

## *It Just Doesn't Get Simpler Than That!*

Perhaps the quintessential question in all of Christianity is - How does one achieve Salvation? In today's reading from the Book of Acts, Peter was asked, "What are we to do...? Peter then gives the definitive prescription for Salvation: "Repent and be baptized..." It was recorded in our reading that 3,000 persons repented and were baptized.

But what is Salvation? A generally accepted definition of Salvation is the "saving [of] human beings from sin and its consequences, which include death and separation from God." Many begin and end their understanding of Salvation with the gift of eternal life. Some believe Salvation is just the reward of eternal life with a "ticket" to heaven where one will spend eternity with Christ. This focus on heaven does seem to mean different things to different people. This has been explained by some of those who believe everyone's heavenly reward will be different. Hopefully we can all agree, however, that Heaven will be much better than what we can ever even possibly imagine. Probably even humanity's best minds are limited by our inability to conceptualize just how magnificent heaven can be for us. In fact, I Corinthians, tells us "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."

Are there other ways Salvation benefits us? In short, yes in several ways. When we gain Salvation, we gain access to God's power. For example, God promises us power in the midst of pain. Psalm 41:3 "The Lord nurses them when they are sick and eases their pain..." Are you in physical or emotional pain? Then access God's power through your Salvation and experience the easing of your pain. When we gain Salvation, we gain access to God's presence. We can always talk to God. Are you in despair? Talk to God! God is ALWAYS present and wants to hear from us. The more we talk with God the easier it becomes. We can also access God's plan for us through Salvation. Each of us has skills, abilities, gifts, and passions (all charisms) and God helps us use these to express love for others. According to Ephesians 2:10, God's plan is for you to do good works with the gifts He's given you.

Today's Gospel according to John references Jesus and his invitation to Salvation. Jesus says "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved...I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Let's not make it more complicated than that. Repent and be baptized. Jesus is the gate to Salvation therefore repenting and being baptized are the keys. It just doesn't get simpler than that!

*Rodney Van Bibber*