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The Greatest Question

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What is the supreme question of the ages?

If there were one question, the answer to which would make you a complete person, and bring you rewards staggering in proportion and blessings beyond your fondest expectation and comprehension -- you would be interested wouldn't you? Of course you would. Everyone who is truly interested in life and success will sit up and take notice of such a proposal.

There is such a question, the answer to which will bring the inquirer the ultimate in blessings. The greatest question ever asked is "What Must I Do To Be Saved?"

Upon the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached Christ to a great multitude whom he charged with crucifying and slaying the blessed Lord (Acts 2:23). "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" The answer to this all important question was quickly forthcoming: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

This same question is repeated in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, verse thirty. The question was asked by a startled jailer who had seen wonderful sights and had been shaken by unfamiliar terrors. He cried out to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Reading further into the chapter we learn where Paul and Silas answered the question by saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Following this statement, "they spake the word of the Lord unto him, and all that were in his house, and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his immediately."

The Greatest Question implies a (1) difference in being saved and lost, (2) consciousness of being lost, (3) possibility of being saved, (4) willingness to be saved, (5) something that the unsaved individual must do.

The word "must" denotes any sort of necessity -- necessity brought on by circumstances -- necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end -- a necessity of laws, commands, duties, equity -- necessity established by the counsel of God. The central idea in this word is "necessity." It is not synonymous with such words as expedient, should, or advisable. It means absolutely essential. If the word of God reveals a principle or action to be a "must" then it is irrevocable and cannot be altered. Some things are "must" from the very nature of the case and are readily seen. Others are necessary because the counsel and decree of God have established them. When God reveals an action to us, which must be done, we will be held accountable for doing it, whether we see the purpose of it or not. Bickering amounts to a lack of trust.

Now, what must you do to be saved? You must do what those in New Testament times did. Having heard and believed the word (Eph. 1:13) you are to "repent and be baptized for (unto) the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). These acts are essential to salvation.

If you have not complied with the essentials contained in the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?", you are lost!



I'm Rich! I'm Saved! I'm Happy!

Tony Mauck

Miserable Christians...isn't that a misnomer? Yet, frequently seen. Little joy. Little rejoicing. Misery most of the time. Something has gone terribly wrong. The horrible agony of the cross looms. This ghastly means of execution is within hours, and Jesus says, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11). Paul and Silas endure a painful beating with rods, "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." Do not miss the significance of this verse. Their behavior contributed to a great opportunity to teach and the result of salvation for the Philippian jailer and his family (Acts 16:22-34).

Two important things are missing in the life of the miserable Christian – 1) Contentment; 2) Perspective. And the second relates to the first. Misery must issue from dissatisfaction with one's circumstances. The dissatisfaction is the result of perspective gone askew which leads to faulty expectations. The dissatisfaction emanates from a self-focus and a worldly-focus. When too much weight or importance is attached to events in this world, our whole disposition is affected. One loses sight of the bigger picture—things in the spirit realm—and focuses too much attention on the physical realm which is "passing away" (1 John 2:17).

If our hope is truly beyond this world, then we can cope when our favorite sports team loses (and mine do way too often for my liking, but what a minor thing this really is in relation to the big picture), we are struggling to make ends meet or even when you suffer injustice and/or mistreatment. Many experience their greatest struggles in the area of joy when they believe someone has done them wrong. It's even worse when this person claims to be a Christian. Spouses disappoint us at times, too. Children, parents, other family members could potentially upset us by their words and actions. When those closest to us in this world are the source of emotional injury, a tailspin into misery often ensues. The best of earthly relationships will occasionally disappoint.

We must not depend on external things for our happiness. Temporal setbacks and circumstance sadness must quickly give way to the joy of our hope. Do not the beatitudes teach us this (Matthew 5:3-12)? Believers mourn, but they also are comforted. And who relishes the thought of bodily persecution, insults and false accusations? But the Messiah's kingdom is all about turning sorrow and sadness into gladness and rejoicing (Isaiah 35:10). The kingdom is ours. We have Him. Our reward is great. ..no matter what this world, the devil, His allies or even misbehaving or unthinking believers dish out.

Constant misery is also an indication of inadequate fellowship with God. God provides a solution for our temporal troubles (Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7). In the context of "be anxious for nothing," we have instruction about rejoicing (4:4), contentment (4:11, 12) and the source of strength (4:13). Ongoing misery should be an indication of one's need to seek God's face. "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually" (Psalm 105:4; see also Psalm 27:7-9).

Since the cause of misery is so often self-focus, set yourself to the task of assisting someone else. Focus on others. Decide to make someone else's day by some kind word or deed. Determine to lift another's spirit. You will likely find your own lifted in the process. Removing the focus from oneself and placing it on God and others will minimize our hurt and unhappiness. Benevolence toward another is a quick lesson in perspective. Everybody experiences difficulties of some kind and some have many greater difficulties than I do. The circumstances of many are far worse than my own. Realizing this truth should contribute to a clearer perspective.

Without a doubt, it's one of my favorite verses in all of the hymns we sing...verse 3 of "The Lord Has Been Mindful of Me." The title of this article is derived from it. "I'm rich! I'm saved! I am happy! I've health and prosperity! I've friends! I have doors ever open! The Lord has been mindful of me!" Now, that's a verse with a lot of exclamation points! I believe L.O. Sanderson wanted us to give those words extra exuberance and emphasis as we sing them. The whole song should be a daily meditation for a believer who is struggling to experience joy. "He blesses and blesses again...How excellent is His name!"

In the midst of your pain... When life seems to be handing you its worst... When discouragement abounds... When despair grips your soul... Remember, the prisoners are listening!