

# Your Appointment with God

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**Bible Text:** Luke 5:27-32, Romans 3

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## Introduction:

Open your Bible to **Luke 5:27-32**. The title of the message is "Your Appointment with God". This morning we are going to study and see "who does God save?" There is a certain group of people that God will not save and others He definitely will. We find the answer in Luke 5.

You say, what do you mean by "saved"? **Hebrews 9:27** says, "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment". There is an appointment you will keep.

We all need to be saved. We are going to die one day. We often have an inflated view of ourselves.

Have you ever considered what is going to happen after you die? You may try to think about everything else but God. Well, that's why Jesus is coming after us.

**Luke 5:27-32**, "And after these things [Jesus] went forth [FROM THE HOUSE WHERE HE HAD JUST HEALED A PARALYZED MAN], and saw a publican [TAX COLLECTOR], named Levi [i.e. the Apostle Matthew], sitting at the receipt of custom [TAX DESK]: and he [JESUS] said unto him, Follow me. 28 And he [LEVI-MATTHEW] left all, rose up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans [TAX COLLECTORS] and of others that sat down with them. 30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole [WELL] need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Who does God save? He saves those who REPENT and put their whole faith and dependence on Jesus Christ. "Repent" means to have a transformation of mind—an awakening of your mind about the seriousness of sin—it is turning from excusing your sin to hating it and to loving God. Repentance is like heeding an alarm. In London in World War II, when they heard the air raid siren, they ran for cover. Heeding an alarm is a life and death matter. Alarms are good!

**Tornado Alarm Illustration:** When I was a child, I can remember enjoying a nice Saturday afternoon. We had a swimming pool in our back yard. I don't think I wore my shoes very much during the summer time. We spent our days in the pool and on the monkey bars. I can remember though from time to time, our nice quiet summer days would be interrupted for several minutes by the massive wailing sound of what I found out later was a Tornado Alarm! Now there were no tornadoes in the area during that nice sunny quiet day, so what was the purpose for the alarm?

The purpose was WARNING. In case an actual tornado was spotted, everyone could be alerted and awakened to the fact that this awful life threatening storm was coming to our area.

Alarms are important. If the smoke alarm goes off in the middle of the night, ignoring it can mean death to myself and my family. Time is of the essence.

When you hear the siren of a fire truck or ambulance, you'd better look around. Those alarms are there to save lives. The alarm wakes us up to danger.

This morning there are many who are in a spiritual sleep toward God. They think their life is ok. They think their sin isn't that bad. The majority of people on earth are aware of their own sin, but they do not think it is that bad, certainly not bad enough for God to sent them to hell.

Today we are going to ask ourselves two simple questions: 1. Who does God save? and 2. How does God save?

I. **Who** does God save? Does He save those who are sincere and think they are ok? There are those who think they are so wicked that God could never save them.

To answer this question, I want us to first look at **Luke 5:27-32**. Jesus had just healed a crippled man and told him that his sins were forgiven. People were shocked. Jesus was doing miracles, and yet the elite religious people especially hated Jesus. They were too proud to come to Jesus. Only the worst of the worst people were coming to Jesus. Jesus' message was "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 4:17**). He was sounding the alarm for people to stop living for this world's kingdom, and to awake and start living for God's kingdom.

**Luke 5:31-32** remember Jesus words, "And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole [WELL] need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Jesus' Mission was to save those who see themselves as they really are in God's sight: unacceptable, worthless, and **wretched**. You say—that is shocking language. That is over the top. If that language offends you, then you are most certainly not going to come to Christ as long as you think that way. You think you are a pretty good, upstanding, and righteous person. Jesus words are striking in **verse 32**, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you think you are pretty good, Jesus is not calling you to come to Him. Only really bad people need Him.

You think of yourself as "not that bad". You are a sinner, but you are "not *that* bad of a sinner". Let me tell you something—everybody who ends up in hell is shocked and surprised to be there. All those who go to hell will do so because they do not see their sin as that bad. They thought hell was reserved for really BAD people like Hitler and murderers and bank robbers. Most people have made a God in their own image. To most people, God's morals mirror their own morals. Most people believe that God is not more righteous than their own self-conceived idea of morality. To them God is going to excuse sin—because we excuse sin. Those who think this way have made themselves higher than God.

Let me say this: God is infinitely higher than our own self-conceived ideas of right and wrong. God will never excuse sin. As the Scripture says in **Nahum 1:3**, God "will not at all acquit *the wicked*". **Numbers 14:18** says that God will "by no means clear the guilty". In other words, God would not be holy if he excused one sin even in the slightest way. You are a sinner, and you often excuse sin. But God is not a sinner. He perfect and good and He is JUST. God would be a monster if He was not perfectly just. He is perfectly good, and

He would not be perfectly good if He was not just in every single circumstance without exception.

What is God's justice measured by? Are you just? To find out you must measure yourself by God's measure of what is just. He gives us the 10 commandments. Most people think that God gave the 10 commandments for us to keep so that we can enter into heaven through keeping them.

**Illustration:** This morning I got on the scale and I measured my weight. We often do this. We also measure our height. In order to do this we must measure ourselves by something and compare ourselves to it. Younger children see this at the carnival when they see a measure for their height to get on certain rides.

**Illustration:** Well, God has a measure that He has given us to see how righteous or unrighteous we are. He gave us His Law. Measure your self by it, and you will see that you measure out to be perfectly wretched. How many times have you lied, stretched the truth or exaggerated in your life. You say, "I'm not that bad". That's your measure. What would you think if I told you that I'm 20 feet tall? I can make my own measure to say that I'm 20 feet tall. I can make my own scale to say that I'm only 150 pounds! I can make my own mirror to make me look skinny. But that mirror would be distorted. It would not be true.

Measure yourself meticulously by God's Law and you will see how bad your situation is. **Job 15:15-16** says, "The heavens are not clean in [God's] sight. <sup>16</sup> How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

**Application:** Let me be clear: God saves only those who see themselves as those who are on a spiritual death row, who are guilty. Only those who know they deserving of hell can be saved. If you think your sin is no big deal, you will never come to Jesus Christ as long as you are in that condition.

**Illustration:** For instance, if you realize you've got cancer, you're going to go immediately to the doctor—to the best doctor you can find. This is life and death. But if you don't know you are sick, you'll never seek help. In the same way, those who think they are spiritually fine will never seek help. They are like the person who doesn't know he's got cancer. God is not calling those who think they are righteous. He's calling people who see themselves as wretched sinners. This is the mission of Jesus Christ.

**II. How** does God save? We are going to find out in Romans 3.

A. Let me be clear: you will NEVER be allowed into heaven because you kept the 10 commandments. If you want to enter Heaven by that standard, then you must keep it perfectly.

And here let's consider

Look at **Romans 3**. Paul in this chapter is talking about the fact that religious Jews are just as condemned and unrighteous and the most rank of heathens and pagans.

The most religious people on earth have no more hope in entering heaven by keeping the 10 commandments as any of the Gentiles who have never heard of God's law. His message is that religious Jews are NOT better than pagan Gentiles. Look at **Romans 3:9-28**, "What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and

Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 ¶ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 **Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**"

God's Law, the 10 Commandments does not merit us favor in God's sight—it measures us in God's sight!

**Verse 21**, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;" The Law and the Prophets refers to the whole Old Testament. This was their message too! This is the message of the Bible. Moses did not give the people a different way of salvation. He gave the Law to show that the people were sinful! **Verse 22**, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". We have all been measured and found short of God's perfect standard. We will NOT make it into heaven. How can God be perfectly righteous and just, not excusing sin, and yet sinners into heaven? **Verse 24**, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God". Jesus Christ is a propitiation. What is a propitiation? It means to SATISFY God's wrath. God's wrath is His zeal and passion for justice. It is not like our wrath, which is arbitrary and based on inconsistent and poorly applied morality. God is perfectly pure and holy and His wrath is His passion and zeal to see that which is perfectly just occur. Jesus Christ satisfies the justice and due penalty of our sins. He satisfies God's wrath, or his passion for justice. **Verse 26**, "To declare, I say, at this time his [GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS] righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

We are justified completely outside of the works of the 10 Commandments. God must NOT take into account your works AT ALL. If He does you will go to hell. Instead there must be a SUBSTITUTION. As Peter says in **1 Peter 3:18**, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God".

Isaiah said long ago that "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (**Isaiah 53:5-6**).

Now turn over to **Philippians 3**. I want to illustrate how someone who thinks they are righteous comes can come to repentance. How can you get the right view of yourself?

Paul again is talking to Jews who think they are pretty good. They have confidence in their own ability to keep themselves right before God. Paul refers to human ability as having confidence in the flesh, or in your own human power of righteousness.

Look at **Philippians 3:4**, "I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**".

Again, we are justified by God through Christ's righteousness. Paul said in verse 9 that He need to be "found in him" in Christ—wrapped in Christ's righteousness. Paul says, "**not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**".

How can you appropriate and apply the righteousness of Christ to you? Remember our text in **Luke 5:32**, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." You must wake up! You must have a transformation of mind about how sinful you are and how much you need Christ. You are completely defiled before God. This is why Jesus Christ had to die. You say, How can I wake up? How can I see this? The answer is in John 3.

Turn over to **John 3**. Remember Jesus is going everywhere and giving His message. And what is His message? Do you remember? "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 4:17**). Wake up! Have a radical transformation of thinking and turn to God! Wake up!

A Pharisee named Nicodemus heard this message. He was hearing from Jesus that no one is righteous, that all people must repent. They must see their own wretchedness and God's holiness and fall on God for mercy. But how would anyone ever awaken out of their sleep and actually REPENT? I mean how does this happen? Let's find out in **John 3:1**, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus gets right to the point. **Verse 3**, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus doesn't understand! He's thinking physical birth, and the Lord must explain to him that He's already had physical birth. What he needs now is a spiritual birth, an awakening from God. Verse 4, "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." What he says is that the new birth is a miracle like the wind. God awakens you by His Spirit. Now look at John 3:16, "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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." We come into this world CONDEMNED ALREADY. We have no hope. Christ is not condemning the world—we are all already condemned.

Now look at **John 3:36**, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

God's wrath is on you. God is zealous to be just with you. It is not unjust for God to cast you into hell. Jesus was sent here to save you. You are condemned already. As long as you are without Him, you have no hope. God would save you and put your condemnation on Jesus. BUT YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!

**Application:** Perhaps you are here today and you realize that you don't see your sin as that bad and you don't think God will judge you. What I want you to do is to sincerely pray to God in your heart right now and ask His Spirit to awaken you. Just say in your heart—God show me how holy you are. Ask God's Spirit to blow on your understanding like the wind!

Turn back to Luke chapter 5 again.

Jesus is calling those who see themselves as wretched to repent. The whole purpose for Jesus coming into the world is summarized in **verse 32**, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Repentance (*metanoia*) "means 'to change one's mind,' ... 'to turn or turn around'...a reorientation, a total shift of perspective"<sup>1</sup> Repentance is where God opens your eyes to His unreachable holiness. You see the impossibility of justifying yourself before God. You see that God's standard for entrance into heaven is infinite. It is infinitely out of reach for any human being to attain it. It is when you see God as He is and you see yourself as God sees you—as a wretch—not able to save yourself.

No one can even enter into the Kingdom of God without this recognition of your great sinfulness. There has to be this great transformation of heart where God turns the light on. That's why Jesus said back in **John 3:3**, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". The requirement for entrance into God's kingdom is a new birth—a transformation of heart where God becomes the center of your universe and you see Him as high and holy. You have a powerful sensitivity to sin of any kind. Sin is not a joking matter any more.

There was an awesome change in the heart of Levi-Matthew the tax collector.

Turn back to **Luke 5:27-32**, "[JESUS] saw a publican [TAX COLLECTOR], named Levi [i.e. the Apostle Matthew], sitting at the receipt of custom [TAX DESK]: and he [JESUS] said unto him, Follow me. 28 And he [LEVI-MATTHEW] left all, rose up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans [TAX COLLECTORS] and of others that sat down with them. 30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole [WELL] need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Have you forsaken all for Christ? Have you died completely to your life and turned to Christ for mercy? You must be born again! Repent. Get a transformation of heart and thought that results in you turning to God. Repent and put your total dependence on Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup>Zuck, R. B. (1994; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (electronic ed.) (129). Chicago: Moody Press.

**Conclusion:** As we close, let us ask ourselves, what does this look like?

Turn over to **Luke 18:9-14**, "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Turn to Jesus Christ today! Jesus words are striking in **verse 32**, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."