



SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE

By
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"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrews 13:8

I am from Kenya. From a child I was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. At that time, I knew nothing about the true gospel of God's grace as found in the Holy Bible.

My parents were devout Roman Catholics and used to pray to Mary and the Saints. I remember on many occasions my parents praying the rosary. I had my own rosary and would imitate my parents prayer. My father was a teacher of the Roman Catholic religion, using the question and answer form of the catechism. He was also a good friend of the parish priest, who was from Poland, and he regularly invited the priest over to our home. The priest had a good grasp of our local language, even though he was from Eastern Europe.

Once the Polish priest and my father were having a conversation about me. They were talking about sending me to the seminary. My father and my mother were both very pleased with this idea. So I was aware even from a child that one day I would be a priest. I was thinking in my heart that I will be all holy like a angel, I will wear priest's cloths, I will stand before all the people saying mass and giving the people forgiveness of their sins in confession.

When indeed I was sent to the seminary, the Polish priest would visit me with food and would encourage me to persevere with my studies even though he told me I would meet with difficulties. Often he told me to pray to St. Augustine to protect me. Also, he used to write letters t encourage me. Generally, my life was filled with pride at this time. In the seminary, I began to smoke cigarettes. Others were smoking face-to-face as it were, but I was a secret smoker. Like all young men studying to become Roman Catholic priests, I had first some years of philosophy and then Roman Catholic theology. (Canon 250 & 251 of the *RC Code of Canon Law*).

I was ordained in the year 1978. My diocese bishop was happy to have a young priest. There was a meeting of 28 priests from 26 parishes. I was shocked to hear many priests calling the bishop my "Lord", and kissing his ring.

I was posted to a parish where I was assistant to the priest. We were good friends and very often used to drink alcohol together. I wondered why I was acting like a worldly person drinking and smoking, etc. this is generally how the priests live. I ought to have applied the Scripture text, *"by their fruits ye shall know them."*

I became acquainted with some dear Christian people from local neighboring churches. On Saturday evenings they came around to my house and they came with the Bible. With them I began to study the Scriptures. God's Word began to penetrate my darkened mind; but all this took time.

I studied more into God's Word and I would remember the way the bishop was called "Father" and "Lord" by those who served him. The Scripture says, *"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall*

be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matt 23:9-12 These men were not acting the way our Lord had taught in His ministry, and I wanted my life and work to be like His.

I began to teach the things I found in God's word at mass. My parents showed me to pray to Mary and Saints and the Polish priest showed me to pray to St. Augustine to protect me. These things were contrary to the Bible teaching. Paul taught "*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;)...*" 1 Tim 2:5-7 These teachings are true and we need not invoke Mary or Saints because God Himself gave Jesus as our Saviour and mediator. Jesus said of himself, "*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" John 14:13-15 I taught these words, but the bishop was also hearing them.

Giving forgiveness for sin is one great joy of the priest. In Catholic seminary I was taught this, but it was not taught from God's Word. John's Gospel teaches, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" John 3:16-19 Here is nothing of priests hearing sins in confessing, or giving absolution and penance. The Scripture text teaches that God Himself gave for sacrifice Jesus on the cross for every sin. If we believe in what Jesus Himself did for all, then our condemnation through sin is forgiven by God Himself our Father.

The more Scripture I studied the more I taught to others and darkness began to leave my mind. It is clear, God has given only Jesus to forgive our sin which keeps us from heaven. "*If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" 1 John 1:10-2:2

Jesus is the center of the Scripture and He should be the center for all true Christians lives. Mary and Saints can not intercede for Jesus is our mediator. Priests can not grant forgiveness of sins for Jesus is our Saviour and forgiver of all sin forever. The more I taught these truths from the Bible Scriptures the more the bishop began to be angered with me.

With more study in God's Word I began to see sin. "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*" Rom 3:23 I saw my secret smoking, worldliness and drinking as sin for which Jesus died, he was nailed to the cross for my sin. All sin brings consequences. Adam sinned and was cast from the Garden of Eden becoming a sinner who needed salvation; all of man are sinners. God gave His son Jesus to be the forgiver of sin for all who believe. Disbelievers must pay for sin themselves as the Scripture text says, "*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Rom 6:23

God's grace (this is what we do not deserve for we are sinners all our life) through Jesus is our only salvation. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*" Eph 2:8-9 The Catholic Church has taught us to live good all our lives and this is hope for reaching heaven. Jesus did all the necessary work that we sinful people could never do, He can not use our help for we are sinners. "*For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly*

through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:3-7

Sinners like me, need a Saviour who will forgive us, free us from our sin debt and take us to heaven. Many do not know the way, but Jesus says *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” John 14:6* You must be a follower of Jesus not a priest, bishop or Saint. After much study and conviction of sin I accepted Jesus Christ as God has said, my only Saviour. With all my heart I put my trust in Christ.

While praying to resign the priesthood, *“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29*, funds arrived from the diocese. They would have helped the people and provided medicine and food. But the priest used the funds themselves, buying alcohol, entertainment and worldly things. *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” 1 Tim 6:8-11*

I began to speak out against Rome in my parish and to explain that grace is God’s free gift, no man’s suffering or good works can bring salvation. *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Gal 2:16*

Because I wished to resign, the bishop made me come and answer why I taught the Scripture to people who could never understand? He told me “I followed bad and evil things” and I said “How can following the Bible and the Word’s of Christ be evil?” After allowing me to leave the priesthood the bishop made it sure that no one would give to me any jobs. The time came, though, when the bishop sent the police to capture me and the 83 other believers who left Catholicism, we were all jailed. We preached the gospel in prison and rejoiced. Some policeman even repented and trusted only in Christ’s sufficient sacrifice on the cross for salvation.

After three months, four policeman who supported us said, “There are no charges you may go home.” We separated forever from the Roman Catholic Church, and prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel boldly, and to guide us into all truth. The sinner repents of his sin and trusts only on the finished sacrifice of Christ for salvation, then knows *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Rom 4:5*

In time, we opened an Independent Church and knew that we could not unite with unbelievers. The Lord has called me to serve His church and build up believers. I tell Catholics to choose now, today is the day of salvation ; tomorrow never comes. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Acts 16:31*

My story is a testimony to God’s grace. God’s free gift of grace is in sharp contrast to a religion that counts on works to co-operate in salvation. *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.” Rom 11:6* Salvation is to God’s glory and not to man’s *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Eph 1:6* Ask Him to give you His light to see, understanding, and accept the truth so that you also may rejoice with us and say, “ It is Christ *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” Eph 1:7*

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