



**ARE YOU
TREATING
YOUR
SALVATION
LIKE A
VACCINATION?
Hebrews 3:1-19**

How viable is your Salvation inoculation? It may have been a long time since you first got your Salvation vaccine or maybe you have never had it.

Maybe you have become complacent – the worldly temptations won't touch me! If you ignore the truth of God's Word and Salvation through Jesus, you are not protected. No mask, no quarantine is going to save you when Jesus returns. Shutting your doors won't stop the sins of the world from infecting you.

God doesn't tell us to hide our faith away but to let it shine bright – a light in this world of darkness. He also tells us to ensure our hearts are not hardened and to encourage each other with love and compassion.

We are told that the tetanus injection remains viable for up to 10 years. The flu injection only remains viable year by year because of new strains that are invading our world. We know that the Covid virus continues to mutate, so we may also have to be vaccinated against this year by year.

Our Spiritual salvation is also being bombarded by mutations from the world in which we live – from false beliefs, secular writings that try to disprove the truth of God's word, false religions and cults putting doubts into our minds, greed, selfishness – the list goes on and on.

Vaccinations work and prevent illness. In the medical sense once vaccinated you are much less likely to suffer from the illness or disease. However, you still need to take good care of your health and well-being.

This is the same from a Spiritual point of view. There are people, often in the church, who treat their salvation like a vaccination and assume all is well without giving any thought to the danger of unbelief around them. You may say I got inoculated against hell when I was eight days old — or six years old. – or 24 years old – or 60 years old. And you assume that getting to heaven is not a matter of vigilance over your heart to keep it from becoming hard and unbelieving. It's simply a matter of making sure that the inoculation happened. These people are the ones that are in tremendous danger.

Your security and assurance are not a decision or a prayer that you remember doing in the past; your security and assurance is the faithfulness and power of God to keep you hoping in Him in the future.

Firstly, we must take heed to our heart. Guard against unbelief. That is, be vigilant to maintain our confidence and hope in Christ against all competing treasures.

Not listening to God leads to the hardening of your heart. This doesn't happen all at one – it is the result of a series of choices to disregard God's will and to judge His word by human standards.

It is easy to fall away from God, even if we acknowledge His blessings upon us, we can become lost in unbelief because Jesus Christ Himself is not our heart's delight and hope and confidence and reward. Jesus taught these things over and over to warn against false assurance.

We must not drift and take our perseverance in faith for granted. All kinds of alternative passions are making war on our souls every day to steal our faith and replace Christ with other treasures.

Take care! Be on the lookout! Be earnest! Be watchful over your heart. In **1 Peter 5:8** we read: “*Be sober, be watchful, your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour*”

C.S. Lewis said in his book – **the Problem of Pain** – that God is always speaking, always seeking our attention. When we are pain free His voice sounds like a whisper, but when we are in pain, His voice is a shout.

I wonder if you can recall a time or times in your life when something happened that suddenly refocused your mind on the Lord. It may have been a particular passage in Scripture; a sermon; a book that seemed to just fall into your lap when you needed it; a friend’s challenge; a string of unpleasant events or a visit to the doctor.

It is often in our pain that we hear from God. Do you realise that God builds our confidence, courage and resilience mainly during our lowest moments, building our inner strength, every step of the way through our experiences? Like they are forged in the fire of our life.

God has used many ways to get man’s attention in the past – one example is when He sent the flood in Noah’s time because humanity was self-absorbed in their own sinful pursuits and could not hear God’s warning voice.

Jesus said in **Matthew 24:38** that the generation prior to His second coming would be guilty of the same thing – so busy with their own voices that they will not be able to hear God’s voice.

We should be turning our eyes and ears to Him, asking Him – Lord what are you saying to our world and Lord, what are you saying to me?

The truth is even if you say you are a true Christian you still need to be vigilant and watchful over your heart. It's the cavalier Christians who need to be worried about their standing. It's those who were baptized and walked an aisle or prayed a prayer and took communion and came to church, but do not love Jesus or count Him their dearest treasure or bank their hope on Him and look forward to seeing Him and can say, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." These are the self-assured ones who need to feel insecure.

Secondly, we are commanded to encourage one another day after day. This means that eternal security is a community project. Let's face it, we could all use a little boost every now and then – and I don't mean a nutrition shake. We could all use a helping hand or a pep talk.

We must be the church for each other but sadly, some find it hard to encourage others. And why is this? Sometimes we are too busy focusing on what is happening to us, saying it isn't fair or I don't deserve it and filled with negative self-talk – we put ourselves first.

If you are jealous, envious or critical of someone's accomplishments or if you are despondent and not receiving much encouragement yourself, then you will find it harder to encourage someone else. It's easier to point out faults than abilities. It's easier to focus on what is wrong than what is right.

And we often do this to ourselves by holding to a high-standard, not accepting any mistakes, beating ourselves up over poor performance,

we don't encourage ourselves therefore we can't be encouragers to others.

In **Ephesians 4:29** Paul says our words should help to boost others up in relation to what their needs are. But if our words are unwholesome they are harmful. We're not building up, we're tearing down. We won't give them a boost we'll knock them down.

As Christians and as a church we are commanded to speak to one another in ways that cause us to have hearts of faith in the superior value of Christ over all things; speaking words that point people to the truth and value of Jesus; helping each other *believe* by showing people reasons why Jesus is more to be desired and trusted and loved than anything or anyone else. Putting Christ at the centre of all of our interactions.

In their book *Passionate People*, Keith Miller & Bruce Larson describe two kinds of people: "basement people" and "balcony people."

"Basement people" are the discouragers in our lives. They may be people from our past, or present, but their words go with us everywhere we go. They are the negative influences and their words go something like this: "You can't do that." "That was a stupid thing to do." "When are you going to get it right?" "You'll never amount to anything." They divert us from our hopes and dreams. They constantly point out what's wrong rather than what's right. **Basement people cause a room to light up when they leave.** I am sure you know people like that.

In contrast to them are the "Balcony People." They're full of love and cheer us on. They encourage us to be loving, courageous followers of Christ. They sit in the balcony of our lives like a heavenly cheering

section, saying, "You can do it." "We believe in you." "You are special to us."

Balcony people are the great encouragers in our lives and we all need them! Balcony people try to lift people up to where they are, but **basement people** try to drag people down to where they are.

Are we going to be basement people or balcony people? There's no question which one God wants us to be.

To remain fully vaccinated, we must continue to seek Spiritual guidance, listening to and obeying God, speaking Christ at every opportunity, remaining within a community of like-minded Christians and treating each other with the love and respect that we expect to be treated.

If you had your Salvation vaccination a long time ago, perhaps now is the time to revisit and reinvest in God's saving grace. If you have not had your Salvation vaccination – I would love to chat to you and help you through that process at a time that suits you.