

Scripture: Luke 12:4-10 & Devotion, 'About Salvation'

'I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear; fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

'I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. (Luke 12:4-10 NIV)

Jesus made good use of contrasts. When he wanted to ask the disciples who they thought he was, he took them to a place called Caesarea Philippi and, in front of deep caves where it was imagined there was a route between Hades, the place of death, and Earth the place of life. With that in sight, Peter declared Jesus as the Messiah, the Lord of life.

Here, Jesus makes another contrast between life and death. This time death is pictured by a valley outside Jerusalem with a bad history as a place of human death, a place where parents told their children never to go and a place that became more scary in their imaginations.

Salvation is a contrast. It is the opposite of danger and life in peril. When someone is rescued from the sea by a lifeboat they are so thankful for being saved. When someone is rescued from a life-threatening illness they too are so grateful for being rescued.

Salvation is a rescue from a dangerous place or situation and the welcome into the place of life. Too often we Christians forget the powerful, grounded imagery of salvation reducing it to a spiritual thing of going to heaven after we die. That is not salvation! It only describes a later result of salvation when we are given new bodies and welcomed into The Garden City of God.

Salvation is the rescue from an existence where souls are bound-up with the same fate as the physical body, and into the eternal life and flourishing that is heaven-made and heaven-bound. Salvation is rescue from death into life that starts immediately when our souls become re-born through God's Spirit.

Salvation is dramatic and life critical. Jesus is clear that his people are of great value to him and he is concerned for this life-saving work. We would be very foolish to deny salvation by living as if salvation has not begun or reducing it to something that happens after this life. It happens now and is dependent on relationship with Jesus.

We would be even more foolish to continually deny salvation by denying the Holy Spirit who makes salvation in us. If we deny him, we deny salvation. That is what Jesus says cannot be forgiven; not because he does not offer salvation but because the person refuses to be saved.

Salvation is life critical. How seriously and soberly are you treating salvation?