

## LESSON 21

# Salvation - How to Experience ?

- Objective** : Experience salvation and live as its witnesses  
**Bible Portion** : Luke 15:11-32  
**Memory Verse** : Romer 10:9-10

That if you confess with your mouth “Jesus,” is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

### **Introduction :**

What is the greatest need of men who live in sin and its curse? They cannot become happy and peaceful until they experience salvation and reestablish the relationship with God. So many ask: “What must we do to be saved?” Many do not understand that salvation is the gift of God and the works of men in not useful for it. The criteria of God revealed to us through the Bible is only necessary to experience the salvation.

### **Karma Marga and the Way of Faith**

To achieve salvation (moksha), men follow various ways. Some follows njana yogam, bakti yogam and karma yogam. Others trust in prayer, fasting, giving alms and pilgrimages. Many of the christians also believe in sacraments and holy actions as the ways of salvation. We call these together as karma marga. Karma marga is the thought believed to achieve God through certain religious practices and good deeds prescribed by religions. Kain laid the foundation of this common religious belief. Contrary to the will God, Kain himself brought an offering which he sees good. He wished that he could please God through his offering from the work of the soil. He, not only recieved any blessings

but became a killer and a cursed one. It is very shameful to see lakh of people still follow this way of karma. By faith, Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain did. So he was commended a righteous man (Heb. 11:4). This is the record of Cain's brother by Holy Spirit. Abel was justified by faith and his offering was accepted. He stands as a forerunner of faith.

Bibel is very clearly says that salvation is not by karma margas and good deed of men. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, not by works so that no one can boast of (Eph. 2:8). He saved us not because of righteous things we had done but because of his mercy (Tit. 3:5). A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law (Rom. 3:28, 4:1-7, Gal. 3:10-13). It is written that all oer righteous acts are like filthy rags (Is. 64:6). Salvation si the free gift of God by the grace. It is recieved and experienced only by faith (Rom. 3:24,25; John. 3:16; 5:24; 6:29; Act.6:31; Eph.2:8; Rom.10:9-10).

Let us think of how the eternal faith grows in a person. It has four phases which is described in Luke 15:11-32 in the form of a parable.

### **1. Self Realisation**

We search for water as we are thirsty. In such a way a person longs for salvation when he becomes aware of sin. It is the work of the Holy Spirit and the word fo God. Jesus talks of the Holy Spirit that whwn he comes, he will convict the world of guilt, in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement (Jn.16:8). It is very clear in Rom. 10:14-17 that faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ. As one hears the word, the holy spirit makes him aware of guild and he understands his real status. This is called self Realisation (Ref. Lk. 15:17). When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my fathers's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death." Here, the prodigal son himself understand how he misuses father's property. He also realised the fact tha he was totally destroyed due to his competitive mind towards father. Thus he recognize the father's love, compassion and prosperity. His understanding of father made him believable in him. In this way, hearing the word makes a man consciousness of guilt and also he is revealed with the revelation of loving God.

## **2. Return**

By understanding own status, prodigal son got up and went to his father (Lk. 15:18-20). When a sinner becomes aware of his sins, he cannot stay long in sin. He will return to God from sin and its circumstances. He feels ashamed of the old friends and situations. Suddenly, the prodigal son got up and reached near the father. It is called repentance. This is the second phase.

## **3. Repentance and confession**

The son who reaches the father's house, confesses all his sins. Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son, make me like one of your hired men (Lk. 15:18-19). The confession and consciousness of guilt leads a man to eternal faith. This is an important step. It also includes the belief of receiving father and the submission for a living according to the will of God.

## **4. Reconciliation**

But while he was still a long way his father, saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, through his arms around him and kissed him (Lk. 15:20). This is the picture of how God receives a person who comes with faith and confession. God reconciled sinners to himself through Christ (2 Cori. 5:18-21). When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of sin, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life (Rom. 5:10). It is safe and enjoyable to live with God in his house.

We achieve salvation by faith in the sacrifice made by Christ. Four phases of eternal faith are self-realization, Return, Repentance and Reconciliation. Let us submit our lives as witnesses of Christ by reconciling and keeping relationship with God.

## **Questions**

1. What do you mean by karma marga ?
2. Establish the fact that salvation is achieved only by faith
3. How the eternal faith begins in one's life ?
4. Explain the four phases of salvation with the help of the parable of prodigal son.