

Sacred Rhythms: Salvation

Matthew 5:17; Matthew 22:35-40; John 10:10; Luke 8:14; Matthew 16:25; John 3:1-6; John 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 1:13-25

Sacred Rhythms: We all live by rhythms: seasons, workweeks, school schedules, family routines, etc. God also designed rhythms for His people which are guideposts that orient our lives toward Him. These rhythms remind us who God is, what He has done, and what He promises to do.

Jewish Rhythms (Sacred Traditions): God gave Israel festivals and practices as sacred rhythms. They included Passover (remembering God's deliverance), Pentecost (celebrating God's provision of His law and harvest), Sabbath (rest and trust in God's care), Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles (remembering the wilderness journey when God provided for and dwelt with His people in temporary shelters (Leviticus 23:39-43))

These rhythms were not just about the past. They shaped daily life, reminding them of God's past provision, protection, and preservation as well as pointing forward to God's future promises. These rhythms were not just optional traditions though. It was written into the Hebrew Law (given by God). Israel was commanded to observe these celebrations.

Jesus and the Sacred Rhythms: When Jesus came, He said He did not come to get rid of these rhythms but to change/improve them. Read Matthew 5:17.

Jesus was a Jew and these rhythms were a natural part of His life (daily prayers, festivals, and traditions. However, He didn't just *do* them out of duty; He *embodied* their true purpose (to form people who live in God's presence and love as He loves).

Jesus summarized the entire law and prophets in a rhythm of life. Read Matthew 22:35-40.

Sacred Rhythms are about rediscovering how the practices of our faith (salvation, baptism, communion, sabbath, prayer, worship, anointing) are not empty rituals. They are God-given rhythms that shape us into people of love. They root our lives in God's story and form us into His people here and now. Just like the Israelites built booths at Sukkot to remember God's provision, our rhythms help us remember and live in God's saving presence.

Today we will look at the first rhythm: salvation.

Escape Theology: 'Escape Theology' is a Christian perspective that emphasizes a coming divine judgment and the eventual removal of believers from a corrupt, dying world into a perfect heaven. It encourages an 'us versus them' mentality toward the world. Belief in the world's imminent destruction can cause individuals to not be invested in improving the world. It can promote spiritual passivity and disengagement from social issues. It views Christian salvation primarily as a means to escape the world and enter heaven. It is kind of a dark way of viewing the world and seeing salvation. We often think/are taught that salvation is 'fire insurance' (avoiding hell) and is motivated by fear rather than love.

Salvation: Salvation isn't just being saved *from* something. It's being saved *for* something (life with God and a flourishing life of loving Him and loving others).

In the Old Testament, salvation often meant physical deliverance. For example: when Israel was delivered from Egypt (Exodus 14) it shows us a picture of God's desire to rescue His people.

Then, in the New Testament, salvation deepens into spiritual renewal where we are saved from sin and brokenness then invited into a new way of *life* through Jesus.

So what does 'Salvation' really mean? The Greek word, *Soteria*, means deliverance, safety, restoration, healing, preservation. It is broader than just 'escape from punishment'. It shows God's holistic vision where body, soul, mind, and relationships are restored. Salvation is transformation from the inside out.

When we think of salvation only as our 'get out of hell free' card, we miss out on the purpose and the life that God's salvation invites us to take part in. One day when Jesus was teaching, He spoke about why he had come. Read John 10:10. Jesus came so that we could have a full, **abundant life**.

What is life?: There are three words in Greek for 'life': *Bios*, *Psuche*, and *Zoe*.

Bios means biological life. Read Luke 8:14. In this scripture, it refers to physical life or the flesh. It is related to the English word Biology.

Psuche (shoe-ka) means soul-life, emotions, or inner self. Read Matthew 16:25. This scripture refers to "loses" or surrender. This is your inner life (mind, emotions, and will). It is related to the English word Psychology.

Zoe means divine, eternal, and spiritual life of God. It is a life that is not possessed by humans at birth but received through faith. This is the word used in John 10:10...the abundant/full life that Jesus came to give us is His eternal life.

Born Again: Read John 3:1-6. When Jesus is talking about being 'born again' to enter the kingdom of God he is referring to a spiritual rebirth that results in receiving *zoe*. This is the divine life of God; not a mere improvement of one's physical or psychological life.

Read John 3:16-17. The promise that those who believe 'should not perish by having everlasting life' uses the Greek phrase *zoen aionion*. It refers to an eternal life that begins at the moment of belief; not just after death. It is a life of a divine and eternal quality dripping with purpose! *Zoe* means spiritual transformation/rebirth that leads to eternal fellowship with God that is only available through faith in Jesus.

Zoe: I don't want to get too deep into this today but I think it is important to mention. The Tree of Life we read about in Genesis is the Tree of *Zoe*. It signifies God's eternal life which was made available to humanity (Adam and Eve). When they failed and ate from the DIY Tree (Knowledge Good and Evil) and were exiled from the Garden, humanity was then divided from having access to God's eternal life that dwelt among them in the form of the Tree of *Zoe*. When

God told them that they would die if they ate from the Tree of Knowledge Good and Evil, it was not a biological death that He was talking about. It was a spiritual death: separation from God's eternal life.

So when Jesus said that He had come so that we could have *zoe*, He wasn't just saying that we would have eternal life after physical death. He was announcing that humanity would have access once again to the eternal life/*zoe* of God here and now. Jesus did not come so that we could simply endure our physical life on earth until we get swept away to our mansion in the sky when we die. He came so we could have access to God's eternal life right now, so that not only our lives on this earth could flourish, but that we could help others flourish also. This is our calling. Our purpose. Our hope. Our salvation.

We taught earlier this year about the Greek concept of *Eudaimonia*. It's the idea that the ultimate goal of human life is to thrive by living good, virtuous lives. A flourishing life of *Eudaimonia* parallels Jesus' teaching about salvation...a thriving life/*zoe* in God. We are 'saved into' God's life of love, joy, peace, and purpose.

***Psuche*:** Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15. The Greek word for 'live' used in this passage is *Psuche* (shoe-ka). It is the one linked to the English word Psychology. This is the same word used when Jesus spoke about the life we need to surrender to God so that we can truly live.

When we surrender our thoughts, emotions, desires, motivations, and actions to God, we are transformed by His Spirit and are able to love God and others with our whole selves. It's not about 'enduring life until heaven', but living in God's kingdom life right now. 'On earth as it is in heaven'.

Application: What does living in God's *zoe* look like in my life? Salvation is a daily life with God. It goes far beyond a moment of decision. Living life as someone who has surrendered our *psuche* (shoe-ka) for God's *zoe* is much more sustainable when we incorporate sacred rhythms into our life. They root us in God's life. They help us to see every part of our lives as a partnership with God.

But it also goes beyond ourselves. We no longer are living life for our own purposes. We have surrendered to God's purpose. Salvation makes us ambassadors of God's love in which our lives become a witness.

Salvation is more than avoiding hell. It is life with God, now and forever. It is restoration, healing, and flourishing. It shapes us into people who love God and love others. I cannot accept the idea that God created us to just endure the brokenness of this world and do nothing to improve it. We were made for more.

Reflection Questions:

- Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. What are your thoughts about this passage based on the message on salvation?

- Have your thoughts/understanding of salvation been changed? If so, how?
- What are you going to do with the time you have here on earth?
 - Are you going to live for yourself or for God and others?
 - Are you going to live a fully surrendered and flourishing life?
 - Are you going to accept the salvation that is freely offered to you?