

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BURN

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The 2025 Men's Retreat at Camp Calvary has come and gone. However, the strong message from the guest speaker, Jim Sites, was a stern warning about the choices people have to make today. They are either heaven or hell. The demonstration that Jim used on stage was very vivid of how man slowly drifts away from God as he falls for Satan's deceptions. Please read the following scriptures and meditate on them.

"Otherwise, He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared one time, at the end of the age, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews 9:26)

"But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." (Ephesians 1:7)

"¹⁹ Do you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body." (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

"⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and man, a man, Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself—a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time." (I Timothy 2:5-6)

All of these verses tell us how much Jesus loves us. Jesus demonstrated that on the cross by paying the price for our salvation, "death on a cross," so we don't have to die a spiritual death. You see, we live in a world where sin abounds. We live in Satan's backyard. "⁷ Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short." (Revelation 12:7-12) No wonder there is so much evil in the world.

We cannot work or buy our way into heaven. "For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is God's gift—not from works, so that no can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Getting into heaven is not based on what we can do; rather, it's based on what Jesus did on the cross. There are a couple of parables in Matthew that describe how two men put so much value on earthly things, one a field and the other a pearl. They sold everything to possess the field and the pearl.

These two parables are examples of how much value we should put on salvation, that we would be willing to do whatever it takes to claim salvation. After all, it's an eternity with Jesus, not Satan. ⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it." (Matthew 13:44-46)

So what about judgment? "And just as it appointed for people to die once, and after this, judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) If you were to stand before Jesus today in judgment, where would you spend eternity? Jesus could return for His church at any moment. The following verses are meant to help you clearly see that Jesus is the only way to heaven. "Jesus told them, 'I am the way and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" (John 14:6) ²⁷ "I am the good Shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me." (John 10:14) "My sheep hear My voice, I know them and they follow Me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever. No one will snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:27-28)

Whose hand are you currently holding on to? If it's not the Master's hand, now is the time to grab it, hold on for life, and never let go. Which is it, for you, heaven or hell? Remember, you don't have to burn.

There was a second part to Jim Sites' message. He talked about the great decline in the morals of today's society. Just look at TV. It has not been that far in the past that you never saw a bedroom scene, nor the language we hear on TV today. I use the frog in the water illustration of how you place a frog in a pot of water on the stove and gradually turn the heat up, just a little at a time, and the next thing you know, you have frog legs for supper. The frog was so comfortable in his surroundings that he didn't notice the change in the water temperature until it was too late.

This is how Satan is working in the world today. A lot of people think you're not guilty of breaking the law unless you get caught. How many robberies, how many murders, how much violence, how many abortions of babies have to take place before the water gets too hot? The change hasn't happened overnight, and it will not change for the better overnight. The fact that it will take time to change our society for the good should in no way stop Christians from taking on the challenge and starting with self to begin the change. Have a blessed week.

The Lord Is My Salvation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-JTbcu7Psl&list=RDy-JTbcu7Psl&start_radio=1