

If You Died Today

by Manley Beasley

Manley Beasley challenges listeners to reflect on their true salvation and readiness for eternity.

Duration: 31:27

Scripture: Romans 10:9

Topics: "Death"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing that Jesus has committed himself to us and that we are truly saved. He encourages both Christians and non-believers to come forward and seek a relationship with Jesus. The preacher shares a personal story about an elderly preacher whose sinful daughter attended a meeting and eventually came to the altar in repentance, which brought great joy to the preacher. The sermon also includes a powerful testimony of the preacher's mother on her deathbed, where she invited Jesus to take her home to heaven, providing a glimpse of the closeness to heaven experienced in that moment.

Transcript

Back some years ago, I was deeply troubled about a deep need that I was seeing in the church. And I asked the Lord to speak to me about the issue. And you know, when the Lord speaks to us a lot of times, we just do not recognize Him at first.

He comes in such a supernatural, natural way. And we do not, you know, realize it's God. Somehow we just expect God to do things in such a supernatural, unnatural way, that when He comes in a natural way, that's supernatural, we just miss Him.

Completely, we just miss Him. And I was seeing a real problem in the church about this matter of salvation. My first three or four years as a Christian, I thought that there was probably two Bibles, two different types of Christians.

Because when I met Jesus, my life was so drastically changed. And I got in the church, and I found people loving and enjoying and delighting in the things that God just saved me from. And I was so ignorant.

I said, maybe there's another way, you know, another class of Christians. Maybe there's classes in this bit. Maybe there's two Bibles somewhere, and you can get in on it a different way than I got in on it.

But it really confused me. And I went to a Baptist college, and it confused me more. And I'm very serious about that, I'm not lying.

And I'd find the preachers sipping on their cocktails and sucking on their cigarettes, and I just got saved from all that junk. And dancing, and oh man, I just couldn't believe it. So I really was confused.

Then I became a pastor, and I would invite people to come to Jesus, and man, they would come down the aisles just broken all to pieces. And then six months later, they'd be right back in their sin. So I had a real question.

I asked the Lord to really speak to my heart. I wanted to know the truth. And I wanted to know the truth because I wanted to preach the truth, and then I wanted to know the truth because I wanted to lead people to the truth.

And then I wanted to know the truth because my wife and I had children, and I wanted them to know the truth, and I didn't want them to be misled. So I said, Lord, show me, show me What's going on here? And I need to know the truth, and I know that the truth will set us free. And so I was called one night by my wife to come to the house, to my mother's house, which was really across the street from my house, and she said, Your mother's dying.

And I got there as soon as possible, and a doctor, a doctor friend was there, a friend of the family, and he said, Your mother's too sick to move. She'll die any moment. I sat down by her side, and I heard her talk to Jesus, and I heard her invite Jesus to take her home to heaven.

And I want you to know something, friend, that was like heaven to be in that room. I've never been closer to heaven in my life. Even when I stood at death's door about six different times, I never was closer to heaven than I was that night.

And I saw a saint go to the door of death and face death for the first time. I walked away from that experience. By the way, my mother just, God touched her, and she's still living, and she is.

But two weeks after that experience, I was called to the bedside of a dying man, and he said, Preacher, I've been in the church for 44 years, and I've been in every office a man can hold in a church. And he said, It's come time to die. And he said, I'm afraid.

And I mean, he was afraid. He was afraid. Now, I'm not talking about not wanting to die.

That wasn't the point. No one wants to die. But he was afraid.

And when you walked in the room, you could tell that Satan had come. Satan had come for his prey. And I mean, it was a fearful experience.

I dealt with that man and did everything I could to get him saved, but I never got him saved. He just couldn't get through. Two weeks after that, I was in a church like this church.

My heart was breaking for the church members because I had such a burden for the lost church members. And the Lord began to show me something, and I saw something that I'd been looking for. And that was this, that the tragedy of Christendom today is that people have religion to live by, but it's not going to do when it comes time to die.

But now Jesus came to prepare men to die. And when men get prepared to die, then they are ready to live. But they are never ready to live till they are first ready to die.

And I changed my preaching from that day to this one. I don't ask people if they're Christians anymore. I ask them if they died today, where would they spend eternity? Because I know a man that's saved and knows Jesus is ready.

He's prepared to die. He may not be prepared for any other thing, but he's prepared to die. And I'd like to ask you a serious, serious question this morning.

And the more you cooperate in the message, the faster I can preach. And I'd like to ask you this question. If today, by accident or some other way, if your heart locked on you, you died, if today you died, tell me something.

Where would you spend eternity if you died today? Where would you go? Now, you know what I have told me, all kinds of things, of course. But a lot of people tell me, well, Brother Manley, if I died today, I would go to heaven. Well, I'd like to ask you another question.

How do you know you'd go to heaven? Well, you can't know. No, the Bible says you can know. And I'd like to know today, if you died today, where would you spend eternity? Heaven.

Well, how do you know you would go to heaven? Here's what I have told to me. Some people say, I'd go to heaven, Preacher, because I'm living the best I can. Do you think that would get a person to heaven? The Bible says that living the best you can would make a Pharisee out of you, but it wouldn't make a Christian out of you.

Other people tell me, well, Brother Manley, if I died today, I'd go to heaven because I have been baptized. I've been baptized. But baptism doesn't save you, does it? Some people say, well, Brother Manley, I'd go to heaven.

Now, listen to this. Brother Manley, I'd go to heaven because I have been born again. They say, I'd go to heaven because I've been born again.

You know what? I've checked into that being born again, and I found out about 30-something percent of the American people say they've been born again. And you know what I found out about being born again? People believe that being born again is everything from trying your best to being baptized to taking the sacraments to belonging to the church or having some kind of emotional experience. I'd just like to simply know, how do you know you've been born again? The Bible says you must be born again to get to heaven.

I was asking a deacon one time. I said, deacon, I said, where would you spend eternity if you died right now? He said, heaven. I said, how do you know? He said, I've been born again.

I knew that deacon for 17 years had lived like the devil, and I questioned seriously whether he'd been born again. He said, Brother Manley, don't you believe in backsliding? Yes, but not permanent. That man had no scriptural grounds for the fact he was saved, but I didn't tell him that.

I just was nice enough to not be too pointed, but I was pointed enough. I said, I said, how do you know you've been born again? He said, Brother Manley, I've had an experience with Jesus. I said, you've had

an experience with Jesus? He said, yes, sir.

I said, how did you know you have an experience with Jesus? I wanted to know the basis of his experience. He was saying an experience was being born again. So I want to know the basis of his experience.

I said, did you see Jesus? He said, no. I said, did you smell him? He said, no. I said, did you taste him? He said, no.

I said, well, did you hear him? He said, no. I said, well, how do you know you met Jesus? He said, I felt him. I said, what do you mean you felt Jesus? He said, well, I had been to church, and I went out in the chicken yard after the service, and said, I had an experience out there in that chicken yard like I've never had before or never had since.

And I said, do you mean to tell me you are basing your eternal salvation upon something you experience? I said, did you know the devil can give you an experience? The devil will let you have an experience. The devil can give you anything but Jesus. And you know what happened to that deacon? He got it straight.

And it was good, because a year later, he fell in a furnace in a steel mill and burned to death. I didn't know that, boy, when I was talking to him. I was a little embarrassed, because I scrutinized him so heavily.

But after I found out the destiny of his life within a year, I was glad that I was serious with him. And I'm being serious with you this morning. People say, Brother Manly, I've had an experience with Jesus.

I know I'm saved. Others say, well, preacher, I'll tell you what. The Bible doesn't lie, and I've done what the Bible said to do.

The Bible says, call on the name of the Lord, and thou shalt be saved. You know, the Bible doesn't lie. But the Bible tells us that we are liars.

The heart's deceitful and desperately wicked, and who can know it? People say, well, all the time, I'm saved because I did what the Bible said to do, and I was sincere when I did it. And I prayed this prayer. It's up on what I've done that they're planning their salvation.

Other people tell me, well, I know I'm saved because of this. I have believed on Jesus. I've walked down the aisle and confessed that I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that I'm a sinner, and I'm trusting Jesus.

And I believe I'm saved because I'm trusting Jesus. Now, I want to look at this. I was really, you know, I have really looked at this thing of salvation.

And I want to make it very honest, simple this morning, but I want to be very honest with you. In the Baptist Church, we have placed so much emphasis on commitment to Jesus that we have avoided one of the basic factors in salvation. You say, what do you mean? When I say it, you'll see it.

If you're an honest person, you'll see it. I'm going to say it in a story, in an illustration. I was in North Alabama in a meeting, and I was blessed by having an elderly preacher that lived in the community to attend every night.

And he was just an old country bumpkin. But brother, I want you to know, that man walked with God, and he impressed me. He wasn't a pastor, he was just a visitor every night.

And I tell you, he just won my heart. And he had a daughter that was so full of sin, she was living in wickedness. I mean wickedness when I say wickedness.

And she started attending the meeting. And one night, one night, brother, she broke out of that seat and headed to the altar, and just fell on that altar and began to cry. And I'll tell you what, I got happy.

I got excited. I mean, I really did, because I just, I got excited for that father, and I got excited for that girl. I got excited.

She was the daughter of old age, you know. And I'll tell you, he loved her, but he couldn't reach her. But here she was, weeping at the altar.

But I looked at him, and I noticed he didn't get as excited as I thought he should. Then he noticed I noticed he didn't get as excited as I thought he should. So the invitation, all this was over, and she'd gone through every step just beautifully.

Just beautifully, she'd gone through every step. And he came down to me after the smoke rolled away, and he said, preacher, I noticed that you noticed I didn't get as excited as you thought I should. I said, that's right.

I would have thought you'd been shouting up and down these aisles. He said, well, I'll tell you. He said, I'll tell you when I'm going to shout.

He said, I'm going to shout when I see that God has committed himself to her and made her his young'un. He said, I have seen her make decisions before. I have seen her make a commitment before.

But he said, I'm going to shout when I see that Jesus has made her his young'un. And I was reminded of this portion of scripture. Now, when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the peace day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did.

Many believed. That means, beloved, they confessed, they expressed, they committed. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.

Beloved, salvation, listen to me carefully, is not you making a commitment to Jesus. Salvation is you coming to Jesus by grace through faith in such a level of repentance and faith that a holy God commits himself to you. And you may have had an experience, and you may call it being born again.

You may have prayed the sinner's prayer, walked down the aisle and prayed the sinner's prayer. You may have walked down and said you believe on the Lord. But beloved, if that experience, if that prayer, if that commitment did not leave you inhabited by the eternal God of glory, you have no hope for heaven this morning.

No hope at all. No hope at all. You say, well, preacher, how can I know that Jesus has committed himself to me? How can I know that I'm really saved? I'm going to give you three statements.

I'm not going to preach 10 hours, so don't get uncomfortable. I hate to preach to people that are here and there at the same time. And so I'll conclude within the basic time structure of your educated conscience.

OK, you understand what I mean? The first reason, and at the same time, if I just go straight to these myself and not lead you verse by verse into it, the first way you can know that Jesus has committed himself to you is this. Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. All things are passed away and behold, all things become new.

That means that when Jesus Christ comes into your person, you are a wicked person up to this point. And when Jesus Christ comes into you, that means God lives in you. You receive a new nature.

That means you have a nature for God. You have a nature that resists, resents and rebels against sin. That does not mean you can't sin anymore, but it does mean, my dear friends, when you do sin, you cannot enjoy it, delight in it or take pleasure in it.

It means, my dear friends, anything that you know to be sin upsets you. Anything that you know to be sin upsets you. Another reason you can know that Jesus has committed himself to you, the Bible says, if you be without chastisement, wherefore, all are for takers, then are you illegitimate and not sons.

What does that mean? If Jesus Christ has committed himself to you as a person, my dear friends, when you go out of that experience of meeting Jesus as your Lord and your Savior, from that moment on, God chastens you. That means God chastens you. You know what that means? It means he corrects you.

He enlarges you. It means, my dear friends, when you sin, God deals with you about that sin till you get right with God and get right with your fellow man. It means, my dear friends, that God is constantly maturing you as a child of God.

And if you be without this, if God is not doing this constantly in your life, you can mark it down. You're not a child of the Son of God. There's another reason it's sort of mystical, but it needs to be said, and I'm not going to be able to dwell on it this morning.

But it says, the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we're children of God. When a person is really saved by the grace of God, they have an intuitive, the word intuitive, intuition, is the nearest word we can come to in the human vocabulary to express how God knows anything. How does God, does God, let me approach it this way, does God have to think to know? Does he have to think to know? No, he just knows.

How does he know? The nearest way to say it, he intuitively knows. When you are a child of God and you are right with God, you know that you know. His spirit bears witness with your spirit, and you don't know how you know, you just simply know you know.

You just know that you're a child of God. And knowing that you're a child of God, knowing that you know Jesus, I believe is the biggest blessing God has for man. Knowing God, knowing that you know, that you know God and the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

Let me just sum this all up by saying this, if you can commit a sin, you know it's sin and you can commit it, enjoy it, delight in it, and take pleasure in it, and God does not correct you, you are not a child of God. If you can go out here and you know it's sin to desecrate the Lord's day, and you can go out here and desecrate the Lord's day, lay out and go see grandmas and grandpas, fish and hunt and all that junk, just

desecrate God's day and you know it's sin. And you can delight in it and take pleasure, and God doesn't correct you, my dear friend, there's no evidence that you know the Lord.

If you can know that it's wrong sin, it's wrong or it's sin, to criticize, slander, carry tales, find fault, gossip, and you can do that and with pleasure, and God does not correct you, friend, there's no indication whatsoever you know Jesus. If you can go out here and know it's sin to sip on your cocktails, slip off these parties, drink your gallon jugs, and my dear friends, you know that's sin and take pleasure in it and enjoy it, and God doesn't correct you, I guarantee you there's no evidence whatsoever in you that you're saved. You can just go right on down the line.

Now this morning, if you died this morning, where would you spend eternity? Jesus said, you'll not come to me that you might receive life. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Would you bow your heads with me, please? As our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, the invitation is being prepared, the musicians are playing.

I want to ask you a question. If you died today, where would you spend eternity? Preacher, I'd spend it in heaven. How do you know? He said, I'd know.

If you know, I know you're not ashamed of it. Would you slip your hand up if you know, if you really know? Thank you so much. If you could not raise your hand and say, Brother Manley, I know.

I wonder, friend, are you interested in knowing? I wonder if you're interested in knowing. Preacher, I'd like to know that I'm really saved. Pray for me.

Would you slip up your hand? Would you slip it up all over this building? Just raise it up. Preacher, I'd like to know. Thank you so much.

Just others. Preacher, I'd like to know in my heart that I know Jesus. Others, just slip your hand up.

Say, pray for me. Let me ask you this question. You say, Brother Manley, I'm confident that I'm saved.

But I'm confident I'm not right with God. You've talked to my heart this morning. I know that the Lord has committed himself to me, but I'm not sure that I'm right with Jesus.

Please pray for me. Would you slip your hand up all over this building? Many, many hands. Preacher, preacher, pray for me.

Others, would you slip your hand up? Would you come this morning? Would you come and let Jesus Christ have his way in your life? It may be that you're here and God wants you in this church. This is a place he wants you. You come.

You feel free to come. Would you all stand with me, please, for a word of prayer, an invitation? Father and Lord, we thank you today that you're able to help us. Because you have made all provisions for us, enable us to be on the basis of the cross of Jesus.

On the word of God, standing today, liberate this service that people may be set free. Save lost people today. In Jesus' name we pray.

As you continue to pray in the auditorium, would you continue to pray? The choir is going to continue to begin to sing. Would you come? Would you slip out of that seat? Dear Christian friend, let me encourage

you to slip out of that seat and come and get your heart right with God. Let me encourage you, dear lost friend, to come to Jesus.

Dear friend that's in doubt today, let me encourage you to come. Would you come?

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