

# The Three Tenses of Salvation

## (1 Corinthians 1:30)

This morning we are so pleased to have Angelina, Bobby and Dylan here for their baptisms. Baptism is also referred to as Christening, a word that means "to make Christian".

Christians are people who are in a living relationship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in relationship with others who are disciples of Jesus, and witnessing to others in ways that will hopefully influence them so that they too will want to follow Jesus Christ. As those who belong to Jesus we know that all our years in this world have as their goal our death when we will enter into the world that is to come. Because we believe this and affirm in this service of Baptism the meaning of a Christ-centred life we want to pray for Angelina, Bobby and Dylan that they too may come to share fully in the Christian life

Tess, Michael, Erin, Bob and Julie by choosing to have your children baptized this morning you are saying to God and to us that you want your little ones to know what it means to be citizens of heaven as they making their way through the world.

As you guide them in the faith it will help you to keep before you the words Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:30. In this one verse Paul presents to us what Christ Jesus accomplished for us on the Cross as he shows us the three tenses of salvation.

He writes "Jesus became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption".

Now in order to understand how this verse fits into Paul's thinking in this first chapter we need to go back to verse 18. There Paul says that the word of the Cross is the power of God for those who are being saved. This is such an important verse because it emphasizes for us that salvation is an ongoing reality. It is not something that only happened in the past when we become Christians. No salvation is something that continues to happen in our present lives and will be fulfilled in the future. Paul picks up on this idea in verse 30. By saying Jesus became for us wisdom from God and righteousness, sanctification and redemption he is showing us that these three great blessings we enjoy in Christ are the three tenses of salvation.

But notice that Paul begins by saying that Jesus became for us wisdom. Each person has to come to a place in their lives when they see that Jesus is the one who makes us wise by delivering us from error. The error we are delivered from has to do with the way we understand and relate to God and the way we understand and relate to ourselves and others. In the bible the word wisdom is used to describe true religion. To make Jesus our wisdom results in our acting wisely, because we are living in the truth which is imparted to us by Jesus through his word. As the Holy Spirit takes this word he shapes our minds and our hearts so that we want to revere and obey God. This is what it means to be truly wise. When we come to understand how God has shown us such great wisdom in Christ and this wisdom becomes alive in our own lives we can claim the benefits of salvation for our own. The next three words Paul uses highlight what these benefits are.

When Paul says that Jesus has become to us "Righteousness" he is saying that it is through Christ that we are accepted by God. This is the point in a person's life when they come to recognize that when we are united to Jesus Christ we get a fresh start, we are created new. This is how Paul describes this life in 2 Corinthians 5: "The old life is gone, a new life burgeons! Look at it! All this comes from God who settled the relationship between us and him. This is the past tense of our salvation.

When Paul then goes on to say that Jesus has become our "Sanctification" he means that Jesus is our holiness. We are purified from sin, and are becoming holy as God is holy. Let me illustrate what I mean with this gown. This gown symbolizes the holiness of Jesus. As we receive it as our own we become clothed with the holiness of Jesus. As we live the sanctified life we are living in the present tense the life of those who are being saved. I like what a priest named Barbara Brown Taylor says about the sanctified life.

God does not care whether I am happy or not. What God cares about, with all the power of God's holy being is the quality of my life. Not just the continuation of my breath and the health of my cells, but the quality of my life, the scope of my life, the heft and zest of my life. Fear of death always turns into fear of life, into a stingy, cautious way of living that is not really living at all. To follow Jesus, to be sanctified in him means going beyond the limits of our own comfort and safety, It means receiving our lives as gifts instead of guarding them as possessions." So sanctification is the present tense of our salvation.

"Redemption," as a part of the scheme of salvation stands intimately connected with righteousness and sanctification. The word implies us to have been slaves of sin, and to be bought off from this state of slavery by Jesus. From now on we are no longer held under control of sin. Although redemption has a present tense meaning it also looks to the future when we will one day be glorified and fully redeemed.

Those who are redeemed know that we are not citizens of this world trying to make our way to heaven; we are citizens of heaven trying to make our way through the world. We are not to live, so as to earn God's love, inherit heaven, and purchase our salvation. All those are given to us as gifts; gifts bought by Jesus on the Cross and handed over to us. We are to live as God's redeemed, as heirs of heaven, and as citizen's of another land. The Kingdom of God... We live as those who are on a journey home; a home we know will have the lights on and the door open and our Father waiting for us to arrive. That means that in all adversity our worship of God is joyful, our life is hopeful, our future is secure. There is nothing we can lose on earth that can rob us of the treasures God has given us and will give us."

So Michael, Erin, Bob, Julie and Tess in order for you to teach Dylan, Bobby and Angelina how Jesus makes us wise, Jesus needs to be your wisdom. Jesus needs to be your righteousness, sanctification and redemption. For as he is that for you, and he is that for us all he will have more of an opportunity to become fully this for each of these children.

It is as we know the past, present and future tenses of salvation that we will take to heart what Paul says in verse 31 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.' Our lives will become more fully shaped by an attitude of gratefulness and thanksgiving because as those who are truly wise we affirm Jesus is at the very centre of our lives.

It is my prayer that your children will be aware that you are living your lives in ways that reflect your love for Jesus Christ. May Dylan, Angelina and Bobby see that you are glad to be Christians because you are active participants in God's great work of salvation.

I also pray that as they grow older they will look forward to coming here on Sunday mornings. Jesus wants them to experience at St. Augustine's a community that delights in Him and makes its boast in Him because he has become for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption".

