

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: JESUS, A PERSONAL SAVIOR

Scripture: Luke 4:16-21

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him a book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your eyes.

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I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh  
unto the Father but by me.

With the unparalleled increase in scientific techniques, in production, in communication, in education, in transportation, and in many other fields of human endeavor, there comes a temptation to think of people in the mass, instead of as individuals. Warfare has ceased to be a small time duel between a few professional soldiers in opposing armies, and has come to be a means of mass destruction, as at Hiroshima. Hatred, instead of being personal, has been turned against whole races of men, who have been driven into the extermination camps of Dachau and Buchtenwald, and wiped out by the millions. We speak of mass production, losing sight of the fact that some individual has to use each individual unit of mass production to make it profitable. We speak of mass communication, thinking that if we blanket the world with radio messages or the printed page, everybody will know -- losing sight of the fact that communication after all is to individuals, not masses. We speak sometimes of mass education, unmindful of the fact that the learning process must take place in individuals before it can take place in the mass.

In the same way, Jesus cannot be the Savior of the world, as we depicted him in the preceding sermon of this series, unless he is first a personal savior for the individual man and woman. There can

be no mass salvation unless there is first an individual salvation -- unless great masses of people accept Christ as their personal Savior. Both of these aspects of Christ and his mission are important. Neither one can exist without the other; neither one can be neglected without neglecting the other.

Christ has made an offer of salvation to every man who ever lived. We said in the previous sermon that any man who does not hear of Christ in this life will have opportunity to hear of him and accept or reject him in the spirit world. But in each case, acceptance of Christ as Savior must be an individual, personal, voluntary act on the part of each individual of all the innumerable masses who are to be saved. Acceptance of Christ's gift must be an active, not a passive thing. If I offer you a gift of money, but you make no attempt to claim ownership of that money, to bank it, to bury it, or to spend it; if, in short, it remains in my control and possession in spite of my offer of it to you, the gift never truly becomes yours. Without acceptance, there is no gift. It is part of your responsibility to accept -- actively, personally, the gift which Christ offers you. He is the Savior of the world, but it is your responsibility to make him your personal Savior.

To make Christ our personal Savior, we must enter into a personal relationship with him. Jesus speaks person to person, to the individual heart -- not to humanity as a huge, amorphous mass without individual entity. He stands at the door of each human heart and knocks, waiting for the latch to be lifted from inside, waiting for recognition as the Christ, the Son of God, waiting for you and for me to accept him as a personal Savior, waiting for us to repent of the sins which stand between us and make our friendship impossible, waiting for us to obey the laws of his kingdom in every aspect of our daily lives. If we would have Jesus as our personal Savior, we must be born again; the old man must die; self must be crucified; and the life of Jesus must be implanted in us by his Spirit, there to grow and develop Christly ways in us and to bring eventually to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Jesus illustrated the personal relationship of himself to each individual, and the personal worth of every human soul, in the parable of the ninety and nine. A shepherd merely glancing at a flock of sheep, without recognizing them as individuals or numbering them to see whether they were all there, could probably discern no difference whatever between a flock of one hundred and a flock of ninety-nine. But the good Shepherd knows when one is missing. Each of his sheep is personally precious in his sight. He plays no favorites. His offer of salvation is free to all. The gift of his love is extended to all. The privilege of his fellowship and friendship is offered to all. But there can be no personal relationship with him unless we accept the gift, unless we reciprocate his love, unless we enter into his fellowship in a personal relationship which makes us not his slaves, but his friends, and his companions and trusted assistants in the earthly work of his kingdom. Jesus offers his friendship, man to man, spirit to spirit, to every human being who will open the door of his heart and receive him.

If you will accept Jesus as your personal Savior, he can save you from many things. The scripture lesson we have just brought you, in which Jesus reads from the book of Isaiah, mentions several of them. Jesus can save you from death.

Not that you will never have to die-- but death will be the preliminary to a resurrection by his power, clothed in a new, perfect, and immortal body which can never die. Only through him have we any hope of such a resurrection and such a life.

In order to save you from death, Jesus must first save you from sin. It is sin which separates man from his God, and which makes necessary the death of the body. It is sin which holds men in bondage -- the bondage of habit, the bondage of tyranny, of hatred, of fear, of guilt, of despair. It is sin within the individual human heart and soul which gives men a sense of futility and frustration, which robs life of all meaning and purpose, and brings men to despair. The sinner who will come as an individual, as a person, to the personal Jesus, confessing and repenting of his sin, accepting the blame for it, acknowledging his weakness and his inability to cope with it alone, will find in the sinless Christ a friend -- and more than a friend. The darkness of futility and frustration, of defeat and despair will be lifted as the sinner finds his sins forgiven, and the great burden of guilt lifted from his shoulders. Sorrow at the loss of loved ones is tempered with joy, as one achieves the hope of a resurrection for himself and all who have thus accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

You cannot establish this personal relationship with your Savior simply by confessing his name once and forgetting all about him. Latter Day Saints believe that confession of him must be accompanied by a sincere and godly sorrow for sin, a repentance from that sin, baptism in water by one having authority as a symbol of the death of the old man and the birth of the new life which is in Christ Jesus; and then the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the seal of our adoption, the sign that we truly have his life within us. When all this has happened, we will then show by our changed life, by our godly walk and conversation, by our good works, by our faithfulness to our religious duties, and by our willing obedience to all the laws of the kingdom, that we have truly found Christ, and know him as our personal Savior.