PREACHING & TEACHING

Sermon on Salvation

Preaching notes on salvation, organised around two questions most sermons on the subject assume rather than answer: saved from what, and saved into what. Includes why the New Testament uses all three tenses and what that does to a congregation raised on a single moment.

topic notes · 4 segments

Topic notes. The three-tense material in movement two is what separates this from an altar call with exposition attached.

BEFORE YOU RECORD

- Congregations raised on a single decision moment often carry quiet anxiety about whether theirs counted. The three-tense reading in movement two addresses that directly and is worth the whole sermon for those people.
- If you make an appeal, make it possible to respond without standing up in front of everyone. The number of people who will respond privately and never publicly is larger than most preachers assume.

01. Three texts, three costs

choose one

[Luke 19 makes it concrete and financial]

Ephesians 2:8-9. By grace, through faith, not of works. Compact and doctrinal.

Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus. Salvation announced over a house, immediately after a man gives away half his property and repays what he extorted fourfold. Costs you the abstraction and makes it awkwardly material.

Romans 10:9-13. Confess and believe. The most quoted and the one most likely to be heard as a formula, which is a risk you should handle explicitly.

02. Three tenses

the useful move

[this settles a lot of private anxiety]

The New Testament says have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved, in different places, about the same people. Past, present and future, held together without embarrassment.

A congregation taught only the past tense will measure everything against one remembered moment and worry when it feels distant. Preaching all three gives them a life rather than an anniversary.

03. Saved from what, into what

the questions to answer

[most sermons answer neither]

Answer both explicitly. A sermon that leaves the first vague makes salvation sound like insurance, and one that leaves the second vague makes it sound like an exit rather than an entry.

Note that in Luke 19 the into is visible before anybody mentions the from. Zacchaeus is described as saved after he does something about his money, not before, and the order is worth sitting with rather than explaining away.

04. The trap

avoid this

[the transaction]

Salvation as a completed transaction with nothing following. It produces congregations full of people who responded once, years ago, and have been waiting ever since for someone to tell them what it was for.

USAGE

Free to use. Preach it, adapt it, record it, publish under your own name. No credit required.

Record it with Hilite — hellohilite.com

Studio-quality audio from your laptop mic. Free to start.