

22Y06 Jesus is Lord

Hello everyone. For those of you that don't know me, my name is Kip Wehrman. I am one of the directors of PUNLA Christian Ministries. I want to thank Pastor Daniel for inviting me to share with you today. When Daniel asked me to talk with you today, He told me to share about my Salvation Experience. It made me think, what is my salvation experience?

Today, I'd like to read you slightly modified version of a Jewish prayer call the Shema. *Hear me God's People, the Lord our God, the Lord alone is God' Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. Write these words on your heart. Teach them repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be an emblem between your eyes. Write them on the doorposts of your house and gates.*

If you indeed love the Lord your God and worship Him with all your heart and with all your soul, I will give rain in your land in its season, the early and the late rain; and you shall gather in your grain, wine and oil. I will give grass in your field for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied. Be careful lest your heart be tempted and you go astray and worship other gods, bowing down to them. Then the Lord's anger will flare against you and He will close the heavens so that there will be no rain. The land will not yield its crops, and you will perish swiftly from the good land that the Lord is giving you. Therefore, set these, the words of the Lord, on your heart and soul. Bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be an emblem between your eyes. Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and gates, so that you and your children may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them, for as long as the heavens are above the earth. I am the Lord your God.'

This amazing prayer is based on the Shema which Jews recite three times of day. It is based on three passages from the Bible, The first passage is Deuteronomy 6:4-9, the second passage is Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and the third passage is Numbers 15:37-41. This amazing prayer demonstrates how we should show devotion to God. Fully and completely. With everything we have. We are supposed to show and teach this devotion to our children, to everyone.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Thank you. I am so humbled that you would use someone like me for your purposes. Help me Lord to be obedient to your plan. I love you with my heart, soul and might. Guide my words today, so I can share the message you wish me to share. I pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Okay, just so you understand, I'm not a pastor, I'm just like each of you. I love God with everything I have. God is the most important person in my life. My experience with God is very personal and very unique to me. As I'm sure yours is.

I grew up in a small town in the middle of the United States. The population is about five hundred people. So, yes it is a very very small place. The cows outnumber the people, about a thousand to one. When I was young, I often joked that it was not the end of world, but you could see of there. Meaning, the middle of nowhere or at least close to it. Very few people, hard cold winters, very hot summers. Nowhere but it was a perfect place for me to grow up. I grew up in a Christian home, I went to church regularly. I was one of the "good kids". But nothing special. I have to admit, I spent most of my young life very confused about God. Our small town often held revival meetings with traveling evangelists. I don't remember the first one I attended but I do remember the evangelist, Brother George. I vaguely remember going forward at the altar call. Everyone was excited, but I was confused. I wanted to know this God I'd heard about. But I didn't. Year after year, revival after revival I'd go forward. Again, and again and again. It became a joke among my mother's friends. They would joke with my mom. "There he goes again". I remember Brother George talking to me privately one time, he said " Kip why do you keep going forward". I did not have an answer. There was just something missing in me. I was more and more confused. I knew about God. I prayed at God. I read the bible about God. I went to church for God. I said the right things, I did the right things, but I knew I was missing something. In fact, I developed an ongoing conversation with God during these years. I prayed to God for stuff. God was very patient with me. But I still knew I was missing something. I graduated and went to college and over time I drifted further and further from God. I knew about God, but I just did not think it was that important. I would deal with that God stuff when I got older, maybe. I was what the Bible calls an Apostate. Someone who turned away from their faith. My college, graduate school and early professional career was nothing short of miracle after miracle. I look back at that time now and I can see God's hand in everything, every moment. Every failure, every success, every decision, every disappointment. All part of God's plan. God's plan for me. I can see how God grew me into the person He wanted me to be. Skills and experiences to fit the person, He wanted me to be. I often spoke with God through outs these years and many times graciously God spoke to me.

Now I'm not talking about an audible voice but unmistakably God was talking to me. Over and over again during those years. Thankfully, I listened and even obeyed occasionally. But, God molded me and reshaped me. God made a way for me to meet my wife. God made a way for me to get a job, a job I did not even know existed. Then through some troubles and trials, I started moving back toward God. I knew I needed God; I knew of God but I still didn't really know God. My wife and I supported many charities and had many chances to meet and talk with many missionaries. Over the next few years, my knowledge of God grew. I studied, searched, researched, and read. More and more about God. I grew to know the Bible more and more. I yearned to know more. But I was still missing something, my relationship with God was incomplete. I can't tell you when, but I often prayed to God, "Lord I want to know you, Help me to

know you”. That was the beginning of a new life for me. I’d been baptized, I’d confessed my faith over and over, but I was suddenly truly born again. Now I did not change overnight. I was still emotional, hard-headed, stubborn, etc etc. But, God had a hold of me. He had always had a hold of me, but now I knew it. I knew God, I was learning who God was every moment of every day. On my job, at home, with my family, with my friends. I began to see what I was missing but I still didn’t get it.

Then in 2015, God stimulated us to start our own charity, PUNLA Christian Ministries. I have to be honest; we didn’t know what we were doing or what we were getting in to. We probably would never have started if we knew the full story back then. But I have no regrets. What an amazing life we have.

In the middle of this, I was making lots of money professionally. So we funded our charity ourselves. Giving money was easy because I had lots of money. Time after time, God asked us to trust him and act. Starting my own business, no more steady income. We now had kids; my wife started working parttime. By this time, my life was not my own anymore. My wife’s mom and sister lived with us; in fact many people have lived in our home with us over the years. Then kids, three girls the twins Ala, Mya and Zoe. Gifts from God.

Then in March of 2021, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, I got sick. I got sick really bad. I eventually was so sick I could no longer walk, my wife took me to the hospital, where I was admitted. I could barely breathe. I knew I was dying. For the next several days, I was in and out of consciousness as I laid there waiting to see Jesus. I was at peace. I was done. Then I had an experience that has permanently changed my life. I was ready to go to Jesus. I knew God loved my family more than me and God would take care of them. I knew God was in control of everything. I received a gift. I got proof that I had surrendered my life to Christ. I always wondered if I truly did or not. I thought I did, but now I had proof. I was ready to die. Over the next few days, I had had many conversations with my Lord Jesus. I had this sense that I had a choice to make. I could recover and go home to my family or I could go to be with Jesus. I choose Jesus. I was ready. But Jesus told me “not yet”.

Then I recovered, but I had lots of complications, kidney stones and infections, it was a very long recovery but I did. God made me whole again. But now I was different. I had changed. Jesus was truly everything to me. First, everything. And I loved people. Not hugs and kisses love. But strongly and truly I wanted the best for the others around me. I was sent back with a purpose, and that was to love the people Jesus put in my life, the way Jesus loves them. *John 15:12 (NIV) My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

I want to go back the Shema prayer for a moment, *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. Write these words on your heart. Teach them repeatedly to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home and when you travel on the way, when you lie down and when you rise.*

For me, my salvation experience was not a moment in time years ago when I was a child. I've been a work in progress for years. Jesus is my salvation. But I personally think we have this a little backwards. It's not about me. It's about God. I love the Lord my God with everything. All my heart, All my soul, all my might. With everything I have. I have been given a great gift. I love my Lord Jesus with my everything. It's not about me. It's all about Jesus.

I think the prayer Jesus gave us says it perfectly.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, in earth as it is in heaven. That means right here and right now. God's kingdom in me and everything I do and say. Each follower of Jesus should be bringing the kingdom when we live kingdom lives. Then, *give us THIS DAY our daily bread.* Or we trust you Lord to provide a way for us to have what you Lord know we really need today. Not what we want but what God wants for us. It can be hardship, trouble, lack or abundance. Lord, today give us what we need. Then, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Meaning Lord out of your abundance of mercy please grant us forgiveness when we makes mistakes and sin against you and please help us Lord to have the strength to also forgive others when they make mistakes, offend us, insult us, hurt us. Help us to show grace and mercy as you have Lord and forgive them. Then, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:* God, we trust you and we know you alone can give us the strength to resist the temptations and evil of this world. Lord we are weak but we humbly rely on your strength not our own to Guide us and Help us to make good choices. Be kind to others and resist the temptations of this world even when we face those who mistreat us. And then Jesus ended this prayer so beautifully. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

The beginning and the end is all about God. Not us. And everything in the middle is about us trusting God. Not ordering things like we are at a restaurant. God is king whether or not you accept it. He's the boss. God has all power whether or not you accept it. He's God. All glory forever and ever Amen.

Now, I'm sure many of you have heard about all the things you CAN'T do if you are Christian. The things we think we lose; I hate to tell you it's not about you. It's about Jesus.

I can promise you that we gain far more than we could ever lose. Jesus is worth more than anything we think we might lose. Oh, and by the way, you never had anything you'll miss. Just give it all to Jesus, It's His anyway. Being a follower of the King, Jesus, a citizen of the kingdom of God gives each of us things money could never buy. I have hope, peace, contentment, joy and assurance right here, right now in the kingdom of God. Nothing we have or have had can purchase any of this. Following Jesus is the best life you can have. It's not about you, it's all about Jesus. It's not about stuff you can get, it's not about money, fame, or prestige. It's all about Jesus.

So, I love and follow Jesus because of who Jesus is, not because of what I think He might give me. I live an abundantly satisfying life, right now, right here. My eternal life

began the moment I surrendered my everything to Jesus. He already owned it and controlled it. I'm just surrendering the control I thought I had to the one that always had control. My Lord Jesus, King Jesus. Right here in the kingdom of God.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father. Thank you. I cannot begin to list the many things I am thankful to you for. I love you, Lord. Thank you for not giving up on me, even though I ignored you. Thank you for guiding me. Thank you for revealing yourself to me Lord, so that I might know you, Lord. I am the clay your are the potter, mold me and make me as you please, I love and trust you father. We pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Let me leave you with this. Does our life change the moment we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior. Well yes and no. Will we have troubles and trials and sorrows in life. Well yes. Everyone does. Being a Christian means being a follower of Jesus. Follow is a life-long process. We grow every day in every moment. If we are not growing then we are not following. But this is the best way to live, nothing else can ever compare.

If you have Jesus, truly trust Jesus, then you can be at peace even if it seems there is no way out, even if you are dying. What a glorious day today is. Today I choose joy. Today I trust Jesus. Thank you, God, for today. And then you do this every day for the rest of your life.

What does that mean for you? This like when you were a child, we trust God will provide, just like we trusted our parents as small children. Sleep like a baby. You can sleep because you know God is trustworthy. No matter what is happening in your life, God's got it. And we can trust in God's plan, no matter what happens. Our life is a short time compared to eternity. How can you get the point you surrender everything to Jesus. Simply ask. Ask God to help you and believe. Believe God will because He can. If you have a chance today, read Mark 9. There is story which ran through my mind over and over again while I was in the hospital. One of my favorite verses says. "Lord, I do believe, help my unbelief" Whenever we feel weak, we can pray these words. and God will help your unbelief.

Before, I finish today. I want to tell you my life is not perfect. Far from it. I don't make money like I used to, but I trust Jesus. I've had many health problems, but I trust Jesus. Things don't go the way I think the should, but I trust Jesus.

Let me read you this Psalm of David. Psalm 23 (NIV) *The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*

So what is my salvation experience? Well, I'm experiencing it right now. Every day, I have to start by putting my trust in Jesus, surrendering control of my life to Jesus. And I believe that, truly goodness and mercy and love and hope and joy and comfort and... will follow me all the days of my life. I have been blessed by God to dwell in His kingdom today and forever, Amen.

When I was about to record this, an old hymn came to my mind. I'd like to share it.
(Trust & Obey) (link to Dan Moen)

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies
But His smile quickly drives it away
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear
Can abide while we trust and obey
Oh, Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet
Or we'll walk by His side in the way
What He says we will do, where He sends we will go
Never fear, only trust and obey
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

Oh, Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey

And 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus
Just to take Him at His Word
Just to rest upon His promise
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord"
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
Oh, for grace to trust Him more
Lord oh, for grace to trust You more

Trust and obey, Jesus.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me to share with you today. Me and my entire family are so blessed to be part of what God is doing in Bicol. I'm so thankful to God, for each and every one of you. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives. If you wish to ask me a question or share anything with me, feel free to contact me. You can email me at kip@punla.org or our website www.punla.org to find our social media links.

So, until next time we are praying each of you, pray without ceasing and surrender your lives to Jesus. Then peace, hope, joy and assurance is yours in Jesus. Amen. I love you all and God Bless.