



WEEKLY STUDY

How to Deal - Week Six

We are staying in the same story as Week Five– the salvation of the jailer and his family. After a wonderful baptism weekend at Providence, it is good to consider how we respond to salvation. That response falls into two different categories. Acts of Piety and Acts of Mercy. This week we will consider how we are invited to go deeper into each of those categories of response.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for all of those who were baptized last Sunday. Pray that they might see with clarity the ways in which they are called to live out their salvation.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: EPHESIANS 2.8-10 (NIV)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Acts, not works. We respond to salvation, we don’t earn it. Chapter 2 of Ephesians contains Paul’s description of the life of sinners who have become saints. Our salvation is 100% a gift from God, so we can not boast, and we can not earn it. We can work our fingers to the bone but our salvation is more than a benefit of our work ethic or right-ness. When you read these words, do you experience freedom or frustration?
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- **Prayer Prompt: It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5.1)**
- *God, I thank you for the gift of salvation. I am sorry for the ways in which I still try to earn it. Let my life be a constant response to your grace. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JAMES 2.16-17 (NIV)

If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

- While we can not earn our salvation, there ought to be signs of salvation that are evident in our day to day life. We want to see the fruit of our new life in Christ as evidence that God has and is changing us for good. James’ words here have been argued over throughout church history because they can be easily mis-interpreted. What do you think about the distinction of earning vs. responding to salvation?
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- **Prayer Prompt: For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1.13)**

- *God, you have rescued me from darkness and restored my life. Let my life today be a reflection of your grace and generosity. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 22.37-40 (NIV)

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- Jesus always connected our love of God with our love of neighbor. That command is a summation of the entire Bible! If you love God, you will also love your neighbor. How is the love of God evident in your relationship with your neighbors? Are they able to see the love of Jesus Christ in your interactions?

- **Prayer Prompt: I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3.17-19)**
- *God, fill me with your love—to the measure of all of your fullness! There is power in the knowledge of your love. Through me, may my neighbor delight in your goodness. Amen.*

THURSDAY: MICAH 6.8 (NIV)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

- God wants His people to show our connection and dependance on Him in an outward way. The requirement of our salvation is humility, justice and mercy. While we don’t earn it, there ought to be evidence of it in the way we interact with the world around us. What does it look like for you to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God?

- **Prayer Prompt:** And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,¹³ and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? (Deuteronomy 10.12-13)
- *Humble me O Lord, stir up in me a deeper desire of justice and mercy so that I might reflect Jesus more clearly to those around me. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 1 JOHN 4.20-21(NIV)

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

- How can I hate my neighbor and love God? I can't! How can I receive God's mercy and not show mercy? It doesn't work. Is there a sense in which you are not allowing God's love to fully impact your life? How will you show love to your brother and sister today?

- **Prayer Prompt:** You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. (Galatians 5.13)
- *God, your love is better than anything I have ever experienced on earth. In you I am free. May I use this freedom to love others well today. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 16.31-34 (NIV)

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized.³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

- The contagious nature of the Gospel is on full display in the story of the jailer. As he invited Paul and Silas into his house, the good news came too. How are you inviting the good news to follow you around? Who else is hearing the story of salvation because of its impact on you?

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- **Prayer Prompt: And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Romans 1.6)**
 - *God, Would you do a new thing in my heart that allows those around me to see evidence of your grace and mercy? Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

How do we respond to the salvation we have received through Jesus Christ? Walk through the inward and outward rhythms of Acts of Piety and Acts of Mercy. How are these responses present in your life? To what would you like to give more attention as a response to the salvation you have received?

Acts of Piety

1. Prayer
2. Searching the Scriptures
3. Holy Communion
4. Fasting
5. Christian Community
6. Healthy Living

Acts of Mercy

1. Visiting the sick and prisoners
2. Feeding and clothing people
3. Earning, saving, giving all one can
4. Opposition to evil structures in society