

Saved

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Sometimes talking about being saved makes people uncomfortable, which, in turn, makes us hesitant to talk about it. Some folks think it is arrogant to say, "I am saved." Let's see if we can clear the air a bit.

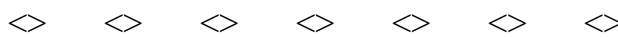
First, saying "I am saved" acknowledges my **need** to be saved. Suppose I was among those snatched from the sea by the crew of a rescue ship. By saying, "I am saved," I would be admitting that I had been in the sea, in danger of drowning, freezing, or being eaten by sharks. So it is in spiritual matters. The name "Jesus" was given to the Savior because "He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). In essence, then, when I say, "I am saved," I am admitting that I was lost because of my own sinfulness. By what logic is that arrogance?

Second, saying "I am saved" acknowledges that I couldn't do it myself. If I, by myself, could have a right relationship with God, then I would not need to be saved. As Paul wrote, "If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain" (Galatians 2:21). In the sense that we comply with the terms of pardon God has revealed in His word, we "save ourselves" (Acts 2:40 KJV; see also 1 Timothy 4:16). But in no sense do we earn or merit anything from God. It certainly is not arrogant to acknowledge that I was lost in sin and could not remedy the situation myself.

That leads to the third and final point. Saying, "I am saved" does **not** imply that "I am better than you." Being "saved" says nothing whatever about how good someone is. If I say I was saved from drowning, am I

claiming to be a better swimmer than others in the sea? Hardly! I might be the poorest swimmer of all. Just imagine someone angrily shouting, "How dare you claim to be saved while you claim that other fellow is drowning! He's ten times better at swimming than you are! If you are saved, then surely he is saved also!"

I might try to explain that being a good swimmer won't save you – being saved depends on whether you get into the rescue ship. No matter how good a swimmer you are, you'll drown if you don't get into the ship! Likewise, salvation from sin is not based on how "good" you are. Yes, God requires that we repent, obey, and live faithful lives. But in the final analysis, all of us are imperfect. Our salvation depends on being in the right relationship with Christ. Thus, it is not arrogant to say, "I am saved."



Two Requests

An elderly woman decided to prepare her will. She told the preacher about her two final requests:

First, she wanted to be cremated; and, second, she wanted her ashes scattered over Wal-Mart.

"Wal-Mart!" the preacher exclaimed. "Why Wal-Mart?"

The woman replied, "Then I'll be sure my daughters visit me every day."

--via House-to-House/Heart-to-Heart

Your Worst Sin

In no way would I ever claim to be a prophet, psychic, or prognosticator. But I can tell you what your worst sin is. Not I know you're wondering how I know. Has someone told me that they saw you doing it? No. Have I been looking into your windows at night, or following you with notebook in hand, recording all that you do? Of course not. And yet I still know the very worst sin you have in your life at this very moment.

Your worst sin is the one of which you will not repent. Our worst sins become our worst enemies in that they will keep us out of heaven (Luke 13:3). John mentions that there is a sin leading to death (1 John 5:16). This is any sin in which one is living, that he is not willing to give up for Christ. By living unrepentantly, in known sin, we crucify Christ all over again; and, in that state, it is impossible for us to be saved (Hebrews 6:6; 10:26-27).

But God wants us to come to repentance and be saved (2 Peter 3:9). He wants us to be sorrowful over our sins and to truly repent (have a change of heart) concerning them (2 Corinthians 7:10). In repenting and being baptized, all past sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Then, in faithfully walking in the light and continually living a repentant lifestyle, Jesus' blood continues to cleanse us (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

Even though washed in the blood of the Lamb, and even though having some noble qualities as followers of Christ, the Christians at Ephesus still needed to repent. Jesus sent word to them: "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works . . ." (Revelation 2:5). That message rings true for us today: Repent and do the first works

Here is another important thing: Your best friend can take care of your worst sin. Your best friend is Jesus (John 15:13; Proverbs 18:24), and He is the only one who can remove all your sins (Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:9). Take a turn for the better by turning away from sin and turning your life over to Him. He will burn your worst sin into something harmless and unreachable (1 John 3:5; Micah 7:19).

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY)