

**Things that Accompany Salvation**  
**Outline by Dr. Perry Sanders in Memory of his 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday**  
**Hebrews 6:1-9**

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**Text Introduction:** We are putting our series called “Defining Moments” on pause for a few weeks. We will pick it back up on Easter Sunday and continue into the month of May. We will begin a new series next Sunday on the theme of revival and spiritual awakening.

Today, I have a special message for you. Today, February 22, would have been the 87<sup>th</sup> birthday of our former pastor, Dr. Perry Sanders. To give remembrance to his remarkable preaching ministry here at First Baptist Church, I am preaching one of his most popular sermons, “Things that Accompany Salvation.” I am also preaching from the pulpit that he used for most of those years. If you were not here to know the story, our Sanctuary burned to the ground in 1999. The fire caused a total loss of property except for the pulpit and the steeple which were miraculously spared. I like to think that the saving of the pulpit is God’s reminder to us that “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God remains forever.” (Isaiah 40:8)

**Text:** Therefore, leaving the elementary message about the Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, <sup>2</sup>teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup>And we will do this if God permits.

<sup>4</sup>For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>tasted God’s good word and the powers of the coming age, <sup>6</sup>and who have fallen away, because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt. <sup>7</sup>For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for receives a blessing from God. <sup>8</sup>But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and will be burned at the end.

<sup>9</sup>Even though we are speaking this way, dear friends, in your case we are confident of the better things connected with salvation.

**Introduction:** Many consider the book of Hebrews to be one of the most complex books in the New Testament. Our unfamiliarity with the Old Testament sacrificial system is probably one of the issues that makes this a difficult book. In addition, the “warning” or “apostasy” passages also cause great concern for some. We can make the book much easier to understand if we understand the context of the original letter. The Book of Hebrews, written by an author unknown to us, was written to encourage Christians to persevere in their faith in the midst of persecution. Even though the recipients of the letter were victims of persecution, the call of the author is for them to persevere in their faith. Nothing, even persecution, should detract them from following Christ. Salvation through Christ is and was so superior to every aspect of their former religion, that they would be fools not to persevere in their commitment to Christ.

Our text today is from one of the more difficult chapters of this difficult book but in the end it gives us something pretty basic about which to think.

For the original hearers of Hebrews, they lived in a time of crisis. First, there was a theological crisis. People were struggling to identify exactly who Jesus was. Second, it was a time of political crisis. Christians were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ. This political crisis brought about a personal crisis for believers in Jesus. Finally, the church was in crisis. People were leaving the church confused and disappointed. Let's see: theological crisis, political crisis, and church crisis of people abandoning their spiritual convictions. One might say that this letter is written just to folks like us.

My sermon's topic and content revolve around the four words in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse – **“things that accompany salvation.” (As the NKJV puts it.)** This scripture gives an illustration to those of that day who were primarily farmers and agrarian people. They understood what he was saying when he spoke of some areas that received the same rain attention that others received and bore good fruit. Some produced thorns, thistles and briars. He then takes this agrarian illustration to challenge the first century Christians to display in every way, **“the things that accompany salvation.”**

Do you realize that almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus spoke the words, **“Go into all the world and make disciples, and when you do that, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”?** Do you realize that there are more lost people on the face of the planet Earth today than there were when Jesus spoke those words? To be sure, there are many more people, but there are more unsaved, nonbelievers on the planet Earth on which we live today than there were when Jesus said, **“Go into all the world and make disciples.”**

Have you ever wondered why? There may be many factors, but I truly believe that the cynical world has not seen the clear evidence in our lives that Christ and the Gospel have truly made a difference. Our conduct is not in step with our creed. What we do in life negates what we say we are. They don't see the clear evidence in our lives that Christ has really changed us.

Alexander the Great, the young man who was literally the conqueror of the known world of his day, had a young soldier who was being court-martialed. It so happened that Alexander the Great, himself, was seated in the courtroom observing the court-martial procedure. He saw an unkempt soldier with a rusty scabbard where his sword had been, and the charges were read of, “Abandoning the army in the heat of battle.” Alexander asked him what his name was. Upon learning that it was Alexander, he said, “Change your conduct or change your name.”

My friends, there are certain essential, necessary, obligatory and mandatory things that must accompany salvation. There are many, but let me suggest four to you this morning.

**A Divine Change** God must enter the human life. Christianity is more than making a change. It is being changed. Christianity is not synonymous with church membership. We often use the word, “simple plan of salvation.” There's nothing wrong with that statement because simple child-like faith is what really procures our salvation for us. But never forget that even though receiving Christ is a simple step of faith, when we exercise that child-like faith in the divine Son of God, what takes place in our lives is nothing short of a transcendent, supernatural miracle. It is so radical and so different that Jesus, Himself, used the word “new birth” to describe the beginning of the Christian life.

There is only one explanation for these changes: The divine change. God entered the human life and changed the person totally and completely.

**A Genuine and Sincere Love** Listen to these Scriptures.

**I John 3:14: “We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brethren abides in death.”**

**I John 4:7: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”**

Jesus said, **“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples because you love one another.”**

God can bless any kind of church in the world – a poor church, a black church, a white church, an integrated church, a city church, a country church, an educated church, an uneducated church, a traditional church, a non-traditional church. But He cannot bless a divided church. Where there is contention and discord, revival and the presence of the Spirit of God no longer exist.

We live in a fractured world that is full of bitterness, antagonism, and animosity. This fractured world needs to look in on a community of believers and see unity, accord, and commonality, togetherness and fellowship.

**A Surrendered Life** This is something we talk about little and practice even less. Jesus was quoting the Old Testament when He said, **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

There’s an astonishing scripture in **Luke 14:25-27 and Verse 33:**

**“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, “if anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his Father and Mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. “And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”**

The surrendered life means that Jesus is first place in every area of life. **Is there anything in my life that does not *right now* belong to God?** That is the question we must ask if we are going to continue to be completely surrendered to God. Is there a habit, a relationship, anything that there is no way that you could say completely belongs to God.?

This idea of surrender is a serious thing. At the end of WWII, Germany was surrounded by the Allied Forces. A few days after Hitler’s suicide, the Germans surrendered to the Allies. The actual wording of the surrender document contains these words: The German Command agrees for all German forces to lay down their arms and to surrender unconditionally. Furthermore, the Germans agreed to “carry out at once, and without argument or comment, all further orders that will be issued by the Allied Powers on any subject.” Are you willing to say that to God?<sup>1</sup>

**A Soul Winning Desire** It is impossible to meet Jesus and not want someone else to meet Him, too. Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

At the end of this letter to the Hebrews, we read, “Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” (Hebrews 13:12-13) Jesus was led out of Jerusalem—symbolically He was

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<sup>1</sup> From Sermon by David O. Dykes, “Surrender Your Trust,” January 9, 2005. Information verified on web from multiple sources.

rejected by the establishment. Jesus now calls us to go outside the camp. The kingdom has its future not inside, but outside the camp. A world in crisis is no time to huddle. Instead, we must go outside the camp.

**CONCLUSION:** How many of you now understand that the things that accompany salvation require a divine change?

1. God has to come into your life and make you different.
2. You must have a genuine and sincere love for all your fellow man.
3. You must have a totally surrendered life to the will of God.
4. You must carry with you till the last day of your life a soul-winning desire.

Think on these things. Check your life and your service and ministry for the Lord in the light of these powerful words from the Holy Scriptures.