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Evidences of Salvation; Psalm 15  
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Introduction - There is one way to read this Psalm that would lead you straight into a belief in salvation by works. V1b-2 "Who shall dwell on You holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right." Sounds like salvation by works. That is a tragic conclusion for David is not seeking to earn his salvation by works. David knows he can't be saved by works.

There is another way to read this psalm. It is with a justification by faith understanding. David and the other OT saints had this understanding of salvation. They knew they could not earn their salvation by keeping the law, however, they also knew that striving to please God by obeying Him was evidence of genuine, true faith. In fact, I believe there was an OT text, straight out of the Law, in the back of David's mind as he wrote Psalm 14 and 15. Hold your place in Psalm 15 and turn with me to Deut 30. v3 - now that sounds a lot like something we read last week in Psalm 14:7.

v6,8 - so there it is, right in the Pentateuch, the Book of the Law, those who truly believe have a new heart and a new way of life. With that in mind, let's study Psalm 15 in the way I believe David would have us read his song.

#### I. The Question that Matters the Most (v1)

- A) David references the Lord's tent, the Lord's holy hill because the tabernacle is where the presence of the Lord was most visible among His people. He dwelled with His people by having His glory rest in the tabernacle. That was not the only place God was present on earth, but it was where He revealed His presence to His people.
- B) The tabernacle was a representation of heaven, where His presence is eternally visible. Just as God's people were in His presence at the tabernacle, so we will forever be in His presence in heaven. The tabernacle was a taste of the eternal joy of God living with His people.
- C) That in fact is the question David poses here. He's not asking who can enter the tabernacle; He's asking who will enter heaven.
- D) Notice it's not a question that is left open to interpretation. It's not a question designed to send us on a spiritual quest. It's not a question intended to have us all find our own answer. The answer is given.

- E) It is the question of all questions that begs an answer, but thank God, He not only revealed the utmost question of life, He also answered it.
- F) Who will sojourn in Your tent? Who will dwell on Your holy hill? Who will enjoy Your presence forever in heaven? Who are the saved?
- G) David's answer then is not how one is saved but how the saved are identified. That's how we have to read this psalm. Not as a prescription for how to enter heaven but rather a description of those who are entering heaven. David gives here two evidences of salvation, and they are the same evidences as found in Deut 30. Namely, a new life and a new heart. Those who are going to heaven are those who live this way, those who have this kind of heart because they are the true believers.

## II. The Way of Life as Evidence of Salvation (vv2-3)

- A) v2 - speaks of one's reputation among others. What is he known for? What do others think of her? It is things like outstanding character, goodness, moral conviction.
  1. The second part of that verse goes hand in hand with a blameless reputation - this individual is a lover of truth. This person speaks truth in his heart. You know that speaking the truth is not always indicative of a pure heart? For example, what if one is caught red-handed in a crime or in disobedience and is asked for the truth. Well, if he sees no other way around it and he knows everyone already knows the truth, he will tell the truth, but not in his heart.
  2. The lover of truth, however, will tell the truth even if it will be perceived as painting him in a bad light. He will still tell the truth because he loves the truth and he trusts God.
- B) v3 - tells us how the loving of truth affects those around him.
  1. he will not slander - he will not misrepresent another or allow another to be misrepresented - he will not say a word or take an action that would cause others to think of someone in a negative light - he refuses to take part in the rumor mill or grapevine of tearing down one's character based on assumptions - if one is to be talked about, he would rather that person be present.
  2. he will not harm another - whether it be a stranger, a family member, a friend, well-known or unknown, he will not act in such a self-centered, selfish manner as to wrongfully take from another in order to satisfy himself or manipulate another for his own ends.
  3. to take up a reproach means something like "to expose and cause shame." He will not intentionally, maliciously cause another public image to be marred. He's not a bully. He doesn't make fun at

another's expense. He doesn't single someone else out in order to take the attention off of himself.

- C) Now there are two very clear characteristics of this person in these two verses that speak directly to his way of life as evidence of his salvation.
1. v2 - his life is different enough that others take notice. He is known to be blameless. He is known to do what is right. He stands out as outstanding. His life is different, and those around him, know it.
  2. v3 - he loves his neighbor - the difference is not isolated to his personal character. He treats others the way he himself would like to be treated. He loves his neighbor as he loves himself.
  3. Who does that? Who lives against the tide? Who puts the interest of others above his own? The believer, the true believer.
  4. You see, this is not a striving for salvation. This way of life, pursuing godliness and loving one's neighbor, is an evidence of salvation.
  5. The difference of interpretation is subtle but the outcome of these two different interpretations are worlds apart, so far apart in fact that one ends in eternal separation and one ends in eternal salvation. There is a way of pursuing good works in order to get God's attention and there is a way of pursuing good works because God has got your attention.
  6. There is a way of pursuing good works in order to gain God's favor and there is a way of pursuing good works because you have been favored by God, in Christ.
  7. There is a way of pursuing good works in order to merit salvation and there is way of pursuing good works because you have salvation.
  8. One says, "I've got to be good enough." One says, "I'll never be good enough, thanks be to God in Christ."
  9. One is looking for God to respond to his list of good works. One is just responding to God's grace to him in Christ.
  10. One is trying to live this way in order to have salvation. One loves to live this way because he has salvation. God is so good, and He's been so good to me. He loves me with an everlasting love, and because of that, I love Him so. Oh, I want my life to bring Him glory. Oh, I want to show His love and grace to my neighbor.
- E) Who will dwell on God's holy hill? The one just described.

### III. The Condition of the Heart as Evidence of Salvation (vv4-5)

A) v4 - if it brings God glory, he loves it. If it mars God's glory, he despises it. His heart is not dead in trespasses and sins. No, it is alive to God, it has been awakened to the glory of God. A dead heart doesn't have these affections and it does not detest these things.

1. Something else here and it connects 4b with 2b - he speaks truth in his heart even to his own hurt and does not change. It's one thing to love truth when you are speaking of others, it's quiet another to love truth even to your own temporal detriment. To have conviction enough to stand for truth, proclaim truth, with love and patience, share Gospel, biblical truth, even if you know your job, your family, your life may be on the line for it!
2. What is it about someone's heart that strengthens him to reinforce instead of retreat when facing possible retaliation? His conviction of truth is grounded in conviction of God. It's also that God knows, and God sees, and God supplies, and God watches over, and God brings good, and God is Father - it's all those things!

B) v5 - now that's a connection back to v3 - this is how one treats his neighbor. What does it say about the condition of his heart? It says one of the most beautiful things that can ever be said about a human heart. it says his heart is free of greed, free of the love of money, free of covetousness. Listen very carefully, what you do with money reveals the condition of your heart.

C) The way of life and the condition of the heart are evidences of salvation. BTW - you can try to live this way without salvation to earn salvation but you can never change the condition of your heart. And if your heart has never been changed by grace to love God, your life will soon reveal it.

Conclusion - 5b takes us right back to Psalm 1. Psalm 1, as an introduction, contrasts the wicked with the righteous. Therefore we see the wicked and righteous contrasted throughout Psalms. And that's exactly what happens in Psalm 14 and 15. We see the wicked in Psalm 14 and the righteous in Psalm 15. Psalm 2 is also a introductory and it is Messianic. So we find Christ throughout the psalms as well. And if we were to study Psalm 16, a resurrection psalm, we would find Christ. So here we have the message of the Psalms. There are the wicked and there are the righteous, and Christ is what makes the difference!