

SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven..." (Matthew 7:21). Who are these unfortunate people? Do you know any of them? Probably some cult member. Someone you know from work. Or they go to somebody else's church. How about your mother, or father. The person next to you at Sunday service. Your son...daughter... husbandwife?

Cornelius...a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually (Acts 10:1-2). Cornelius was not saved. Yet he feared God, gave money, and was a "good" man. God even intervened in his life by sending an angel with a message for him. But this did not save him. He needed to be born again. God sent Peter to Cornelius and his family, to preach the salvation message, which they gloriously received.

You know people like this. Some of them faithfully attend a church whose doctrine teaches that you must believe and be baptized and you will be saved. They talk about it every Sunday, and it is part of their liturgy. Others attend evangelical churches where every service is ended with an invitation to recite the sinner's prayer. Many are "second generation," whose parents were gloriously born again, and were raised in home with Christian morals and values. However, unless they have a "born again" experience, they fit into the category from Matthew 7:21.

Fred...a devout man, and one who feared God...tithed and gave offerings to his church. He was always there to help, fix, clean - whatever needed doing. But he was searching and unhappy. The Lord sent him to the Jesus Is Real camp meetings just a couple of weeks ago. He had emptiness inside when he came forward to a prayer line. He wore a mask on his face which was called Death. There was no breakthrough until one of the brothers could see that he was not saved. Pastor Darwin ministered to him the next day, and asked him to tell him about his salvation experience. As a teenager at a Christian Bible camp, a friend had dragged him forward to "recite" this sinner's prayer. Words with no meaning. From that time on, he was told he was saved. What a struggle. Forty years of making bricks without straw! Forty years of working for God, but never knowing Him personally.

Lowell... a devout man, and one who feared God...tithed and gave offerings to his church. He would come early to vacuum, and mow the yard during the week. He knew scriptures better than most, praised and danced before the Lord every Sunday service. "But, I came to the camp meetings completely empty inside. I cried out to God to help me," said Lowell. And He did. Listening to Fred's testimony, Lowell realized, "That's me!" He came forward, and was born again. Why didn't we see this before? "If you hang around sinners, you act like them. You lie, cheat swear, and are dishonest," Lowell said. "If you hang around Christians, you act like them. You have decent language, talk about God, read your Bible, pray, even speak in tongues." Brought up in a Christian

family, Lowell thought he had always been saved. He discovered he was wrong! Today, his face shines, and he has eyes to "see" things spiritually.

Keith... a devout man, and one who feared God...tithed and gave offerings to his church. He brought his family to church, and taught his children Godly principles. He played with the worship team at Jesus Is Real. As a youngster, he traveled with Pastor Darwin's tent ministry. His Christian parents brought him up in an environment where Jesus was the bond and fabric of their lives. "When the Holy Spirit began leading me, I argued in my mind about all the times I had gone forward to "recite" the sinner's prayer. I reminded myself about the all the experiences I had had with God. I didn't want to do anything just because somebody else was. When I do something, I want it to be real," said Keith. "But, when you are "led" by the Holy Spirit, it is entirely different. I was led this time, and when I prayed, Jesus came in, and my eyes were opened." That night, Keith, his family and friends, stayed at church long after the meeting, praising the Lord, and didn't get home until 4:30 AM! Look what the Lord has done!

Frieda... a devout woman, and one who feared God... tithed and gave offerings to the church. She attends church regularly, and has two sons who are pastors. Her born again experience? Didn't have one. But that night, she was born again. Frieda said, " I know that I am saved, I really do!" When one of her other sons found out she had been born again, he said, "Wow, Mom was sure happy this morning!"

There are many who are rejecting these testimonies. What if these people were your son or mother or husband who you thought was saved all along? Would your pride get hurt. What if you had been the person who had helped this person "recite" the sinner's prayer. Now you can't take the credit. Or would you rejoice because now this person's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life? The people above are not strangers to us. They have walked and worked among us for years. We never questioned their salvation. Until now. Until the Spirit began to teach us. Until we started to find many, many who are walking the walk and talking the talk, without being born again.

Tradition and doctrine get in the way of changing lives for Jesus. Don't be one of those who stand in the way of someone's salvation. Don't let tradition and doctrine (or pride) stand in the way of your salvation. Do you wonder why you have no peace? Do you wonder why you cannot understand the Scripture? Do you have difficulty praying? Are you sure of your salvation? Ask yourself what your born again experience is. When was it and where and did your life change - were your eyes opened.? Is the Holy Spirit tugging at your heart right now?