

ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

LUKE 13:22-24 • TV-004B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
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Luke 13:22-24

“And he went through the cities and villages, then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

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I'm reading today from the **Gospel of Luke 13:22-24** and we'll begin reading with **verse 22**; *“And He went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able.”*

Our text today is **verse 23**: **“LORD, ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?”**

Now the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. That's what the Word of God says. In **1 Timothy 1:15** Paul wrote, *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”* And the angel said to Joseph, *“Fear not to take unto thee Mary to be thy wife. That holy thing which is conceived in her shall be called the Son of God and thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

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And then in **Luke 19:10** the Scripture says, Christ Himself, speaking; *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.”* So that’s clear; the Lord Jesus Christ came down here into this world to save sinners.

The Bible was given to us that we might know God, that we might know His Son Jesus Christ and that we might be saved.

Listen to **John 20:31**; now listen carefully; *“These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that believing you might be saved, you might have life through His name.”*

That’s why it was written; *“These things are written that you might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that believing you might have life in His name.”*

So, Christ came to save sinners and the Bible is given not to astound wise men, not to give us a historical account of a race of people; it’s given us that we might be saved.

And then ministers of the Gospel are sent to preach the Gospel to every creature that sinners might be saved. Before our Lord ascended to heaven He said to His disciples, *“Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. And he that believeth not shall be damned.”*
“I’m not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; it’s the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

So ministers are sent on that mission; that’s our task. We go forth and preach that men might be saved. And then the grand object; now listen carefully to me, I might have more enemies when I get through with this message than I have friends but I want you to hear me out. The grand object of having a religion is to be saved. That’s what it’s all about.

This is the great question to settle, do we know God? Are we redeemed? Do we know Christ? Are we saved? Our main concern is not to find the right denomination; that’s not our main concern.

Our main concern is not to be sure that we carry out the Sabbath Day exactly as it’s prescribed. Our main concern is not that we carry out the ceremonies exactly as they’re set forth. Our main concern is not just the right dress and the right rules and the right laws; our main concern is this; do we know God, are we saved, do we know the living God?

Without salvation, without the promise of salvation, without the hope of salvation, without the joy of salvation, without the peace of salvation, all of our religious doings are only so much weariness and pain and labor in vain.

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To be wrapped up in a religion which gives no peace in this life, to be wrapped up in a religion that gives me no confidence and no rest in this life, to be wrapped up in a religion that gives me no hope in death, to be wrapped up in a religion that promises me no glory in the world to come, to me is worse than foolishness, it's insanity.

Now I have three questions that I'd like to ask in answering this question. The person came to our Lord and said; "*Lord, are there few that be saved?*"

That's my topic, "**ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?**"

First of all: I want to answer the question, what is it to be saved? When we are talking about being saved what are we talking about?

Secondly: I'm going to answer this question, what does the world think about this question, "*Are there few that be saved?*"

Thirdly: What does the Bible say in answer to the question, "*Are there few that be saved?*"

Fourthly: I'm going to deal with this, how is it in this present day?

Now first of all, what is it to be saved? This is the matter that has to be cleared up first. Before we can get to the question, "*Are there few that be saved,*" we've got to find out what it is to be saved, what is it to be saved?

Well, let God's Word answer this question. First of all, in **John 17:3** we have our Lord's high priestly prayer.

Now, when we say we are going to pray the Lord's Prayer, we bow our heads and we say, "*Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name*" and don't feel hard with me; that's not the Lord's Prayer, that's the disciple's prayer.

The disciples came to Him and said; "*Lord teach us to pray.*" And He said, "*When you pray, you pray this way, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.*" The Lord's prayer, the one He prayed Himself is **John 17**; that's when He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "*Father, glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee.*"

Now watch **verse 3**, and He says, "*This is life eternal and this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*" That's what it is to be saved; it's to know God.

It's not just to know there is a God; it's to know God. He doesn't say, "And this is life eternal that they might know there is a God and this is life eternal that they might know

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some things about God.” He says, *“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God (the living God) and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.”*

How does one come to know God? God is revealed in Christ. Now **1 John 5:20**; this is an important Scripture, **1 John 5:20**; listen:

“The Son of God has come into this world and hath given us, (human beings, sinners) an understanding that we may know Him. The Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him, that is, the true God. And we’re in Him; that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is eternal life.”

Now you take your Bible and turn to **1 John 5:20** and you read that again. What is it to be saved? It’s to know God. That’s what Christ said. It’s not just to be a church member. It’s not just to adopt a few rules and regulations and some principles of piety. Eternal life is to know God. It’s not just to know about Him. It’s not just to know there is a God; know Him. *“And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”*

If you were to come to me today and say, “Brother Mahan, what is life eternal; we hear preachers preach about being saved and having life eternal,” that is it. *“And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, that we’re in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is life eternal.”* It’s to know God. And to know God is to have Him revealed to you in the person of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord said in **Luke 10:22**, *“No man knoweth the Father except the Son and He to whom the Son will reveal Him.”* Phillip said, *“Lord show us the Father and we’ll be satisfied.”* And Christ said, *“Phillip have I been with you so long and you don’t know me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”*

To know God is to have a desire to know Him better. What did Paul say? He listed all of his religious background, his heritage, his accomplishments, his deeds, and his fame and he said, *“I count these but dung that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”*

Paul, do you know the Lord? “I know Him.” I want to know Him better. I want to know the power of His resurrected life. I want to know the power of His daily fellowship. I want to know the power of His eternal glory. I want to know Him; oh that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then to know God is to rejoice in His attributes. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We joy in God. What is it to be saved? It’s to know God. *“This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”* Eternal life, to be saved, is to believe on Christ.

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When the Philippian jailer came to Paul and Silas after their bonds had been broken loose from the shackles and had fallen to the ground; he fell on his knees and lifted his face to Paul and said, *“What must I do to be saved?”*

Now Paul; here’s a direct question from a sinner who wants to know how he can be saved. What do you got to say for Paul answered in this fashion, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

Paul didn’t say “Be baptized and you’ll be saved.” He didn’t say, “Take the sacraments and the communion and the Lord’s Table and you’ll be saved.” He didn’t say, “Go to the confessional and you’ll be saved.”

He didn’t say, “Become a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Catholic and you’ll be saved.” He didn’t say, “Do so many religious pushups and you’ll be saved.”

He said, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,”* to believe on Christ as the covenant surety, to believe on Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away our sins, to believe on Christ as our great high priest who intercedes, who offers the blessed atonement on the mercy seat of glory, to believe on Jesus Christ as our substitute and sin-offering, to believe on Jesus Christ as the risen one, the Mediator, to believe on Christ as the coming one, as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

To be saved is to believe on Christ. It’s to receive Him to be your Lord. What is it to be saved? It’s to know God and His Son Jesus Christ. And to be saved is to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. The Bible plainly teaches that *“If any man be in Christ he’s a new creature.”*

And the Bible plainly teaches that if a man is in Christ, if a man is saved, that in his life, will be revealed the fruit of the Spirit, which are; *“Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.”* These are the fruits of the Spirit and they will be manifested in a regenerated and redeemed life.

Now I know we are living in a day when men walk down a church aisle and shake a preacher’s hand and join the church and people say they’re saved. They say they’re saved. Everybody says they’re saved. The church members are getting baptized and joining the church and they say they’re saved.

But they live dishonest lives. They live lives of profanity and filthiness and blasphemy. They live lives that are not a credit even to an earthly organization, let alone a heavenly church. This is not to be saved.

“If any man is in Christ he’s a new creature.” And no man has the right to lay claim to being in Christ if he’s not a new creature. My friends, we are living in a world of hate. We are living in a world of malice. We are living in a world of vengeance and it’s just

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summed up in the word h-a-t-e, hate. People hate each other. They hate even in the religious realm. It is full of hatred.

I want you to listen to what the Lord says here in **1 John 4:7**, now listen to this; *“Beloved; let us love one another for love is of God. And everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. And he that loveth not knoweth not God.”*

Now what is eternal life? It’s to know God. What is eternal life? It’s to know God. *“He that loveth not knoweth not God.”* Now that’s what the Scripture says, *“For God is love. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwells in us. If we don’t love one another God doesn’t dwell in us.”*

So, eternal life, to be saved; what is it to be saved? Now we’re answering the question today, *“Are there few that be saved?”* That’s what this man said to the Master; *“Lord, are there few that be saved?”*

Well the first thing we’ve got to determine, what is it to be saved; all these folks flooding down the church aisles, are they saved? All these people that have their names on the roll books in the church, are they saved?

All these people out in the world in dishonesty, profanity, blasphemy, and rebellion, who have no use for God, His church, His Bible, or anything else; they just want to go to heaven when they die and miss hell at the judgment; are they saved?

What is it to be saved? The Bible says, *“It’s to know God and it’s to know His Son Jesus Christ. It’s to believe on Christ, to receive Him as Lord and Saviour.”* And if He’s not your Lord, He’s not your Saviour.

You don’t make Jesus your Saviour today and later on let Him be your Lord if it’s not too inconvenient. A man who’s saved; Christ is his Lord, the Lord of his life. *“And he that cometh to me has got to hate mother, father, brother, sister, husband, wife, even his own life or he can’t be my disciple,”* Christ said. Christ is Lord of all or He’s not Lord at all. To be saved is to be a new creature. He’s got a new heart, he has a new nature, and he has to have new principles. It’s to manifest the furtherance of the Spirit, *“Love, joy, peace, and longsuffering.”* To be saved is to love other people.

And a person whose heart is filled with vengeance and hatred and malice is not saved. *“He knoweth not God. He that loveth not knoweth not God.”* I didn’t invent that. I read that to you from **1 John 4:7-8**. How can we love God whom we’ve never seen if we don’t love our brethren whom we have seen?

Now then, what is the world’s answer to this question, *“Are there few that be saved?”* If I were to ask, if I were to take a poll, like the Gallup Poll, or some other poll, of all the people in Huntington, Ashland, Ironton, Parkersburg, or Pikeville, I’d take a poll and ask you the question, *“Are there few that be saved,”* what would you reply?

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Well, I'll tell you what most people would reply, "Most people are saved." They don't believe that a few are saved. And this is revealed in their attitude toward people. Now listen to me; let me present some facts from God's Word.

First of all the Bible says, "*There's none good, no not one.*" The Bible says, "*There's none that understandeth. In the flesh dwelleth no good thing.*" That's what God's Word says. "*From the soul of the feet to the top of their head there is no goodness, no soundness in it.*"

Do we believe that? Do we believe that our friends and our relatives and our neighbors are no good, for people don't believe that. Do we believe they're ungodly? Do we believe they're evil? People say to me all the time, "Well pray for my husband; he's such a good man or pray for my boy; he's not saved but he's a good man." If he's good he doesn't need to be saved because the Bible says, "*There's none good but God.*" And if your husband is a good man he must be God.

The Bible says, "*The natural mind is enmity against (toward) God.*" The natural mind hates God. That's what the Bible says. Christ said, "*Marvel not my brethren if the world hate you; it hates me.*" Do you believe your friends hate God? Do you believe your relatives hate God? The Scripture says they do. They despised Him and rejected Him and crucified Him on a cross.

The Bible says the wrath of God abides on unbelievers. Do you believe that? "*He that hath not the Son the wrath of God abideth on him.*" Do we really believe that our friends and neighbors and loved ones, "*The wrath of God abideth on them?*" We don't believe that.

Consequently, when we answer the question, "*Are there few that be saved?*" We say, "Well I think most of them are all right. I believe when the smoke dies down and the dust settles and eternity begins that we'll all meet in heaven."

Observe the attitude of the people of this world when a man dies. Everyone is respectable after he dies; I found that out. I've been preaching 29 years and I've preached a lot of funerals. A man dies and he gives no evidence of repentance, he gives no evidence of faith in Christ, he gives no evidence whatsoever of being regenerated or a child of God.

While he lived on this earth he lived for himself. While he lived on this earth he died like a creature without a soul and without a God. What are the comments down at the funeral home that I listen to? "Well, he's better off now." Somebody else comes along and says, "Well, he's gone to his reward."

Somebody else comes by and says, "He's with the Lord." I don't know why he would want to be with the Lord up there; he never did care anything about being with Him down

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here. I don't know why he would want to go to the Lord's house upstairs if he never would attend the Lord's house downstairs. Why is he with the Lord now?

Somebody else says, "Well, we'll meet again someday." I hope not; I hope I never meet him again. I hope that I'm not where he is. Does anybody ever die and go to hell? Not in the opinion of this world. It proves that this world believes that most people go to heaven, that the world, when it answers the question "*Are there few that be saved?*" The world says no!

Let me tell you something else; observe the attitude of the world toward ministers who insist on what the Bible says and a saving relationship with God. Now watch me here, just real carefully now, I'm going to get us where it hurts right now.

Let a preacher insist that the Bible is true when it says, men are born in sin. Let a minister insist that the Bible is true when it says, "*No man in the flesh can please God.*" Let a preacher expose false and religious professions. Let a preacher demand a regenerated church membership. Let a preacher declare who Christ is and what Christ did and why He did it. Let a preacher preach the narrow way of life.

Let a preacher stand in the pulpit and condemn sin and I'm talking about the sins of jealousy, envy, hatred, malice, dishonesty and lying, those sins which come from the heart. Let a preacher insist that if a man belongs to the church of the Lord God, that he live like a person in the kingdom of God ought to live.

Let a preacher preach the righteousness of God in Christ and what will the results be?

Well, he'll be unpopular, he'll be rejected and he'll be called a fanatic.

Who are the popular preachers? The popular preachers are those who say nothing, who disturb no one. The disturbers of Israel, just like in the days of Elijah, are rejected. The disturbers of Israel, just like in the days of Samuel, are rejected.

To be popular a preacher must be parrot, puppet, or a promoter. This shows what the world thinks about the question, "*Are there few that be saved?*"

What does the Bible say? That's my third point, what does the Bible say? "*Are there few that be saved?*" Read **Matthew chapter 7**. Listen to the Lord Jesus Christ here in the **Matthew 7:13**. Our Lord says this, "*Enter ye in at the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be which go in there at because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life and few there be that find it.*" That's what Christ said, "*Few there be that find it.*"

How was it in the days of Noah? How was it in the days of Abraham? God said, "*I'm going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.*" Abraham said: "Lord, if I can 50 righteous people down there will you spare the city? "*I will spare them.*" "Well Lord, I don't want to be presumptuous but suppose I found 40; would you spare the city? "*I'll spare them.*" "Lord, if I found 30 out of the houses, if I found 30 godly men, "*I'll spare them.*" "Ten," "*I'll spare them.*" Ten righteous men; they couldn't find five.

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How was it in the days of Elijah? Elijah said, *"I'm the only one left."* How was it in the days of the kings? David said, *"Lord, the godly man ceaseth. The faithful men fail."* How was it in the days of Isaiah? Isaiah said, *"Except the Lord of the Sabbath had left us a remnant we'd be like Sodom and Gomorrah, (not five righteous men, unless God had left us a handful)."*

How was it in the day of our Lord's visit? *"He came unto His own and His own received Him not."* They crucified Him and nailed Him to a tree. How many believers did He leave after He was here on this earth 3 ½ years?

How was it in the days of the apostles? Paul; read Paul's writings. Everywhere he went he had a riot. He expected everywhere he went to be hated, violence to surround him, and death to threaten him. On one occasion, he said, *"All men have forsaken me; only Luke is with me."*

Now then, *"Are there few that be saved?"* Well, how about our day, right now, I'm talking about 1975? Let's take the New Testament in our hands and let's weigh, every one of us, us, not everybody else, us. Let's weigh ourselves by the Word of God, what is it to be saved?

Let's be honest, let's be fair. Let's allow no one to be a Christian who does not show evidence of regeneration according to this book, evidence of a new birth, evidence of a genuine faith in Christ Jesus, evidence of a knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, evidence of a new creation, evidence of a new heart and a new nature, evidence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling person.

"Are there few that be saved, are there few that be saved?" We must not base our conclusion on sentiment or compassion or our own desires for people. We must base our conclusions on God's Word.

And I'm asking you this, how many true believers do you know, people who can say *"I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded He's able to keep that which I've committed to Him against that day?"*

How many true, dedicated, devoted, sons of God do you know who can say with Job, *"Though He slay me I'll trust Him. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord?"*

How many new creatures in Christ Jesus do you know who can say, *"Old things have passed away and all things have become new?"* I'm not what I use to be. I'm not what I ought to be. I'm not what I want to be. Thank God I'm not what I'm going to be.

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How many seekers of God do you know, men who pour over the Scriptures and sense the Word of God, who find time for the prayer closet, to cry for men in order that they might speak to men for God? How many seekers of God do you know?

How many do you know, “*Who hunger and thirst for righteousness?*” How many do you know who say; “*Lord, to whom shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life?*” How many do you know who can say, “*I’m crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live, yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me?*”

I’m not talking about just having religion; we’ve got enough of that. This world’s got religious indigestion. I’m talking about salvation. “*Are there few that be saved?*” And our Lord said, “*You strive to enter in.*”

Make it the object in your life and the goal of your soul to enter into eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ!