

## ***The Way To Salvation For Families***

1 Peter 3:1-4

I think the hardest thing in missions would be having a family member who does not believe in God. If any of you are now praying for a family member who is not yet saved, I hope that you are able to receive a positive answer from God through his Word today. One thing that you should carefully remember is that when you are praying for an unbeliever in your family, you must not rush. A lady always cries when praying and says, "How long do I have to plead for the unbeliever in my family?" She prays this because she has a lot of things to do for the church and for God, yet her family doesn't believe in Jesus. I know that she must feel miserable for herself. However, we should know that with a hasty mind, a question such as: "How long do I have to plead for the unbeliever in my family?" can be an obstacle to the work of the Holy Spirit. The prayer for the unbeliever in our family is a very urgent one; but one thing we must remember is to not rush it. Haste is not a part of our faith and should not be part of our prayers either.

A certain Christian lady said, "My life is too short because of one person in my family. Pastor, do you know how long I have been waiting for my husband to be saved? I think that I am too old and I have wasted my life waiting for my husband to be saved. How much longer do I have to plead for my husband?" However, this kind of thinking makes things worse. I think that she needs to change her prayer to something like this: "O God, if you take my life for my husband to be saved, I am willing to do that. I will devote my life to my husband's salvation." If you pray like this, your prayer requests will be answered faster than you expect and then you can do your church activities with your husband.

Sometimes living with the person that you are serving as a missionary for can seem like a waste of our own life, but it is a very precious mission. It is so valuable because God sent you to this world for the salvation of one person in your family. It is priceless if God sends you to this world for the salvation of your husband or wife. If you have someone in your family that needs to be saved, why don't you think like this: "I am a missionary that has been appointed to this house." There are many kinds of missionaries that have been appointed to India, China, Japan, etc, but there is an even more valuable missionary. That is a family missionary. It is because we don't know if a person from one of our homes might become famous and would change the world's history. Someone thinks, "Why does God restrict me within my family for their salvation?" However, we don't know what God's will is.

There was a circuit rider that toured preaching around the country in the United States. He was not a famous speaker, so he led revival services in small rural areas instead of at the big churches in the cities. His name was Mordecai Ham. When he was preaching, a 16-year-old young man decided that he would devote his life to God and he was set free. That young man was Billy Graham, the great evangelist. You should know that the same thing could happen in your home. The greatest missionary is a family's missionary.

God's mission for you to bring only one person in your family to salvation is not a small job. Rather, rushing it may interrupt the work of God. "Why do I receive all the trouble from my family?" If you start thinking like this, your belief in our Lord Jesus is not correct. A heavenly family member is the promise of God! If we believe in Jesus, God promised that we would have

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a heavenly family. However, that is not the sole reason that we should believe in Jesus. Jesus is more than enough to us in our Christian lives. We were set free from our sins and as a result we became children of God, people of heaven, and live together with Holy Spirit. What more do we need? If we know that we have been blessed and have done many things for Jesus, that's enough. If we believe in Jesus, our family can be saved. That is a stated promise that came from Jesus. In the New Testament Book of Acts 16:31, it says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

However, if the making of a heavenly family was the focus for a Christian life, every believing family member would continuously complain and be disappointed until the their entire family was saved. The unbelieving members sometimes say that they believe in Jesus, but more succinctly, they believe in their helping their family become happy, wealthy, successful, and healthy. So complaining and rushing things can become an obstacle to unbelieving family members becoming saved.

Why do you think that Jesus' disciples left him when He was on the Cross? Why did they run away from Jesus? If they really loved and believed in Him, they wouldn't do something like that, would they? They believed that if they loved others and believed in Him, they would succeed in the world. So that's why the disciples were disappointed and upset by seeing Jesus Christ die on the Cross. They thought all their efforts had gone to waste. They thought that everything would be okay if they followed Jesus. Yet they left everything they had and ran away from Jesus. If they really loved and believed in Him, they wouldn't have done that.

I have a question for you this morning. What kind of faith do you have? If you really love and believe in Him, Jesus will accomplish all the promises given to His disciples. Your family will be saved through you. We cannot be shaken in our belief that Jesus will save our family as He promised. The reason for this is because only Jesus is enough for us. We should think of this: if becoming successful in our lives, being happier, and financially well off are your desires for a good Christian life, you should know that your life will not always be quite so good.

Even though you may have heard God's voice, there will be suffering. Abram left his hometown right after he heard God's voice. He left because God told him so. A famine then hit Canaan when he got there. Joseph also dreamed a vision from God. However, there were many sufferings on him. Even though you hear God's voice or message, there will be suffering. Paul traveled to Philippi from Europe after he heard God's voice. He went because God called him. Nevertheless, he was put in the public jail there.

We should have confidence about our call from God though because the most important thing is that Jesus is truly with us. Joseph believed that God was always with him so that he could overcome every trial and suffering, even when he was facing death, was sold as a slave, and was put in jail. I think that Paul, who was put in jail in Philippi, thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to preach in Europe instead of the province of Asia, which was why he was locked up in jail in Europe. He may have blamed God for it. However, he knew that the Holy Spirit was with him. With this in mind, he praised and prayed until midnight in the basement jail. Suddenly there was a very violent earthquake and the foundations of the prison were shaken so the gate

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was opened. After that, the Philippi church was built. If you are full of faith for Jesus, there is no problem in the end.

We should realize something else here. The family's salvation is the same. How do we encourage the unbeliever in our family to go to church? There is one thing; it is up to us who already believe in God to keep on believing. If I am a model of a good Christian, naturally others will believe in Jesus. A family's salvation should be followed by a believer's actions rather than their words. A wife needs to recognize that they cannot change their husband's behavior overnight. When they preach to him, it closes their husband's mind. One day a lady turned on the Christian radio station very loud in an attempt to get her husband to change his ways because he never listens to her. The result was that her husband didn't want to come home anymore. That was a wrong method of missioning for her husband. The only way to change an unbeliever is to simply show them our faith through our life.

Peter said to the women who wanted to lead their husbands to Jesus in 1 Peter 3:1-2, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives." These verses mean that a husband who does not believe in the word watches and judges the behavior of their wives. We must keep that in mind. 'Wow, her life really changed because of Jesus.' That can be a shock to unbelievers. How can we change them? But we can change them. If your life has become different compared to your past, unbelievers would start believing in the God who is living within us. That is because they would then understand that only God can change our lives. So this is why it can be shocking for unbelievers. Shock comes from the actions, not the words. This is the only way to save the unbelievers in our family. The bottom line is that we have to do is whatever Jesus tells us to do.

The unbeliever in our family sees those who already believe in God. A family's salvation is God's grace. This means that our family's salvation is not our work or job. Since it is the work of the Holy Spirit, we do not disturb Him. All we have to do is be an instrument for the Holy Spirit's work. In verse 3 it said, "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes." These words do not mean address the importance of a wife's adornment. The key word is that they and their husbands cannot be saved through beauty alone. Have you heard that an unbelieving husband joined the church to worship God because of his wife's beauty? No, it will never happen that way. Additionally, joining the church and serving God and saying, "I want to be a Christian" because of their wife's beauty will never happen. The reason why the unbelieving husband decided to become a Christian was strictly due to his wife's Christian life. The only thing that could have changed the husband's mind is his wife's faithful life. Verse 4 said, "Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."

We Christians usually try to find a good Christian to marry. So young people and their parents often say, "We're just looking for a good Christian for marriage." However, there is a trick. They are also looking for others things like academics, career, family background, finance... Many people don't know what good faith is. Being a faithful person to Jesus is very important. When we think about 'good faith or Christian', we consider it as someone that goes to church

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every Sunday, has a good personality... But, it is not. There are many obstinate people on the inside even if they look good on the outside. A good Christian is a person who has a gentle and quiet spirit inside. That is because Jesus is our master. A good Christian is a person who is always joyful and prays continually. A good Christian is a modest person and is also a dignified person. They are free from an inferiority complex, fear and anxiety. This person has power to lead them. He can lead the unbeliever in their family to God. Not many people have this kind of Christian faith. I hope that you find these kinds of people. They have a good spouse, son-in-law and daughter-in law. The person who truly believes in God and lives with Jesus can become a good Christian. This is what a good Christian is. We who believe in God, must first become good Christians, then other unbelievers in our family may then be able to believe in Him. After that, we will get a chance to lead many other people into the church.

Beloved sisters and brothers, saving the unbeliever in your family is one of God's great blessings. The reason that we live is for our unbelieving family member and becoming a good Christian. Every family seems like a good Christian family, but many families are not. If we could become a genuine Christian, our problems would be solved. We can apply this at our working place and at church as well.

We should pray like this; "Dear God, I thank you even if you gave me this life for the unbelieving family member who is yet to be saved. LORD, I will follow your command because of it. LORD, if one life can be saved through me, I will do it. LORD, please grant our family your work of salvation and revival. I pray that all of my family will be born again. Please use me as your tool."

I know that many in our congregation have cried and prayed for the salvation of unbelieving members in their family. I pray that your family is born again and ask you to also pray for those families who are not yet saved as a nurtured Christian.