

CALVARY CHURCH LIFE



SALVATION

Knowing
Christ and
New Life in
Him



SALVATION

The gospel is the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ to rescue sinners, restore us to himself, and give us new life.

Because the world needs Jesus, at Calvary Community Church, everything begins with the gospel. The gospel is this: God saves sinners by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, rose again, and gives new life to all who trust in him.

Our mission is stated as: “We come together to know Christ so we can go and make him known.” We believe knowing Christ begins with recognizing our need for him, trusting in his finished work, and receiving the salvation God freely gives through faith. Salvation is not something we achieve. Salvation is God’s gracious work, accomplished through Christ and received by faith in him.

What Is Salvation?

Salvation is God’s gracious rescue of sinners from the power and penalty of sin and restoration to a right relationship with him through Jesus Christ. Scripture teaches: every person has sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God and leaves us unable to save ourselves through good works, religious activity, or personal effort. But God, because of his great love for us, sent his Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus lived the perfect life we could never live, died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sin, and rose from the dead in victory. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness, reconciliation with God, new life, and the hope of eternal life. Salvation is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ—not by our works.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Why Do We Need Salvation?

We Have All Sinned

Scripture is clear: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23

Sin is more than individual mistakes or failures. Sin is our rebellion against God and our failure to live according to his holy character and purposes. Every person has sinned. No amount of good behavior can erase our guilt or make us righteous before a holy God.

Sin Brings Death

Sin brings separation from God and ultimately death (Romans 6:23). Our greatest need is not simply to become better people. We need to be rescued and reconciled to God.

We Cannot Save Ourselves

We cannot earn salvation through good works, religious practices, morality, church attendance, baptism, communion, generosity, or personal effort. Salvation is God's gift (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a church service. In the foreground, the backs of several people's heads are visible as they sit in pews, looking towards the front of the church. In the background, a large, ornate stained glass window is visible, featuring a central figure, likely Jesus, surrounded by intricate designs and other figures. The lighting is soft, typical of a church interior.

*For it is by grace you
have been saved, through
faith—and this is not from
yourselves, it is the gift of
God— 9not by works, so that
no one can boast.*

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

What Has God Done to Save Us?

Salvation is God's gracious work from beginning to end. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each play a distinct and essential role in God's saving work. Together, the triune God accomplishes our salvation.

The FATHER forgives, justifies, and adopts

God the Father is the gracious initiator of our salvation and sends his Son to accomplish our redemption. He is holy and just, yet rich in mercy and love. He does for us what we could never do for ourselves. Through Christ, the Father forgives our sin, declares us righteous, and welcomes us into his family.

- **Forgives** - God the Father forgives our sins as we repent and place our trust in Christ alone (Ephesians 1:17, 4:32). We can do nothing to earn his forgiveness. Because Jesus paid the penalty for sin, God graciously forgives those who turn to him in repentance and trust in Christ
- **Justifies** - Through faith in Christ, God declares sinners righteous before him. God declares us righteous because of what Christ has accomplished for us, not because of anything we have accomplished ourselves (Romans 3:21-26).
- **Adopts** - God does more than forgive us. At salvation, he welcomes us into his family as his children. Those who belong to Christ become heirs of God's promises and are described as co-heirs with Christ (John 1:12-13).

JESUS CHRIST redeems, reconciles, and atones

Jesus Christ is at the center of the gospel. He was fully God and fully human. He lived without sin, willingly gave his life on the cross, and rose from the dead. His resurrection demonstrates his victory over sin and death and gives believers the hope of new and eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20-22).

- **Redeems** - God the Son redeems (buys back) sinners from the bondage of sin. Jesus paid the full price we could never pay and frees us from the power and penalty of sin (Titus 2:14).
- **Reconciles** - Through Christ, those who were once separated from God are brought near. God not only forgives our sin; he reconciles us to himself and brings us into a restored relationship with him (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).
- **Atones** - God the Son is our atoning sacrifice. He lived a perfect and sinless life. His death satisfied the righteous judgment of God and atoned for the sin of those who believe (1 John 2:2).

The HOLY SPIRIT regenerates, seals, and indwells

The Holy Spirit applies the saving work of Christ to the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit gives us new spiritual life, takes up residence within us, marks us as belonging to God, and empowers us to follow Christ.

- **Regenerates** - Apart from Christ, we are spiritually dead and unable to make ourselves alive to God. The Holy Spirit brings new spiritual life through the work of regeneration (Titus 3:3-7).
- **Seals** - The Holy Spirit seals believers as belonging to God. This seal identifies us as God's own and points to the certainty of his promise and the inheritance that awaits us (Ephesians 1:13-14).
- **Baptizes into the Body of Christ** - The Holy Spirit places every believer into the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the Church, consisting of all people who have placed their trust in Christ alone for their salvation. This is a spiritual baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- **Indwells** - The Holy Spirit takes up residence in the life of every believer. Our bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit because God himself lives within us (1 Corinthians 6:19). God saves us, God gives us new life, and God empowers us to live that new life for his glory.

How Do We Respond to the Gospel?

Although salvation is entirely the gracious work of God, Scripture calls us to respond to the gospel through repentance and faith.

- **Repentance** - Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. It involves a change of heart and direction—a willingness to surrender our lives to God and turn from the ways that oppose him. Jesus calls people to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). Repentance does not mean that we become perfect before coming to Christ. It means that we recognize our sin, turn toward God, and desire to follow him.
- **Faith** - Faith means trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is more than agreeing that certain facts about Jesus are true. Biblical faith involves placing our confidence in Christ and relying upon his finished work for our salvation (Acts 16:31). We do not place our faith in our own goodness. We place our faith in Jesus.
- **Confession** - Scripture calls us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9. Confession acknowledges our need for God and openly identifies Jesus as Lord.

What Happens When We Trust in Christ?

Through repentance and faith in the gospel, God gives us new life in Christ—bringing forgiveness, reconciliation, adoption, the indwelling and sealing of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Christ's body, and eternal life.

What Does It Mean to Follow Jesus?

Salvation is not simply a decision we made in the past. It begins a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus calls his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him (Luke 9:23). As disciples of Jesus, we grow through:

- God's Word
- Prayer
- Worship
- Obedience
- The work of the Holy Spirit
- Fellowship with other believers
- Serving others
- Sharing the gospel

We do not follow Jesus in order to become saved. We follow Jesus because we have been saved. Our obedience is a response to God's grace. Love obeys.

Salvation and Good Works

Good works do not save us; they are the fruit of salvation, not its root. We do not serve to earn God's love—we serve because he has already loved and saved us. As the Holy Spirit works in us, our lives increasingly reflect the character of Christ (Ephesians 2:8–10).

What About Baptism, Communion, and Church Membership?

Baptism and communion are important acts of obedience and worship, but neither contributes to our salvation.

- **Baptism** - At salvation, the Holy Spirit places every believer into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). This spiritual baptism is distinct from believer's baptism in water, which is a public act of obedience identifying the believer with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Believer's baptism celebrates the salvation God has already accomplished. See *Believer's Baptism: Following Christ in Obedience*.
- **Communion** - Communion remembers and proclaims the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and celebrates our unity as his people. Communion does not save us or add to Christ's finished work. See *Communion: Remembering Christ Together*.
- **Church Membership** - Membership does not save us either. It is an intentional commitment to belong to a local church family, grow as a disciple, serve others, and participate in the mission of making Christ known. See *Local Church Membership: Belonging, Growing, and Serving Together*.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Is salvation something I can earn?

No. Salvation is God's gift of grace received through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Do I have to become a better person before coming to Jesus?

No. We come to Jesus recognizing our need for him. He forgives us and begins transforming our lives.

Is baptism necessary for salvation?

No. Baptism is an important act of obedience, but salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Is church membership necessary for salvation?

No. Membership is a commitment to a local church, not a requirement for receiving salvation.

What if I continue to struggle with sin?

The Christian life is a lifelong journey of growth. Believers will still struggle with sin, but we are called to confess our sin, receive God's grace, pursue repentance, and continue following Christ (1 John 1:9). Salvation does not mean we never fail. It means we belong to Christ and are being transformed by his grace.

Can I know that I am saved?

Our confidence rests ultimately in God's promise and Christ's finished work—not in our ability to perform perfectly. Jesus promises eternal life to those who believe in him (John 6:47). As we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit works in us and produces evidence of new life.

We can therefore have confidence in God's faithfulness while continuing to examine our lives and pursue faithful obedience.

SUMMARY

Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ.

- We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- All people have sinned and need God's saving grace.
- We cannot save ourselves through good works, morality, or religious activity.
- Jesus lived a sinless life, died for our sins, and rose again in victory.
- Through faith in Christ, we receive forgiveness, reconciliation, new life, and eternal life.
- The Holy Spirit gives us new life, seals us as belonging to God, places us into the body of Christ, lives within us, and empowers us to follow Christ.
- Repentance and faith are our response to God's gracious invitation.
- Good works are the fruit of salvation, not the means of earning it.
- Salvation brings us into relationship with God and into the family of believers.
- Baptism, communion, and church membership are responses to God's grace, not means of earning salvation.
- Salvation begins a lifelong journey of following Jesus, becoming more like him, and making him known.

Our Hope

The gospel is the good news that God saves sinners through Jesus Christ. Through him, we are forgiven, reconciled to God, given new life, and welcomed into his family. Because Jesus died and rose again, we have a living hope beyond this life. Salvation begins a new life with Christ—growing in faith, becoming like him, serving others, and making him known. We look forward with hope to Christ's return, when sin and death are defeated and all things are made new.

