

HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF

MARK 9:23-24 • TV174B

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Mark 9:23-24

*“Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.
And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe;
help thou mine unbelief.”*

This is going to be a personal message. I am going to talk to you today as plainly as I can one on one. I’m going to talk to you about how a sinner is saved through faith in Christ.

There was a man who came to our Lord one time with a son (his son was very ill). He said, “Your disciples couldn’t help him, can you help him; if you can, do something for him.”

Listen to what the Master said in **Mark 9:23**; *“if you can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”* Can you believe that all things are possible to him that believeth?

“And straight way the father of the child cried out,” (and this is what appealed to me for I feel that this is the cry of my own heart, as sincerely as I know how to cry); *“Lord, I do believe, help thou mine unbelief.”*

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Now my friends, I can fully appreciate (and I want you to listen to me), will you listen? I can fully appreciate the confidence and assurance that some men have had and have today of their hope of a saving interest in Christ. I can enter into that.

David said, *“The Lord is my shepherd.”* No doubt about it; *“the Lord is my shepherd.”* Job said, *“I know that my redeemer liveth.”* That was just as dogmatic as he could express it; *“I know that my redeemer liveth.”*

The apostle Paul said this; *“I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.”* John the apostle wrote; *“we know that we have passed from death unto life.”*

I can enter into that, can you? I can understand that. If I have a hope it is in Christ, if I have a refuge at all, Christ is that refuge. If I have eternal life, I know that eternal life is in Christ. I know that it is not in religion, deeds, the law, or anything like that. Christ is my life. Christ is my hope.

I will tell you this also; I can also enter into and appreciate, seriously, (and some preachers can't but I believe I can), the apprehension, the concern, the doubts and fears of those who continually examine themselves for some evidence of eternal life. I can enter into that.

David said, *“The Lord is my shepherd,”* but he said this on another occasion; *“will the Lord cast off forever, will he be favorable no more? Is God's mercy clean gone? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?”* You might say “that's David, that's David.”

You are familiar with John Newton's great old hymn **“Amazing Grace”** aren't you?

**“Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me,**

**I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind but now I see.**

**When I've been there
Ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,**

**We've no less days
To sing God's praise
Then when we first begun.”**

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Yes, Newton wrote that and that is confidence and assurance in Christ, but he wrote this too:

**“Tis a point I long to know
Oft it gives me anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?”**

**Lord, if indeed I am thine
If thou art my son and my song
Then why do I languish and pine
And why are my winters so long?”**

Newton could enter into the confidence and to the assurance of those who had a saving interest in Christ and felt it very strongly. He could also enter into those who were apprehensive, full of concern and doubt and fear about their saving interest in Christ.

Actually, in the light of God’s holiness, His immaculate, infinite, eternal, immutable, holiness; do you know how holy God is? Even the cherubims and seraphims cover their faces in His presence. No man can look on Him and live.

Isaiah said, *“I saw the Lord high and lifted up. His train filled the temple and they cried around the throne, “holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.”* And he said, I cried; *“O woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips. I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”*

Moses came down from the mountain, from the presence of God, and his face shown in such a way that they had to cover Moses’ face so the people could look on him because he had just been in the presence of God. There was nothing like the awesome, holy, presence of God.

Do you know how holy God is? In the light of God’s holiness, in the light of my corruption and my sinfulness, in word, thought, deed, nature; (just keep naming it); in the light of the spirituality of God’s perfect law, you haven’t commenced to get started yet to see the holiness of God’s law, the spirituality of God’s law. You don’t know a thing; you haven’t touched the hem of the garment, the awesome holiness of God’s law, the spirituality of it.

Then, in light of the deceitfulness of human nature, Jeremiah just finally said; *“the heart is deceitful above everything, desperately wicked, who can know it,”* in the light of people just like you and me who have departed from the faith by the millions.

Now, in the light of God’s holiness, in the light of our corruption, in the light of God’s spiritual, holy law, in the light of the deceitfulness of human nature and in the light of so many just like us who have not endured to the end, (who have fallen away, who like the

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dog have returned to their vomit, and the sow to the water and the mire); how can any of us have any presumption or any over confidence in the matter of salvation?

I like the words of the hymn writer who said:

**“Here I raise mine Ebenezer
Hither by thy help I’m come
I hope, I hope by God’s good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.”**

You go on with your know-so salvation; you go on with your cockiness and your easy beliefs; you hold to it if you want to. You go on with this fundamentalist idea of easy believing, walk an aisle, make a decision, get baptized, put your name on the roll, and say, “I will see you in the sweet by and by in the presence of Jesus.”

My friend, let me tell you something; I’m afraid most of us don’t know who we are talking about or what we are talking about. Oh, the awesome holiness; the Bible is full of warnings to religious people who lay a presumptuous claim to God’s favor.

Three million people came out of Egypt, three million people; two of them, over 21 years of age entered the Promise Land, only two of them. Moses didn’t even enter it, only two of them did.

“Many shall say unto me in that day; Lord, have we not cast out devils in your name, preached, and done many wonderful works?” The Lord will say, “I never knew you. Take heed brethren; lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.”

Our Lord said; *“Strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, (in that day), and shall not be able.”*

We are told so many times to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith. We are told to *“give diligence to make our calling and election sure.”*

Paul, the apostle, who wrote 13 books in the New Testament, Paul himself said; *“I keep my body and bring it into subjection, lest while preaching to others, I become a castaway.”* Do you know what the word castaway is? It means reprobate.

One of the old writers said: *“They made me keeper of the vineyard and my own vineyard I didn’t keep.”*

What are you saying preacher? I am saying this, I can understand an assurance, a confidence in Christ, but I can also understand the reasons for apprehension. I can understand reasons for doubts and fears.

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The more a man knows of the awesome holiness of God and the more we are able through the Scriptures, the experience and the Holy Spirit, and look into these natures, these hearts of ours, and observe the behavior pattern that we got from our daddy, Adam, you will have more room for doubt than you ever had before. That's absolutely so!

Well, how can a man have any confidence, how can a man have any assurance that he is redeemed, that he is a child of God, that he is possessed of a good hope?

Well; I know of four ways that he can't have it. I will also try to give you some ways that he can, but here are four ways that he cannot have any assurance:

First of all: It is not by position.

Somebody might say, "Well; I know that I am saved, I am a preacher or I am a deacon, or I am an elder. I'm a Sunday school teacher and I sing in the choir." Lucifer was an angel; you haven't got that high yet.

Judas was an apostle; you haven't even gotten that high yet and Demas was a companion of the apostle Paul and you haven't reached that plateau yet. Saul was king of Israel and you haven't gotten there yet. These men all perished.

Then, there was the high priest of Israel who was a type of Jesus Christ himself who perished in unbelief. There's no security in office. There's no security in position. There's no security at all in a religious profession, no matter how high you climb, how many offices you have, or how many credentials you have; there is no security.

Then, my friend; you cannot have any assurance or confidence of a saving interest in Christ by outward obedience to the law. Now, will you listen to me? You might say, "I try to live right. I try to live by the Ten Commandments."

The rich young ruler also lived by the Ten Commandments. He came to our Lord and he said; "*Good master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?*" Our Lord, not giving him the way of righteousness at first, (actually, if a man is born without sin and keeps the law; he is righteous and he will be received by God).

What our Lord is doing is revealing to that young man his evil nature, his covetousness, his lack of love, not only for God, but for his fellow man. He was a very rich and a young man. He had plenty and his neighbors were starving.

He had clothes and his neighbors were naked. He had everything his heart or flesh could desire and people around him were going without. Christ said, "*Keep the Commandments.*" He said; "*I have kept them from my youth up.*" Christ said, "*Go sell what you have and feed the poor.*"

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Christ had revealed to him that he hadn't kept the Commandments. There is no salvation in keeping the Commandments. Saul of Tarsus said; *"Concerning the law I was blameless. But the Bible plainly declares, "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified."*

There is no assurance in morality. The most moral people who lived in the days of Jesus Christ were the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes. Our Lord called all of them, *"a generation of vipers, and hypocrites."* He called them, *"Whited sepulchers."* He called them "sons of the devil." He said, *"You are of your father the devil."*

I will tell you another way you cannot find any assurance:

Secondly: It is not in position, not in morality and not in religious duties, faithfulness in prayer, fasting, and giving.

You listen to the average preacher today and you would think that if you gave up certain sins that he names; he doesn't name inward sins, heart sins, spirit sins, and soul sins; he just names outward sins.

He says, "You give those up and join the church and start living right and start sending him 10% of your income, and start praying, and start fasting so many times a month, then you are sure to go to heaven."

But, now wait a minute! Let's see what the Lord says; he said, *"A Pharisee went to the temple to pray and he lifted his eyes to heaven and he said, Lord; I thank you that I am not like other men."*

Now, that is what religion claims today, the so-called Christian claims that he is different, he is separated from the world, and that he is not like other men. He said, "I fast more than what is required of me, twice a week. I give 10% of everything that I have. I tithe all my possessions."

"I give alms to the poor. I don't commit adultery; I'm not an extortioner; (I am a man who pays his bills). I am not unjust; (I treat people fair)." Our Lord said, *"He went home condemned."* That ought to answer your question. You cannot come up to that man's credentials.

Our Lord passed by that Pharisee and saved the Publican who was a sinful man *"who would not even lift his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, and cried; "God be merciful (be propitiated, be reconciled) to me, the sinner."*

Our Lord passed by a Sadducee and saved a woman who had been divorced five times. He passed by Simon the good man and saved the harlot. He passed by the Scribes and saved Zaacheus because he said, *"I'm not come to call you righteous (self-righteous, hypocrites), to repentance; I have come to save sinners."*

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Our Lord died for sinners. *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* He came *“to seek and to save the lost.”* You won’t find any security in your position, in the law, or in your morality or in your religious duties.

Thirdly: You are not going to find any security or assurance by studying the Bible

Now, I know that I am going to offend somebody here but that’s all right; let’s just let it fall where it will; let’s tell the truth and let God do with it what He will.

Somebody said, “Well; I read and study my Bible.” Let me tell you something friend; you can study for 6,000 years and you won’t know enough orthodoxy, you will not know as much orthodoxy as the devil knows.

Satan can quote Scripture. In fact, when he tempted our Lord on the mountain, he quoted Scripture to Him, he said; *“it is written, it is written, it is written.”* Satan is brilliant; he is a spiritual power and he is spiritual wickedness and darkness.

He uses anything at his command, anything at his disposal, his subtlety, his craftiness, his trickery, deceit, and he will even use Bible; that’s right and bring people *“strong delusions.”*

Somebody said, “He knows his Bible,” but does he know the author;” that is the key. *“You believe in one God, you do well. The devil believes and trembles.”*

Do you know who the Pharisees were? They were the most brilliant, orthodox, Bible scholars of their day. Do you know who the Sadducees and the lawyers were? Do you know who the scribes were?

The scribes were men who sat with the Scriptures all day long with a pen and wrote the Scriptures in long-hand and printed them. They knew the Scriptures and didn’t know the Lord. They knew the Scriptures.

They knew the histories, they knew the names, they knew the dates, they knew the Feast Days, they knew all about these doctrines. But, when Christ came, they didn’t even know him.

So, assurance and confidence and eternal life is not to be found in position. It is not to be found in obedience to the law, it is not to be found in religious duties, and it is not to be found in knowledge of Bible facts. Where is it to be found?

All right; let me give you five things quickly:

First of all: The salvation of God has to do with a person, not with a doctrine, and not with a law, not with an ordinance, but with a person.

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In **Romans 1** the apostle Paul said; *“Paul, a servant (bond-slave) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel, the Gospel which he promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel of God concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead.”* In **Romans 11:36**, *“For of him, through him, to him, and by him, are all things to whom be glory, both now and forever.”*

My friends, don't be taken up with the things of religion or the duties of religion or the orthodoxy of religion, and miss Him who is all things. You will miss all things if you miss Christ. Salvation is in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One day, the religious leaders came to our Lord with all of their questions about various subjects. You know, we have a lot of questions. We are more interested in the anti-Christ than we are the Christ. That's right!

We are more interested in where Cain got his wife than where Christ gets His bride. We are more interested in what's going to happen than what has happened. Christ died for sinners.

But, the religious leaders came like religious people today, and they said; *“good Master, what is the greatest law?”* He said, *“Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.”*

Well, that put them to silence. He said, *“On these two hang all the law and the prophets.”* So, another group came to him and said; *“good Master, is it lawful to pay tribute to a wicked man like Caesar? We are sons of the king in the kingdom of God.”*

“Do you think that we ought to contribute to this pagan emperor?” He said, *“Do you have a coin?”* One of them brought out a coin. He said, *“Whose inscription is on that?”* They said, *“Well, it is Caesars.”* Christ said, *“Well, you render to Caesar the things are Caesars and to God the things that are God's.”*

Another group came up to Him who didn't believe in the resurrection, it was the Sadducees, I believe. They said, *“Now, good Master; here was a woman who was married to a man; he died and she married again and he died. She married again and he died. She married five or six men; they all died.”*

Now, *“In the resurrection, who's going to be her husband?”* He said, *“Well; you do err not knowing the scriptures (the Word of God) nor the power of God. In the resurrection they are neither marrying or given in marriage.”*

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They were all put to silence and they started to leave and He said, “now hold it; I have a question.” This my friend, is a question that I put to you today. When you solve all of your naughty problems, and all your conflicting ideas, and when you get all the answers to your unanswerable questions, I have got one for you and for me too; “*What think ye of Christ,*” what a man thinks, (his thoughts); that is where business is done. What do you think, not of your church or your denomination or pastor; but what do you think of Jesus Christ; whose Son is he?

Now, that is the whole issue right there! Our Lord dealt with these men’s questions, and he put to them, the question, “*what think ye of Christ?*”

You see, the Bible, the Scriptures sets forth the fall and restoration of sinners by representation. “*In Adam we died; in Christ we are made alive. As we bore the image of the earth, earthy, we bear the image of the heavenly.*”

The first Adam, the first man, “*is of the earth, earthy. The second man is the Lord from heaven.*” That is where it is all done. “*By the disobedience of one we were made sinners. By the obedience of the other we were made righteous.*”

“*What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he? Of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*”

So, I am saying this to you, this thing of salvation, whatever it is, whatever it consists of, inheritance, eternal joy, happiness, privilege, glory, or righteousness; I am telling you what it is; it has to do with a person and that person isn’t you, it is Jesus Christ.

Now that is what it has to do with. It’s not your church or your denomination; it is Christ. God either sees you in Adam or in Christ. God sees you condemned in the first Adam and restored in the second Adam, in one or the other. That’s right; it has to do with a person.

Secondly: Watch this; I will help you if you will let me. This thing of salvation; (we have played games long enough; we have played church long enough) it is time that somebody said something to this generation that made sense, scriptural sense and spiritual sense.

We are all doing something for God and God doesn’t need anything, He said, “*If I was hungry I wouldn’t ask you. The cattle on a thousand hills are mine.*”

You need God to do something for you not you doing something for God. He doesn’t need recognition. He’s not in your hands, you are in his hands. Salvation is not on your terms it is on his terms. He said, “*I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.*”

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“It’s not of him that willeth. It’s not of him that runneth; it is God that showeth mercy.” Salvation has to do with a person, God designated, God ordained, God appointed, and God sent Jesus Christ. That is who it has to do with. It has to do with His exaltation, not yours. That’s right!

I know that believers are children of God. I know that the believer has pardon and remission of sins. I know that the believer has an inheritance in glory. I know that the believer will reign eternally, but all that he has is in Christ, and because of Christ, and through Christ.

I am going to reign because He reigns. We are not going to reign separately and apart from Christ. I am not going to reign at all except in Him, it would be a reflected glory, just like it is a reflected love.

It’s His righteousness that I have. It is His sanctification, it is His justification, it is His position that I occupy. I am seated in Him. *“We were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.”* We were loved and redeemed in Him. *“We are accepted in the beloved.”* Because Christ lives, we live, because He lives, simply because He lives.

“We are seated together with him in the heavenlies and we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” He is the heir; we are joint-heirs. We share in his glory.

The king made a feast, for what purpose, to honor his son. Now, that is what the Father has done. He is going to honor the Son. He said, *“I have given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, in heaven, in earth, and in hell.”*

“And every tongue is going to confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the father.” He will have the preeminence. He will be exalted; He will reign. If I have anything, recognition, any grace, any mercy, any position, any place in God’s kingdom, it will be because of Jesus Christ and I am going to share in His exaltation.

I don’t expect God to give me personal or particular recognition. I expect to bask in the sunlight of His glory. I expect to join that big crowd, more than the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore. I expect to join with them some day and cry, *“Worthy is the Lamb, to whom be the glory and the honor and the majesty, world without end.”* Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

That is the key to it; Christ is going to be exalted. You will be honored and exalted and glorified as you are in Christ. If you think that you are going to have some little corner or a cabin in the corner of glory, you have got another think coming.

We are not going to be a separate entity up there; we are going to be in Christ; *“that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.”*

Thirdly: Salvation has to do with faith in Christ.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life,” not faith in my faith, not faith in facts, not faith in doctrine. Listen to me; don’t be offended, saving faith is not even faith in the finished works of Christ; saving faith is faith in Christ himself.

You don’t believe a work, you believe a person. You believe Him who did the work. It’s not the cross that saves it is the Christ on the cross.

I know that we sing that song:

**“The old rugged cross
So I cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it for a crown.”**

I’m not clinging to any old cross; I won’t even wear one. I won’t even have one in our church. A cross is a shameful thing. It is an ignominious death. It is a humiliating death. It is not the cross that saved me it is the one who died on that cross.

Our faith is in a person, not in an act. All that He did is part of His redemptive work. He stood as our Surety in eternity past. He stands as our Mediator now. His death on the cross accomplished nothing without His mediating work or His surety-ship or His righteousness or His life.

It is a person; *“Abraham believed God”* before there was a cross, except in the mind of God and the purpose of God. *“Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness.”*

“It was not written for his sake alone, it was imputed to him for righteousness, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe what, on him, who raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification.”

My friend; your faith, the object of it, better not be a work or a cross, or a river, but a person, Jesus Christ.

Fourthly: Then, the salvation of God has to do with a vital living union with Christ

Listen to this Scripture: *“Christ in you; that is the hope of glory.”* Paul said, *“I travail, until Christ be formed in you, in you.”*

Where is assurance? It is in a divine person, it is in His exaltation, it’s through faith in Him and it is by a living union with Jesus Christ!