

Chris Murphy

February 9th, 2025

Scripture: 1 John 4: 7-18

Sermon Title: Jesus Our Savior

Prayer...

Do you remember when you experienced being delivered from something or when you experienced healing from an illness? I imagine all of us have a story of healing and deliverance in some way. I have my own story of healing that I want to share with you.

My heart story...

This morning, we are continuing our sermon series on images of Jesus by looking at the idea that Jesus is our Savior. The word Savior relates to the idea of salvation. The word for salvation in Hebrew is Yasha or sometimes Yeshuah. In Koine Greek, which is the primary language of the New Testament, the word for salvation is Soterios. You may remember that the study of salvation is called soteriology. The word for Savior is soter.

The meaning of salvation is similar in both the Old and New Testaments. The word relates to deliverance, preservation, restoration, safety, and healing.

When we talk about Jesus our Savior, we are reminded that Jesus is our healer and deliverer.

According to Strong's Concordance,

In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of salvation was often associated with deliverance from physical danger or political oppression. However, in the New Testament, "sótérios" takes on a deeper spiritual meaning, referring to the deliverance from sin and eternal death through Jesus Christ. This salvation is not just a future hope but a present reality for believers, impacting their daily lives and relationships.

The term "sótérios" is used to describe something that pertains to salvation or has the power to save. It is often used in the context of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the deliverance from sin and its

consequences. The word highlights the transformative and life-giving aspect of God's intervention in human history.

The majority of usages of salvation in the NT refer to physical healing or deliverance from what injures, restricts, or threatens harm.

In our Scripture passage today, we see the writer of 1 John highlighting that God is love and that we are to love one another. God's love is especially described as revealed in God sending his Son to the world, so that we might live through him and so that Jesus might be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

In the life of Jesus even before the cross, we see his work as our healer and deliverer. He healed the sick and delivered people from demons. He even raised the dead when he spoke to Jairus' daughter and called Lazarus from the tomb.

Of course for those of us who grow up in church, especially if we come from an evangelical heritage, we associate Jesus as Savior with the ultimate gift of knowing that when we die, we will be delivered from death and hell and brought to heaven for all eternity. As our Scripture describes today, as followers of Jesus, we do not need to fear God, because fear has to do with punishment. No, according to our passage.

“God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.”

How wonderful to remember that love casts our fear and we do not need to fear death because God promises us eternal life in heaven.

This is the beautiful truth of knowing Jesus our Savior. Through his life, death, and resurrection we are promised eternal life in heaven. And the good news is this eternal, abundant life is not only for heaven. It begins in the present when we receive the truth of relationship with Christ into our hearts.

I want to remind us of a couple truths related to knowing Jesus our Savior.

First, knowing Jesus as Savior does not necessarily mean that life is free of hardship. I know this is obvious to all of us, but sometimes we hope that following Jesus will somehow enable us to have a force field of protection in every circumstance. I wish. Instead the promise is that Jesus will be our companion through the joys and the pains and sorrows of life. We will still face trials and challenges. We will lose loved ones and will experience suffering. Jesus our Savior will sometimes provide healing on earth from diseases at other times healing will take place only in heaven. Sometimes we will endure real hardship and yet, the hope is that with Jesus our companion we can experience grace and wholeness in this life and ultimately peace and fulfillment in heaven, where the lion lies down with the lamb and our tears are wiped away.

A second thing that I want to remind you about salvation is that Jesus is in charge of who is saved. Jesus our Savior is Lord and ultimately determines who goes to heaven. For me this is comforting. Like the famous German Reformed Theologian Karl Barth, I trust that Jesus is the Savior of the world and can save whomever he chooses to. The grace offered through Jesus could save even the most hardened sinner. Jesus may choose to save people of other faiths than Christianity. It is not my job to determine who is saved. In fact, you may be curious to know that many Presbyterian Church USA pastor have hope in the potential restoration and salvation of all humankind and all creation. This is called hopeful universalism and it is a common view also of many Catholic priests, such as Pope Francis. I personally like this view, but whether it is true or not, we can put our trust that Jesus our Savior is the one who determines our salvation and we need not be afraid of death or hell, since God is a God of love.

As I reflected on salvation this week, I also thought about the cross. Why did Jesus have to die and why did Jesus die such a tragic death on a cross. The Biblical idea is that it was necessary for Christ to die and rise in order for salvation to come to the world. I think this is true, but I wonder if there is another reason Jesus had to come and die and rise from the dead. I wonder if Jesus suffered and died and rose again to show his creation that he gets it. He really understands our suffering. If Jesus showed up here in person it might be tempting for us to say something like. Don't you care. Look at all the pain in

this world. Do you understand what we are going through? Then Jesus would look at us with compassion and then would point to his hands and we would see the nail prints. We would realize that Jesus does understand human suffering. Jesus would be able to say that he, God's Son did not stay in his protective mansion in heaven but came down to earth and experienced real pain. We would likely look at Jesus and say, we are sorry for not understanding your love more fully.

Friends, Jesus is our Savior. We have a God who showed us love by becoming one of us in sending Jesus the Son to give up his life out of his love. We know that God cares because Jesus gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life to atone for our sins and to confirm the beautiful truth that one day we will join him in heaven and one day all of creation will be restored. For now, we also are blessed with the presence of the Holy Spirit who reminds that Jesus is alive in our hearts and that we are to share with others the good news of Christ's love for all. When people ask you how you came to know Jesus, just share your story. Share how he met you in your suffering and let you know that you are not alone and that his love is real and with us always. What a beautiful name Jesus is and what a joy to know the love of our Savior. AMEN.

1 John 4:7-18

God Is Love

7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. 15 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.