

A Lesson from the Titanic . . .

History was changed in 1912 by the sinking of a British luxury liner, the *Titanic*. This horrific tragedy resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 people. Previous to its launch, maritime experts believed that its 16 watertight compartments would keep it afloat regardless of any disaster. It was unsinkable.

Titanic researcher David G. Brown says that the ship could have been its own lifeboat. Even after running aground on a submerged iceberg, the 46,000 gross-ton liner “was capable of saving all on board by floating into midmorning until the rescue ship *Carpathia* arrived on the scene.” Instead, once the *Titanic’s* owner, Bruce Ismay, saw that the damage appeared minimal (the hole in the hull measuring only about 12 square feet) and that the ship’s pumps were successfully expelling the incoming water, he ordered, “Engines ahead, half-speed.” Minutes later, the ship’s fragile buoyancy gave way, and it began its fatal plunge. Brown says, “The inescapable conclusion is that *Titanic’s* pumps were swamped by massive amounts of water pushed into the ship by its own forward motion. . . . *Titanic* appears to have steamed itself into a watery North Atlantic grave.”¹

Meanwhile, thousands of people were comfortably, confidently, securely sleeping below deck.

“God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you.’”
(Luke 12:20)

Common Misconceptions
about Salvation

- **Wrong Belief:** “God would never accept me. . . . You don’t know what I’ve done.”

Right Belief: The issue is not what you’ve done, but what Christ has done for you.
(1 Timothy 1:15; Isaiah 1:18)

- **Wrong Belief:** “I can’t give up my sins.”

Right Belief: The power of Christ in you is bigger than the power of sin over you.
(John 8:36; Philippians 4:13)

- **Wrong Belief:** “I want to become a Christian, but I don’t want to make a decision now.”

Right Belief: Not making a decision is still a decision—it’s a decision against Christ.
(Matthew 12:30)

- **Wrong Belief:** “It’s too late for me.”

Right Belief: It’s never too late for a heart to be humbled before God. (2 Corinthians 6:2)

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”
(2 Peter 3:9)

What Do We Need to Be Saved From?

1. Justification—Past

We need to be saved from the penalty of sin. (John 3:16–17)

—Justification means “declared righteous, vindicated, acquitted.”²

—Justification is “just as if” I’d never sinned—a completed action.

2. Sanctification—Present

We need to be saved from the power of sin. (Philippians 2:12–13)

—Sanctification means “set apart to God, set apart from sin.”³

—Sanctification is not being in bondage to anything—a present process.

—Sanctification means to be given a new heart, new spirit, and new way of behaving. (Ezekiel 36:26–27)

3. Glorification—Future

We need to be saved from the presence of sin. (Romans 8:23–24)

—Glorification is the final state of all believers who, with transformed, imperishable bodies, will live in splendor in the presence of God—a future condition.⁴

—Glorification means there will be no more death, crying, pain, thirst, or sin.

“God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:9)

Common Mistakes in Counseling Nonbelievers

- Offering counsel for a superficial problem without getting to the root problem
- Assuming a person understands biblical salvation
- Getting sidetracked
- Offering only a “ticket to heaven”
- Not presenting the cost of an obedient walk with Christ (Luke 14:28)
- Feeling personally responsible for another person’s salvation (John 6:65)

Key Verses to Memorize

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”
(John 3:16–18)

Key Passage to Read and Reread

John 3:1–21

Present God’s Plan for Freedom

1. God’s Purpose for You . . . is **Salvation**.

—God’s motive in sending Christ to earth was to express His love for you by saving you! (John 3:16–17)

—Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth was to forgive your sins, empower you to have victory over sin, and enable you to live a fulfilled life! (John 10:10)

2. Your Problem . . . is **Sin**.

—Sin is living independently of God’s standard—knowing what is right, but choosing wrong. (James 4:17)

—What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, spiritual separation from God. (Romans 6:23)

3. God’s Provision for You . . . is **the Savior**.

—Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. (Romans 5:8)

—Belief in Jesus Christ *is* the only way to God the Father. (John 14:6)

4. Your Part . . . is **Surrender**.

—Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of gaining God’s approval. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

—Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. (Matthew 16:24–26)

“God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
(Romans 5:8)

Welcome to God's Family

If you have just trusted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you are now in God's family and . . .

- You are completely forgiven and cleansed of all your sins. (1 John 1:9)
- You are a new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- You are declared righteous by God . . . right in God's sight. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- You have received the gift of eternal life. (1 John 5:13)
- You have received the Holy Spirit, who lives within you, empowering you to overcome sin, as well as to love others in a new way. (Romans 5:5)
- You have peace with God. (Romans 5:1)
- You will never be condemned by God. (Romans 8:1)
- You will never be separated from God's love. (Romans 8:38–39)

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1. David G. Brown, *The Last Log of the Titanic* (2001); http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/articles/lastlog_brown.shtml.
2. Charles C. Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible: King James Version* (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 1599.
3. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), s.v. "Sanctification, Sanctify."
4. Earl D. Radmacher, *Salvation*, Swindoll Leadership Library (Nashville: Word, 2000), 5–6, 219–22.



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