

Baptism and Membership Service of Jorgi Klockow

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 June 2007

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Georgie and Dan, you're on a journey. You've taken the first steps on the way to heaven. You've repented of your sins. You've put all your hopes on the Lord Jesus to save you.

And you're walking on that narrow road then that leads to life. You set your faces like flint, fully intending to reach heaven at last.

But between you and there are many dangers. As friendly and as nice as you both are, you have many serious enemies.

There are many who oppose you, whose goal it is to keep you from getting to heaven. And the Bible tells you about that threefold enemy.

The world, the flesh, the devil. Ephesians 2, 1-3 and many other places. There are devils, fallen angels, who will tempt you and seek to lure you astray.

[1:04] They will trick you. They will deceive you. They will lie to you. And even Christians can fall into their traps when they're not watchful and fully armed.

Remember, we were told in Ephesians 6 to put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.

It's not just against other human beings that sometimes oppose us. But our struggle is against the rulers and against the authorities and against the powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

And to become a Christian is to draw the attention of the enemies in spiritual places. When a sinner repents, the angels in heaven rejoice, but the fallen angels in hell snarl with hatred.

That's one of your enemies. The devil and all of his fallen angels. But then there's the world. The world, what someone called corporate flesh. You know how wicked your own flesh is?

[2:16] Put it all together. Corporate flesh. The world system. All unbelievers. And they all serve the enemy cause.

Many of them unknowingly. But they too are agents of darkness to turn you aside. To get you to ignore God. To ignore His Word.

To get you to seek pleasures outside of Christ and outside of the boundaries of His

commandments. To get you interested in other things so as to give up your journey to heaven.

The world is a dangerous place to live in. And its very atmosphere is harmful to spiritual life. The devil.

The world. And then there's the flesh. Perhaps the worst enemy of all. Because it's the traitor on the inside. It's the traitor on the inside that agrees with the devil and the world that loves sin and hates righteousness.

[3:21] And it's because it lives on the inside that its workings often go unnoticed. And its voice passes without suspicion. So there are these three enemies. And they all stand in the way.

The narrow way. Not wanting Dan or Georgie to make it to heaven. And on top of that, you have all the tribulations and troubles that will come. You know, Paul says, it is through much tribulation and hardship that we must enter the kingdom.

So there's not only these enemies, but there's hardships. There's things that will be very hard for you to take. Hard to understand. Things that will try your faith to the very quick and the very limit.

And you'll wonder, shall I go on? These hardships. And crosses to bear. Self-denying costs.

Dan, you spoke about it. Friends. They're going the wrong way. That's one of the costs of discipleship. And it's not over. There are costs all along the way to heaven. Am I going to follow Jesus or am I going to go the world's way?

[4:24] And every time, it's costly to the flesh. It's not what the flesh wants. Well, you have that as well to turn you aside. And then there are many who appear to make a start like you who never

finish the race.

Some who profess to be Christians. Who were baptized. Some of them in this very baptismal that you were baptized in. Who are not following the Lord at all. They've apostatized.

They've turned their back on Jesus and gone back to the world. And you see all of this and you may begin to wonder, am I ever going to make it to the end? Will my little ship make it through this storm and all these rocks and land in heaven at last?

Or will I be dashed by my enemies, by my own folly, by the world, the devil? If that's all the Bible had to say, it would be a very discouraging thing for us today.

As we see you, new Christians, just setting out, taking your first steps of the journey, we would, oh, we would just shake our heads. Because we know what's out there. We know what's against you.

[5:33] But the Bible has more to say than who and what is against us, doesn't it? Yes, there's a threefold enemy against you, but there is a threefold friend that's for you.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The whole Trinity is combined in their wisdom, power, and love to see you make it safely to heaven at last.

The Bible has enough to say to you as you face this journey today to cause you to face it with confidence and assurance that you will safely reach the end and look face to face upon your Savior. We have many passages in Scriptures that we could turn to. Because if God before you, who can be against you? And greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

And we've seen what our Savior did to our enemy, triumphing over Him on the cross. And we share in His victory. Well, these things are written for your encouragement, as is our text this morning.

[6:40] And we're returning to the book of Philippians once more. And I just leave you with this meditation from Philippians 1 and verse 6. That familiar promise, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.

So though you're a new Christian, just taking your first new steps, a bit wobbly, yet here is given to you confidence and strong assurance that you will make it safely to heaven at last.

Notice this confidence is in God and not yourself. Just two points. First, God is the one who began the work of salvation in you. And secondly, God is the one who will carry it on to completion.

First, God's the one who began this great work, this good work of salvation in you. He who began a good work in you. What's the good work He's talking about? Well, it's salvation.

It's a good work, isn't it? There really are no works that compare to it. Creation is a great and a good work. But the new creation is a better work.

[7:54] To be saved from a tragic accident, to be saved from a deadly disease would be a good work. But to be saved from sin and guilt, to be saved from coming under the wrath of God, to be saved from a fruitless life, a wasted life, and an eternity in hell, this indeed is a good work beyond telling.

He has begun a good work in you, the work of salvation. And God's the one who's begun that work. God is the one who saves. Now that ought to go without saying, but it needs to be said over and over again.

God is the only one that saves. Jonah said it, salvation is of the Lord. What do you mean by that, Jonah? He contributes a little and you contribute a little?

Think of Jonah. What did he contribute to his salvation? Well, the rebelliousness, the sin that brought the storm upon the sea, that brought God's frowning providence in causing these sailors to throw him overboard.

And now he's out in the billows, he's bobbing like a cork, and he's getting his breath, and now he's going under, and he's choking, and he's going up and down, and now he's going down for the last time. And he's sinking lower and lower down to the seaweed, to the very depths of the earth, he says.

[9:27] What did you contribute to your salvation, Jonah? Absolutely nothing, but the sin that required the salvation. He's going down, and God prepares the big fish to swallow him, to keep him alive for three days and three nights.

And Jonah's praying like he never prayed before those three days and three nights. He's praying in the fish, and then God commands the fish, and it vomits out Jonah onto the shore.

And in that prayer of Jonah, prayer that he prayed in the belly of the fish, comes to the end of chapter 2, and he says, this is what happened to me.

Salvation is of the Lord. It's all of the Lord. He's the one who began the good work in you. You contributed nothing, even as Jonah contributed nothing.

The very faith with which you trusted in the Savior is a gift of God to you. The very grace of repentance. You didn't have it. You just testified to us that God's word came to you and you went your way rather than his way.

[10 : 36] But when grace came, now when you sin, you repent. It's the grace of repentance, and it too is given to you. Salvation is the work that God has begun.

You told us how God got your attention in one way or another. How he awakened you to your plight, your need of him, you thought you knew him then, you thought you didn't need him, but then you came to see, I don't have what it takes.

I am lost. I don't love Christ. I don't want to be safe from my sins. You came to see your need for a Savior. And he brought you to your senses. He opened your eyes so that you began to see glory where you saw none before.

George, you used to pray that you'd get sick on Sundays so you wouldn't have to listen to God's Word. What is that? That's the heart that's in every one of us by birth. We'd rather be elsewhere. We'd rather be doing anything but this. Then God plants a seed of love in your heart for His Word. And now you see God's talking to you, and God is making sense about your sin and about your need for a Savior.

[11 : 46] And He taught you how perfectly Jesus Christ meets your need as a sinner for forgiveness, for eternal life. It was God who worked in your heart, changed you, made you spiritually alive with new desires in your hearts for Him.

And so you entered through the narrow gate, which is Christ, and now you're on the narrow road that leads to life. And you already partake of that life in principle. For you know Christ now. And knowing Him is life eternal. Knowing the Father. You've already passed from life to death. There's no condemnation for those in Christ. Salvation for you is of the Lord, even as it was for Jonah.

But there's something more. The work's just begun. And that's a hint to us that this work of salvation isn't complete. And it's not complete in them as it's not complete in me.

But He's begun the work in us. And that is a reminder that there's more to God's salvation than what any of us have ever experienced to this point.

[12 : 53] There's more to the race than the start. There's more to the war than the first day of battle. There's more to life than your birth. And even so, there's more to salvation than its beginning in the new birth.

There's more than initial faith and repentance. There's ongoing faith and repentance. There's more to salvation than regeneration and justification.

There's sanctification and glorification. There are more spiritual battles to fight, more likeness to Christ to gain, more grace to grow in, more to add to your faith, more to do in His service, many more miles to run.

And that's what we're talking about, this journey. It's just begun. And young Christians at the outset of this race may look at the course and be filled with doubts and fears about being able to finish the race.

But here's something to make you run the race, every step of the race, even your first steps, with confidence. And that's the second point, because the same one who began the good work in you is the one who promises to complete this good work of salvation.

[14 : 00] He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. Until the day of Christ Jesus. Do you understand what that's promising? There's coming a day that is going to be so much centered around the person of Jesus Christ that it's called the day of Christ Jesus.

Now, He's not thought much of today, and so this is not the day of Christ Jesus. But that day, He will be seen and acknowledged by all.

And in the day of Christ Jesus, you will still be found in Christ. That's what's being promised. That dread day, that horrifying day when Christ splits the heavens and comes to earth to a people who have not given Him the time of day, and they realize the day of judgment is upon them.

in that day, you will be found in Christ, still persevering, because He who started the work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

The day of Christ Jesus. He carries on the work.

[15:12] What God begins, He finishes. That means He's not whimsical. He doesn't just start something and then lose interest and walk away. He didn't start your salvation and then somehow lose interest.

You know, it wasn't last summer that God decided to save you, Dan. It wasn't just one day last summer that God said, I think I'm going to save Dan Wessner today. Ephesians 1 and verse 4 says, before the world was created, He chose you in Christ.

Chose to save you. When you were nothing more than a thought in the mind of God, before anything was made that was made, just a thought, yes, there will be a Dan Wessner.

Dave and Eileen will be his parents. And I'm going to save him through the merits of my son Jesus and make him my son. And then he sent his son, sent him to the cross and he came to die and to pay your price, the price you paid, owed for sin.

And then, yes, one day last year he sent his spirit to you to make you alive in Christ, to make you trust in that Savior. and now he's continuing that work that he started in your lives.

[16:27] Today, he's continuing it. Today, he's strengthening that faith. And he's promised to carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Now, the question is, can he do it? You see, he's gone on record saying, I will do it. I am going to make you just like my son. He's predestined you to be conformed to the image of his son.

He's promised since he started the work he'll continue it until Christ returns. Well, can he do it?

That's really the question that's left now. Can he pull it off? Can he bring it to pass as he's planned it?

Can he keep you from falling away? Can he keep your faith from failing? Can he keep you from being snatched out of his hand?

Well, to ask the questions is to answer them, isn't it? Yes, he can keep you from falling. Now, to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before his throne with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ.

[17:38] Is he able to keep you from being snatched away? Yes, you're safe in Christ's hand and the Father's hand so that no one can snatch you from him. Jesus said that he will not lose any of all that the Father has given him but will raise them up at the last day.

And so, these questions, will I make it? To ask them is to see them answered in Scripture because God's honor is at stake here and this should be to your great comfort as new Christians.

Will I make it to heaven? I'm throwing all my eggs in this one basket that Jesus is strong enough to take me there but if he fails, I fail. Will I make it?

Well, the thing that ought to encourage you is that God's own honor is at stake. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are committed to getting you to heaven. Can they do it? He will not be called to his own and his own He cannot disown himself.

His honor is on the line. He can't act contradictory to his own nature. He's faithful. He will not let his word fall to the ground. He'll not be called a liar.

[18:57] He'll not let one of his promises fail from fulfillment. And that's why your ultimate salvation is so certain and why you can face this Christian life with such certainty and assurance.

God is not a man that He should lie. In fact, it's impossible that He should lie. As He promised to take you home, He'll take you all the way. And that means whenever you stray.

Here's the narrow way, Dan and Georgie, but now look, you're straying. Well, whenever you stray, this good shepherd will come after you and He'll call you back. Come back.

Here's my way. Walk in it. Sometimes you won't listen to Him. So He's got a crook in His staff and He'll put it right around your neck and He'll pull you and tug you.

And sometimes you'll still be stubborn pulling away. He's got a rod and a staff and they are your comfort to know that He will discipline you.

[19:57] And see to it that you get back in the way. He'll never let you stray and go right on back to the world. Never let you forget heaven and the journey there in the Christ you're waiting to see.

He'll always bring you back. Whenever you fall, He'll renew your repentance. He'll warm your hearts to come back to Him and to confess, Lord, I was wrong.

Forgive me. He'll do that for you. And when Satan would sift you like wheat, He'll pray for you that your faith will not fail. Hebrews 7.25, therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because He always lives to intercede for you.

He's always living. He's always, we saw it in Sunday school, His eye is always on you. He never slumbers or sleeps. And when you stray, He'll be there to bring you back. He'll be there to encourage you along the way.

There to fight against your enemies for you. He'll be there to receive you into glory at last. He's put His Holy Spirit in you and His Spirit will move you to follow His decrees and to be careful to keep His laws, Ezekiel 36 says.

[21 : 05] Jeremiah 32.40, I will never stop doing them good and I will inspire them to fear Me so that they will never turn away from Me. You see, it's not because of you and who you are and how strong your faith is.

That's not the reason that you can face your journey with such confidence. It's because of your Savior. His determination and His power and His love and His faithfulness. And He says, I'm going to work in your heart in such a way that your hearts will be inspired to revere Me such that you will never turn your back on Me altogether and walk away.

Yes, He is able to keep you from falling. And He who began the good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

What a salvation. What a Savior. So, brother and sister, as you're at the very outset of your journey, run the race looking to Jesus.

Run with confidence expecting Him to carry you all the way home. He'll get the job done. He's called the author and finisher of our faith.

[22 : 15] Well, if you're here today without this Savior, there's no way you're going to make it to heaven, is there? Even these are only going to make it by the grace of God through the work of Christ.

I invite you to that Savior. Put your trust in Him. Let's sing to God be the glory. Great things He has taught us. Great things He has done.

We sing it in acknowledgement that everything that we have heard testified to by these two young people today is the work of our great God.