

Often when I am preaching, there's more I want to say about something. I know you expected Dan this morning and he will be here next week as Don and I take our vacation which includes the next two Sundays starting tomorrow.

Will you allow me to go back and highlight some things from last Sunday's sermon? I believe the Question that I asked you last week is one of the most important questions we will ever answer.

What do you believe? And does that belief change the way we do life?

Probably the very first thing we must settle in our hearts and minds, is do we believe in God? Have you wrestled with that and have you come to a belief? You might say to me...How can we believe in the One who we can't see? Listen to what Romans 1:20 says:

For ever since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through His workmanship [all His creation, the wonderful things that He has made], so that they [who fail to believe and trust in Him] are without excuse *and* without defense.

Somehow in your spirit, don't you know that's true? Haven't there been times when something stirs you deeper than you have words for?

Somehow you know there is a God and He has just touched your heart.

But that's not enough....that's just Him calling to you.

Do you believe the Bible? Seriously, Is this true? You can't just pick out the parts you want...Is it true? All of it? Did God really speak the world into existence? Was there really an Adam and Eve? Was there really a great flood? Is there really a Heaven and Hell? And is God Holy? Does our sin separate us from God?

It's what the bible says. Do you believe the bible?
I presume your answer is still yes?

Then are you a Christian? Do you know whether or not you are a Christian and if you died today that you would go to heaven?
I'm serious...these are important questions and you can know.

Let's settle that.

For just a few moments this morning I want to take you to the gospel of John.

If you were to google the word believe in the bible....it occurs some 280 time in the Bible. It's spread throughout both the Old and New Testaments but there are only 4 books that it is mentioned more than 15 times. Mark's gospel it is mentioned 15 times. Romans 23 times....Acts 41 times but then you come to the gospel of John and believe is mentioned 85 times. In case that doesn't give you some kind of hint, listen to why John said he wrote this book.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John wanted you to know that Jesus was the real deal and that if you will believe in Him you can have eternal life.

In John's gospel is where we read the most familiar verse in scripture: John 3:16-18¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Vs 36: ³⁶ Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

Because of sin, and we have all sinned... we are under God's wrath..but because He loves us...He sent us a way to be reconciled to Him. Jesus

This is what it looks like..... this is how it played out in my life. As a child I was taken to church from the time I was born. One day I can't tell you when, I was sitting in church or listening to the radio...we didn't have TV and

mom only listened to Christian radio.... But somewhere God's words penetrated my mind and heart and I knew that I was a sinner and that I was going to hell. But I also heard the message that Jesus came to take away my sin...to wash me white as snow and if I would ask him to forgive me and if I asked Jesus to come and live in my heart...He would and I could go to heaven. So I did. The problem was I wasn't told the whole story. When I became God's child, I was given everything I needed to live like God's daughter.

The amplified bible reads this way in II Peter 1:3

³ For His divine power has bestowed on us [absolutely] everything necessary for [a dynamic spiritual] life and godliness, through true *and* personal knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

I didn't know I didn't have to sin. I didn't know I had His power living in me. And so I would get right with God on Sunday and by the next Sunday I would have to do it all over again. Just ask Konnie....or my kids... I was not nice and I wasn't allowing God or His word to change me. Paul's words in Romans 7 were my words:

¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

But I didn't read the next Verse!!!!

²⁵ Thanks be to God [for my deliverance] through Jesus Christ our Lord!

What I couldn't do...Christ did for me!

Listen to how chapter 8 begins! This is good news!!!!

⁸ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

I believe in Jesus Christ! And with all my heart I want to follow Him. I want Him to be pleased with my life.

I am very competitive. To the point of being obsessed. I like to win. If we are playing a game and I am losing. I don't want to play that game anymore right now... I want to play a different game and if I'm winning... I don't want to quit. I have a brother that I love deeply. But I hate it when he wins. It is my goal in life to beat him. I'm not evil. I would never cheat just so I could win... I would never hurt my brother so that I could win.... I would never kill him just so that I would win.

That's not true of the devil! He will cheat... He will hurt you... He will kill you. He will lie to you. He is evil!!!

Don and I have been given an incredible gift in this time away in New Mexico. I know it's from God. There are some things on my heart that I just want to get away and pray about. We could not have afforded this....just the plane tickets and car rental are over \$2000. Let alone the 5 bedroom 4 bath house in a resort area in the mountains of New Mexico. And it's all provided for us. My heart should be so full and it is, but I can't begin to tell you the battle that has been going on in my mind. You don't deserve this. You shouldn't go. Your plane is going to crash. You're going to get altitude sickness. I have hardly ever felt so much torment. I didn't even share it with Don because I didn't want to steal his joy. And I found myself taking it out on the dog. Ugly parts of me

and then I heard the words, “see...how horrible you are!” In the midst of all this, I could hear God calling me...softly...but the voices in my head were so loud I could barely hear Him. Two things were a turn-around for me.

I don't know if I told you but I couldn't find my Bible after I had been to family camp and I looked everywhere. Don and I both called the camp to ask them if they had found it or someone had turned it in. It's my favorite Bible and I know it's a little ratty but It speaks to me. Two nights ago I had a dream that I found it in my purse and I was so happy. It was a dream. But that day there was a package in the mail from the District office and as soon as I felt it, I knew it was my bible and I sobbed...It was so like God to give it back to me when I needed it the most. It was tangible proof that God loved me. And would care for me no matter what! The second thing was something I read in a devotional book. Can I read it to you? It goes along with what I am trying to share with you this morning. I'm sorry it's long.

Now I want to show you a most remarkable image. When Paul was talking about putting on the armor of God in Ephesians 6 By the time we get to verse 17 he has already talked about the loin belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace and the shield of faith. Then he tells us about the Roman helmet of salvation!

The Roman soldier's helmet was a fascinating and flamboyant piece of armor, very ornate and intricate. Highly decorated with all kinds of engravings and etchings, the helmet looked more like a beautiful piece of

artwork than a simple piece of metal formed to fit the head of a soldier.

Furthermore, as if these fabulous engravings and etchings were not enough, a huge plume of brightly colored feathers or horse hair stood straight up from the top of the helmet. If the helmet was designed to be used in a public ceremony or parade, this brightly colored plume could be very long—long enough to hang all the way down the soldier's back!

The helmet was made of bronze and was equipped with pieces of armor that were specifically designed to protect the cheeks and jaws. It was extremely heavy; therefore, the interior of the helmet was lined with sponge in order to soften its weight on the soldier's head. This piece of armor was so strong, so massive, and so heavy that nothing could pierce it—not even a hammer or a battle-ax.

It would be very hard to walk past one of these soldiers without taking note of him. It would be hard not to notice a man who had a piece of sculpture on his head or who wore a helmet with a brightly colored plume standing straight up on top of it! Yes, these helmets made the Roman soldier noticeable!

Why would the Holy Spirit compare a piece of weaponry like this to salvation? Because your salvation is the most gorgeous, most intricate, most elaborate, most ornate gift God ever gave to you!

Paul calls this marvelous gift "the helmet of salvation." He likened salvation to these flamboyant helmets that were worn on the head where everyone would notice. By

using this example, Paul is telling us something very important. When a person is confident of his salvation—and when he walks confidently in the powerful reality of all that salvation means for him—he is a noticeable individual!

But why did a Roman soldier need a helmet that was so tightly wrapped about his head? This kind of helmet was essential because the Roman soldier's opponent carried a short-handled ax called a battle-ax—and when battle-axes were used, heads rolled!

If the Roman soldier didn't have a helmet on when he went out to fight, he could be absolutely sure that he would lose his head. Thus, the Roman helmet was not merely a beautiful piece of weaponry but a defensive weapon designed to save a man's head.

That's exactly what salvation will do for you when you wear it like a helmet on your head! But if you don't walk in all that your salvation entails, you may feel the brunt of the enemy's battle-ax as he comes to attack your mind and steal your victory.

That's exactly what was happening to me this last week! I did not have on my helmet of salvation.

Where is those guys who put buckets on their heads...I could have used one!