

8 Salvation Army



A Message from Martin Luther

Christ Himself explains how He wants the words “No longer do I call you servants, but I call you My friends” to be understood. He says: “This friendship—the fact that I call you My friends—you do not have from yourselves; you have it because I chose you as friends through My suffering and death. . . .” This blasts and condemns all the presumption

toward God of the pseudo saints, who want to do and merit enough to reconcile God and to make Him their friend. For what else is this but to presume that they do the choosing[?] (LW 24:258)

Opening Prayer

L: Jesus said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you.” (John 15:16)

P: **Blessed is the one You choose, [O Lord,] and bring near, to dwell in Your courts!** (Psalm 65:4)

L: Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near

P: **To Himself by the blood of Christ!** (Ephesians 2:13–14)

L: Open our eyes, O Lord, that we may behold wondrous things out of Your Word.

P: **Amen!**

Sweet Freedom

Does a baby personally decide he or she wants to be born, and then afterward, the baby’s parents subsequently decide to conceive? In what way might the physical conception and birth of a child provide a helpful analogy for the way God chooses to make us His children? Use John 1:12–13 to help guide your discussion.

Arminians point the words “to all who . . . believed in His name” (John 1:12), and say that this is good proof of freedom of the will. That is to say, you have to believe before God makes

you His child. Yet, according to the following verses, where does faith come from?

Romans 10:17

Ephesians 2:8–9

2 Peter 1:1

Arminians will also point to Romans 10:9 and say that you must first confess faith before you can be saved. But according to verse 8, where does your confession come from? From whence does this Word come according to verses 14–17?

In what way might the Arminian teaching that God responds to you—rather than that God acts first—tempt you to doubt your forgiveness and salvation? Use Hebrews 12:1–2 to help guide your discussion.

Bells

Do you personally contribute to the Salvation Army’s collections? Why or why not?

Is there any distinction to be made between supporting the teaching efforts of another Christian church body and supporting that body’s human care efforts? Why might such a distinction even matter? What cautions might be exercised in this regard?

What would be a good relationship for a Lutheran congregation to have with its local ministerial alliance or food pantry? What about such things as World Day of Prayer or Meet Me at the Pole? Use the following Bible verses to guide your discussion.

Mark 8:15

Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 4:6

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

2 Corinthians 8:19–21

1 Thessalonians 5:22



Church Body

The Salvation Army

History

The Salvation Army was started in the slums of London in the 1860s by William Booth and his wife, Catherine. They reached out to those considered the lowest of British society. The first Salvationists in the United States started their work in 1880. From their earliest days, the Salvationists have used military titles for leaders and followers in the church. The Salvation Army has combined spiritual care with social work since its inception.

Vital Statistics

Members call themselves Salvationists. There are 446,000 members in the United States. Source: www.salvationarmyusa.org.

Source of Doctrine

Salvationists accept only the divinely inspired Word of God in the Old and New Testaments as the source for all teaching and preaching. Before enlisting as Salvation Army "soldiers," prospective Salvationist members must sign the "Articles of War," a document outlining their basic beliefs.

Role of Christ/Way of Salvation

The Salvation Army teaches that salvation comes through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace through faith. However, Salvationists also believe that man can make a conscious decision to come to faith. Therefore, members enlist as "soldiers" in the Salvation Army. Salvationists also teach that it is possible for man to overcome sin and obtain perfection on his own.

Sacraments

Salvationists do not observe any sacraments.

Lutheran Response

While we highly regard the charitable support provided by the Salvation Army, we differ in our understanding of how we come to faith. Approach the Salvationist firmly grounded in the Word of God.

9 Church of the Nazarene

A Message from Martin Luther



[Christ died] for the sins of the whole world. It is certain that you are a part of the world. Do not let your heart deceive you by saying: "The Lord died for Peter and Paul; He rendered satisfaction for them, not for me." Therefore let everyone who has sin be summoned here, for He was made the expiation for the sins of the whole world and bore the sins of the whole world. (LW 30:237)

Opening Prayer

L: Behold, the Lamb of God

P: **Who takes away the sin of the world!**

(John 1:29)

L: In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself,

P: **Not counting their trespasses against them.**

(2 Corinthians 5:19)

L: Open our eyes, O Lord, that we may behold wondrous things out of Your Word.

P: **Amen!**

Saved/Not Saved?

In what way do these Bible verses speak against Arminianism's idea that Christ's death was only potentially for all people?

John 3:16-17

John 6:51

1 Timothy 2:4

1 John 2:2

If Christ died for all people, does that necessarily mean that all people will receive the benefits of His sacrificial death?

In what way do the following verses distinguish between those who will receive the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection and those who will not?

Mark 16:16

John 3:16-18

2 Thessalonians 2:10-15

If Christ did not die for all people of all time everywhere, but only potentially died for you, how could you ever be certain that He definitely died for you? As you seek assurances of your forgiveness and eternal life, where would you be required to look if Christ truly did not die for all without exception?

Holiness

In what sense is it good and true to say that God's gift of faith leads to a change in your behavior? What might you say about people who call themselves Christians, but whose actions and words make it seem as though they are unbelievers?

What do the following verses have to say about the relationship between faith in Jesus and your behavior?

Galatians 5:16-26

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Ephesians 4:17-24

Can we stop sinning on our own? Use **Matthew 5:22, 28, 44** to guide your discussion.

In what way do the following Bible verses help explain why it is impossible for a Christian to stop sinning in this life?

Romans 7:15-25

Galatians 5:16-17

Why is it for your personal blessing and benefit that you cannot stop struggling with sin and become personally holy? Asked another way, how is it that your personal struggle with sin prevents you from placing your certainty and confidence in yourself rather than in Christ? Use **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** to guide your discussion.

Church Body

Church of the Nazarene

History

The Church of the Nazarene shares its roots with other Protestant churches in the Wesleyan and Holiness traditions. The first Church of the Nazarene was established in 1895 in Los Angeles. Through the years, the church has combined with and separated from other Pentecostal and Holiness denominations as it spread from the West Coast, across the United States, and into many foreign countries.

Vital Statistics

The Church of the Nazarene has 645,000 members. Its national and international offices are in Kansas City, Missouri. Source: www.nazarene.org.

Source of Doctrine

The Church of the Nazarene accepts the inerrant Scriptures as its main source of doctrine. The church's essential teachings are described in the Articles of Faith, the General Rules, and the Articles of Organization and Government, which have been adopted by the church's General Assembly.

Role of Christ/Way of Salvation

The Nazarene Church teaches that salvation is a free gift of God given to the believer. Once the individual confesses his or her sin and is made free from original sin, the heart of the believer must be fully cleansed through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Nazarenes teach that at the final judgment each person shall appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life.

Sacraments

The Church of the Nazarene observes Baptism as a sign of the individual's acceptance of faith. It indicates his or her desire to lead an obedient, holy, and righteous life. Children may be baptized at their parents' request, as long as the parents promise to instruct them in the faith.

The Lord's Supper is practiced as a symbol or remembrance of Christ's institution of this Sacrament and as a visible reminder of His sacrifice on the cross.

Lutheran Response

The Nazarene understanding of salvation is grounded in a keeping of the Law. Any discussion of faith must be grounded in an understanding of God's Word, which clearly shows that Christ alone earned salvation for us.

