

I. Introduction

- A. I have good news for you today.
- B. You could ask a person a thousand things, but the one thing, the most important thing, the pivotal thing is this. What have you done with Jesus Christ? Who is he to you? Is he or is he not your Savior? Are you saved?
- C. Because having the answer to that question is like having the picture on the box top of a puzzle of 10,000 pieces.
- D. So we have been talking about salvation. In fact last week if you were here, you noticed that I gave an invitation for salvation. Normally I plan for this, but this one was not planned. But I'm so glad I follow the Lord's promptings. Last week we saw 40 people make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior. And if that was you, mark that day down as the date of your salvation.
- E. In all of the struggles and battles and warfare of life, having salvation is your biggest and strongest and most fundamental defense.

II. Series Intro

- A. Welcome to part 13 in our series, called the Christian in Complete Armor. The Bible give us six pieces of spiritual armor, plus prayer. So far we have studied the first four pieces of armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the boots of the gospel, and the shield of faith. Last time we started the fifth piece of armor:
 - 1. *"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."* (Ephesians 6:17)
- B. We're going to finish on that same piece of armor today, so I invite you to think with me on the topic:
 - 1. **The Helmet of Salvation, part 2**
- C. Where does a helmet go? On your head.
- D. Last time we introduced the idea of mental health. I began to show you how much the Bible talks about mental and emotional health. This is part of the spiritual battle we are in.
- E. The devil wants you discouraged. The devil wants you frustrated. The devil wants you angry, addicted, depressed, and, if he can, suicidal.
- F. Anything but happy and contented and at rest in the gospel of the grace of God. Because...
 - 1. The ultimate dysfunction is feeling unloved.
 - 2. The ultimate salvation is the love of God poured out in your heart... which fixes every other love.
 - a) And this is exactly where the devil is fighting you.
- G. So when St Paul here tells you wear your helmet, it is because the helmet of salvation is God's way of safeguarding your mental health.
- H. I have six reasons for this, and I gave you four of them last time. I'm going to review them quickly, because I want you to see how this all fits together.

III. Six Ways Salvation Safeguards Your Mental Health

- A. Review
 - 1. **Salvation delivers from guilt and shame.**
 - a) **In theology this is called ATONEMENT, and it means that God took away your sins when Jesus died on the cross.**
 - 2. **Salvation removes the drive toward punishment.**
 - a) **In theology this is called EXPIATION. It means that God punished Christ for your sins instead of punishing you.**
 - 3. **Salvation ends the need to prove your worth.**
 - a) **In theology, this is called JUSTIFICATION and it means that God declares you perfectly, eternally RIGHTEOUS when you believe in Jesus.**
 - 4. **Salvation bestows God's love and grace.**
 - a) **In theology, this is called PROPITIATION, and it means that God's justice is so satisfied with you, so God's love must be lavished on you.**
- B. I hope that you're getting something here. Two things can be true at the same time.
 - 1. **One is that the teachings of Jesus are the most psychologically healthy truths ever given on planet earth.** Whether you're looking for peace, for self-acceptance, for relationships, for forgiveness, power, purpose, success, sobriety, love any other aspect of mental health, there is nothing that even comes close to biblical Christianity.
 - 2. **The second that is also true is that the psychological brilliance of Jesus is super-glued to the deep theology of Jesus and his Cross.** You can't separate them. In fact, the deeper you go into the *theology* the stronger you will be in your *psychology* when the devil comes to hit you in the head.
 - 3. The helmet of salvation is THEOLOGY in your head. This is why I am giving you a crash course in SOTERIOLOGY — the theology of salvation — over these two messages.
 - a) And just to be clear, I'm not trying to psychologize our theology. I'm trying to theologize our psychology by setting it on the grace of Christ, through the Cross of Christ, in opposition to the demonic onslaught of the dark side.
 - (1) I want to throw something in here really quick. I made a **chart** of all the things I've been teaching you. If we have your email address, we're going to send this out to you this week.
 - (2) If you're not getting emails from Pathway, or if your email has changed, and you want this, please fill out that get connected card in your seat back or scan the QR code on your guide today so you don't miss it.
- C. So, we've got two more ways that salvation safeguards your mental health. And to get into that, let me mash in another story.

IV. Hosea and Gomer

- A. *"When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: "Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry, For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the LORD." So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son."* (Hosea 1:2-3)
- B. Well this is weird. God has a prophet—a religious spokesperson. His name is Hosea. And God tells him to marry a prostitute.

- C. So Hosea marries Gomer the prostitute. They have a son. Then they have a daughter. Then they have another son. And God is using all this to help Hosea teach the people about his grace, and about the high price of rejecting his grace. Happy couple. Grace personified. A couple of years.
 - D. But then, Gomer goes back to her old ways. She abandons Hosea and her kids. She actually gets back into the old business... and spirals downward super fast. This is the high price of sin. This is the high price of misusing grace and redefining grace.
 1. I've got to tell you something. When grace is in your life, and you use it to say it's okay to sin, there's something more wrong with your soul than you realize.
 2. Sin is moral defiance against God with destructive psychological effects.
 3. You can't just wave the grace flag and think it makes sin not sin and not defiant and not destructive. Sin is a sewer and you're drowning, and grace is Jesus diving in to save you... *so that you're not stuck in the sewer*. But, to quote Peter quoting proverbs, as a dog returns to its vomit, so Gomer returned to her sewer.
 4. Have you met anyone who does that?
 - E. Gomer sinks so low, she literally descends into slavery. Soon, she finds herself in shackles, literally in the slave market with a for sale sign around her neck.
 - F. So the devil has her right where he wants her. Swamped by her own sin. Broken and ruined. Unloved, turned into an object, and being sold to the highest bidder.
 - G. We'll come back to Gomer. Because I said I have good news.
 - H. So let's see the last two...
- V. Ways Salvation Safeguards Your Mental Health
- A. **Salvation reanimates your dead spiritual core, reconnecting you to God and his blessings.**
 1. Sin broke you.
 2. Salvation fixed you.
 3. The main break is something called spiritual death.
 4. Every person is born into this world in a state of spiritual death. That means that our very being is damaged. We are less than we were made to be — body, soul, spirit, mind, will, emotions.
 5. Everything is twisted. Your body carries pain and will die. Your soul is messed up. Your mind is mostly shut down. Your will is weak where it should be strong and strong where it should be weak. Your emotions can turn dark and bitter. Your spirit is shriveled up and dead.
 6. People say that spiritual death means separation from God. That is the most common definition, and I think it falls way short of what spiritual death really means.
 - a) *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others."* (Ephesians 2:1-3)
 7. Spiritual death is a coin with two sides: a personal side and a judicial side.
 - a) The personal side is a dead and unresponsive spirit and a corruption of your very being.
 - b) The legal side of spiritual death is condemnation from the justice of God. It's not just that a person is separated from God, they're actually under the wrath of God!
 8. This is spiritual death.
 9. Listen, I'm looking at you. There is something so broken inside you that, before God Almighty, you are dead in trespasses and sins. You are under the influence of the demons and devil, you are entrapped again and again by the lusts of the flesh (like Gomer was), you are guilty of running a godless agenda, and you are, BY NATURE, a child of wrath...
 10. We're the Walking Dead out there...
 11. And don't take it personally, because you're just like everybody else... that's how the verse ends.
 - a) This makes everybody and their brother mentally messed up which makes the devil mentally psyched up!
 12. You are alive physically but dead spiritually.
 13. And so in comes Jesus into this situation. He knows all about this. He knows all about you. And knowing you, he loves you. So he says...
 - a) *"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"* (John 3:7)
 14. Born once, die twice. Born twice, die once.
 - a) Born once... physically but not spiritually... die twice... physical death and eternal death forever.
 - b) Born twice... born physically and then born again spiritually, meaning you're saved... then you die once... you'll die physically, but that's just transportation to heaven!
 15. But in that very moment you are saved... one week ago for 40 of you... when you put your faith in Jesus, you were born again.
 16. And in that moment, God swooped by his Holy Spirit. and he went down to your circuit breakers to turn back on every switch that had been turned off by the Fall.
 17. He took that dead old spirit of yours and made it alive again. For the first time since the day you were born, you are now both physically alive AND spiritually alive too.
 - a) **In theology this is called REGENERATION, and it means that God makes your spirit alive and reactivates all the God-given powers your soul was created with.**
 18. This is spiritual rebirth. This is what it means to be born again. Re... Generated.
 - a) *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing [cleansing power] of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,"* (Titus 3:5)

19. Regeneration is a radical change. There is an absolute radical difference between saved and not saved. No one is “kind-of” born. You’re either been born or not. There are no shades of gray here. It’s an on off switch.
20. Because if you are saved, you’ve been born again. Regeneration is immediate. It is complete. It is perfect. It is supernatural.
21. You have a new nature. You are a new creation. Regeneration creates a brand new spiritual species.
22. You are a different person on the day after you are saved than you were on the day before.
 - a) In comes the devil to say, you’re all on your own. But since you’re born again, you can say, I have a Father who is with me, my God who is for me, and my help is only a prayer away.
 - b) The devil will say, people don’t change. Can a leopard change its spots? But the born-again person can say, You’re wrong, devil because you are looking at a New Creation, and I am being transformed day by day... just by learning more and more about Jesus.
 - c) The devil whispers, It’s not real, you know. It’s only make-believe. But regeneration makes you say, Oh, you poor devil, I have God’s Word in my mind and God’s witness in my heart that I am his child, and you’ll never take that away.
 - d) The devil will shout, Ha! Look at you! You sinned again. And your heart will say, I know. I shouldn’t have. But I am still the righteousness of God in Christ, and it’s totally different now. Because I’m beginning to love God more than my sins, because the one who has been forgiven much loves much.
 - e) And when the devil says, you can’t, the born-again person can shout, I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength!
23. Are you saved?
24. Good. Then wear your helmet.

B. Salvation sets you free from spiritual bondage to every dark force and unleashes the truest self God created you to be.

1. God made you for dominion. God made you with authority and power. God made you to be free. There should be no one over you, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, but the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. But sin wrecked all of that. Sin enslaved you. And I’m not talking about this or that sin that you committed. I’m talking about sin in the world, sin in the garden of Eden, resulting in Sin invading the deepest guts of your soul, like a nasty parasite, sucking everything out of you all the time. In theology it is called Original Sin, and because of this...
 - a) Sin is your master... Addiction is your master... Dysfunction is your master... Mental brokenness is your master... Satan is your master... Death is your master... Hell is your master.
3. When the Bible talks about slavery and about bondage, it’s using something literal to talk about something spiritual. Something emotional.
4. The equivalent today of slavery and bondage would be the words, addiction, and dysfunction.
 - a) *“Jesus answered them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.’”* (John 8:34)
 - b) *“That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* (Hebrews 2:14-15)
5. Sins are not just random acts of badness. Sins are an existential crisis of being stuck in captivity to an evil master.
6. We need someone to set us free. And guess who that someone is!

C. Let’s go back to Hosea and Gomer

1. She has run around one time too many, and is now sold into slavery. She is humiliate. She is embarrassed. Never in a million years did she think this would happen to her.
2. Now, she is literally a slave, and literally for sale in the slave market.
 - a) She is an emblem of every person who isn’t saved.
3. Deformed sexuality ruled her life.
4. All she could do was to wait for the next master to buy her and use her. Surrounded by filth, the smell of death, the weeping of slaves, the clanking of chains, the smell of despair and death.
5. But then she heard that last sound she could ever imagine.
6. She heard a familiar voice — a voice from her past. “Gomer,” he said. There was a tenderness there she hadn’t heard for years.
7. Gomer looked up, and saw. There, standing ankle deep in the filth of the slave market was the man who loved her without limits. The man she cheated on, and ran away from.
8. There stood her own husband, Hosea — the prophet, the man of God, at the slave’s auction block.
9. Hosea looked at the handler. “Name your price,” he said.
10. Without flinching, Hosea paid that price in full. He bought his wife back to himself, at great cost.
11. This is what he wrote:
 - a) *Then the LORD said to me, “Go and get your wife again. Bring her back to you and love her, even though she loves adultery... So I bought her back for fifteen pieces of silver and about five bushels of barley and a measure of wine.”* (Hosea 3:1, 2, NLT)
12. Here’s the most amazing thing of that moment. He did not buy her as a slave.
 - a) He did not buy her as a servant. He did not even buy her as a wife. He bought her as a person. He paid the price, not to own her, but to set her free.
 - (1) **In the Bible, this called REDEMPTION, and it means that Jesus paid the price to buy us and to set us free from every dark force that would dominate our lives, once for all.**
13. I am talking about a helmet of Salvation which is forged in the fires of redemption.
14. Redemption means to buy a slave and set them free. You were shackled in that slave market too. You were a slave to sin, a slave to death, a slave to Satan, and a slave to hell, and slave to the flesh (your own fallen nature).
15. But Jesus set you free from all of it.

16. The important thing to know is he didn't set you free by POWER only, but by PAYMENT. That is what redeem means. Redemption means to pay a price. It means to buy back. This wasn't an arm wrestling match, but a satisfaction of penalty and debt. This was the payment, the ransom, the total elimination of any debt to any dominating force.
17. What was the payment price? The payment price was the shed blood of Jesus in his sacrificial death on the Cross.
 - a) *"knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* (1 Peter 1:18-19)
18. Can you even begin to imagine that kind of love?
19. Jesus Christ did not buy you to boss you around: he bought you to set you free.
20. He bought you to restore your dominion and your royal right to be a royal, happy, free, beloved, empowered, beautiful, accepted, radiant, blessed, provided for, secure, heir of God and joint heir with Jesus.
21. Fly and be free.
 - a) Has your married fallen into a trap? Jesus wants to redeem your marriage, and buy both you and your partner back to himself and each other.
 - b) Has your financial life collapsed far from God? The redeeming power of the blood of Christ can apply even there — and lift you out of whatever financial prison you have made for yourself.
 - c) Maybe you need sexual redemption: deliverance from the emotional prison of exploitation, or porn, or uncommitted sexual expression, or social contagion, or any twisted distortion of God's design for sex.
 - d) Maybe your heart is a tangle mess of addictions to drugs, or alcohol, or gambling, or the cruel master called narcissism.
 - e) Or maybe your job is a jungle, and you feel trapped by golden handcuffs in a den of vipers.
 - (1) Whatever jail holds you, Jesus Christ has purchased you out of it. And if nothing else, at least your heart, your mind, and your emotions are FREE TO SOAR.
22. Christian, say it... I AM REDEEMED.
 - a) There is no price too high for him.
 - b) There is no prison too strong for him.
 - c) There is no hole too deep for him.
 - d) There is no demon too strong for him.
23. You are free.
 - a) You are not a sinner... you are a SAINT and you struggle with sin.
 - b) You are not an ADDICT... you are a CHRISTIAN who struggles with addiction.
 - c) You are not a VICTIM... you are MORE THAN CONQUEROR and, yes, you have your battles... but REDEMPTION IS THE DEEPEST TRUTH ABOUT YOU.
24. There's a difference between the thing you are and the things you struggle with.
25. The thing you are is REDEEMED... and the things you struggle with will fade away if you only do one thing...
26. You've got to differentiate.
27. Always name your IDENTITY by your redemption, and label your BEHAVIORS by what you do.
28. Why? Why should you do that? Because the Bible tells you to take the helmet of salvation to shield you from all the attacks of Satan.

VI. Conclusion

- A. How do you do that?
- B. How do you wear your helmet? That's the cliffhanger I left you with last time.
- C. Don't be underwhelmed, but...
 1. **You put on the helmet of salvation, like every other piece of armor, by declaring FAITH in Jesus and his finished work on the Cross... IN THE VERY MOMENT of your struggle.**
- D. So...
 1. The bottle tugs at you, or the porn tempts you... or the demons wave your addictions in front of your face... in that moment you declare, I AM REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB and you have no power over me... And so you have the faith to walk (or run) away
 2. The weakness surfaces, and you feel inadequate... in that moment you declare, I AM BORN AGAIN, REGENERATED, and a new creation in Christ, so I can do all things through him who gives me strength.
 3. The voice in your head says, I'm a loser, and the bullies in your life say, you don't matter. In that moment, you declare, Jesus IS MY PROPITIATION! And if God is satisfied with me, I don't care what anyone else thinks.
 4. Inferiority, rises up, and so workaholicism and perfectionism rise up too. The drive to prove yourself, where is you out. The fear of failure runs your life. But in that moment you declare... I AM THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, FOR I AM JUSTIFIED ONCE FOR ALL BY JESUS. I can live with nothing left to prove.
 5. A depraved voice comes in to say you have to punish yourself, and you see patterns of self destruction, and self defeat emerging. That's when you can say, All the punishment I'll ever deserve has ALREADY FALLEN ON CHRIST. He is my EXPIATION and that work is complete. Wear your helmet by faith.
 6. And when the devil punches you with guilt and shame. Just point him to the Cross and declare BE SILENT DEVIL! I stand upon the atonement and the finished work of Christ.
- E. You put on the armor by faith.
- F. But you say, Bill my faith is weak. How do I make it strong?
- G. We'll have to save that for our next time...