how we, like Jesus and Paul, can bring the light of the Kingdom to shine wherever any lingering darkness of sin continues within the places of our world.

You are sent to the world as Jesus was, to bring near the Kingdom of God (Jn. 20.21; Matt. 4.17). Identify the places the Lord has sent you. Offer them up to Him, like John Knox, praying, “Lord, give me Scotland, or I die!” Then gear up for the daily challenge of working out your great salvation in the places of your sphere, bringing the joy of Christ and His Kingdom to your world with ever-increasing glory.

#### *For reflection*

1. Make a list of the places you go each week. For each place, identify one change that would bring more of the Kingdom of God to light there.
2. Should the Gospel, in all its radiance and brilliance and goodness and love, become established in the place of your world, what would be different?
3. Do you believe God has called you to make a Kingdom difference in the places of your sphere? Explain.

*Next steps – Preparation: Watch this brief video ([click here](#)), then download the worksheet and map out the places of your*

*Such a Great Salvation: Part 3*

*Personal Mission Field – where you go each week. Show your work to a Christian friend, and ask for your friend's prayer as you begin working out your great salvation in the sphere of your world.*

## 6 Salvation for Your World (2)

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works...* Hebrews 10.23, 24

*For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.* 2 Corinthians 10.14-16

*Your sphere, your places*

Each of us who believes in Jesus for salvation has been sent out for the purpose of bringing His Kingdom and great salvation to the world. Day by day, we draw water from the well of Christ's salvation, to refresh and renew us, so that the living water of grace and truth may flow from within us, by the power of the Spirit, to bring the dawn of the new Kingdom day to all the places the Lord sends us (Is. 12.3; Jn. 4.13, 14; 7.37-39; 1 Jn. 2.8).

As the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and the leaven of grace and goodness in a world shrouded in sin, we expect to make an impact for righteousness, peace, and joy in all the places of our personal sphere.

The Kingdom we seek so earnestly (Matt. 6.33) comes into being on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10) as believers increase in their great salvation, and as that great salvation overflows to their world – all the places they go, week after week.

We are not sent to bring salvation to *the* world, but to *our* world, those places we typically visit and habituate, where our great salvation flows by grace and truth to make all things new. Excellence and beauty trail in our wake. Goodness surrounds us. Truth leaves its mark on every sector of the sphere God has appointed to us. Joy lingers even after we have gone. We are the people through whom our great Savior is making all things new. The more of His great salvation we know and enjoy, the more that great salvation will impact our world.

But even more important than the *places* that make up our appointed sphere are the *people* we encounter in those places. For while all places, even those made more wholesome, beautiful, and welcoming by the effects of our great salvation, must ultimately be destroyed, human souls are forever. And in the places we go, as we are going there, we seek to bring our great salvation to bear on the souls of those who are lost as well as the souls of those who are saved.

*For the lost: Hold fast your confession!*

For those who do not know the Savior, we bring a consistent, winsome, and personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ. The people to whom the book of Hebrews was addressed were failing in this matter. As a result, not only were they neglecting their great salvation, but they were confirming the lost views and opinions of their lost neighbors, thus misleading them into thinking they were right to reject the Good News of Jesus and His great salvation.

There are lost people in our spheres, in many of the places we go each week. Do we care that they are lost? That they may be lost *forever*? We are called to be witnesses to Jesus (Acts 1.8), and our primary place of witness-bearing is that sphere appointed to us by God, to the people who occupy it with us.

Do the people you see week after week know that you believe in Jesus? Do they know how much Jesus has done and continues to do for you? Do they experience the hope of glory in your demeanor and speech, so that they feel free to ask a reason for the hope that is within you? Have you sanctified Jesus as Lord in your

heart, so that you are ready to confess your faith in Him at every opportunity (1 Pet. 3.15)?

Holding fast our confession before the lost people in our sphere is a most important part both of *growing* in our great salvation (Philem. 1.4-6) – as our confidence, boldness, and ease of witness increases – and of *spreading* that great salvation to people with whom we long to spend all eternity (Acts 8.1-8).

*For the saved: Consider and stir up!*

Also in our sphere, in many of the places we go each week, are others who share in this great salvation by virtue of their faith in Jesus Christ. We have a duty to them, to encourage them in this great salvation, to consider where they are in their walk with and work for the Lord, and how we may be able to stir them up to good works of love in their own spheres.

All those “one another” passages in the New Testament make it abundantly clear that believers can help each other grow in Christ and realize more of His great salvation, and we must do so faithfully and in the love of Jesus.

Does this mean that all our conversations have to be about Jesus? That every other word out of our mouth is something “spiritual” or “Gospel”? Of course not. The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it (Ps. 24.1). The goodness of the Lord is in all the earth (Ps. 33.5). We should take an interest in and learn about many things, especially those things that most directly relate to the places we go and the people we see. The more we learn, and the more we bring our world into the dominion of Jesus’ righteous, peaceable, and joyous rule (Heb. 2.5-9), the more we will be able to talk with people about many things, to encourage and assist them in many ways, to build them up, give them hope, and help them to experience the world through new eyes, *Kingdom* eyes.

We are citizens and ambassadors of a Kingdom not of this world, which is expanding throughout all the world, and, by our efforts and prayers, throughout all *our* world. But this doesn’t just happen. And we will be in danger of neglecting our great salvation if we do not receive as our calling to prepare in and work out our great salvation in every situation, with every person, at every moment, for the praise and the glory of God’s grace.

*For reflection*

1. Do the lost people in your sphere know that you are a Christian? How do they know?
2. Why is it so important that believers encourage one another for love and good works?
3. Summarize the *confession* you might share with someone in your sphere.

*Next steps – Transformation: Write down the names of every person you see in a typical week. Begin praying for them daily, and especially on the day you expect to see them, that God would enlarge your great salvation to reach out to them in some way.*

## 7 Salvation for Your World (3)

*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.* Hebrews 12.28, 29

*For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.* 2 Corinthians 10.14-16

### *Grace to serve*

The great salvation which is ours in Jesus Christ, by which we enter into the Kingdom and seek the glory of God in all things, is a free gift of the grace of God. But it is grace with a purpose. The places we go and the people we see in those places need to know the grace of God, and it pleases Him to send us to those people and places, transformed by and armed with His grace, to bring His great salvation to our world.

Paul instructs us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2.12). God is at work within us, Paul promised, willing and doing of His good pleasure, transforming us increasingly into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2.13; 2 Cor. 3.12-18). He is bringing more of His great salvation to bear on every aspect of our lives – soul and body, words and deeds – so that, as we grow in that great salvation, that great salvation flows from us, in the power of the Spirit, to make all things new, wherever we are, whomever we're with, whatever we're doing.

The Christian life – life in our great salvation – is rather like the Peanuts™ character Pigpen, who, everywhere he goes, a cloud of dust rises from his body. Even in the midst of a winter snow storm, dust will rise from Pigpen whenever he moves or talks. He's Pigpen; it's what he does.

But we're Christians, and Christ is what we do.

God intends that a fragrance of Christ should rise from us, wherever we are, whatever we're doing (2 Cor. 2.15, 16). We bring an aura and presence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; a bent toward encouragement and edification; and an outlook of hope and confidence into every situation. Thus, we raise the banner of Christ throughout our sphere and world, and we establish beachheads from which the Good News of salvation can spread to other people.

But, as we have been at pains to say throughout this series, this doesn't just happen. And if it's not happening, then we are in danger of neglecting our great salvation, drifting from the Lord, and finding ourselves in need of some serious and unpleasant corrective action on the Lord's part (Heb. 12.3-11).

It is much better if we take up our calling to our appointed sphere with a view to growing in our great salvation and causing that great salvation to spread outward to everything and everyone. What does this entail?

### *Four goals*

We have to have some goals. Paul mentions four that guided him in working his own sphere.

First, Paul determined to make of his personal sphere a place for *boasting about the Lord* (2 Cor. 10.13, 15-17). That meant he would always be ready to talk about the Lord; to share what the Lord was doing in His life; to help others understand the beauty, goodness, wisdom, kindness, and power of the Lord; and to encourage others to talk and boast about Him as well. He would create or find or diligently pursue ways of bringing

Jesus to the table, as often as he could, for the purpose of making His many virtues and saving work known.

Second, Paul wanted his personal sphere to be *a place of give-and-take*, a kind of mutual edification zone, especially where his relationship with believers was concerned, so that they would help one another grow and hold one another accountable in love for working their personal sphere diligently and fruitfully (v. 15). He created teams, communicated often, took up projects with them, and was encouraged by and encouraged them.

Third, Paul determined to make sure that *every person in his personal sphere heard the Gospel* by one means or another (v. 14).

Finally, Paul's goal was always to *be looking for ways of enlarging his sphere*, to include more places and people with whom he could work out and live out his great salvation (v. 16).

These four goals should guide our work as well: increased boasting in the Lord, mutual edification and accountability, sharing Christ with others, growing and expanding our sphere of influence.

#### *Four disciplines*

Achieving these goals will require regular and faithful use of four disciplines.

*Preparation.* We must prepare well every day. By spending time with the Lord, studying His Word, praying about the places we go, the people we meet there, and the opportunities for bringing the grace of Jesus to our world, and by improving our own salvation day by day, we will be ready for whatever arises in our sphere, to let our great salvation flow like rivers of living water.

*Conversation.* Second, we need to work on our conversational skills. Ask questions. Listen carefully. Share honestly. Take a genuine interest in the places and people of your sphere, so that you can talk about them in an interesting and edifying way. Make a point to start conversations, but don't think every conversation has to include a Gospel review. Keep conversations going over time. Keep asking questions, being interested, and listening well. Talk often with the Lord before you talk with others.

*Demonstration.* Let people see Jesus in you – in your demeanor and outlook; how you do your work; the way you treat and talk about your co-workers and others; in your willingness to help and to be helped; in simple acts of kindness, thoughtfulness, and love; and in a resolute determination not to be a party to sin of any kind.

*Transformation.* Learn to think and live for transformation. Do not be content with the *status quo* in anything if there are ways to improve and bring more of the beauty, goodness, and truth of Jesus into a situation. Try to envision new ways of adorning the places and engaging the people of your world with the grace and truth of Jesus.

We can know more of the Lord's great salvation, and we can be used of God to disseminate that great salvation in the world, if we will embrace these goals and master these disciplines for use in our own spheres of influence.

Yes, it's work. What *isn't* work is neglecting our great salvation. Do nothing, or very little, and you will succeed at that.

But if you succeed at that, you will not succeed in knowing the riches and bounty and blessing and power and joyous exhilaration that come as Christ makes all things new in you and through you to the praise of His glory and grace.

Your great salvation is ready and waiting.

*For reflection*

1. Have you identified your personal sphere – your Personal Mission Field? Are you beginning to work it day by day?
2. What obstacles do you need to overcome in being more consistent in working your Personal Mission Field?
3. What will you do, beginning today, to be more effective in growing in and sharing your great salvation?

*Next steps – Transformation: Make a plan for realizing more of your great salvation. Offer your plan to the Lord in prayer. Then share it with a friend, and ask your friend to pray for you.*

*For reflection or discussion*

1. We all have a sphere of influence – a Personal Mission Field. How would you explain this concept to a new believer?
2. What kind of impact should we expect to make on the *places* of our Personal Mission Field? Can you give some examples?
3. What is our responsibility toward the unbelieving people in our Personal Mission Field?
4. What is our responsibility toward the believes in our Personal Mission Field?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.