



Abundant Life Christian School

MS/HS Chapel: Sin, Expectations, & Salvation with Pastor Tom Flaherty

This is a summary of the key points of Pastor Tom's talk his chapel for middle & high school students from April 30, 2020.

This week, Pastor Tom is addressing three (3) student questions.

I. **God's Part and Our Part in Salvation**

- a. God-loving, Bible-believing, sincere Christians have different ways of looking at salvation and I don't know what your church teaches, so I will give both views.
In essentials unity; in non-essentials, liberty.
Essentials: Both believe that "the wages of sin is death and that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Both believe Jesus was God in the flesh and He lived a perfect life, so that He could die in our place. Both believe that salvation comes freely to us, not because of our works, but because of God's grace. Our part in accepting that gift differs.
- b. Reformed theology – Martin Luther and John Calvin – a portion of the evangelical church embraces this today.
 - i. Before the world began God predestined some to be saved – they are the elect. They were created for salvation, so these are the ones Jesus died for and they will be saved because God wills it and whatever God wills He gets. We are saved entirely by the grace of God. You believe because God willed that you believe.
 - ii. Romans 9:14-16: "What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."^[a] It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy."
*He doesn't answer to us.
 - iii. Reading your Bible, going to church, and bearing fruit doesn't save you, it is just evidence that you are saved and part of the elect.
 - iv. You can't lose your salvation because you didn't do anything to attain it. If you fall away, it only means you were never really saved.
 - v. God's glory is most expressed by His sovereignty.
- c. Armenian theology - Jacob Arminius and John Wesley – the other portion of evangelicals of which I am part.
 - i. God predestined an event – Jesus would die for our sins and whoever believes would be saved and whoever rejects Him would be condemned. God's foreknowledge is not causative. He has the DVR before the game was played. Once the game is played, you can't change its outcome yet the players were free when they played. The difference is that God doesn't live in time, so He can see the beginning from the end – He has the DVR before the game is played.
*We can stumble or worship!

- ii. Many are called but few are chosen. Matt. 22:14 *John 6:44 includes everyone; John 12:32-33; John 1:9 – Jesus comes knocking at everyone’s door because He loves everyone and died for everyone.
*Depravity still exists so man cannot choose God – Pelagian heresy.
- iii. Romans 9:30-33: “What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹ but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. ³² Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”
*Paul’s point is that God decides who shows mercy, not you. He could do it any way He wanted to and you couldn’t argue – He doesn’t have to do it by law, He chose to give mercy in Christ. The whole section ends in chapter 11 where Paul gives God’s intent: “For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all” (Romans 11:32 NIV).
- iv. God is sovereign in that He set up the conditions, but the center of His glory is His goodness. *Moses
- d. Two ways to see salvation - on a ship where two people have gone overboard and are passed out in the water.
 - i. In one, the captain sovereignly chooses one and sends someone into the water with a life preserver. This person gets the one who would drown up on the life preserver and wakes them up. The captain pulls them in and they are saved. The other one drowns because they weren’t elected.
 - ii. In the other, the captain throws a life preserver to both and a person to go rescue them. The one sent wakes them up, so they know they are drowning and then offers them the life preserver. If they resist this offer, he lets them go under and come back up and again tells them they’re drowning and that he was sent to offer this life preserver. If they continue to say no, he lets them drown. If he wants the life preserver, the one sent puts it under him and stays with him while the captain pulls him into the boat.
 - iii. The captain is Jesus, the life preserver is salvation, and the person sent to bring it is the Holy Spirit. We’re the ones drowning - in sin.

II. How Does One Know If One is Saved and How Do You Stay Saved?

- a. The Holy Spirit will witness to you that you are saved.
“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Romans 8:16 NIV).
- b. Salvation is a relationship, not a prayer or an event. It starts with a prayer, but some don’t have a time they can point to; they just know they love Jesus.
John 14:6; 1 John 5:11-13 To stay saved is to maintain relationship. If you have a relationship with Jesus when you die or He returns, you will be saved.
- c. God wants us to know it’s secure because of His grace.
“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all^[a]; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29 NIV).
*Children – whether they’re good or bad, they are still my children.
- d. Can I still walk away from Jesus?
 - i. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked

up, thrown into the fire and burned" (John 15:5-6 NIV).

*A third of the angels; Saul – the first king; Judas – we can fall away from grace.

ii. My experience with erasers. Rev. 3:5

III. What Does God Expect from Us When He Knows that We are Sinful?

a. That we will honor the blood of Jesus and the Spirit of grace by not changing the gospel to a license for sin. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

Weakness is understood; rebellion isn't. Matthew 7:21-23

Don't deceive yourself by changing God and the gospel to your own desires.

b. That we will confess our sins when convicted. (1 John 1:9)

c. That we will grow in union with Him – one day at a time. He just wants to walk with us.

*Enoch