

Our Incredible Salvation

by Donny Coulter

This sermon emphasizes the importance of holiness in the life of believers, focusing on laying aside relational sins like malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander. It highlights the need to hold our incredible salvation in high regard, which is kept by God's power, and to crave the Word of God to grow spiritually. The message calls for self-examination, repentance, and a commitment to live a life reflective of God's holiness and grace.

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:15, Romans 6:14, James 1:21, Colossians 3:8, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Holiness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

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Transcript

For a long time, hear about the idea of holiness. And what exactly does that mean? We started off probably a year ago or more talking about the holiness of God. And as we talked about the holiness of God, the otherness of God, how God is holy, or he is other, there is none like him, that we have been a calling in and of ourselves by God, a command to be holy even as he is holy.

And we discovered that in 1 Peter chapter one. Now I wanna take, we went from there to talk about, to prepare us for what this means to us practically. And what it means to us practically is we have such an incredible, wonderful salvation.

Now what do we do with it? How do we live that out? And we are told, we've learned through the word of God, we are to work out our own salvation, meaning that we are to work out, have work out of us what salvation has done for us. And that should be reflecting in the life that we live. We sang a song that says, I wanna live a life that's like a stream of God's love as he's given to me, and so everybody can see it.

We need to be able to live in such a way, we're called to live in such a way. We are called, remember, we're called, remember the balance and the scale, that we are called to walk worthy of the gospel, to walk worthy of the Lord, to walk worthy of God, to walk worthy of the calling by which we've been called. If you remember the picture of the balance.

And so we are called to this. This is not an optional thing for you as a believer. This is something that we are called to do, to live, a way that we are called to live.

But I wanna clarify some things before we move on, and then teach through this as we get started on the practical side, because we are now at a point where we are moving away from preparing us for the idea that God has given us a list of things that we are to stay away from as believers, that we are not to have active in our lives. And as we look at that, I want us to be extremely cautious. So I wanna lay some groundwork again today as we jump off into that practical side of this.

First Peter chapter one, verses three through 12. Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Randy read this earlier.

Who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again, or has caused us to be born again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now here's what I want you to do. As we're walking through these verses, I want you to see if you can pick up four or five things that yell at you how incredible of a salvation you have.

I want you to, as we read through these, I want you to look at them, and then we're gonna talk about them for a minute or two or 10 or 12. We're gonna talk about them for a little while, and then we're gonna see what that has to do with how we live, okay? So blessed is the God, blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible. It is an imperishable, incorruptible inheritance.

Look what it says, and it is undefiled that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. You who are kept, you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be to the praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Now what is the purpose of the trials? Purpose of the trials is to purify the gold or to purify you so that we can live to the praise, honor, and glory at Jesus's revelation. Whom having not seen you love, you haven't seen Jesus, but you love him, though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with a joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Of this salvation, now pay attention here.

Listen to what Peter says. Of this salvation, the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ was or who was in them was indicating when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which have now been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

Things which, now here's another thing. So you've got the prophets that desire, and now look what he says. Things which the angels desire to look into.

The gospel that was preached to you by someone through the leading of the Holy Spirit, the angels desire to look into it, it says. Now, let's go back and look at some of these things that are in these verses that tell

of the wonderful, immutable, incredible salvation that you have been given. First of all, look at verse three.

Blessed be the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who according to his abundant mercy, abundant is his overwhelming mercy. Now, do you understand what mercy is? We've talked about it over and over again. Mercy is not receiving what I should receive.

In other words, I deserve death and the wrath of God, but in the mercy of God he has not given me that. He has given me grace. By grace he has given me mercy, and in mercy he has given me grace.

So his abundant grace or abundant mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope. Did you know that you have a living hope? Christian who is down and out and frustrated with life, listen, look at the words that you are reading and believe them, that you have been born again unto a living hope, not only in this life, but in the life to come, and because of the life to come, we can live in hope here. So you have been born again to a living hope.

Look at the second one, I'm gonna push on. Through the resurrection of Jesus to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, that's reserved in heaven for you. You have an imperishable inheritance.

This is just a blip in eternity. Whatever you're walking through, whatever you're going through, whatever circumstances surrounded you right now, whatever sin you are fighting against, this is temporary as a child of God. This place, this time is temporary.

You have this living hope and you have an inheritance that will never be taken away. And that inheritance is imperishable, it is undefiled, it is absolutely protected by God, as we will see in verse nine, it is protected by God. It is, it will never, look what it says, it will never fade away.

What a wonderful inheritance you have. Think of the inheritance that you have been given. Now, the second one, the third one.

I wanna skip down to verse 10 of this salvation, the prophets have inquired and searched. Did you know that the salvation that you have experienced, the prophets of the Old Testament could only hear and dream and believe in something that was to come? They longed for, they longed for what you have. They longed to experience exactly what you have experienced.

Their desire, their heart's desire was to experience this, but they couldn't, they didn't because the time was not yet that Christ would come. Look what he says, indicating when he testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. They desired to see it, to experience what you have.

You have an incredible salvation. You have an immutable salvation. It's so much so of a salvation that he says here that the angels desire to look into it.

Not only do the prophets desire to have it, but the angels desire to look into it. They will never experience, the angels will never know what you know. Did you know that? They are in the presence of God, yes, and they serve God, but look, they will never experience the salvation that you have.

And it says that they desire to look into the incredible things that you have received. And all of that is kept by God. Look back at verse nine.

I'm sorry, is it verse six? Where's my reference? Oh my goodness. I'm sorry, verse five. This is what happens, that's why I should be using my Bible.

Verse five, who are kept by the word of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last day. How are you kept? How are you kept? By the power of God. Now, here's why I wanted to do this.

Because I want us to make sure that we understand, number one, how incredible of a salvation that you have. And that salvation is kept by God. Do you understand that? That because we're about to enter into talking about how we as believers struggle with sin.

And how the Bible tells us that we should put those things away. Okay? And I want to reiterate to each one of us, there's a couple of conclusions that I can make from what we've just read. Number one, our salvation is kept by the power of God and not by our ability to perform sinlessness.

I almost got an amen out of somebody. Let me read that to you again. Our salvation is kept by the power of God and not by our ability to perform some sinlessness.

Okay? There we go. So let me show you that graph again that we've been looking at. Remember the graph? All right.

Right there, that little red star. See that red star? That was the point of salvation. That was the moment that you believed.

And the moment that you believed, you received this incorruptible, imperishable salvation. That's what happened. You didn't have to earn it, you didn't have to deserve it, you didn't have to work for it, you didn't have to do anything but come to Christ to turn to Him, we call that repentance, and believe by faith and faith alone, it became yours.

That inheritance became yours. And God, it's His job to keep that inheritance for you. Do you believe that? Okay.

So we've got our first conclusion is that we have such a beautiful and wonderful, incredible salvation that is kept by God and not by me. It is not by my works, it is not by my efforts, it is kept by Him and Him alone. All of that received at that very moment of salvation.

Secondly, here's what I believe. As I read through that and I see this incredible salvation, would you do something with me? Our salvation is so absolutely amazing. Think, think with me for just a moment.

Get away from notes and everything else. Think with me for just a minute. Think of all that you have received in your salvation.

Think about where you have come from. Think about where God is taking you. Think about the incredible, immense love that God had for you.

To call your name, to say your name, and even give you grace to respond to the call by faith. Does that not deserve just some kind of praise? Some kind of, would you stand with me? I know this is gonna be weird. Would you stand with me just a minute? Can you give God a standing ovation for your salvation, your incredible salvation? Would you join with me in doing that? Amen.

Father, we worship you for such an incredible salvation. Oh my goodness. The thoughts overwhelm.

The emotions come because of a wonderful salvation that you have blessed us with. And Father, I pray that we would take that salvation and hold it in the highest regard as we think about how we are to live from day to day. I pray, Father, that you would teach us to honor that salvation on every moment that lay our life out before such a wonderful, beautiful salvation.

As we enjoy all of the bounty that we receive from you because of it, I pray that we would live it out in our lives. May your Holy Spirit direct us now as we jump into your word. I pray that he would be our teacher.

God, that he would anoint my words and anoint the words that are heard so that they can have an impact in the lives of those that are willing to listen and to do. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So the second conclusion that I have is this, that we must hold our salvation, this incredible, wonderful salvation, we must hold that salvation in the highest regard. Would you agree with that statement, that conclusion? After all, and that's just reading in 1 Peter, chapter three, I mean, chapter one, verses three through 12. That's just reading in those nine verses that we've been, if you get into the rich word of God and see all the other things that come along with your salvation, we have been given such an incredible salvation that we must hold it in the highest regard we cannot put it away, set it aside, and walk through life and be busy with this life and forget that we have a salvation until we come back to church on Sunday morning.

God, forgive us in North America for becoming so busy and so engulfed with everything around us that we have forgotten how great of salvation we have. May he remind us of such. Therefore, if we have such a great salvation, if that salvation is kept by God and we have such an incredible salvation that we need to hold it in the highest regard, look back now at 1 Peter, chapter one, verses 13 to 16.

Take you back to where we began this several months ago. Based on these two conclusions, Dan, our salvation is kept by God and we must hold our salvation in the highest regard. He says, therefore, gird up the loins of your mind.

Remember, we talked about the battlefield of the mind. We spent a lot of time speaking of the battlefield of the mind. Be sober and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lust, not allowing your former lust to mold and shape who you are, but he says, but as he who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all of your conduct. Because it is written, be holy for I am holy. Now, you remember if you go back, we talked about this, that we have been given a command to be separate even as God is separate, to be holy as God is holy.

Now, look at chapter two. That was your introduction. Look at chapter two.

Chapter two and verse one. Therefore, there's another therefore, and we're gonna discover why it's there. Therefore, laying aside.

Sound familiar? Couple of weeks ago, we were talking about Hebrews chapter 12, verse one and two, and it said, lay aside all the weights and the sin which so easily besets us or entangles us. And run with endurance the race that is set before you. Therefore, he says, verse two, or verse one, first Peter chapter two.

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking as newborn babes desire the sincere or the pure milk of the word. That you may grow thereby if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Now, our first attempt here to look at a practical approach to our holiness is to look at what does the word of God tell us that we should leave aside or lay aside? Here we go.

Because it was in the context of be holy for I am holy, we are coming back to it here in first Peter. First Peter chapter two, verse one. Therefore, laying aside all of these things.

If he's saying therefore, there's something that he's pointing back to. Obviously, he's pointing back to chapter one, and I believe he's pointing back to chapter one and verse three and verse 22. Verse three talks about this being born again unto a living hope.

It is your salvation that he's pointing back to. Verse 22 talks about how that purified soul, if you look at verse 22 in chapter one, it says since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit in sincere love of the brethren. Now, I believe that those are connected.

It is our salvation and our salvation reflects in the way that we love our brothers and sisters, okay? And then he begins, therefore, in chapter two, he begins this therefore, lay aside in the context of your salvation and in the context of loving your brothers, he then goes about giving us these list of relational sins that we need to lay aside, okay? If you look at those words, all of those things that we're looking at are relational sins, okay? Now, he says, therefore, laying aside. Before we get into what we're gonna lay aside, remember the word laying aside means to take, it refers to clothing, and here it's referring to a dirty clothing. So we're taking this dirty clothing off.

I wanted to have, I just did not have time to work on it this week. I was gonna come in here with a dirty suit on with holes in it and everything else, and then show what it means to take it off and put it aside, and I'm sorry I didn't do that. You know I like those illustrations.

But it means to take it off and put it aside, to lay it aside or to put aside. It means to take it away from its normal location, which is on me or in me or by me, and putting it away, and then, if you remember, we talked about, it's a leaving it there. It's not about, you can't hold a string to it and put it along with you.

We're supposed to lay it aside, put it down, and leave it. All right? And did you know that you can do that? Did you know, believer, that you can do that? As a Christian, you can do that. If you don't believe me, just read Romans six for a little while.

Go back and read Romans six. Because Romans six says to me and to you that sin is no longer your master. Malice does not have to be your master.

Envy does not have to be your master. That you are no longer a slave to sin. That sin no longer has power over you.

That sin, you no longer have to obey it in your life. Did you know that? If you don't know that, you need to go and study and read Romans chapter six. And many more places.

But start with Romans six. Because one of the beautiful things about the salvation that you've been given and that you must hold in high regard that God is keeping for you is that he's given you power over sin. Before you became a follower of Jesus, you had to do what sin told you to do.

Now you do not have to do that anymore. So when Peter, realizing this, knowing this great truth, is saying to those who are reading this and to us this morning, therefore, because of your salvation and in light of the love of the brothers, lay aside because sin no longer has power over you. You can stop these things.

You can lay them aside through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. It's not about, and we've talked about it before, it's not about mustering enough strength. I'm not gonna do that anymore.

I'm gonna be an overcomer. It's not about that. It's about faith in the power of the Holy Spirit who resides in you.

That's where your power comes from. That's where you plug your cord in if you will remember the illustration. That's where the power comes from.

So now, we've got this laid out. What are we to lay aside? What things are we to lay aside? Look at it. Based on these truths, put aside the dirty clothing of, number one, is malice.

Malice. Malice is also translated wickedness. Malice is the idea of harboring evil thoughts for someone.

Malice has with it the idea of antagonism. It has with it the idea that I'm holding this grudge against you. Malice says, I want revenge on you.

Or at least some evil to come on you. Now I know, when I talk about that, some of you are going, I don't have a struggle with malice. And maybe you don't.

And I pray that you've got to a place in your life where you don't. But if you do, malice is, I don't like her. I don't like him.

And I hope that he falls and breaks his foot when he walks out the door. I hope his business fails because of what he did to me. You see where it's going? It's as simple as having a grudge, holding onto a grudge that you've held onto for years in the same church, in the same congregation, sitting on one side or the other.

It's about holding onto a grudge. And look what he says. He says, laying aside all malice, there is no exception clause here.

Once again, he leaves us with no exception clause. This is all of your malice, every ounce of malice that you may have towards someone else. What about the abuser? What about the ex? What about that one neighbor? Malice.

Laying aside all malice. Look at the second one, laying aside all deceit or guile. This one has the idea of being crafty, being slick.

It has the idea, the word actually comes from the idea of a fish hook with bait on it. A baited fish hook. I'm gonna fool you.

Look, this is so good. Take a bite. I think Peter probably knew a little bit about this word just simply because he was a fisherman.

I don't know how much he used hooks to fish with, but I think he probably knew a little bit about this. It means deception. It means, it refers to a trap or a snare or bait.

It, here's what it means in practical terms to us. It says that I'm gonna do whatever I can to gain an advantage over you. I'm gonna do what it takes to gain advantage over you and I'm gonna do that by deception.

I'm gonna use it to get even. That's guile, craftiness. It's a crafty tricks that we're up to.

Do you have guile in your heart? Well, all deceit, all malice will lead to hypocrisy. Hypocrisy means that we are presenting as something that we are not. That you and I are standing up giving something to somebody else that we really are not.

It has with it the idea of wearing of a mask. It was used to describe theater in the Greek language and they would oftentimes, they would put a mask on so that they could seal their own identity so that they could play another role. It literally means to judge under.

I am judging you under a mask of liking you. Let me see if I can describe what this one might be. Oh my, you look so good in that yellow dress.

It matches your yellow teeth. Sorry, I don't know where that came from. What? I guess.

Do you get the idea of hypocrisy? When I was preaching in Brockett, oh my goodness, I used to do some crazy stuff. And just so you know, the crazy illustrations have always been a part of my preaching and I had a mask, a Batman mask that my little kids owned. It was like for a two year old.

And I got big ears and a big head and I had that mask under here. And so I dipped down like this and I put that mask on and I stood up with this Batman mask. It looked like this and the little things pointing up.

And I preached for 10 minutes with that mask on. But that's the idea that he's bringing forward in hypocrisy is that I'm saying something to you but this is what I'm really feeling. I like your yellow dress.

It matches your yellow teeth. You see what I mean? Hypocrisy says, I really, I love you sister. I love you brother.

And on the inside, boy, if they only knew how I felt. Hypocrisy brings with it envy. And envy is a pain that we feel.

It is an internal pain that we feel. It's something that comes inside of us when we see the excellence or the happiness of those around us. I am hurt by their success.

Oh, they play the guitar so good. Why can't I play like that? They get to get up front. Why can't I get up front? It's a pain that is felt when we see others excelling or experiencing happiness.

They have a joy in the Lord and there is a pain in us that is offended and hurt and I want it. And it means, listen, it's not just a wanting something that what another person has, it's also resenting the person for having it. Look at the joy they have in the Lord.

I hate their guts. In envy, you cannot be satisfied with what you have. You can never be satisfied with what you have and therefore, you crave someone else's.

Envy. The last one is slander, all slander. Slander is evil speaking, evil speech, evil report.

It means to speak evil against or to speak against someone with evil. That means that fancy little prayer request that you made for somebody out loud, oh, could you pray for so-and-so? Because, and then you go into depth of why they are needing your prayers. Or you just come right out and say it, you know that Donny, if you really knew, if you really knew how bad he was, if you knew what I knew and then you go about telling everybody what you know.

You wouldn't listen to him as your preacher if you knew what I knew. That's slander. Now we've laid that out and I have run out of time.

There is your negative duty, okay? Your negative duty. Now what I mean by that, that is something that we do that we put aside these negative things, okay? Putting aside the negative things but look at verse two. Now we're gonna look at the positive duty is that I crave the word of God as newborn babes desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby.

If so be, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. So we have the negative side is putting aside those negative things and we have the positive duty that we have and that is to crave after the word of God. How many of you would describe your day to day life as a craving for the word of God as a baby craves his mother's milk? I can tell you that there are often times that my craving is not that deep.

But I wanna make a connection. Without spending a lot of time there, you know how we feel about the authority of the word of God and the inerrancy of the word of God and how we need to stand on that. We believe that and we stand on it.

And that's what we ought to seek and what we ought to crave. But I want you to see this idea of a vertical and horizontal relationships. Your horizontal relationships like it or not, the horizontal relationships that you have here affect the vertical relationship that you have with God.

In other words, the way that you treat one another is a direct, has a direct impact on your relationship with God. Do you believe that? If I have malice and envy and I slander my neighbor or my brother or sister in the church, can I have a great fellowship with God? If I am consistently living with those relational sins in my life, do you understand now why Peter's saying put these aside? Put these aside and desire the sincere milk of the word of God. The milk is here and we're desiring that milk of the word of God.

And if we are eating junk food all the time down here on the horizontal relationships, are you ever gonna want the real food? Let me ask you this. If I invited you over for steak, all right, I'm gonna grill a nice big steak on the grill and a nice, tender, juicy, expensive steak. And I've got my little sauces and stuff I've got on there and it's good, you can ask my wife.

And I'm gonna make you a nice steak and I've invited you over and you go by McDonald's on the way to my house and you pick up two big quarter pounders and supersize the meal and a big drink and you eat that before you come to my house, how willing are you going to be to eat my eight ounce steak? Well, it depends on who you are. But for the average person, your appetite has been ruined. Are you catching me? Your appetite has been ruined.

When we are living consistently with those relational sins that Peter just laid out for us, your appetite and craving for the Word of God, for God Himself and in relationship with Him is going to be hindered. Would you agree? It has to be. Those relationships, that's why, we could take you to Colossians chapter three.

We could take you to other verses that say almost identically the same kind of sins and how they affect our life. Look at James chapter one, verse 21. Therefore, laying aside all filthiness and overflow or abundance of wickedness, guess what that word there is? Also translated malice.

That's the word for malice. Now, let's put that in there. Therefore, laying aside all filthiness and overflow of malice or wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls.

Do you see the connection? There is a do this, receive this. You get it? There is a lay aside, receive the pure milk of the Word. There is a lay aside the filthiness and the malice and receive with meekness the engrafted or implanted Word of God.

Do you see the connection? That if we are living in these relational sins, yes, you can feel some of those things about people and get away with it and not think about it offending God much at all, but I want you to know, as we've said before, it is offensive to God when you have malice in your heart towards somebody. It's offensive to God when you have envy. It's offensive to God.

Do we understand that? And if we have such an incredible, great salvation that we've been given, such a beautiful salvation that we are to hold in high regard, should we not then begin to do whatever it takes to relieve ourselves through the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, working on laying aside those relational sins that can adversely affect our relationship with God? Don't you think we should do that? Not only that, does it affect the relationship with God, but when we hold those relational sins, malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy, slander, when we hold these, we are not showing a proper picture of Christ and the salvation that you have received. You are not preaching the gospel through the presence of the Holy Spirit, are you? So, any of these hit home for you? Any of these grab you? Even with somebody maybe sitting in this same room right now, would you with me begin to examine our lives because we have such an incredible salvation that we want to honor it, can we examine our lives and begin to set aside as the Holy Spirit reveals to set aside those things and to walk away from them and leave them behind so that we can be holy as He is holy? Will you do it? Do you wanna do it? Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word.

Thank you for your Holy Spirit who is our teacher. I pray that He would, oh God, may He take all of the rambling thoughts and words and use them to pinpoint as a laser focus on our lives and our hearts. God, we ought to be so enthralled and so joyful of our salvation, joy inexpressible that God, that even these relational sins that we kind of harbor close to ourselves, Lord, they ought to be offensive to us as well.

God, I pray that you would help us. May your Holy Spirit reveal where we may allow these sins to come. And God, you didn't leave an exception in there, it's all, and it means people in church, it means people outside of church, it means the people that have hurt us, deeply hurt us, that we are not to have these sins in our hearts against them.

That's tough because some of us have come from a lot of hurt. I pray, Father, that you would help us break free from the hurt. And Lord, may we live a life that is reflective of you.

God, we're gonna trust you to do that Holy Spirit work in us and through us, we ask in Jesus' name, amen. I'm gonna ask Cliff if he would come and close us in the last song.

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