HOW I KNOW GOD WANTS EVERYONE TO BE SAVED

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I TIMOTHY 2:8

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto

the knowledge of the truth" - 1 Tim.2:4

 I have met a few people in my Christian experience

who felt that they were excluded form the atonement and

from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

 I never shall forget a sad experience I had with a

man who came to this church many years ago. One night

while riding with him in the car, I was talking to him

about how he could know he was saved - how he could

have assurance in his heart. He had said that at times

he thought he was saved, but then again he did not know

whether he was saved or not. In the darkness of the

car, he said to me, "I am afraid, Brother Tom, that I

am predestinated to be lost and that God did not intend

for me to be saved in the first place."

 I am absolutely positive that is not true, and I

can take the Bible and prove that the will of God is

that every man or woman be saved. "Who will have all

men to be saved, and to come unto knowledge of the

truth" does not mean that everyone will be saved. The

doctrine of Universalism, which is a false teaching,

teaches to the effect that sometimes God is gong to

change His mind and He is not going to let anyone be

lost; He is not going to let anyone suffer; He not

going to let anyone go to Hell; and finally He is going

to save everyone. Not one verse in all the Holy Bible

intimates such teaching. The Scripture says, "Who will

have all men to be saved, and to come unto the

knowledge of the truth."

 There are two different verbs in the New Testament

for will. One expresses determination; the other,

desire. If the verb in this verse were the verb for

determination - if God were determined that there would

be no one in Hell - there would be no one in Hell. But

this is not what the verb means. It is the word for

desire. This verse teaches that God desires that

everyone be saved, that no one be lost, that all come

to the knowledge of the truth.

 I find in the Scriptures five reasons why I know

God wants and desires and longs for everyone to be

saved.

I. WE ARE TO PRAY FOR EVERYONE

 In I Timothy 2:1 we read, "I exhort therefore,

that, first of all, supplications, prayers,

intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all

men."

 God said we should pray for everyone. If there

were no hope for a person to be saved, would God exhort

us to pray for that person? No. Since there is a

possibility for everyone to be saved, the Bible says

that we are to pray for all men. I don't care how deep

in sine the are, how hardhearted they are, how

indifferent they are.

 I heard just the today of someone who is lost and

needs the Lord, but who told one of our workers today,

"Shut up! Go on your way! I don't want to hear about

it!" That does not mean that we should not pray for

him. The Bible teaches that we are to pray for all men

everywhere. That fact leads me to believe that it is

possible for any and all to be saved because God has

told us to pray for them.

 Many people have been saved because someone

prayed. Many people are in Hell today because no one

cared enough to pray for their salvation. I never shall

forget reading the accurate account of the mother of

Tom Carter. Tom was a prisoner who was sent to prison

for many years. While in prison, his mother, who had

prayed for him all of his life, got a very special

burden to pray that God would save him. She set aside

other things and began praying for her lost boy in

prison. She prayed that God would not let him die until

he was genuinely saved.

 In the midst of these four or five days of

praying, fasting, waiting on God and travailing for the

soul of her son, she received a telegram from the state

prison. It read like this:

 Dear Mrs. Carter:

 We regret to inform you that your son Tom Carter

died.

 She took the telegram, went back to her knees

again, laid it on the floor and bathed it with her

tears. She told God, "God, I don't believe it! I don't

believe it! I have prayed in faith believing. I have

held my boy up to You, begging You to save him. I have

had the confidence in my soul that my prayers were

being answered. I don't believe this telegram!"

 It is said that Mrs. Carter wadded up that

telegram, threw it in the wastebasket and told God, "I

still claim Your promises. I believe my boy will be

saved.

 In only a matter of hours a second telegram came

from the state prison. it said:

Dear Mrs. Carter:

 We are happy to inform you that we have made an

error. There are two men in this prison by the name

of Tom Carter. It was not your son who died: it was

another man with the same name.

 That telegram was followed in a few hours by a

letter from her son Tom saying:

 Mother, while here in this prison in recent days,

I have felt the need of Christ in my life and I have

been saved.

 Friends, there is no way of knowing how many of us

sitting in the house of God, singing songs of Zion and

rejoicing in our hope in Christ, were saved because

someone prayed. God in His Word says, "I exhort

therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers,

intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all

men.

 I know that God wants everyone saved because He

wants everyone prayed for.

 "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto

the knowledge of the truth.''

II. CHRIST GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL

 We read in I Timothy 2:6: "Who gave himself a

ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

 The Bible plainly teaches that Jesus died for all,

died for every one of us--for the lost heathen, for the

uncivilized, for those in the past, for those who live

now, and for all those who will be born until the end

of time. He "gave himself a ransom for all." When

Christ died on the cross of Calvary, He died with you

and me in mind.

 A wonderful verse in connection with this thought

is verse 5: ''For there is one God, and one mediator

between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." There is

one God who manifests Himself in three different ways:

Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Multitudes do not believe

this verse and in a moment, you will know whom I am

talking about. "For there is one God, and one mediator

between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Just one

Mediator, not two, not three not several--one God, one

Mediator. Who is that Mediator? It is not the Virgin

Mary; it is not a Protestant preacher; it is not a

Catholic priest. "...one God...one mediator..., can

mean only one glorious Person, Jesus Christ.

 Mrs. Malone and I have visited the four largest

and most historic churches in the Roman Catholic world:

Saint Peter's Cathedral in the Vatican in Rome, St.

John's Lateran Church, the most historic Catholic

church on the face of the earth; Saint Mary's Basilica;

and Saint Paul's Outside the Wall. While in Saint

Mary's Basilica, I saw some things that I shall never

forget. One was a large sculpture in beautiful stone.

There is no telling how many thousands of dollars that

piece of sculpture is worth. It was of a woman sitting,

representing the Virgin Mary. Underneath her feet was

an entanglement of men. One was an old haggard-looking

man with long hair down to his back. That was John

Huss. One with bulging eyes looked like an imbecile.

Around both of these men snakes were wrapped. The

woman's feet were upon Martin Luther, the Father of the

Protestant Reformation.

 While looking at that sculpture, I noticed some

little booths, like telephone booths. I saw a Catholic

nun, a young woman, in one of those booths. There was a

perforated piece of board and then the enclosed booth

on the other side. Through that perforation you could

speak. In that booth was a Catholic priest, hidden from

view of all who stood in that great church.

 I saw that young Catholic woman come, kneel and

cross herself. She had no sooner knelt, garbed in all

her black attire, than she began to whisper and confess

her sins to a man in that booth. I saw the big tears

roll down her cheeks. Then I watched her arise, and

with tears still on her cheeks and with the same sad

look on her face, and with not one ray of hope or one

glitter of peace or one bit of joy in her soul, I saw

her walk out, stooped and weeping.

 I said to myself that day, and I have said it

thousands of times since, Thank God for one to whom we

can go who never sins!

 Not a man, but a God-man, the spotless perfect

Lamb of God who bore my sins, the one and only

Mediator.

 Any man or woman who says there is more than one

Mediator goes contrary to the Book of God. There is one

God and one Mediator--no other. That Mediator is Christ

Jesus.

 You might say, "Oh, but I have heard all my life

that you could confess your sins to So-and-So.'' "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'' (I John 2:1).

 Don't think I am just "taking off" on the Catholic

church. I have the truth at heart. I have as much right

to preach what I believe, as they do to advocate what

they believe. We see thousands of cars on the road that

have a little Catholic image in them. People carry

those images because they believe they have some

efficacy, some atonement, for protection. Saint

So-and-So is to protect you; Saint So-and-So is to help

you when you are in sorrow; Saint So-and-So is to help

you when you run out of money; Saint So-and-So is to

help you when all of your friends have turned their

backs on you; Saint So-and-So is to help you when you

get sick; Saint So-and-So is to help you when you get

old.

 Gathered into one glorious, living Redeemer, we

have all of those in "one God and one mediator between

God and man, the man Christ Jesus.'' One Mediator. He

gave Himself a ransom for everyone. No one can take

this Bible and find anything that would indicate Jesus

did not die for your sins. He wants everyone to be

saved because He died for everyone.

 III. THE TEACHING OF THE SCRIPTURE

 In II Peter 3:9 we read, "The Lord is not slack

concerning his promise, as some men count slackness,

but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

 Titus 2.11, 12 says, "For the grace of God that

bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching

us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this

present world....

 So the Bible teaches that God is not willing that

any should perish. There is a sense in which God has

put everything He can between a lost soul and Hell--the

Bible, a bloody cross, the church of Jesus Christ,

gospel preaching, the prayers and tears of honest

Christians. God is not willing that anyone be lost. He

has put every barrier, every stop sign, every blockade,

between you and Hell that He could possibly put. That

He wants everyone to be saved is the teaching of the

Scripture.

 The Bible plainly teaches that the grace of God

that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. He is

not willing that any should perish. His glorious

salvation is not confined to any one class of people.

He loves the rich, the poor·. the learned, the

unlearned, the up-and-out, the down-and-out. God loves

all sinners, every sinner, everywhere.

 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom.

5:8). Jesus ministered to all classes of people while

here on earth. His love and saving grace reached to the

very lowest rung of the ladder of human society.

IV. HE HAS NEVER REFUSED ANYONE

 I have never met anyone who came to Jesus and was

refused. Have you? There are verses that teach that God

has never refused anyone. 1 have often said that I can

hardly preach without referring to John 6:37, "All that

the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him that

cometh to me 1 will in no wise east out." The Lord

never refuses anyone.

 John Wesley was one of the greatest preachers who

has ever lived. He was a man and a human being, but he

was a miracle himself. John Wesley crossed the

Atlantic Ocean thirteen times when it was a miracle if

anyone got across without disaster. He rode across

this country on horseback and muleback, establishing

Methodist churches and sowing the seed of the Gospel.

John Wesley had an unusual voice. He never used a

microphone. He would preach to as many as forty

thousand people in an open field without a P.A.

system. It is said that his voice would carry a mile.

He would lift up his voice and it would fairly ring

across the heads of thousands of people. He stood at

his mother's grave and preached to many thousands.

 One day when he had preached to a large open-air

crowd, Lady Huntington and other royalty went up to him

and said "Mr. Wesley, we would like to entertain you

for tea." So he went to tea. But just before he went

into the home of this royalty of England, someone

handed Wesley a little dirty piece of paper, which he

stuck into his long Prince Albert coat.

 While being entertained at tea, one of the royalty

said, "Mr. Wesley, we think you went a little too far

today in your preaching. " "Why do you say that?" this

great Methodist preacher asked.

 "Because you made the statement that God would

never refuse anyone. You went so far as to say that

Jesus would take people whom the Devil was even tired

of. You said the Lord would take the Devil's

castaways."

 "Yes, I believe that," he answered. As she was

talking, John Wesley reached into his pocket, got the

note and read it.

 We are just two old, sinful women, two soiled

doves of the London underworld who heard you preach

today. We have lived in sin all of our lives. We

heard you say that Jesus would take even the Devil's

castaways. Hearing that and believing it, we have

trusted Him and have been saved.

 Mr. Wesley folded the note and looked through the

glass of the large and beautiful doors. Out there he

saw two old women with their rags gathered about them,

standing shuddering in the cold. After reading the note

to Lady Huntington and the other royalty, he said,

"There are two people out there who have been away from

God all of their lives, who have lived in the very

gutters of this city. The Lord saved them today.

 "AIl that the Father giverh to me shall come unto

me; and he that cometh to me I will in no wise cast

out.

 My friends, there is no record of Jesus Christ

ever refusing anyone. Thieves came to Him, and He took

them in. When people flung a woman at His feet and said

that she deserved to be stoned, He took her in. When a

cursing, swearing fisherman crossed His path, He took

him in. This Bible teaches that Jesus has never refused

anyone. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come

unto the knowledge of the truth.''

 V. BECAUSE OF THE GIFT OF HIS SON

 Romans 8:32 says, "He that spared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with

him also freely give us all things?'' God gave His Son

for you. That is why I know He wants you to be saved.

''He...spared not his own Son.'' Can you possibly

believe that God would give His only begotten Son to

suffer and die on the cross of Calvary, then not want

you to be saved?

 "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.''--John 3:16.

 Someone has told this beautiful and wonderful story:

 Long ago, before the days of railways, people

could travel only on horseback or by rumbling

stagecoach. The arrival of the coach in town or village

was a great event. As Harry, a bright but careless boy,

came out of school, he waited to see the visitors get

out of the stagecoach. Among them was a queer-looking

man who swayed from side to side as he walked. Harry

laughed aloud and imitated the funny walk of the

stranger to the rest of his chums. When he reached

home, his father said, "Come into this room and see a

dear old friend of mine. "

 Harry was glad to go, but oh, how ashamed he felt!

There sat the stranger who had arrived on the

stagecoach and at whom he had laughed. But the

gentleman smiled and was very kind.

 Then Harry's father told his son that when he

(Harry) was quite little. he (the father) had fallen

into the canal. A stranger plunged in to save him, but

it left him crippled for life.

 Harry flushed when he thought of his own bad

behavior toward a man who had saved his father's life.

 The Lord Jesus has more than risked His life to

save you from sin. He gave Himself. Oh, such a cruel

death He died upon the cross! He "gave himself a ransom

for all."

 You may not love Him now because you know Him not,

but to know the Lord Jesus is to love Him.

"God is not willing that any should perish, but that

all should come to repentance."