



"Helping Your Child Understand Salvation"

Isaiah 42:3 (NKJV)

3 A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

My concerns this morning:

1. For true conversion for all who claim to be saved.
 2. For our children to experience true conversion.
 3. For parents as they seek to lead their child to Christ.
 4. For those who teach children in Sunday School, Arrow Kids' Club, and our Student Ministry.
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(I'm not sharing the Gospel today to win your children, but so you will know how to win your children)

This is most likely one of the most unusual verses (Isaiah 42:3) to use for a message on salvation. But here, this verse is about Jesus and His tenderness. We can trust Jesus with our children when they become broken and go to the brink of hell where we can't go with them.

Every parent wants to protect our children and keep them from danger. We want to go with them so they don't get hurt. But salvation is one place you can't go with them to the end and you must allow them to go alone.

"If our child gains the whole world and loses their own soul, what profits them?"

If they become an SEC caliber athlete...
If they become a Rhode scholar...
If they become President of the US...

"It is from God that parents receive their children, and it is to God that they should lead them."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, 31

Every child conceived in a mother's womb is a gift of God and God expects that child to be brought back to Him. Not just in a Child Dedication service, but in salvation and conversion.

God did not bypass you to bring your child into the world physically and I believe, if you are Godly parents, He won't bypass you to bring them into the world spiritually.

1. The most important person(s) is the parent in his (her) example and teaching.

Ephesians 6:4 - "And you fathers....bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

You are leading them somewhere. **Where?**

You are an example to them - the question is whether a good example or bad example?

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

- 1** "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess,
- 2** that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.
- 3** Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'
- 4** "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!
- 5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
- 6** "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.
- 7** You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.
- 8** You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.
- 9** You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

It's not enough any more just to take them to church and everything will be alright. It never was really enough any time...but especially not today.

You need to demonstrate to them the essence of salvation...sin and forgiveness.

When you get angry with them, or you have to change your plans that you promised...go to them and ask their forgiveness.

2. Pray earnestly from the time they are born till their time of conversion.

3. The greatest issue involved in salvation is the child's understanding of sin.

The story of the little boy being asked by his pastor if he had sinned or done wrong. He replied, "I guess when I stuck an ice cream cone up my sister's nose."

He's not ready to be saved.

Teach them about sin...against a holy God.

David said in Psalm 51, "It is against you, and only you, that I have done this."

We break the heart of God.

Francis Schaeffer was once asked the question:

"What would you do if you met a really modern man on a train and you had just an hour to talk to him about the gospel?"

He replied, "I've said over and over, I would spend 45-50 minutes on the negative, to really show him his dilemma - that he is morally dead - then I'd take 10-15 minutes to preach the Gospel. ... (we need for a man) to realize the real cause of his sickness, which is moral guilt." (Page 71 - To Tell the Truth)

Conviction comes over the brokenness of sin.

Remember, only the Holy Spirit can convince your child (or anybody) of their sin. You can't. But He will use the Word of God to do that.

That little sweet boy or girl is a sinner and must be saved.

Only the Word of God and Holy Spirit can bring about this understanding.

So, read to your child verses about their sins:

- **The Ten Commandments...**

Exodus 20:1-17

And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. "You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. "You shall not murder. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

- Romans 3:9-26...

Romans 3:9-26

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

God's Righteousness Through Faith

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- Romans 6:23...

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- John 3:14-18...

John 3:14-18

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Take these verses slow and read them 1-2 a day and let it sink it to their hearts.

4. Explain plainly why Christ came—to forgive our sins and to give us life.

**“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance,
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save
sinners, of whom I am chief.”**

I Timothy 1:15

Salvation is not just getting saved from hell, but also that Jesus becomes our life.

Our very essence of being.

5. Understand the difference in “first-steps” and the final step.

Dr. W. A. Criswell said when children begin asking questions and wanted to go down front or be baptized, he called them “first steps” toward God.

Any time we baptize, and especially baptize children, other children will begin to say they want to be baptized.

Wanting to be baptized is not being saved or even saying they are ready to be converted.

Curiosity and eagerness do not necessarily equate to spiritual life.

The final step of conversion has to be taken alone. You can’t go there.

6. Rely on the Holy Spirit to know when the child is under conviction.

The parallels with the labor of physical birthing that child into the natural world and the spiritual labor of birthing them into the kingdom of God.

Galatians 4:19 – “For whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.”

When a mother gets into her final six weeks or so of pregnancy, normally the doctor will stop any long trips. You don’t go to Six Flags when you are about to go into labor.

When I knew my boys were under conviction, I would not let them go to grandparents for the weekend or to another church. I wanted them under my preaching where I knew what would be said, where I knew how salvation would be explained and where I knew the Holy Spirit would be working.

We can manipulate children to come to Christ. “Just ask Jesus into your heart.”

7. Let the child pray themselves.

This is not learning “protocol” for a one-time visit with the President.

This is a beginning conversation for a life-long, eternity long relationship with Jesus.

8. Look for fruit evident of conversion.

In the spirit of **Jonathan Edward’s 5 Signs of True Conversion**, here are 5 evidences that I try to use as a template as both a parent and pastor in wrestling with this issue...

- A growing affection and need for Jesus and the gospel.
- A heightened understanding of the truths of Scripture.
- An increased kindness and selflessness towards siblings.
- A greater awareness and distaste for sin.
- A noticeable desire to obey parents.

This is not about putting any parent under guilt. I can do that so easily and that is not my purpose.

If you are not sure about your child’s previous experience, then pray. Many, many have been converted since they made a child’s profession of faith and was baptized.

Parents, trust God with them.

But, let’s do everything we can to assure our children are converted when God wants them to be.