

# ...BELIEF

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer

It is utterly out of the question that any man could ever save himself. Of course, it depends on what we mean by “being saved.” If it is merely to make oneself a little better citizen in this world, perhaps with a good deal of effort one could bring that to pass. But if it is a matter of writing one’s name in heaven, of forgiving one’s sin forever, of imparting eternal life, or of clothing one’s self in the righteousness of God, surely we must declare—if we are honest at all—that this is something we cannot do.

And, we are just as ready to admit that all the people in the world put together—should they undertake to do this for us—could not approach one of these things. God alone is able to save. The whole plan and thought of saving sinners originated with God. It never originated with man. They hardly identify it when it is brought to them, and oftentimes they have no response to it at all.

With God, this proposition of saving sinners is the most intrinsic, the most enticing, and the most desirable thing. All His love is expressed in that salvation. It is the outlet of His infinite love toward the sinner. To Him that plan of saving the lost is more important than it could be to all of those that are lost put together. It’s worthwhile to fix in our mind that the salvation of one’s soul means more to God than it means ever to the soul. It means more to God to have us saved than it means to all the saved people together.

**“The whole plan and thought of saving sinners originated with God. It never originated with man.”**

It is His great satisfaction in the exercise of His love in behalf of us. And because He loves us, He has devised this. He has taken away the hindrances which we could not remove. All this unworthiness, all this intense sinfulness as seen by His holy eye, is removed. He Himself did this long, long ago—before ever we were born.

He prepared the situation into which we should come and provided the salvation which would be unhindered by our sins. People are constantly saying, “Oh, I am not worthy to be a Christian. I am not worthy.” But friend, every unworthy thing that you can name, or God can name, in your life has been taken by the Son of God onto the cross and borne for you. The only other thing that hinders God’s infinite love from saving you is your own will.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life . . . He that believeth on him is not condemned. . . . These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (John 3:16, 18; 20:31; Acts 16:31, KJV). These words are only a fraction of what the New Testament declares.

Upwards of one hundred and fifty passages in the New Testament condition our salvation upon the one thing: believing. Nothing else. It is ruinous, tragic to add anything. Just the one thing: “believe . . . and thou shalt be saved.” Thirty-five passages use another word, which is of course just a synonym, and that is “faith.”

**“It means more to God to have us saved than it means to all the saved people together.”**

This great principle of turning from confidence in ourselves or anything else and looking directly to the Lord Jesus Christ—the only qualified Savior in all this universe—that principle of looking to Him is *faith* or *believing*.

The great apostle described his attitude when he said, “I know whom I have believed.” I have believed Him, He is my Savior. He has told me of His saving grace, and I believe it. It answers all the burdens and the distress of my heart and life forever. I believe on Him.

Now there are constantly those who are insisting that there must be something added to this one simple requirement of believing. “You must believe and repent,” or “you must believe and pray,” and so on.

But dear friend, if that were true, if anything were to be added to the one requirement of believing, then every one of these one hundred and fifty passages are incomplete. And if that were true, when Christ told Nicodemus that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life,” Christ was only telling Nicodemus a part of the truth and left him stranded without knowing it all.

And when Paul and Silas said to that Philippian jailer when he asked, "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," were they giving him only a partial statement? Are they to be reprimanded for having misguided this poor man and leaving something so important out?

**“But friend, every unworthy thing that you can name, or God can name, in your life has been taken by the Son of God onto the cross and borne for you.”**

My dear friend, never confuse the issue of the greatest passages of the New Testament that have to do with the human responsibility in this question of being saved. It is just one and only one thing. Believe. Why?

Because that's the only thing we can do. The other things add nothing at all. Shall I have to soften God with my tears? Must I persuade Him with my pleading? Have I got to make a public display in what I think? All of this is utter folly when we are dealing with God in a matter of this kind.

Look at the great elements that make up our salvation: our name is written in heaven, our eternal life is bestowed, our sins are forgiven, and we are clothed in the righteousness of God. Who is going to do this?

God said that He will do it through Jesus Christ. It's made possible on the grounds of what Christ did for us on the cross. Therefore, I can't add anything. There is nothing for me to cooperate in. There's not some teamwork here in which I do my part and He does His part. I fall helplessly and hopelessly at His feet and into His hands and His arms.

**“It's made possible on the grounds of what Christ did for us on the cross. Therefore, I can't add anything.”**

I simply commit myself to the saving grace of God as it is through Jesus Christ our Lord. He never refused one who came like that. Therefore, once more, I leave the word definitely, definitely upon you today. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”



The capstone of Lewis Sperry Chafer's life as a musician, evangelist, and Bible conference speaker—in addition to founding and teaching theology at DTS—was the publication of his eight-volume *Systematic Theology*, the last of his books. Dr. Chafer's presence was a blessing and benediction to his students. He served as the first president of DTS from 1924 to 1952.