

We continue on from last week where Hopeful is sharing with Christian how he came to personal belief in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Please make sure you read it first so [click here, scroll down to Chapter 32 and read pages 175 to 177.](#)

ONLY BELIEVE! Salvation in Jesus is on God’s terms, not human initiative, religious performance or accomplishments. **John 1:12-13** says: *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD.”* Our pride, self-righteousness and human will, blind us to this most simple gift given by God to us. John Bunyan reveals the intense conflict of the human soul in becoming born again. Everything in the human nature struggles for 100 per cent surrender to God. It’s a deliverance from the ‘domain of darkness’ to ‘the kingdom of His beloved Son’, Colossians 1:13. When you get born again you go through a deliverance session! It’s not a prayer said on a whim or by the pressure of your peers, it’s when you’ve come to the end of yourself. It’s all about God – not about you. After all, none of us come to God on our own. It’s been Jesus drawing us by the power of Holy Spirit that we even WANT to come to God and be saved. **John 6:44** says; *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”* **Acts 4:12** says: *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

Hopeful describes his struggle of intense knocking and seeking, knowing that Jesus is the only righteous one by whom he can be saved. But he doesn’t understand, doesn’t know what to do and yet he keeps on praying although satans temptations for him to quit are every near. Christian asks him if he had ever considered quitting praying. Have you quit praying that Christ be revealed to you? It’s a trap of the devil to make you think God doesn’t hear you. God does hear you, he’s looking for your desperation and earnest cry to be saved and leave the sin of the world. Remember some of the other characters such as Obstinate, Pliable, Timorous and Mistrust? They all quit seeking and knocking for Christ to be revealed to them. There is no prescribed ‘amount’ of time before being converted, nor are there “set requirements” to prepare yourself as some religions require, but God is looking at the heart! **Jeremiah 24:7** says; *“Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.”* Hopeful needed to wait for the revelation of Christ in his heart! **Matthew 11:27** is so clear when Jesus says; *“All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”* Do you comprehend that? It’s personal and individual and Jesus reveals himself as **Galatians 2:20** shows speaking of the Apostle Paul; *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*! He loved us FIRST and GAVE HIMSELF for us FIRST! We didn’t initiate salvation, God did it first through Jesus Christ!

You’ve heard it said by people that ‘the lights went on’. That’s what transpires with Hopeful on a specific ‘day’. Christ was revealed to him in his heart at the darkest time in his life. In the darkness of the depravity of sin, you see the wickedness and vileness of your heart and mind; you may despair for your life; you may be in such utter depression you can’t get out of bed or you live with self-hatred. You think you’re too ugly and dirty inside for God to love you and for His grace to be extended to you, and moreover you may push people away from you because you believe they won’t even love you! It’s like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they ate the forbidden fruit and their nakedness was exposed. They didn’t want God to look at them. They tried to hide from God because they knew they were now defiled, dirty and sinful. With a note of sarcasm here; why do you hide when God is the one who knit you together in your mother’s womb, He knows when you stand and sit, He even knows your thoughts before their on your mind ([Psalm 139](#))? He knows how many hair you have on your head ([Matthew 10:30](#))! Don’t you think He is well aware of your sin and how wretched you are? I think so! **Ephesians 4:17-18**; *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, having given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”* If you’re born again, do you remember that ‘one day’ in your life? You’re life story changed in ‘one day’. **II Corinthians 4:6** says; *“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

So, on that 'day', Jesus called Hopeful. He says these simple words; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." ([Acts 16:30-31](#)) The invitation was extremely personal, almost like Jesus was calling him by his name. But amidst all of this love and light being revealed, Hopeful still goes on to list reasons of 'why not' to be saved!

1) "I'm a very great sinner" But Jesus said to come by grace. II Corinthians 12:9 "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Jesus says in **John 6:37**; "If you come and welcome me, I will [welcome you and] not turn you away."

2) "What is it exactly to believe?" It means to come, to eat and to drink. **John 6:35** "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'" **John 7:37** "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

3) How do I come to you? You clearly come to Jesus on His terms as I mentioned earlier.

- **He** is the Saviour of sinners; not a religious guide, trendsetter or another prophet, **Luke 5:32** "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."
- **He** is the end of the law for righteous; no works are required, it's a free gift, **Romans 5:17 and 10:4**; "For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the GIFT of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.", "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."
- **He** rose again for our justification; we've been made in right standing with God. You've maybe heard justified described this way, "just-as-if-I've" never sinned! **Philippians 3:8-9** "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."
- **He** loved us and washed us of our sins; remember, you didn't love Him first. You can only love because He first loved you! **I John 1:7** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."
- **He** is the mediator between God and us; **I Timothy 2:5**; "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." **I Peter 1:20-21** "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God"
- **He** ever lives to make intercession for us; **Hebrews 7:24-25** says; "But He, because he continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." You have a personal intercessor!

We see that all along, Hopeful was relying on **his** own righteousness, righteous acts ... it was all about him, what he could do and what he could believe in. There was A LOT of him that had to get out of the way before he could come to terms that it was ALL about Jesus and what HE DID! It was utter abandonment and surrender in humility to Jesus Christ. He laid aside his pride and self. Do you comprehend the magnificence of this free gift of salvation and grace? We see lots of art work, slogans, gifts, cards and the like that have the word, 'believe'. But it's **who** you believe in that is the key. People believe in all kinds of things, but it doesn't bring salvation to their lost soul. Only believing in Jesus Christ and receiving Him will you be saved. Everything that God required to fulfill the law and to remove sin was met in Jesus. He was the substitute for our punishment of unrighteousness. **I Peter 3:18** says; "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."

So Hopeful understood and comprehended what his salvation meant. It meant that the self-righteousness of the world was like filthy rags; that God is just and justifies and that he was ashamed of his life as a sinner and his ignorance to it. Salvation will cause you to long for holiness, godliness and put a desire in your heart to serve the Lord however you can. Does that describe your salvation?