

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 9- Luke 9:23-26

167- The Characteristics of Saving Faith- Part 1

July 1, 2012

Luke 9:23-26

23 And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his ¹life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*

To the Glory of God

There is a primary Truth of Christianity that has been either greatly neglected or outright hidden from the minds and hearts of God's people for well over a generation now and that Truth is this simple but profound statement:

Salvation and Discipleship are the same thing

Being saved and walking with God are the same thing; Serving Christ and being born again by Christ are the same thing; Bearing Fruit and being Saved are the same thing- they are just two different ways to express the very same Truth. The Bible teaches that a saved person walks with God and those who walk with God for any length of

time- are saved. If you are saved- you will serve the Lord and if you serve the Lord- it is because you have been gloriously and wondrously and eternally saved. Now it is true that serving God does not *cause* or *bring about* or *produce* Salvation- but a person who has been truly regenerate by the Sovereign Move of God's Spirit *reflects* or *responds* to that Sovereign Salvation by automatically loving God and the things of God and a truly born again soul will *naturally* and *normally* pursue after God and pursue after Truth and pursue after holiness and will desire and seek and labor to live a life in accord with God's Will and God's Word precisely because he has that new Divine nature.

And he can't help it- it isn't his fault- he certainly can't take any credit for it- he is not entitled to any glory for doing so- it is all because God has Sovereignly and miraculously and supernaturally transformed his sinful, rebellious, fallen, and radically ruined nature into one that is Divine. And now all of his loves and wants and desires have changed. And thus all of his choices and the acts of his will reflect those new and holy loves and desires.

That is what Jesus is teaching here in this Passage that our brother just read to us. So the notion that is so popular in the modern Church that *some* saved people go on with the Lord into actually serving Him and following Him and obeying Him- while others- who are equally saved- do not- is a myth- it isn't true; it is a lie; the Bible does not teach it. So Salvation and Discipleship are the same thing and following Jesus and being saved are the same thing. Or to say it in the words of our text- looking at verse 23,

If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Now we must understand that these Words by Jesus here are not an invitation to some form of higher Christian living for those who voluntarily choose to participate in at some point after they were saved- no, this is Christ's Own Personal description of what true and genuine Biblical Salvation is. Salvation does all of that to every individual who is so blessed to have God graciously rescue them from the Wrath of God:

- ✓ They will "wish" (desire) to come after Jesus
- ✓ They will deny themselves

- ✓ They will take up their cross
- ✓ They will follow Jesus

In other words- there is no such thing as anyone living continually under the bondage of sin after they are saved. There is no such thing as anyone living in continual defeat over habitual sins after they are saved; no such thing as anyone walking in premeditated and ongoing disobedience and being saved; no such thing as being saved and not hungering and thirsting after Righteousness; no such thing as being saved and not wishing to come after Jesus; no such thing as being saved and not denying the lusts of the flesh; no such thing as being saved and not taking up your cross; no such thing as being saved and not following Jesus.

Now what we must understand is that the dominant view of many people in the modern Church about Salvation is one that is Man- made; it is false; it is unbiblical; it is pagan in its origins and many of the foundational teachings about Salvation that are taught from the pulpits of the American Church are actually the work and the labor and the logic and the teachings of a fourth Century heretic named, Pelagius and are not found anywhere in Scripture.

In fact many of these foundational teachings about Salvation in the modern Church are actually *opposed* to what the Bible *does* say and they are fighting *against* true and eternal Salvation and are not a help at all- but actually a hindrance to people being truly born again.

The dominant foundational teaching about Salvation in many parts of modern evangelicalism in America- which are taught by very prominent seminaries and many Bible colleges and are regurgitated from many pulpits is that all a person needs to do to be saved is to "*believe in Jesus*" or "*accept Jesus into their hearts*" and then God is eternally stuck with you and then somewhere down the road- if the Spirit moves on you and if you feel the need- you then at some point after Salvation- you "make" Jesus the Lord of your life and that's when you get really serious about obedience and service. But that's not what the Bible teaches at all.

The Theology that teaches that you have to "make" Jesus the Lord of your life after Salvation is as flawed and is as unbiblical as the Theology that teaches that you have to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit after Salvation or that you have to get rid of generational curses after

Salvation or that you have to be anointed with a prophetic utterance at some point after Salvation and any other variation of the false and unbiblical notion that Salvation really just gets the ball rolling and if you really want to be obedient or "super powered" or really, really, really used by God- then you need to "do" or "allow" or "have" or "get" something else later- after you are saved.

And the sum total of all the benefit of all of these Man-made and false and unbiblical teachings is that they *belittle* and *diminish* and *limit* the Beauty and the Power and the Glory of true Biblical Sovereign Salvation and all of them put together in all of their glory do *not* add a single inch of spiritual growth to *anyone's* life; they do *not* provide any power or anointing to *anyone*; and they do *not* assist *anyone* at all- because all of these teachings are patently false and they are all the invention of the mind of Man. God did not speak them. And they all serve to lead their followers down the wrong road.

The simple Message here in this Biblical Passage is that Salvation and Discipleship; Salvation and Obedience; are the same thing; Being saved and bearing fruit is the same thing; Being saved and loving Jesus is the same thing; being saved and denying yourself and taking up your cross and following Jesus is the exact same thing. And every time Jesus said things like, *"If you want to follow Me, you have to count the cost, you have to take up the cross, you have to deny yourself, you have to obey Me, follow Me, keep My Word."* - He was *not* calling people who were already Christians to some higher level of Christian Service or Obedience- He was calling people who were lost and unsaved to repent and be saved. Please turn with me to what the Apostle John said about this in **1John 1**. Now **1John** was written by the Apostle John to give the people of the Church- ten separate tests to gauge themselves by- so that that they would make sure that they were truly saved and not simply deceived into thinking that they were saved. And I want you to allow your eyes to fall on these inspired Words found in the 1st Chapter and verses: 3-6. **1John 1:3-6:**

3what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

4These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

5This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Now here in verse 3- the Apostle John makes the claim that he and the other Apostles actually saw the Lord; they touched Jesus with their own hands; they listened to Him speak with their own ears- both before and after His Resurrection- and John makes the amazing claim here that what Jesus told them- the Apostles wrote down and they wrote it all down- so that they could proclaim to us- so that we would be saved and have true fellowship with the Father and with the other Apostles- because John says here in verse 3 that the Apostles have correct fellowship with the Lord.

So the amazing statement that John makes here in verse 3- is if any of us ever plan on having a true and correct fellowship with God- if any of us plans on being saved- then we must have a true and correct fellowship with the Apostles- because John says here that the fellowship that the Apostles have with the Lord is true and it is correct.

And what that means to us is that there is no such thing as anyone having a true and correct fellowship with the Lord outside of having a true and correct fellowship with the Apostles. In other words- there is no such thing as anyone being outside of fellowship with the Apostles and yet still having a true and correct fellowship with the Lord. Another way of saying this is- that if we are walking in contradiction to what the Apostle John and the other Apostles have taught- then we must know that we are not in a true and correct fellowship with God. And yet another way of saying this is that one of the ways we know that we are saved is to walk or live our lives in such a way as the Apostle John writes here in this Epistle that if we are living contrary to the way that John writes here- and elsewhere in the 66 Books of the Bible- then we then should be very concerned about whether we are truly saved and not simply deceived. Now look again at **1John 1:4:**

These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

So John says that he writes the things contained in this Epistle- for one overriding reason or purpose:

... that our joy may be made complete.

So everything in this Epistle is designed to do one thing- bring to us or produce in us- the fullness of joy. Another way of saying this is that the over-riding response to us being truly saved is- joy. John wants us to actually *enjoy* our Salvation and *thrive* at being saved and *relish* the new birth and the straight and narrow path; and delight ourselves in the Lord.

And the way that John intends for us to enjoy our Salvation is to give us these ten tests so that we will not be deceived and simply think we are saved- so that we will enter into this amazing joy - so that the power of sin may be broken over our lives and we may be set free from our sinful natures and being born again- we may live our lives with abandon in this Radical Love that Jesus gave to us- all to the Glory of God. Now look again at **1John 1:5**:

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

This is the powerful; radical; life changing message that we heard from Jesus personally and that we Apostles wrote down in the pages of the New Testament:

... God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

God is Light; God is pure; God is sinless; God is pristine; God is holy; God is Righteous; God is Perfect; God is the highest form of Morality; God is the highest expression of Purity; God is the highest form of living. There is no world system; no morality; no way to live that even remotely measures up to the level of God's Own Personal Character and Nature.

The perfect Standard is not anything that Man has developed- but the perfect Standard against which all other standards are measured – is God's Own Personal Nature and Character. And God will judge and

hold accountable- all men against *that* Standard- against Himself- not other people.

John says that there is no darkness of any sort in God- none. And that is a very important statement because John then goes into five Chapters to tell us exactly what that means. John then explains that because God is Light and has no darkness in Him at all- therefore- every soul that is in Jesus Christ- every soul who is saved; every soul who is truly born again- has that very same nature inside him too- please read **1John 1:6**:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

The Apostle John and the other Apostles understood something that we all need to try to grasp. Because we are flesh; because we live in this world; because our feelings are as fallen as our flesh; because our hearts are deceptively wicked; because we are limited in our understanding and our knowledge is finite- because we are human and not Divine; because we are not God- we have an enormous capacity to be deceived about ourselves.

It is possible for humans to be very happy and very content and live in raw sin and not be concerned about it. It is possible for people to be in blatant rebellion to God and not be worried about it. It is possible for people to be standing on the very edge of eternal damnation and not even be moved.

No one is the best judge about himself. No one is able to see himself as clearly as he needs to. No one has the capacity to understand his own heart and his own motives by himself. So since that is true- God- in His great Mercy has given us several things that will help us to see ourselves correctly. And the correct way to see ourselves is to see ourselves as God sees us- to see the truth about ourselves.

So God has given- to every single saved person- these things to help us to see ourselves as God sees us:

- ✓ **The Word of God**- the Holy Bible- the Scriptures
- ✓ **The indwelling Holy Spirit**- Who authored and responds and agrees with the Word

- ✓ **The Church**- made us of imperfect people- all striving to love Jesus through obedience and helping one another by holding each other accountable to the Word of God and provoking one another to love and good works by proclaiming and teaching the Word through the Power of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ **Prayer**- which brings us into God's Presence and resets our bearings from being caught away by the world and the flesh and the devil
- ✓ **Communion**- the Lord's Supper- which reminds us of what it took for us to be saved and reminds us of our capacity to sin and of the Great Price that set us free

God gave us these things so that by availing ourselves of them- we would be strong in the Lord and in the Power of His Might and see ourselves correctly- as God sees us- so that we will not be deceived about ourselves and actually be truly saved. And here is why- read verse 6 again:

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

True Salvation is not about simply praying a prayer or walking an aisle or raising our hands or being baptized or joining the Church or adopting some moral code to live by. True Salvation is a supernatural miracle whereby God the Holy Spirit actually and literally comes to us- while we are yet in our sins and while we are yet lost and while we are doing as much as we can to serve satan and to rebel against God and to run and hide from God and while we are not wanting or caring anything at all about God- and while we are wishing that God would just leave us alone- God the Holy Spirit comes to us before we ask Him to; before we desire Him to; before we initiate anything at all towards Him- God the Holy Spirit Sovereignly violates our will and He Sovereignly interrupts our lives; and He Sovereignly inserts Himself in us and He Sovereignly imposes Himself onto us- and He forcefully opens our blind eyes and give us new eyes that see; He forcefully unstops our deaf ears and allows us to hear; He forcefully goes inside us and takes out of us a stony heart and He forcefully puts in us a new heart of flesh- a heart that is able and willing to believe- and God the Holy Spirit- all by

Himself- without any cooperation from us at all – gives us life; He rebirths us- He regenerates us- He destroys forever the domination that sin had over us and He kills and takes out of us forever that fallen and sinful and rebellious nature that we inherited from Adam. And God the Holy Spirit- all by Himself gives us a new nature- a nature that is divine; a nature that naturally and normally loves God and the things of God; a new nature that craves the Presence of God; a new nature that hungers and thirsts after Righteousness; a new nature that seeks to do God's Will; a new nature that enjoys following after God; a new nature that relishes the Ways of God; a new nature that hungers for Truth; a new nature that desires to understand God's Word in the very same way that a baby desires to suck milk; a new nature that thrives on the straight and narrow path; a new nature that hates sin; and a new nature that naturally and normally loves the Commandments of God.

God Sovereignly and supernaturally and miraculously and forcefully takes us out of the darkness of sin and brings us into the marvelous Light of Himself. And so we are now changed; we are now transformed; we are now a new creation. We are not a better or an improved version of the same old person- no- we are not simply people who have made a conscious decision to follow Jesus- we are a brand new creature that possesses a brand new nature- one that we didn't possess before we were saved and we are now forever set free from the tyrannical and the dictatorial and the dominating power that sin and satan had over our lives before we are saved.

And because that is true for every single saved person who has ever or who will ever be truly saved- John says here that we *do not* and we *cannot* and we *will not* continue to walk in darkness; we will not continue in the sin that we have been saved from; we will not continue to live our lives the same way that we did before we were saved- precisely because we can't- the new nature will not allow it; we no longer enjoy it; we no longer crave it; we no longer have anything in common with darkness- we no longer have any linkage or any connection to the darkness; we no longer have any fellowship with the darkness because we have been brought out of darkness and into God's marvelous Light- and the Light of God is so infinitely better; so much more infinitely enjoyable; so much more glorious than the darkness that we see no value at all in remaining in the darkness or having anything at all to do with it.

And because this is absolutely true- John says here that those who do continue to fellowship with the darkness; those who do not change; those who continue to see value in sin and those who continue to fellowship with sin and those who are still enamored with sin and who still take pleasure in sin and who like to play with sin- John says those people are simply deceived about their Salvation. Notice that he says here that they "say" they are saved and yet they continue to walk in darkness. They say they are saved but they have not been truly born again and so they do not possess the new divine nature. And so even though they have prayed and even though they have gone through the motions- there aren't any different than they were before they prayed and the proof of this is that they continue to love their sin and they remain under the terrible bondage and power of sin and they enjoy that.

So John says here that their conversion is a lie; their conversion is not real; their conversion is false- these people lie to themselves and the proof of that is that they do not practice the Truth.

Now that is a very interesting phrase. John says that these people,

...do not practice the truth;

And what that means is that the normal way that they live their daily lives is not holy. You see, Salvation is about Jesus saving our souls. It is our immortal souls which are saved. All of our sins have been forgiven and the Wrath of God against our sins has been forever averted from us and we will spend eternity in Heaven with God.

But God saved our souls and not our bodies. And so even after we are saved- we still live in a body of fallen sinful flesh that has not been converted and has not been redeemed. The Sin that dominated our souls still dominates our bodies and the Divine Curse that was against our souls is still on our bodies. And no matter how old we are- we are in the process of dying and 100% of those who are alive right now will die because Salvation did not change anything about our flesh.

And Salvation did not alter the way of the fallen world and the system by which the world operates and Salvation did not rescue the devil either. And so even though our souls have been forever saved- we are still faced with a three- fold danger of the world and the flesh and the devil which continues right on in their fallen and sinful ways.

And so our saved souls live in a sinful body which exist in a sinful world which is still dominated by a fallen arch angel named satan. And so our new divine nature compels us to serve the Lord among great temptation and great obstacles and great hindrances and great opposition. And so we struggle. We struggle against our flesh and we struggle against the world and we struggle against the whiles of the devil.

But we do not struggle alone. And we should not struggle alone- ever. To struggle alone is to fail and so as we struggle – we must struggle together- which is why God gave us all those other things I was talking to you about. And as we avail ourselves of God's Word and Prayer and Fellowship and Communion- we will struggle far better than if we do not avail ourselves of those things.

And so John calls our daily walk with God in this fallen world and with our fallen flesh and with satan- "a practice". That is the term that he uses- which tells us that we must consciously do certain things and consciously not do other things if we are to be found faithful and busy and fruitful.

So the normal and natural walk of a truly born again person does not lend itself to sin- although sin is ever present. The normal daily walk of a genuine believer does not lend itself to darkness- even though darkness is all around us. The normal daily walk of a truly regenerate soul does not lend itself to the world or the flesh or the devil- even though a truly regenerate soul is constantly plagued by all three.

So a truly saved person will sin- but he will quickly repent and follow Jesus. A truly saved person will find himself captured in darkness- but he will see that darkness and he will repent and return to the Light. A truly saved person will find himself caught up in the world- but he will be convicted of that and he will repent and return to the straight and narrow path. So while sin periodically overtakes the believer- that is not the normal way of life for him. He is periodically overcome with temptation- but that is not his daily way of life. He is periodically overrun by satan- but that is not his practice.

But a deceived person *is* known by these things; these things are his daily life; these things are his practice because he is not saved and the power of sin has never been broken from him and he does not possess the new divine nature. That is what John is saying here.

The Gospel that Jesus proclaimed is a Sovereign Divine Call to all of those who are chosen for Salvation from before the foundation of the world- to consciously reject and denounce and hate and turn away from their sin and the way of life that is birthed and promoted and sustained by the lost pagan world and joyfully and humbly follow Jesus as Lord and Master and Savior and King and Father by doing what He says and by obeying what He commands and by loving what He loves and by hating what He hates.

It is a Call to follow Jesus in both submissive and joyful obedience- as a bond-slave- with no more rights over your own life or your own desires or your own plans or your own dreams or your own ambition.

And this Call is far more important than simply buying "fire insurance" on your soul; far deeper than a prayer; more eternal than raising your hand; more profound than walking an aisle or filling out a card. This is not about the symbolism of a ritual or a ceremony- it is a Call to a radical life of selfless Love and an eternal transformation from being fallen to being regenerate; from being a child of satan to being a child of God; from loving sin to hating it and loving God; from being a goat to being a sheep; from being fish on the right side to fish on the left; from being blind to being given sight; from being deaf to being given hearing; from having a stony heart to being Sovereignly given a heart of flesh that believes- and that keeps on believing.

And while it is absolutely true that *half* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was and is the Divine Call of forgiveness for all sin along with the promise of eternal life to all of God's elect- it is equally true that the other half of that same coin is a Divine Call- by the very same Savior out of His very same Mouth to a life of self-denial; a life of bearing a cross; and a life of following Jesus Christ through obedience. And to even attempt at separating the two sides of that same coin is evil and sinful and destructive to any people.

You do not come to the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ so that you may fulfill all of your dreams, dear friend- that is simply not taught anywhere in the Bible. You do not come to the Cross to bargain with God about how much or how little you are going to serve Him or do for Him after He forgives and saves you. You do not come to the Cross so you may then be free to pursue whatever is in your heart to do and be and God exists for no other reason than to give you those desires.

No, you come to the Cross of the Lord to die. You die to sin; die to personal ambition; die to self- esteem; die to self- gratification; die to self- fulfillment and your joy and your satisfaction and the highest degree of personal value in your existence lies in your complete submission and joyful obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of His Will and the proclamation of His Word and the advancement of His Kingdom. So when the true, Biblical Gospel is preached- it has inherently in it- a rebuke to superficiality; a rebuke to shallowness; a rebuke to outward hypocritical response.

So the heart and soul of the one true Biblical Gospel- the Gospel that Jesus preached and the Gospel the Apostles preached – is a Call to the forgiveness of sin and eternal life through repentance and faith that is evidenced by ongoing self-denial; cross bearing; and submission to the Will and Word of God.

There has been great attempts over the last several years to separate- in people's minds and in reality in the everyday practice in people's lives- Salvation from Obedience; Jesus as Savior from Jesus as Lord; and Justification from Sanctification. It's a disjointed disconnected strange emphasis and it's a tragically unbiblical separation. In fact, it can be described as little more than a Gospel Scandal.

Sinners are told today that if they want to be saved and go to Heaven- they just need to *"accept Jesus Christ into their hearts"* or *"Invite Jesus in"* or some other common and unbiblical phrase. Very little is ever said about how they have to view God and themselves and their sin and what true Biblical repentance really is.

The people who hold this position- whether consciously or not- end up discarding the one single Biblical Gospel and they turn Jesus into nothing more than a "deeper life coach" or a "higher life teacher"- somebody who is trying to get people who are already eternally secure to be a little more dedicated and little more committed.

So they take everything that Jesus and the Apostles said like "Follow Me" and "Take up your cross" and "Obey Me" and "Keep My Word" and "Keep My Commandments" and "Love Me" and "Love one another" and "Crucify your flesh" and "Mortify the Deeds of your Body" and "Love your enemies" and "Forgive those who wrong you" and "husbands love your wives" and "wives submit to the authority of your husbands" and "not allowing the sun to go down on their wrath" and all

those other things as not spoken to those people who need to understand that that's the attitude of a person who comes for salvation, but rather making it an attitude of somebody who is already a Christian moving to some kind of "second level"- and that is simply not true.

So instead of Jesus being an Evangelist- preaching the Gospel; instead of Him being the only One Who seeks and saves that which is lost- the "Jesus" of the modern Church becomes nothing more than a speaker or a guide- offering some tips on how people can move from one level of spirituality to another- that is, of course if they feel like it or it agrees with them. But the truth is that any teaching that strips Jesus of the Evangelistic intent of what He says- is in contradiction and opposition to that intent. If Jesus truly said, "**I came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost**" then we ought to make sure that we know that what He said had that goal in mind and that what *we* say today reflects that.

Jesus never said, "*I came to elevate those who are already saved,*" He said, "*I came to seek and to save that which is lost.*" I don't really want to reinvent Jesus and I think it takes an awful lot of arrogance to do that.

James Montgomery Boice- who died in 2000- was a wonderful exegete of God's Word and wrote about this subject in his book, Christ's Call to Discipleship. Boice said,

"This is a common defect, this disconnection between salvation and discipleship, this is a common defect in times of prosperity. In days of hardship, particularly persecution, those who are in the process of becoming Christians count the cost of discipleship carefully before taking up the cross of the Nazarene in the first place."

And that is absolutely correct. Where there is great hardship and persecution against believers- there is never any distinction made by those Churches between Salvation and Obedience- because all you have to do in those countries is publicly profess that Jesus is your Savior and that's enough to get you thrown in jail. So in those circumstances- you have to be willing- if you're going to say even that much- to pay a huge price for your Salvation- perhaps even your life. So that's correct.

But then Boice went on to say,

"In hard times of persecution- preachers do not beguile people with false promises of an easy life, or indulgence of sins. But in good times- the cost does not seem so high and people take the Name of Christ without undergoing the radical transformation of life that true conversion demands"

So this strange new teaching that seeks to separate Salvation from Obedience can only work here in America or some other affluent society- where there is little or no sense of persecution and execution of believers.

But the true Biblical Call to Salvation is a Call to both surrender to Christ and then to follow this same Christ. It's a Call to follow Christ with such extreme devotion- that it stands out from those who are not saved- where an intelligent and thinking person denies himself on purpose- he consciously examines what he lusts for and what he craves for and what he desires to have and then by the Power of the Spirit and the Grace of God and to the Glory of Jesus Christ- that person consciously; on purpose-*rejects* those desires and those lusts and those cravings because the Word and the Spirit has worked together to convict him that those desires are not holy and not fruit producing. And true Biblical Salvation causes a person to love God far more than he loves himself and so this level of denial is not really all that unusual- it becomes the normal and natural way of life for all genuine believers.

And again- that is not the rare activity of some super powered person- who is one among a thousand- no, that denial is the normal and natural response of all who are genuinely saved. In other words- denial to that extent is what it means to be saved. Anything less than that is not a characteristic of true "Saving Faith".

And Saving Faith is a very interesting and important subject that we need to understand and so as the Lord leads- I want to explore what Jesus meant by what He said in this Passage by looking at what Saving Faith is and what Saving Faith does in the life of every soul who is blessed to be given it by the Lord-and Lord willing- we will begin that next week.

Let's pray.