

Acts 16:30

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[0 : 00] We shall turn now to the book of Acts, the 16th chapter, reading at verse 30. Acts chapter 16 and verse 30.

Acts chapter 16 and verse 30.

As all of you, I suppose, are aware there are two sides to the Christian salvation. There is a divine side and there is a human side.

On the divine side we have that whole complex of attitudes and achievements that are distinctly God's own contribution to our salvation.

It is God who conceived our salvation. God who provides us with a savior. It is God who becomes our savior.

[1 : 33] It is God in Christ who bears our sin. It is God who regenerates. It is God who elects.

It is God who loves. It is God who gives us faith. It is God who keeps us. It is God who sanctifies. God who loves us.

It is God who loves us. And that is a tremendously important emphasis. One which the New Testament makes time and again that all things are of God.

God who loves us. That the whole glory for the initiative in our salvation belongs to the Most High. God who loves us. And I don't want for a moment this morning to minimize that particular aspect or to erode its importance in any way.

[2 : 32] But I do want in fidelity to this text to draw your attention to the other side of our salvation. That is our own human responsibility and our contribution on a personal level to our own salvation.

There is a question asked, what must I do? What must I do? Not only what has God done, but what must I do?

And it's a question that asked specifically, what must I do? What human decision? What human step?

What human action is there that is enjoined and required of me? What must I do? What must I do? And of course also the emphasis, what must I do? What is this imperative, this indispensable requirement without which my salvation cannot be achieved?

[3 : 59] Our catechism has a very similar phraseology where it says that God requires, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and so on and so forth.

And I want for a moment this morning to focus attention on this precise question. The step that you and I must take in order to our own salvation.

Now I'm taking this course at one level because I read a few days ago of a young student approached by another young student and asked, what must I do to become a Christian?

And the person approached, found himself quite unable to answer that question. He'd been a Christian for many, many years.

And yet when challenged by an unconverted person, he found himself quite unable to answer the question.

[5 : 24] He couldn't describe what it meant to become a Christian. And I put it to you that that is a very common problem and a very common disability that many Christians have approached would find themselves quite unable to answer this question.

What must I do to be saved or to become a Christian? And I'm taking it also for this reason. That there are surely some this morning who must themselves be asking what they must do.

Whose need is not to learn in order to lead others to Christ. But who, at the most urgent, personal, existential level, must themselves find an immediate and clear answer to the question, what must I do to be saved?

What must I do? And then you see of the apostle answers, he tells them quite plainly, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The question is, what is involved in this faith in Christ?

It means, first of all, the acceptance with our minds of the fundamental truths of the Christian faith.

[7 : 02] The intellectual acceptance of the great foundation doctrines of Christianity.

In other words, faith at this elementary level is unashamedly theological. It is doctrinal.

It is propositional. It is, at this threshold level, it is intellectual. It's something that I do with my mind.

Something I do with my own understanding, with my own intellect. Whatever else faith is, and it is much more, it is an intellectual commitment.

It is commitment. It is the grasp of certain great doctrines. It is commitment to certain great doctrines.

[8 : 05] If you go to Paul's own conversion, it was, in a most radical way, an intellectual revolution in his life.

He had lived for years, convinced that Jesus Christ was an imposter. Convinced that Christ was an outstanding threat to his own Judaistic faith.

He was convinced that the Lord of glory was a blasphemer. And in the moment of his conversion, there is an intellectual revolution in which his whole attitude of Christ is radically altered.

In which all his whole convictions about the Savior, in which all convictions about the Savior are replaced with a completely new set of convictions about the Savior.

And he emerges from that Damascus road experience with a completely different intellectual attitude.

[9 : 19] He comes out of it absolutely convinced of the truth of certain elementary propositions.

You find the same thing in the Ethiopian convert approached by Philip. The moment of his baptism, that man says, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

There again is something which is unashamedly intellectual. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And so whatever else it means to become a Christian, it means acceptance with our minds of the core doctrines of the Christian faith.

It means the cordial acquiescence by our intellects. In such affirmations as the deity of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ, and the power of Christ to save.

[10 : 35] That is why evangelism is a battle for the mind. It is the endeavor to instill in the intellects of our own generation.

The belief that Jesus Christ is Lord. The belief that Jesus Christ can save from sin. The belief that Jesus Christ has risen.

The belief that today he has the whole world in his hands. The belief that Jesus Christ has risen.

The belief that Jesus Christ has risen. The belief on a more personal level still. That after death there is judgment.

That beyond judgment there is heaven and hell. I have to propel those elemental and monumental truths.

I have to impel them into your intellects. I have to instill them into your minds. I have to persuade of the veracity of the indubitable truth.

[11 : 45] Of those mighty affirmations. And I am asking this morning. Whether our minds have made that pilgrimage.

Whether we have moved. Into the full assurance and the full persuasion. That it is true. That Christ is God.

That it is true that Christ has risen. That it is true. That Christ can save from sin. Save from its guilt and save from its power.

I've got to ask. If you and I at the most urgent personal level. Have moved to the conclusion. That one day we shall stand face to face.

Eyeball to eyeball. With the living God. And await his solemn. His most solemn assignation.

[12 : 54] Of our souls to heaven or to hell. We have to believe the propositions. We have to accept the truth.

Of those great doctrines. A Christian is a disciple. A Christian is a man into his heart.

God has driven certain mighty convictions. And when Paul said. Believe on the Lord Jesus. He was laying down.

As a most urgent imperative. That we believe. What the Bible has to say. About him. Then that can never be enough.

Intellectual it must be. And yet intellectual it may be. And our souls be lost. And how often does the Bible.

[13:55] Spell out that great lesson. That it is possible for us. To have the most orthodox set of convictions.

To hold to those great truths. Most firmly. And most clearly. And sometimes most pugnaciously. And yet not have. This real faith. This real faith. Without which our souls. Cannot be saved. We are told by James. That there is a faith of devils. The devils believe the doctrines. Now to me. It is a great thing. That men believe the doctrines. It is an imperative. That men believe the doctrines. And yet we may believe the doctrines. And yet lack this faith.

[14:54] That is indispensable to our salvation. So what is there more? What is there beyond? The commitment of my intellect.

To the propositions. There is surely. The commitment. Of my life. Of my heart. Of my problems. To the one concerning whom. I hold. Those great beliefs. The yielding. Of the heart. The surrender. Of the life. The bringing. Of my whole personality. Into conformity. With the doctrines. And beliefs. That I hold. Let me work it out. In a little more detail. I believe.

[15:52] That Jesus. Is Lord. I believe. That he is Jehovah. I believe. That he is God. I believe. That he is the maker.

Of heaven. And earth. I believe. That proposition. But how does that belief. Register. In my life. What is its practical expression. What if I may use the word again. Is. Its existential. Symptom. How do I show. That my heart. Is yielded. To the proposition. Of the deity. Of Jesus of Nazareth. Well surely I showed. In adoration. In worship. In the prostration.

[16:51] Of my life. In the unqualified. Surrender. Of my soul. Before the one. Whom I believe. Intellectually. To be the son.

Of God. In other words. The theological. Belief. In his deity. Must be. Registered. In an existential. Act of worship. In which. In which. In which. I fall. At his feet. As dead. There is.

No. True. Faith. In the deity. Of the Lord. Unless. That faith. That conviction. Is registered. In worship. In a worship. Which is. Christ. Directed. A worship. Which is. The unqualified. Practical. [17:50] Recognition. Of the absolute. Deity. Of the son. Of God. And that. Surely. Is what.

I must ask. For this morning. Every knee. Bow. Every head. Bow. Every tongue. Confess. Can we. Really. Allege. That we. Believe. In the deity.

Of this man. And yet. God. Are we. Regardless. Withholding. That worship. Which alone. Can authenticate. Our belief. We believe. That he is God. Well. If we believe it.

[18:45] Let's get down. Let the knee. Bow. Let the heart. Be prostrate. Let us fall. At his feet. Is dead. Let us fall there. In wonder. Love. And praise. Let the belief. That indispensable belief. Let it find. It's practical. And it's existential. Register. In the surrender. Of our souls. And the unqualified.

Adoration. Of the son. Of God. Let me go beyond. God. We believe.

In the infallibility. Of Christ. As a great teacher. There again. There's a proposition. Christ. Is the prophet.

[19:41] Sent from God. Christ. As the prophet. Sent from God. Is an infallible teacher. I have this great proposition.

Christ. Is infallible. But then. What do I do. With the proposition. How do I relate. To a person. Whom I believe.

To be infallible. How do I react. In the presence. Of such a person. Well surely. In this way. I react. By making. An unqualified. Surrender. Of my intellect. To Christ. An unqualified. Surrender. Of my intellect. To Christ. In other words. I believe. A thing. To be true. Simply. Because.

[20:40] He says. And my intellect. Requires. No further proof. But. To that. To that. He says. To that. He says. If he says it. Then that is enough. I believe. That he is infallible. That's my proposition.

I believe. I believe. A thing. To be true. Because. He says. That is my. Intellect. Tribute. To his infallibility.

That to me. Something. Of enormous. Consequence. Infallible. In. In. Why. This morning. Do I believe. In the infallibility.

And in the inerrancy. Of the Old Testament. It is not because. I am. Lord. Shigley. Able to show. That the Old Testament.

[21 : 37] Contains no errors. It is not because. I can. Empirically. Demonstrate. That it is infallible. It is not because.

I can answer. All the objections. It is because. Jesus Christ said. The scripture. Cannot be broken. I may go on.

Having made my surrender. I may go on. To look at the objections. I may go on. To immerse myself. In the claims.

Of biblical scholars. I may be able. To amass. To organize. Many collateral. And supportive. Arguments. In favor.

Of the proposition. That the Old Testament. Is infallible. But in the last analysis. I believe it. Because Jesus says.

[22 : 40] And I cannot get beyond. That. That is where my. Mind rests. The son of God. Says.

The scripture. Cannot be broken. And there. There my heart. And my mind. Rest. My intellect. Is surrendered. To his. It is.

It is an act. It is an act. Of devotion. It is a. Personal tribute. To his authority. It is not. Bibliology. It is not.

The worship. Of a book. I start. I start. With a person. With a person. Christ. And that person. Sends me. Back to the Old Testament. With this.

Tremendous. Confidence. That it cannot. Be broken. Why again. Do I believe. In the doctrine. Of hell. It is a terrible.

[23 : 36] Doctrine. It is one. Which in the abstract. Is very difficult. To reconcile. With the affirmation.

Of the love of God. And yet I believe it. And I believe it again. For one elementary reason.

The reason. Namely. That Christ. Taught it. That more frequently. Than John Calvin. And more often.

Than Jonathan Edwards. That gentle Jesus. Meek and mild. Spoke. Of a place. Of outer darkness. Of weeping.

And wailing. And gnashing of teeth. I can feel. In the depths. Of my imperfectly. Sanctified soul.

[24 : 31] I can still feel. A certain revulsion. Against the doctrine. I find. That in myself. Which wishes. It were not true.

And yet. My mind. Is a captive. To the authority. Of the Savior. He says. There is such a place. On my intellect.

Is submitted. To his. Why. Need. Do. I believe. In the love. Of God.

When one. ConstemPlates. The sum. Of mystery. And degradation. And exploitation.

exploitation, the measure of injustice that there is in human life. When one looks at the enormities of human history, when one ponders today the quantity of pain that even the best of men have to endure, I don't find it easy to believe that God is love. And yet the Savior says it. The Savior embodies it. The Savior, in what He is and does, says, God is love. Says that God weeps as He beholds our misery. Says that God so cares that God has borne our sin. Says that God so loved that for our sakes He made Himself poor. There is only one proof that God is love. There is only one proof that history will make any sense.

[26 : 47] There is only one proof that this world is going anywhere. And that is Christ. And I must submit my intellect, nor to the force of the empirical evidence of the Belsons and Auschwitz and Abelbans of human history.

But I must submit my mind to the teaching of which my Lord is not only the vehicle and the means and the articulator, but of which is the embodiment of which he is the embodiment of the hands immolated between two thieves on the cross of Calvary.

And in many ways, my most urgent challenge to non-Christians is this challenge as to where your intellect rests.

And what is your ultimate principle? What is your final court of appeal? What is the basis of, I may so ask, of your epistemology?

What is it that we say at last? Is our court of appeal? Is it our own independent judgment? Is it the opinion of experts, the authority of Marx and Darwin? Are our minds thorough to Christ?

[28 : 29] As a Christian, that for me is the most monumental and the most momentous step that I have furl'd my mind to Christ. And that today, because I have done that, I reckon I face this universe fearlessly.

Because he is truth. Because he is truth. I have no fear of probing it at any point. There is no question I will not ask. There is no problem I will not face. I will not draw back on the brink of any research.

Frightened that I may find something that will unsettle my faith. I have known such fear. But once my mind has come to rest in Christ, I know no such fear. Because he is truth. And I believe that he has sent me out into the world to ask questions.

To ask questions. To ask questions in subatomic physics. To ask questions in microbiology. To ask questions in psychology. In genetics. To ask questions in astrophysics.

To ask questions in prevention. To ask questions in ■ink e sap Coburn. To ask questions in clinical disease.

[30 : 27] He said subdue the earth. He said colonize the earth. Some other thing God places Adam in the paradise of Genesis 2.

We're told magnificently that out of that garden there flowed certain rivers. And God said be fruitful and multiply and replenish colonize the earth.

It seems to me that what the Lord is saying to us this Christ. To whom I have submitted my intellect. That Christ is saying to us go see where the rivers flow.

This river and paradise. Go see where it goes. Follow its course. Over the horizons.

Down the mountains. Across all the barriers. And don't be afraid because Christ has sent me to ask questions.

[31 : 40] Christ has sent me to see where the rivers flow. Christ wants us to go over the mountains. Christ wants us to go over the horizons.

We have submitted our minds to him. And in him we have absolute confidence. Because he is the truth. Our faith means that we worship.

Our faith means that we submit our intellects to him. Our faith means that we bring our sins to him. My proposition here surely is this. He is a sacrifice for sin. He is the place where sin was dealt with. He is the one who bears sin. The one who intercedes for sin. That's my proposition. That's my proposition. And what do I do on the practical level?

[32 : 46] What do I do with this belief that Christ is a sacrifice for our sins? Surely what I do is this. I bring my sins to him.

I bring to him all the imperfections of my own life. It would hardly be edifying.

To narrate those particularly and personally. Each of you must know for himself. The areas of defeat.

The areas of ugliness. The areas of anomaly. In his own particular life. You know the pain you have caused.

You know the hearts you have broken. You know the relations to which you have been unfaithful. You know the moments of lovelessness.

[33 : 53] And the moments of egotism. In your own lives. You know how disordered. Your emotions have often been.

You know your own sinful depressions. You know your own egotistical persecution complexes. You know that terrible feeling that we so often have.

That men don't show us the respect that we deserve. Or the kindness. That we deserve. And I am saying.

That when I know these things. About myself. As I face the structural faults. In my own personality. My own relational ineptitude. My own self-centeredness. As I face them frankly.

[34 : 59] As I acknowledge. That they're there. What do I do with them? Do I despair? Or do I bring them to Christ.

To be dealt with. It would help us enormously. If we could see sin as personal. Our offenses against persons.

Against loved members of our own families. Against our own friends. Against our own social contacts.

Against our own enemies. Keep it personal. It's not an abstraction. It's the people I've wounded.

And hurt. And failed. And disappointed. And pained. And grieved. And insulted. And injured. And defamed.

[36 : 05] And miscalled. And frustrated. And robbed. And cheated. And I come. With those sins. To the place.

Where alone sin. Can be dealt with. I put them on Christ. On the Lamb of God. And I say to my God in heaven.

Lord I hear. That people's past. Can be covered. I even hear Lord.

Of the possibility. That my past. Can be covered. Is it true Lord. That my past.

Can be covered. That I hear the great comfort. That yes. My past.

[37 : 02] Can be covered. That it not. Need not lie. As a shadow. Or a burden. Over the rest. Of my life.

That God. Can put it behind him. And help me. Put it behind me. And it happens.

At a place. Called Christ. In the name of Christ. I pray to God.

Lord. Because Christ. Because Christ. Bore sin. Forgive me. Lord. Because Christ. As answer for my past.

Let me be free. Of my past. Are we this morning. The faith. To place the whole.

[38 : 00] Responsibility. Before dealing. With our past. On the shoulders. Of Christ. To some of you. I speak nonsense. Some of you.

Don't think. About the past. And some of you. When you do. Think of it. Are quite pleased. With it. I've no word.

For you. But there may be. One or two. And they do think. About the past. And when they do.

They're not pleased. With it. One or two. Not ashamed of it. One or two. It makes them blush. As it makes me blush.

For you. For you. I have. I have. A word. That that past. Can be covered. Forgotten.

[39 : 02] Forgiven. In Christ. I believe. So completely. Forgiven. That not only.

Will God. Not call it. To his own mind. But God. Will never. Bring it back. To our mind. I believe.

That God. For Christ's sake. Can so forgive. That the peace of God. Which passes all understanding.

Shall keep. Our hearts and minds. In Christ. I believe. In a very curious way. That in Christ.

I can accept myself. We should ponder that. Justification. Is God. Accepting us. As righteous.

[40 : 04] Can you follow me. When I say that. Part of the end. Till of that is. That I must accept. Myself.

My own. Developmental. Limitations. The parameters. Of my own personality. God has accepted. In Christ. There is a glorious way. To put in justification. God gives us. Back ourselves. God gives us.

Peace. With ourselves. And I'm asking. Therefore. You have the proposition. Jesus saves.

Saves from sin. Have you reacted. By coming. By coming. With the sins. And the unfaithfulness.

[41 : 08] And the injuries. Bringing them to Christ. Christ. And in Christ's name. And in Christ's name. Asking. That they be dealt with.

I just add one thing more. Faith means. The adoration of Christ. Faith means submitting my intellect to Christ.

Faith means. Faith means. Bringing my sins to Christ. Faith means. Following him.

Whatever he leads. Christ. Faith means. Faith means. I say it for this reason. The Lord is my shepherd. That's a proposition.

Christ is a good shepherd. That's a proposition. Do you believe. That is a great shepherd. That is a great leader.

[42 : 12] Well you believe it. What do you do? You follow him. You follow the lamb. Wherever he goes. So many of you this morning stand.

On the threshold. Of futures. Of immeasurable potential. You stand.

At the beginning. Of your careers. You stand. At the commencement. Of manhood and womanhood. A great.

Uncharted scene. You're going out. Each one of you. Not knowing. Whether he is gone. For all of us.

Who have reached. Years or so. More maturity. We have to acknowledge. That the Lord has led us. By the most.

[43 : 21] Unexpected paths. And had I known. Twenty years ago. Some of the roads. Some of the places. I would never have believed.

Under the road. Under the road. I would never have molt guy. It would have been. I am asking you. Are you going out leaderless. going out captainless with no shepherd with no guide and I'm saying please it's foolish, it's unnecessary there's a great shepherd at the threshold, at the commencement and he says let me lead you let me keep you he says most of the road I promise I'll bring you by green pastures and quiet waters and you lack nothing that's what the shepherd says you lack nothing there'll be days as it's even and I'll restore your soul

I lead you into experiences the most exhilarating and the most refreshing what great privileges we have known as we have followed Christ what great moments of renewal what moments of wonder as we have looked into the glories of creation and the more glorious glories of redemption beyond that he says in the valley of the shadow of death I'll be with you when there are enemies I'll be with you and when the journey's over and the battle's done then I'll take you to the house of the Lord forever well what shall we say?

shall we be our own leader? or shall we turn our souls to some human leader?

or shall we follow Christ? there are only the three options you can be your own man or woman you can be another man's man or woman you can be Christ's man or woman and if in your heart you hold the conviction that he's a great shepherd and a great leader then what option have you?

[46 : 34] but to follow the lamb wherever he goes I am painfully conscious of the hypocrisy of a preacher's position as a sinner and a failure trying to give instruction to others but I am also conscious that beyond most men I've had a privileged Christian life and it is in the name of that privilege and out of those privileges that I plead this morning that you would bow the knee to the Christ who is God submit your minds to the Christ who is infallible confess your failures to the Christ who bears sin and follow wherever he leads the Christ who is a great and a good shepherd let us pray let us pray oh lord we ask thee in grace to look down upon us as we reflect upon the imperatives of the gospel we pray thee to give us grace to respond so that through

God's initiative we may be able to do man's part in our own redemption for thy glory's sake amen we shall sing your closing praise from Psalm 103 verses 1 to 5 to the tune Bishop Thorpe Psalm 103 verses 1 to 5 O thou my soul bless God the Lord we shall sing two stanzas to God's praise O thou my soul bless God and all that in me is praise thee status of the ravine μενεις and all that in me is asked whooping in me is to ei men serve to immerse whois oi yokämä taste ?

other si The King was with us He used to pray.

O thy name, which is for now, O specials give for him, O righteous Jesus, Father-maid tome theéré. O loving my life has come to death, To dream with loving, Highest love, And heaven blessed now.

[51 : 50] O with the hand and soft good things, and satisfy thy power, so that ye love, see your church, bring you that peace by you.