

## There is Salvation in No One Else

### Acts 4:8-12 (CSB)

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders: <sup>9</sup> If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing here before you healthy. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.” (verse 12) This is a powerful verse, an exclusive message. But what is this salvation? What does it mean to be saved?

There are a lot of things that we save. We save a file on the computer so that we don’t lose it and have to recreate it. We save that Sunday edition of the newspaper or last month’s edition of *Better Homes and Gardens* so that we can reread an article or share it with someone else or save an idea. We save leftovers because we’re going to be hungry again later and we don’t want to waste food. We save that keepsake, that memento, because I have precious memories attached to it. The hockey goalie makes a save by stopping the puck so that his team can hang on for the win. We ask our friends, our spouses, to save us from awkward conversations. A lifeguard saves a person from drowning. The minister says, “Believe in Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

In all these ways that we use the word “save,” what do they have in common? There is a sparing or a rescuing element whether it be sparing from discarding something in the trash or from mental distress or from disappointment or from suffering loss.

A man who couldn’t walk, who was born that way, who used to beg at the Temple gate called Beautiful, now walks and jumps and leaps around the Temple! How did this happen? The Jewish rulers, the elders, the high priest and his whole family put Peter and John on trial to figure out how this man was healed, or, more literally translated, how this man was “saved.”

What was this man saved from? I suppose he was saved from a life of never walking. He was saved from a life of constant begging. But is this what Peter meant when he said, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved”? (verse 12) Is Peter’s statement primarily about physical saving? Because we have to admit that many of our prayers are for physical saving. Save me from my sickness! Save me from my cancer! Save me from my Alzheimer’s, from my dementia! Save me from my degrading body that just doesn’t work like it used to or how I think it’s supposed to! Save me from the back pain! Save me from the whiplash from the car accident! Save me from all this physical pain!

Now, it’s never wrong to bring all these physical pain petitions to God. In fact, God invites us to do so and we know that no medicine and no doctor and no healing works unless God makes it work. So it is only good and right to pray to him about these things and expect him to answer. But our prayers seem so overwhelmingly stacked with physical requests. Maybe a reason why many of our prayers are focused on physical pains and ailments that we need saving from is because pain is so visible; we feel it all the time.

Sin, on the other hand, our wrongs against God and others, we tend not to feel that like we do constant physical pain. Certainly we feel it when we have used our words to wound someone, to shun them, to be mean to them, to cast them aside. We see the pain, the hurt, the disappointment, the rejection, in their face. Every time we see that person afterwards we are reminded of what we did to them. We see their face and feel the pain of our wrong, of words that we can’t take back, of a relationship we damaged. It’s my fault that I feel this way when I see them because of what I said.

In that pain of sin, we try to save ourselves from it. We apologize profusely with continuous, “I’m sorrys” to the point where the other person thinks that the words mean nothing or get mad at you for constantly apologizing. Or we get angry with the other person for being so hurt or offended by what we said. Sometimes we tell ourselves that they have no right to be upset, that we are the ones that should be upset. They should apologize to us for taking our words in such a wrong way. Other times we try to save ourselves from the pain of how we have wronged people by ignoring it – ignoring the person, ignoring what was said, ignoring the need to apologize, ignoring correcting what was wronged.

That’s how we try to save ourselves from our sins against other people, but what about when our sins are against God? That’s different, isn’t it? We don’t have to look Jesus in the face every day. We don’t have to make eye contact with him when we do

something that we know is blatantly wrong. We don't have to say the awkward and repetitive "I'm sorrys" to him because he's not right in front of us. It's easier to ignore him when we've wronged him. We don't have to look at paintings of him. We don't have to read our Bible. We don't have to come to church. And so we try to save ourselves from our wrongs against God by avoiding "looking" at him and avoiding examining ourselves and what we have done in the light of God's Word.

Could you imagine if you did have to see God face to face every day? Could you imagine living with Jesus, having him watch you whenever you did anything wrong? Would he cast a disapproving glare at you? Would he be tapping his foot and shaking his head at you incessantly? Would you burst out at him in anger because of how guilty you would feel around him? Would you scold him for him rubbing his righteousness in your face while he knows every single failure of yours, but he is Mr. Perfect? Would you try to avoid him whenever you saw him, excuse yourself to go get a cup of coffee or go on a walk? Would you shun him while he pointed out your sin but then still go up to him when you had a back ache, when you had a broken bone, when you had a fever, when the cancer prognosis made your finite nature of your life a startling reality?

Thinking about seeing Jesus face to face and how we wrong him, our unworthiness begins to overwhelm us, our guilt crushing us. I sin. I disobey. I do wrong. I am not perfect, and I have to admit that to a holy and perfect God. He sees everything I do, knows everything I think. I'm a spiritual cripple. God would never want me. I need saving, spiritually, eternally, as well as bodily.

If we ignore the wrongs we have committed against God, ignore every commandment broken, ignore our sin-sick spiritual state like the rulers and elders and high priest and his family were doing, then we can only expect fearful judgment, of being cast away from him, of having him turn away from us, never to look at us again, never to take pity on us again, never to help us again, never to heal us again, never to save us again – physically or spiritually. Rejection of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth means setting up a life that will come to complete destruction, like a building without a cornerstone, a building built on an unstable foundation that will not stand up against time or the elements.

When Peter talks about salvation before the rulers and the elders and the high priest and his family, he points to a healing, a saving, far beyond the physical one this man experienced. The crippled man was also healed spiritually, saved from the disease of sin which would eventually claim his soul. The name of Jesus not only made him walk, but Jesus' name also took his sins and guilt away. This salvation found in no one else other than the name of Jesus is not just about physical aches and pains. It's not even just about being raised back to life from the dead. It's a salvation from our sickness of sin, of our corruption, of our imperfection.

Jesus' name literally means "he saves," and he certainly does that, and more than just physically. He saves us from the crushing guilt of our imperfect and sinful lives. By his sinless life, his perfect keeping of God's laws, we are saved from ultimate destruction. As John wrote in our Second Lesson, "If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous one. He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2) Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross to take away our sins. John explained, "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) This saving from sins, being purified of all our wrongs at the name of Jesus, this is an exclusive saving that comes from no other name, from no other person, and especially not from ourselves. It has to be all on the risen Christ. He takes away our sins. He takes away our imperfection. He heals us, saves us - spiritually as well as physically.

So, let it be known to all people, Jesus makes us forever healthy – spiritually and physically. Whenever we receive physical healing, this is from God. We can see that healing, but God also heals us spiritually. We can't always see that, but it's what the name of the risen Christ does for us, what the name of the risen Christ did for that crippled man. Jesus' blood has purified us from all sin. We are made well and whole with God and before God. Jesus saving us means that we are now perfect and that we are worthy to stand in his presence because the risen Christ saved us. He is the only one that can do this. "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved." (verse 12) Amen.