

Matthew 22:34-40
The Principles of Salvation Part 2 ~ The Presence of Love
also Ezekiel 36:25-27

We are continuing in Matthew chapter 22 verses 34 through 40. We took this section last time, but we moved from this section into another section in Ezekiel, which we will do again today, as we are studying The Three Principles of Salvation. That is the title of this series - last week, this week, and next week, The Principles of Salvation.

It is on page 6 of your study guide. If you are following along with the study guide it is on page 6, Matthew 22:34-40.

Last week we studied The Promise of Love from Matthew 22. And this week we were going to study The Presence of Love. We are studying about the Lord's final week in Jerusalem and His public ministry. Back in chapter 21 we studied how that the Lord rode into Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday as we know it, riding on a donkey. Since then there have been people seeking confrontation between Jesus and others, mainly the religious leaders.

So in our text for today, and we saw last week, the Pharisees which is a sect of the Jews, confronted Jesus through one of their lawyers or one of their scribes. He says in verse 36, notice Matthew chapter 22 verse 36 he says, "**Teacher, what is the great commandment in the Law?**" Jesus answered in verses 37-39, "**You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like to it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' In these two commandments the whole Law and Prophets are hanging.**"

The Lord's answer to the lawyer's question, *What is the great commandment in the Law?* Jesus quoted Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 5, "**You shall love the Lord your God.**" I emphasized to you last week this is not a command in the original language. It is a future tense verb, which most translations adhere to, because it is important to understand the principles of salvation. "**You shall love the Lord your God in your whole heart, and in your whole soul, and in your whole mind.' The second is like unto it,**" and He quotes Leviticus chapter 19 verse 18, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**" You *shall* love, not you *should* love, or you *ought* to love. And it is not even a command, but, "**You shall love the Lord your God, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself,**" it is a promise that is given.

And notice in the text itself the lawyer asked him for the great command of the law. And Jesus said, "This is the first and great commandment," verse 38. Verse 40, "**In these two commandments the whole Law and the Prophets are hanging.**" So Jesus and the lawyer called them *commandments*. But they in their original form, both here and the quote from the Old Testament, it is in a future tense form. It is a promise. Understand these two principles. The Lord commands His people: *you will love* not you *should*, but you *will* love the Lord your God. A promise given to us as a statement of fact that has commanded by God to be fulfilled by God's Spirit. That is what this whole study for three weeks is all about. When God gives the promise and He says, "It is a command, you will love," He is placing His Spirit in the position to fulfill that command. It is not up to us.

It is important because these technical points are the expression of The Principles of Salvation in Ezekiel 36:25-27. On page 7 in your study guide is Ezekiel 36:25-27. We took verse 25 and highlighted that last week, though we read all three.

Principle number one was The Purification of Sins. We saw last week that Ezekiel uses symbolic language used by the priests in their anointing of cleansing in the Old Testament. But we also saw last week in the New Testament that the purification is based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ. In Luke chapter 22 verse 20 and Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 that we studied last week. This pronouncement of purification is upon those who are in Christ according to the new covenant that is in God's promise and God's law.

Principle number two, The Proclamation of Salvation. This is the principle for today. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will give within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will give My Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in My statutes.** See, that is why it is a promise that is commanded. God says, "I am going to put My Spirit within you, and I am going to cause you to keep My judgments and keep My commandments." It will not be human effort that God accepts. It is the spiritual ministry of God's Spirit that has been placed within the individual life that produces God's work. God produces His own work, and we are to trust Him. But first there must be a presence of the Spirit of God in a person's life before we can have the promises of God fulfilled.

Notice in this second principle in Ezekiel 36:26 The Proclamation of Salvation, two things:

1) Who made the promise? It is God. **I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will give within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and will give to you a heart of flesh.** All symbolic language used metaphorically for a transformation process that takes place in a person's life. It is a new creation. It is a work of God that God produces within the person's life. So God is the one who does the work. God is the one who produces the spirit within a man.

2) But notice the second thing what He is going to do. He is going to give you a new heart. **And a new spirit I will give within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** In other words, "I am going to take the insensitive heart of stone that is in your body and give you a new heart, a sensitive heart."

Many people think that Christianity or salvation is a religious experience. But it is not religious, it is a spiritual experience. And many believe that because they believe the truth about Jesus, or they believe what the Bible says about Jesus that they are Christians, and they are saved. And that is not the requirement presented in Scripture. There is a transformation, a change that needs to take place in a person's heart.

James addresses this in James chapter 2 verse 19, **You believe that God is one; you do well: the demons also believe, and tremble.** Demons believe the truth about Jesus. Demons

tremble at the truth about Jesus and judgment which is to come, but it does not save them, but they believe it.

We are told in John chapter 2 verses 23 and 24 that **there is a day when Jesus was in Jerusalem in the Passover, in the feast day, that many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He was doing. But Jesus did not entrust himself unto them because He knew all men.** They believed Him because of the miracles, but that was not enough.

In John chapter 8 verses 30 and 31, **Jesus was speaking these words, and many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which had believed on him, "If you should continue in My word, then are you My genuine disciples."** So He says, "You believe because of My words, but you are genuine if you continue in My Word. If you leave off from My Word, you are not genuine." So it is not belief only. It is not just a religious belief. In fact, it is not a religious belief; it is a spiritual belief in Christ that receives Him as Savior. A major change must take place. This inner transformation must take place in a person's life, not just religious belief.

In John chapter 3 verse 3, Jesus speaking to Nicodemus, **Jesus says to him, "Truly, truly I say unto you, except someone be born again, he is not able to see the kingdom of God."** Jesus speaking to a religious leader and telling him you cannot enter the kingdom of God without a spiritual birth. You must be born again. The word again, literally *ἀνωθεν* (anōthen) in Greek, literally means *to be born from above*. You must experience a spiritual birth or else you cannot see the kingdom of heaven.

Peter in I Peter chapter 1 verse 3 said, **Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His great mercy He has begotten us** - that is literally the word for *to be born again, to be born anew, a new birth*. **He has begotten us again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** He has given us a new birth through Christ and His resurrection. So it is called *being born again*. It is called *a new birth*.

In Titus chapter 3 verse 5, Paul says to Titus, **Not out of works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration** (that literally means *to have a new nature*) **by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.** *Renewing* literally means *inner transformation*. But here is our term *washing* again that we saw last week in Ezekiel 36 verse 25. It is a cleansing. When God's Spirit comes into a person that person is cleansed, purified, and given a new birth, and a new inner nature, and a renewing of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit renews the person's mind, transforms their mind to be sensitive to the things of Christ. So not just *belief*, but you need to become a new creation, a new birth must take place.

In John chapter 1 verses 12 and 13 John says, **But as many as received Him** (that is, received Christ) **to them He gave the authority to become the sons of God, even to the ones believing on His name: Which were born, not out of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but born of God.** So as many as received Christ.

And notice that the word is *received*. I am a stickler on this point, because in the last ten years the word *accept* has been adopted as the normal. *If you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior*. The Bible never says that, it says, "Receive Him." And that is literally what it means. **But as many as received Him, to them God gave them the authority to become children of God, who are born** (who experienced a spiritual birth, John 1:13), **not out of bloods** (meaning *bloodline*, you cannot be born out of a bloodline and be saved), **nor of the will of the flesh**, (it is not a personal human will), **nor of the will of man**, (in Greek that is the word *husband*, the head of the family cannot pronounce somebody a Christian just because he says so), **but rather someone who has been born of God**. It must be a spiritual birth. And by this spiritual birth a person becomes a new creation with a new nature.

II Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 Paul says, **Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things have become new**. Complete change.

Paul said in Galatians chapter 6 verse 15, **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is effective, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation**. So religious ritual has no effect. It means nothing. What matters is a new creation. Have you become a new person? Has there been a change with Christ coming in, receiving Christ, and been born of His Spirit? Has this change taken place because that is the only thing that stands in line with God as far as salvation goes and being right with Him.

So in light of all this, we are told in II Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5, **Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith**. Are you in the faith? The word *examine* means *to put to the test*. Put yourselves to the test, whether you are in the faith. **Prove your own selves. Do you not know your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you** (emphasis *in you*) **except you be rejected**. So if Jesus Christ is not in you, you are rejected from salvation. You are not saved. It is Christ in you.

In fact Paul says, "This is a great mystery." And by the way, it is still a mystery today. A lot of the things I am telling you this morning you will hardly hear in church or in Bible study, because it is a mystery. People do not understand it.

Paul said in Colossians chapter 1 verses 26-27, **Even the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now was made manifest to His saints: To whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory**. That is the mystery. That is the mystery that has been hidden. It is hidden to those who are religious, to those who rely on their own goodness for their salvation. It is Christ in you that is the only hope of glory. That is the good news that is preached and that is taught.

We see this evidence in Romans chapter 5 verse 5 it talks about **hope not making ashamed; because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us**. Here is the love of God, the love of God is in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. So God gives His Spirit within when a person receives Christ.

I John chapter 3 verse 24, **And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him** (that is, in God), **and God in him. And in this we know that He dwells in us, through the Spirit which He has given to us.** I can examine myself and know that I belong to Christ, and that I am in Christ and Christ is in me by the Spirit whom He has given to live and reside within.

I John chapter 4 verse 13, **In this we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given to us of His Spirit.** So it is evidence, fruit, proof that Christ lives in us by the Spirit that He has given us. Just like we just saw in Ezekiel 36:26. God said, **I will give you a new heart and I will put My Spirit within you. And when I put My Spirit within you, He will cause you to keep My judgments and keep My commandments.**

In Romans 8:9 Paul reassured the believers, **But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.** If you do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling within, you do not belong to Christ. It is not a religious activity. It is a spiritual experience where we receive Christ to be saved.

In summary, I John chapter 5 verse 12, **The one having the Son has life; and the one not having the Son of God does not have life.** If you have Christ, if you have experienced this spiritual birth, this spiritual experience, then you have life. And if you have Christ then you have life. If you do not have Christ, you do not have life. Again, this is an inner change that takes place, an inner transformation that takes place.

So then the question arises, then how does one be saved? In Romans chapter 10 verses 12 to 13 it says, **For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord of all is rich unto all those that call upon Him. For everyone, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** Whether Jew or Greek, it makes no difference. A person can call upon the Lord to save them and the Lord promises to save them. It is not a ritual; you cannot just say a ritual prayer. But call upon Him to save you and place His Spirit within you. But know this, that when He places His Spirit within you, He is taking over. He will own you. You will belong to Christ. You will also be going to heaven. Know that you are asking for this transformation to take place. **Whoever, (and I translated it literally), and everyone whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.** That is a promise. So it is realizing what salvation is, realizing what must take place and what God will do. And then coming to Him and calling upon Him to save you, and to give you this new birth, this inner transformation, this change that takes place in a person's life.

Let's close with prayer.