

## HOUSEHOLD SALVATION

### I. GOD'S PROMISE OF SALVATION BEING TO THE HOUSEHOLD

[Let us] come to the subject of the unit of salvation. Everything is measured by units. The unit of salvation is the household. According to the Bible, in God's dealings and communications with man, He has given man many promises. If we know these promises, we will reap great benefit for ourselves. If we do not know them, we will suffer great loss.

**God's promise of salvation** takes the **household as a unit**, not the individual as a unit. If a newly saved person sees this from the very beginning, he will be spared many headaches, and he will gain much benefit for himself. When God saves man, He takes the whole family, rather than an individual, as a unit.

Concerning eternal life, the Bible takes an individual, not a household, as the unit. However, concerning salvation, it shows that **men are saved household by household**. The unit of salvation is the household. We want to spend a little time to consider several portions of the Word. This will show us clearly that salvation is for the whole household. We can inquire of God according to these words. We can deal with Him not only for ourselves individually but also for our whole family.

We hope that all the children who are born among us will not need our extra effort in the future to bring them to salvation and to rescue them out of the world. Some have already been born into our fleshly family. We should make sure that they are born into our spiritual family also. We cannot afford to lose them year by year and then fight to rescue them back year by year. We cannot just beget them into the world; we still must bring them to the Lord.

If all the brothers and sisters agree that this is the way we should take, we will have at least as many saved ones as the number of children in our midst. The Lord has placed them in our hands. We should not let them go; we must make sure that they are saved. Otherwise, it will take considerable effort to bring them back from the world. All the little fishes born of our big fishes should be on our side; we should not let them go back into the sea and then struggle to catch them again. Whether or not the church will continue with its second generation depends on whether our children belong to the Lord.

I hope that the brothers and sisters will see the importance of this matter. **Whether or not the church will go on in the next generation, whether or not those after us will go on, depends on whether we can bring our own children to the Lord.** If we lose as many as are born to us, our second generation will be gone. If generation after generation all those who are born into our midst stand fast and if we also have some increase from the outside, the church will be strong and its number will increase. **We must never give birth to a child only to lose it later.** Instead, those who are born to us must be regenerated.

## II. EXAMPLES FROM THE BIBLE

### *The Household of the Jailer*

Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." This is one of the most outstanding verses in Christianity. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household. God's Word does not say that if you believe on the Lord Jesus, you and your household shall receive eternal life. It says that if you believe on the Lord Jesus, you and your household will be saved.

Throughout the entire Old Testament, God dealt with man by households. Likewise in the New Testament, He deals with man by households. This is the smallest unit; one cannot reduce it to a smaller one. **If anyone believes in the Lord Jesus, his whole household shall be saved.** This is indeed a wonderful thing. I do not know why this is so, but the Lord's Word says it is so. The Old Testament and the New Testament are consistent; both recognize the same unit.

The church in Philippi started with a jailer. Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." Verse 34 says, "And he brought them up into his house and set a table before them; and he exulted because he had believed in God with all his household." Here we see a wonderful picture. In the beginning the promise was given to the jailer; no one else heard it. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." Later, the jailer brought his household to Paul. After Paul spoke to them, they were baptized. Then the jailer brought them into his house and set a table before them; and he exulted, having believed in God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household"—this is not something difficult to achieve. The apostle gave the jailer a promise, and his whole household was saved. Everyone listened, everyone was baptized, and everyone exulted.

Suppose the apostle told the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved." If this was the case, we would have to wait a few days after a person was saved, teach him something, and hope that he would understand. Then he might gradually testify to his family, and his family might eventually believe and be saved. If this had been the case, how long would it have taken for the jailer's household to be saved? The apostle did not preach the gospel this way. He did not deal with individuals one by one; instead, he addressed the whole household. He said, "You and your household" shall be saved. You need to see this: **The salvation of a household is no different and certainly no more difficult than the salvation of one person. You should never forfeit the privilege of saving the whole household. If you bring the whole household along, the whole household will be saved.**

If we are clear about God's way with men, we will not suffer unnecessary loss. God takes a household as a unit. If God gains a person, He should gain his whole family as well, regardless of how many persons there are in that family. I hope you will tell the

brothers to rise up household by household. Those who are the head of a family have the ground to bring their whole household to the Lord, and they should help their families be saved. Household salvation means household rejoicing. This is a great matter! **If we see that God's dealing with man is by households, we will experience much blessing. We must learn to lay hold of this promise of God.**

### *The Promise of Pentecost*

Let us consider the condition at Pentecost. **Acts 2:39** says, **"For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God calls to Himself."**

The promise of Pentecost includes the forgiveness of sins and the receiving of the Holy Spirit. It was given **"to you"** and **"to your children"**; it was not merely given **"to you."** **Those who are heads of the family in particular should lay hold of this promise and say, "Lord, Your promise is for me and also for my children. It cannot be mine without my children also being included. I want it for myself, and I want it also for my children."**

### **THE NEED FOR THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD TO MAKE A DECLARATION**

The **head of a family** has the **special responsibility** before God for bringing his whole household to the Lord and to His service. You need to take your stand as the head of your family to declare that your household will believe in the Lord and that you will not tolerate anyone who will not believe. The head of the household can decide for his entire household. Even if the little children do not believe, you can still say that your household will believe in the Lord, because this household is yours and not your children's. You are responsible for your household, not your children. You can declare Joshua 24:15 before the Lord and before your whole family: **"As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."** You have to acknowledge that your family is a believer's family. **You need to declare this by faith, and you need to put your wife and children on this ground.** Always lay hold of this fact: I am the head of my family, and my family will believe in God. My household will not believe in the devil. I have decided that this family will be a family that worships God. I have decided that this family will be a family that believes in the Lord. If you declare this with faith, and if you exercise your authority to take the lead, your children will go along.

I believe the head of every household should make the declaration of Joshua 24:15. You should gather your children and dependents together and tell them, "As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." Then as long as you are in the household, your household will serve the Lord. The household is yours, and you have the power to decide whether this house will serve the Lord. When you take this stand, everyone who is under you will come to the Lord; they will have no other way to take. This is marvelous!

### **THE NEED TO BRING THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD TO THE LORD**

I hope that the newly saved brothers and sisters will pay attention to this matter. Once you are saved, you should gather your family members together and declare to them, "From this day forward, my household belongs to God." **You need to declare this whether or not they belong to the Lord and whether or not they agree. You are the head of the house and you should do this. You should take the matter into your own hands. You should declare that your household will serve the Lord. When you exercise your faith to stand firm this way, you will prevail.**

If those who are saved through us are saved household by household instead of one by one, what a difference it will make! Brothers and sisters, do not be too loose with your children at home. One of the greatest failures of the Protestants is that they are too loose with their next generation; they allow their next generation to have the freedom to choose their own faith. The Catholics do not have to preach the gospel. Their increase through natural birth alone is greater than the increase the Protestants have in a lifetime. Have you seen Catholics preaching the gospel on street corners like the Salvation Army? No. They just propagate through natural birth, generation after generation. Two become four, and four become eight. Every Roman Catholic child automatically becomes a Roman Catholic. The Catholics do not pay much attention to increase from the outside. As long as a person is born into Catholicism, he is dragged into the religion whether or not he eventually becomes a true believer. It is no wonder that the Catholic population exceeds the Protestant population by more than three times. **Do not be nonchalant in this matter, and do not allow your own children to drift away.**

Let me repeat: A new believer needs to declare right from the start that his household belongs to the Lord. Not only must he be the Lord's individually; he also must declare that his household is the Lord's. **Take full control of this matter, and it will be done for you.** You have to declare again and again at home, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. All who live in this house should decide to serve the Lord." You should bring your family to the Lord. You should not make any excuse. Do not allow anyone to drift away.

**Household salvation is one of the greatest principles in the Bible. Once you are saved, your whole household should be saved.** As an individual you must first stand firm for the Lord, and then your household will change. I hope that you will pay attention to this matter. This is a great blessing. If you do this, you will bring more people to the Lord. (*CWWN*, vol. 49, *Messages for building up New Believers* (2), chapter 20: Household Salvation)