

A CHANGE OF
MIND

What is Faith?



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VOLUME 5

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What Is Faith?

I had an email come in, and I am going to respond to it. The email reads,

“I am attempting to apply what you shared with us in the last Spiritual Warfare message. I do appreciate the encouragement. I have also been looking to other Scripture for guidance and encouragement. Oh, and I have been looking up all the verses on pistis versus pisteuo because I am having difficulty seeing fully how your understanding...”

Let me just stop right here: *I have been looking up all the verses on pistis versus pisteuo...* This is not a wrestling match. There is no *pistis versus pisteuo*. I was telling someone a few days ago there is a fine line. In fact, if you can imagine, it is an unseen fine line from *pistis* to *pisteuo*. They are not combating against each other. They are not ‘versus’ each other. If I haven’t made myself clear on that, I plan to now. I told you there were more topics about faith I needed to get to that will add on to the knowledge you already have about *pistis* and *pisteuo*, or faith. So, with this message, I intend to add a few more pieces to the puzzle as we march along in our journey and discoveries of the riches of God’s Word, that cannot be explained by a simple definition or a few messages. So, it isn’t *pistis versus pisteuo*. Let’s get that clear. It’s a fine invisible line between the two, which I guess is the best way to describe it. I’m telling you when *pistis* starts, *pisteuo*, more than likely if not always, comes in and they intertwine. But back to the message before I go any further.

“I have been looking up all the verses on pistis versus pisteuo because I am having difficulty seeing fully how your understanding of faith is as opposed to what we were taught via Doc.”

Doc was my mentor, my pastor for thirty years. You are going to find out there isn’t that much difference. A different way of looking at it but not that much difference.

“I know you stated it wasn’t enough for you or you felt it didn’t go far enough. And so, I’m trying to see how each apostle contributed to the subject and get a deeper understanding of it.”

Well, I admire the passion for that. I can’t criticize that. But let me address this topic further. I think it will benefit everyone.

“You felt it didn’t go far enough”—What I was referring to was the definition I received under my mentor: he use to write on the board “A, B, C,” one under the other starting with ‘A’ on top. Then for ‘A’ he would write ‘Action.’ For ‘B,’ he would write ‘Belief.’ And for ‘C’, ‘Confidence; ‘and he used to say, “Action, based upon Belief, sustained by Confidence.” Those few of you who were a part of that ministry have that memorized.

When I said it there had to be something missing is because I saw a gap in the definition that didn’t complete the process. It was missing a starting point. Think about it; Action, based upon Belief... Right there is the first problem I had. Let’s separate it now so there is no confusion about what I am saying.

Obviously, you are taking action, and, what are you doing with it according to his definition? You are basing it on belief. I always asked, “Then where is the belief coming from?” Because by the time you get down to the last part of the definition of ‘by confidence,’ there is no clue there. There is no explanation there where it came from. Now I know he use to say it’s tough to change opinions that you form because you start defending them and you will defend them until you die. Everyone is guilty of that one way or another. And this definition was given way before he ever came to Faith Center...or developed by him. But I always saw it as incomplete because it misses a starting point. Maybe as a Christian it can make someone believe it’s a complete definition because your starting point has already come and gone. But as a nonbeliever and a newly born-again Christian, where was your starting point, Action...let’s break it down again, Action based upon belief. How did you get that belief? That was my question. And of course, you are assuming that *pistis*—which I will get into in a moment—literally means faith. I can track it all down to where it turned into faith, but it wasn’t always faith. In fact, it was called something else in Latin before we got our English word. It is definitely called something before that in Greek. The Greek definition is not in a lot of these silly different Greek dictionaries that float around in bookstores – that even the good biblical scholars that study these languages criticize and rightly so. Because definitions change over a period of time in any language, we need to understand that the word faith and what it means today has also changed, but the Greek didn’t. Modern Greek, today’s Greek, yes it did, but in those days it didn’t. Even in our English language it’s changes somewhat by definition. So, action based on belief; that belief had to come from somewhere. It had to start somewhere. So, when I say faith comes by hearing, that scripture means what Paul meant it to mean. You must hear it from a preacher, according to scripture.

Romans. 10:14, ***“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”***

“How then shall they call on Him...” Who is them? The one’s seeking the Lord Jesus. “...in whom they have not” there it is believe, *pistueo*; that’s trust, that leads into confidence that God said it so, so be it. “And how shall they believe,” or faith (*pistueo*) “in Him, of whom they have not heard?” See, you’re not going to get any action in your belief system or understanding unless you’ve heard it from somewhere else. So this was my argument for years; if I’m sitting across from somebody who doesn’t know anything about Jesus and say, “Well you got to have faith in Christ,” that means diddly squat to them because they are going to apply an English definition of what faith means today—which I will show you in a few moments, it falls short of what *pistis* or *pisteuo* truly means.

“And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how should they hear without a preacher? And shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring good tidings of good things.”

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah said the Lord who hath believed our report.” Which I don’t have time to go into now on how that connects. ***“So then by faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”***

So before you even develop a belief system or a belief understanding what the Word of God even says, even if you have a very immature understanding of it, the first thing that needs to be established is someone bringing you that word so it can develop a belief system. So, describing action based upon belief sustained by confidence leaves that beginning part of the element of how it is described in scripture out of the equation. It is like I said, how am I going to tell somebody who doesn't understand anything about Christianity, or Jesus Christ, or even the Bible, "You got to have faith in Jesus Christ," they are going to say "What does that mean," because they don't have any belief system established in their life. They have nothing to fall back on is what I am trying to say. If you said this definition to an already established Christian with some background system of belief (hopefully brought on by the understanding of God's Word), then this definition can apply. But until then, it can't. So really this definition is for already believers but not nonbelievers, especially nonbelievers without an understanding of a belief system that comes from God's Word. Do you understand?

So, when you wrote in this message, "*seeing fully how your understanding of faith is as opposed to what we were taught...I know you stated it wasn't enough for you,*" now you know why it wasn't enough. It was enough for me because I was already on my journey and had some type of belief system, especially growing up a Catholic and then obviously turned into a Protestant with an understanding of God's Word. Even before I heard Dr. Scott, I already had a foundation to nudge me along. Let's explore this thought further. Let's say you are a missionary and you walk into a jungle in nowhere land and they have never heard of Jesus Christ. Their god is some funky named god and now you are going to present to them Jesus Christ. If you walk up to them and say, "You got to have faith in Jesus Christ," they are going to say "Okay," and then they are going to put their definition on what faith in God is all about, which is probably going to be all screwed up anyway. They are going to say, "Okay, how do I do that? What do I believe in?" So, action based upon belief sustained by confidence is not a definition of faith that you can apply and really think you are going to get far with it with nonbelievers. It just won't happen. Those tribal folks are going to look at you and let's say they didn't worship anything, they are going to say, "Believe in what? Believe in Who? Then how do you do that?" How does someone act on something that they didn't know existed? And how do they act on it without even knowing what He said? No established belief system is the point I'm trying to make and that is why I said, "It wasn't enough for me," and I know I didn't make that clear earlier by explaining what I am explaining now to you but maybe you can see now the perspective of someone trying to communicate something else to someone else.

Let me read you something from a book I've had for a long time.

In the scriptures of the New Testament... in the Latin and later English translations, the word Faith was put in there for A DIFFERENT WORD!

I am going to go slow now because I don't want any mistakes or misunderstandings on your part about what I am saying. Faith was put in there for a different word. A word that should have been used every time you saw *pistis*. We are still focusing on *pistis* and I have taught you what the starting definition of *pistis* (faith) is. Faith comes by hearing, the *pistis* level of faith, which I told you comes by the process of hearing. Hearing what? The Word of God. So, what does that mean? Faith comes by hearing and hearing here in the Greek is a repetitive process that never really ends.

It comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. Why? Because at that *pistis* level of faith, it keeps persuading you.

“Well, I don’t need much persuasion.” The let me ask you a question. Do you still want to grow spiritually? You are going to need a solid understanding what faith means.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing of the Word of God. It comes by constantly persuading you that what you are hearing is true. But there is another process, which takes us a step further now.

We know from Strong’s Concordance that in every place we see Faith, the Greek word Pistis is used as the original reference. However, ...

When the people of the first century got the letters of Paul, for example, they did not say, “What is pistis?,” as if Paul had invented a new word. Pistis was in common use in the Greek language and had been for centuries. It is in the writings of the Greeks, including Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus, etc. The first definition of pistis in the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon, sold in college bookstores to students of ancient Greek, is “trust in others.”

Remember, it was a common everyday word in the Greek and not just for religious purposes only, everyday use. You can trust in your brother, trust in your sister, trust in your mother, trust in your father, trust in your boss, “trust in others.”

That is why we say [and should say] pistis means “trust.”

Pistis doesn’t mean Faith, it means Trust!

That knocked some of you off your seat. “How dare you say that! I was taught differently. *Pistis* is Faith.” Give me a definition of faith. *Pistis* doesn’t mean Faith, it means Trust. So, add that on to what I already told you before. How does this trust come? By hearing, which persuades you to start trusting. So literally Romans 10:17 and other places in scripture, Trust comes by hearing. How? Because what you are hearing is persuading you that it is worthy to trust (it goes beyond worthy actually), it is truly the only thing you can trust in that never fails. But trust in what, since *pistis* was an everyday word used for everyday common situations, not just religious? Trust in Jesus. Since we’re talking about the New Testament, trust in Jesus, relying on Him and all the promises he’s given us.

Now, where did the word usage of faith come from?

The Bible was then read in Latin for hundreds of years. As the English language developed, our English word “faith” came from the Latin word fides. There should be nothing mysterious about pistis, fides, or faith. We know what trust is. Merriam-Webster defines it as “assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something.”

Now referring this word back to Scripture, our reliance (trust) on Christ's character (we know what that is), His ability (it goes beyond anything we can comprehend), His strength. We know He is the Truth because He declared it; I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one is going to get to the Father unless we go through Him.

If both pistis and fides mean "trust," how did "faith" come to be defined in our culture as "firm belief in something for which there is no proof" (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition)? To understand this, we must remember that a dictionary definition is only a record of how people are currently using the word in their speech and writing. This is why dictionary definitions change as time passes.

What happened to change the definition of faith from "trust" to "firm belief in something for which there is no proof" was: (1) people started to use "faith" as "belief in something for which there is no proof," (2) that usage was put in the dictionary as a definition of faith, [including religious people] (3) people who did not know what faith was looked it up in the dictionary, saw that definition, and used it that way. This process continued over time until now almost everyone thinks "faith" is "belief in something for which there is no proof."

I challenge you; walk the streets, quiz your friends who aren't that familiar with what you trust in. Ask them to define what faith is, ask them, "Do you believe 'faith' is something for which there is no proof?" I guarantee the answer ninety-nine percent of the time will be, "Yes, that is why we have 'faith' in it."

Sadly, it is now safe to say that most people do not know that the biblical definition of faith is "trust," and furthermore that they do not have the knowledge or the tools to research that for themselves. Serious consequences come from believing that the Bible asks us to believe things even though there is no proof for them.

I have been laying down the evidence for many years now. I have been showing off God's Word. Don't tell me there is no proof. There is plenty of proof. Thank God for biblical archeology that can also prove it too. How much proof do you need? It's become common now to say, "historical Jesus," because everyone knows now there is enough history and recorded information about him to make it historical...not fantasy.

Believers become confused about faith, not knowing what it is or how to get it and grow in it. Unbelievers, thinking the Bible asks people to believe things without proof, say it is an unreasonable and illogical book, and reject it—to their own doom.

How did the idea that faith is "belief in something for which there is no proof" enter into the Christian culture in the first place? The actual historical process is long and tedious, but the concept is simple. The Church asked people to trust doctrines that were neither logical nor clearly backed up by Scripture.

That is why I preach on God's verifiables, as I call them. I try not to drift too far from that practice.

For example, the doctrine that the "host" (bread) and wine that are used in Roman Catholic Mass become the body and blood of Christ is not logical (for example, it still looks and tastes like bread and wine, not meat and blood), and it is not backed by solid Scriptural exegesis. Priests know this, and so they ask people to "take it by faith."

The CRUX of this is, people equate faith now to Belief, not to trust. They call their church, THE FAITH, they call the Doctrines of that church they follow, THE FAITH, they have faith in the traditions and customs that the church does. They have faith in their Pastors and Elders to be correct, etc....

But HERE is the difference between fides and pistis:

Fides is belief or belief in something on the earthly realm, Pistis is trust and trust alone, in God and His promises.

We wonder why believers can't understand absolute and complete trust in God, and his promises... It is because believers have been taught to have Fides (Faith) and not Pistis (Trust).

Here are some scriptural examples.

Mathew 6:30, ***"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"***

Do you think Christ was saying, Oh ye of belief in something of the earthly realm? No. What He was saying is, oh ye of little trust and reliance on God and trusting in His promises. Promises of what? His promise to supply what he has promised, not what you want, but what He has promised. There is a difference. Let's look at another scripture.

Matthew 14:31, ***"And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him,"***—when Peter was sinking— ***"and said unto him, O thou of little faith"***—the word there again is *pistis*. Jesus was saying, Oh thou of little total and complete trust and reliance in Me. He said to come, obviously guaranteeing Peter no danger— ***"wherefore didst thou doubt?"*** He didn't have complete trust and his trust was not based upon God's promise of making sure no danger would come to him. You can go through the Scripture, finding other examples, and do the homework yourself.

Does that not change the entire scope of what is required of us? When you understand what *pistis* truly is and that is trust? Trust because you have been persuaded by what you've heard because a preacher has been sent to tell you, and what he is telling you trusting it to be true, which then moves you quickly into that action part, bringing that into the equation now of saying, So be it. I am not only going to have trust in it, but I am confident because I am trusting in God's Word and

his promises. Like I said, it is that invisible line you really cannot see that almost melts *pistis* into *pisteuo* and intertwines them. It isn't simply to believe (Have faith), it is to completely and totally Trust in God and Jesus Christ in all aspects of life, as our healer or as in the scriptures I just gave, our provider, etc...

Luke 17:6, ***“And the Lord said, If ye had faith [Pistis - complete trust in God and Jesus Christ and trust in His promises] as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.”***

It isn't our faith (belief) that will do this... it is simply a small amount of TRUST in Him, and the power and authority He gave us in His promises that will do the impossible. The actual DOING is His, all we need to do is TRUST completely, and do not doubt, and whatever it is will be done.

We don't pull it off, He does. The actual doing is His. All we need to do is trust Him completely. Do not doubt in any way. It isn't about belief. It is about trust. It isn't about faith. It's about trust especially in the way faith is defined, not just in the secular world but also in the religious world.

And how do we get this and grow in it?

Rom 10:17, ***“So then faith [lit. trust] cometh by [What?] hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

Here the 'word of God' is the Greek word *rhema*. Look it up. So then trust comes because you are persuaded by the continuance in the hearing of it, that what you are hearing to be true, and then you act upon it which leads to *pisteuo*, trust and confidence, the so-be-it level because of the hearing of the *rhema* of God. Trust comes by how? We have in the Bible a record for us that we call the Word of God. Isn't that true? Don't we also refer to it as the inspired Word of God? Who inspired it? Peter makes it clear; it was given to man, inspired by God. Through what source? The Holy Spirit. So then trust comes by hearing, hearing by the Word (the *rhema*) that was given by the Holy Spirit to men and that is what we have here as a record. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Holy Spirit who gave it to man so that we could then absorb it in, and the Holy Spirit now identifies with us in our life, it becomes literally in us. Do you get that folks? So, trust comes by hearing and hearing by the Word which was inspired by the Holy Spirit who is now identifying with us as we start that trusting activation of God. That is why you need the Holy Spirit. You are not going to understand this or get the riches of God's Word and the deep wonderful meanings and understandings it provides without the Holy Spirit. There is no way. You can be a learned Christian, but you need to be a Spirit-filled Christian. And I am not talking about the Spirit-filled Christian that goes around talking in tongues all over the place and acting like idiots. I am not talking about that. I am talking about a real experience that comes by levels of faith. And the starting point is being persuaded because you're hearing the belief system, if you want to call it that, so then you can act upon it, which brings you the confidence...if you want to go back to my mentor's definition.

The other problem I had was the explanation that ninety percent of faith is courage. That didn't hit home with me either. I understand the principles behind it. I mean, courage is a human element of

emotion. You can be a non-Christian and have courage. You can be a Christian and have courage. You can be a Hindu and have courage. You can be a Muslim and have courage. But what if the courage is misplaced? What if we were using the old terminology of faith—which we won't be using anymore from this point on because we are now at the place where I can present it to you in a different way. A lot of things don't take courage that people faith for. I'm telling you that right now. I hate to burst your bubble but it's the truth. And there are some things that are.

Maybe now you can understand what I am saying about a further definition is needed of faith and its different levels. Go to Hebrews 11. Let's read some of these heroes of faith in chapter 11 starting with verse 4 and include our improved understanding now.

“By faith [trust] Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...”

Trust in what? I have said before, don't just read this through and say, 'by faith by faith'. It never did cut it for me because I wanted to know how Abel came to the point of knowing what God would find pleasing as far as presenting an offering. And I know there are different ways of coming to that understanding, but how? If you go back to the Genesis record, you still have to fill in some of the gaps. And of course, you need to use all of Scripture to do that.

By **trust** Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain...

Abel and Cain—I'm convinced not just using these scriptures alone but other materials that are out there—they got their instruction not from God directly but from their father Adam. Adam taught both the correct way. How to present their offering which would please God. One chose to do it the way it would please God. The other didn't care about it at all. So, Able trusted...trust in what? Trust in what he was taught. So, he was persuaded by what his father taught him. He became persuaded by trusting in who? In this case, his father directly. He trusted his father why the offering was important in their worship of God. But what about the courage part? After you're past that part, what happens? I am going to tell you right now, it's not 90% courage. It takes courage, don't get me wrong. I am not saying to reject that completely because it does take courage, but it takes something even more important than courage.

Verse 8, ***“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out...”*** By **trust**...Abraham, trusting in what? In this case, a word from the Lord directly, ***“...when he was called to go out into a place...”*** He was trusting in the information he received or the instruction he received of what he had to do. ***“By trust, when Abraham was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;”***

And I have told you before to circle this word, obeyed, it's obedience. After that first activation of faith, the trusting in the instruction because he was persuaded it was the truth, he wasn't just imagining it, what he received was the truth, he then did what? Put a courage badge on? Walk the yellow brick road like the lion who wanted courage? No. ***“By trust Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;”*** And that obedient part of the Greek definition also describes something very unique, which is also a definition that is used for the same word, **listened**. He listened and obeyed. So, he trusted what he received as instructions because he listened, then acted on what he listened to and made himself an obedient servant at that point. And then what did he do? He went out. Trust,

obedience, and I'll add a third one, so be it. Trust coming from the persuasion about what you've been instructed or heard to be true concerning the *rhema*, the inspired word of God. The Holy Spirit has now made a connection because you started trusting. Abraham moved on to the *pisteuo* level, the so be it level. Now he didn't remain there. Like David who I was referring to earlier, he was up and down too. I don't call Abraham the father of faith like most do in the Christian world. I call him the father that showed what trust in God will do. Or, let's just call him the father of trusting in God.

Now I have just started on this. We have a journey in our understanding of Scripture; what trust, confidence, obedience, listening, or hearing consists of in God's Word. But I wanted to take this time to respond to this message to hopefully give you a further insight of what this ministry stands for and what it trusts in. It is not just a memorized 12345 formula. It is God's Word that is coming to life, to an understanding of the verifiable Word. And even though I will use secular sources at times, that's just to show off what God's Word has already said. I know who my trust is in and I will keep trusting.

It's ironic, my mentor use to say, what would you like from your loved one? He said, "Wouldn't you rather have trust?" to make a long story short. So we aren't that far off. I'm just coming from a different approach and breaking it down, piece by piece.

No Fig Leaf Religion

Open your bible to I Peter 1:18.

We have been to this scripture many times before in the past. It's a good way to open up this message about the precious blood of Jesus Christ. It reads,

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed [ransomed] with corruptible things, as silver and gold;” money cannot buy your salvation. I don't care if you are the richest man in the world. You are the poorest spiritually if you have not been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. ***“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”***

So, let's put this in perspective. Living a good life does not cleanse or remove your sin. Joining a church does not remove or cleanse your sin. Praying does not cleanse or remove your sin. Being baptized does not cleanse or remove your sin. Partaking of the sacraments—I am going to touch a sensitive nerve here now—partaking of the sacraments does not cleanse or remove your sin. We take the sacraments because we are reminded of what Christ asked us to do, *“as often as you eat or drink”* remember Him. So, what cleanses or removes our sin? Jesus' blood alone cleanses and removes our sin, period. Good deeds do not remove your sin. It doesn't cleanse you from them.

Now, I'm not going to say after you've been saved by Jesus Christ you won't go through a transformation. The Holy Spirit will start work on you at the pace He wants you to progress as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Things will change. I guarantee it. So the things you did in the past you won't want to do any more and some of the things you did in the past that you thought was so bad you realize that didn't keep you out of heaven.

What keeps you out of heaven?

Romans 6:23, ***“For the wages of sin is death”***. Wages in the Greek is a debt. Because of sin, because we were born with sinners' blood due to what Adam did, there is a debt to be paid. The only payment is death. It sounds harsh but that is what it is saying here. ***“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life”***. How? ***“through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** In other words, it took the death of Jesus and the shedding of His blood – not all those other things I listed – to pay sins debt and ransom us, redeemed us from sin. The minute we are born, the minute we are in our mother's womb, you don't even have to be born yet, we owe a debt because of sin. The only way it can be paid is through death. That is why Jesus came, to redeem us from the debt that we owe that brought upon us death. He stepped in and paid it for us and we don't live under the doom of eternal death any longer but have the promise and hope of eternal life if we trust in His precious blood and what it can do for us.

See, the only way to have our sins (mine and yours) forgiven in and our names written in the Lamb's book of life that we read about in the scriptures is by the precious blood of Christ our Savior.

How do you receive this gift, God's gift, this amazing grace that brings eternal life with it? The first thing you must recognize is you're a sinner. I don't care how good of a person you are, you're still a sinner. If Jesus Christ has not redeemed you, God looks at you as a sinner. He doesn't look at you as a sinner if Christ has become your savior. We no longer are under the condemnation of God's Law.

What do I mean God's Law?

Romans 3:19, ***“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”***

A better translation would be *subject to the judgment* of God.

See, we deserved to be punished in the flames of hell for our sins. Romans clearly states we are guilty, without any excuse. And I don't care who you are, no one ever got saved who didn't realize that they were a sinner. So, the first thing you must do is recognize that you are a sinner. You must admit that you are a guilty sinner whether you are living under the Law (if you understood the Law of the scriptures) or anything else. You're still a guilty sinner. So, what are we to do? Trust (*pisteuo* in the Greek) on the Lord Jesus Christ who died, was buried and resurrected for our benefit, for our sins. You must come to the acknowledgement that once you receive the Gospel, the Gospel is a full payment for your sins, and you are saved. What I mean by Gospel is Jesus Christ. It is good news. About what? What Christ has done for us. That's it. Don't complicate it.

“Well, I was told I have to say a sinner's prayer.”

Where in Scripture does it say you have to say a sinner's prayer? Show me chapter and verse.

It is the faith in the Gospel because of the redeeming power of Jesus Christ' literal blood that saves wretches like us. We are wretched. And Jesus Christ is the only cure. Too many Christians think that there is a process or steps you must go through to be saved. Show me where. Salvation has never been a process. We are saved because we come to Christ; because somewhere you heard and were persuaded about the Good News and now you are ready to act and put your full trust in Him. To do what? To forgive your sins. And only he can do it. Only he paid the price. It is having your heart, having your mind changed from what you thought was the way to salvation to what the Gospel record declares, and a faith, the trust, the *pisteuo* to be saved. It sounds like a two-step process but there is only one step there my friend.

You go to Mark 1:15, ***“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent”***—the King James word, but isn't repent, it is change your mind—***“ye, and believe [pisteuo; trust, have full confidence in] the gospel.”*** The Gospel, the Good News. About what? About what Jesus Christ was preaching about, Himself and what He would do for us.

I'm sorry, no self-righteous works are required to be saved. None whatsoever. In fact, adding anything to trust (faith) alone in Christ is no faith at all. You can't add to the Gospel and you can't take anything away. So, don't add and don't subtract from the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Nothing added, nothing taken away.

Now you may have all kinds of questions, doubts, fears and worries. Don't fret over that; just if you place what faith you do have in the Savior Jesus Christ. I am not part of this positive principle idea that you always must remain positive 24/7 to always demonstrate to yourself that you are always full of faith. All I would have to do is read the characters in Scripture, who made it into the Scripture, they were up and down roller coasters. They were real people going through real circumstances, good and bad times. Most of our record is bad times. It is normal to have doubts. Faith isn't the absence of doubt but rather the presence of trusting in the Savior. Look at Gideon in the Old Testament. He had a whole vocabulary of doubt, but he had just enough faith to accomplish what God wanted him to accomplish; and he's listed in Chapter 11 of Hebrews in the Heroes of Faith section. Wasn't it Jesus who said if you only have enough faith as of a mustard seed, a small seed, you can move mountains? Just think about that for a minute. I'm not saying you should go around like a doubting Thomas, don't get me wrong. But how many people condemn you or criticize you because you just didn't have enough faith (you didn't just have enough faith in this or you didn't just have enough faith in that) when Scripture says all you need is enough faith (small seed size) that you almost can't even see it, mustard seed type faith to move a mountain? These same Christians that go around criticizing you...if they were so full of faith all the time, then they could move this world off of its orbit if they wanted to. I am so tired of nonsense Christianity. Most people after hearing and being persuaded don't have a background or knowledge of the Scriptures that builds faith. They just have enough faith to believe on Jesus Christ the Savior to save their soul from sin and hell. Where in the Bible does it say that God requires a certain degree of faith to be saved? I want you to think about that. He just requires faith, not degrees of it to be saved, but faith. And optimism is not faith, at least not biblical faith.

Saying you believe is not faith. I can say that I believe this chair I'm sitting on right now can't support my weight if I've never sat on it before, I had never tested it. If I never sat on this chair before, I could look at it and say, I don't believe that chair can hold my weight if I sit in it. I haven't placed my trust in this chair until I actually sit in it. Once I sit in this chair, assuming I had never sat in it before, even if I was ninety-nine percent sure it would not hold my weight and my keester would fall on the ground as soon as I sat on it, but I decided to sit on it with that one percent, in actuality, I've placed no less than 100 percent of my faith in that chair once I acted upon it, act upon sitting in it. Now it's kind of a silly illustration but hopefully it makes the point; the point that I still have 100% faith in Jesus Christ even though I may still have 99% doubt in my heart. It's not about degrees of faith. In some cases, especially as you are starting off, it is just a presence of just enough trust to receive what I been reading here, the Gospel, as full payment for my sins. Faith is when you come as a sinner in need of a Savior and you actively place your trust in Jesus Christ to forgive and save you because of the precious blood that He shed for you.

Jesus Christ died and that is history. And most cannot refute that any longer. There is just too much history out there that has been discovered and uncovered. Jesus Christ died and that is history. Christ died for me, that is Salvation. Remember I was preaching on Lordship Salvation during a Table of the Lord message and how there are a bunch of false teachers out there who promote this heresy. Those of you who don't go about in the Church world may not know

anything about it, but I have taught on this before. It's just a bad philosophy that says just believing in Jesus isn't sufficient to save anyone. What the Lordship Salvation people have done is add to the Gospel. What they add to the Gospel is a requirement for people to leave the act of sin, forsake the sinful world, and cease from sinful bad habits to be saved. They require you, me, to commit to changing our sinful ways. All they are reformers. They want to reform us as a prerequisite to placing our faith in Christ to be born again. They want to form us first to be born from above, if you think about it. Well, my bible says it is the other way around. I don't know what your Bible says but mine says it is the other way around. Being born from above comes first and then transformation, not the other way around. Reformation is brought on by manmade traditions. They will change you and then you are okay. You're worthy enough to be saved. It's a lie. It's not biblical to teach anyone that they must first reform before they can be born by the Spirit of God. It is blasphemy in my book.

These same preachers (and some popular ones) removed the importance of Jesus' literal physical blood. That is what they have done. But when you understand the doctrine, I hate to even call it that, but when you understand what the scriptures say about the blood of Jesus Christ, it totally blows up their Lordship Salvation to smithereens. It is Christ precious literal blood that washes our sins, that removes our sins and not some kind of commitment on our part to cleanse our own ways, turn over a new leaf.

In the Old Testament, God required the high priest to kill a male lamb. It must be a perfect unblemished lamb which pictured Christ—of things to come, which in our time has already happened—and to apply that lamb's blood to the mercy seat in the Holy Place. There was no requirement or stipulation in the Old Testament that the Israelites cease from sinful bad habits in order for the lamb's blood on the mercy seat, seen in the Holy Place, to be valid. Show me that if there is. I can't find it in the Old Testament scriptures.

Now when the Lord brought the tenth plague in Egypt (before Israelites left Egypt), that first-born plague, the firstborn died. The only way the firstborn was protected was to kill this lamb and apply its physical blood on the door post. See, it wasn't enough to just kill the lamb; the blood of that lamb had to be applied. In Exodus 12, it says when I see the blood I will Passover and the first born was spared. Old or New Testament, it was the blood that saves, not the death. It is Jesus' blood that saves, not the death only – which too many preach these days and leave the blood out of it.

In the Old Testament, it was not a requirement to give up your sins before the high priest entered into the Holy Place. And if you look at it, it was because of their sins that the high priest needed to apply the lamb's blood on that mercy seat in the Holy Place.

So, you see how ridiculous it is? How foolish it is for anyone to claim that sin must be forsaken in order to come to Christ for salvation? It is ridiculous. Like I said a few moments ago. It's blasphemous.

The entire purpose of this Old Testament story, the Old Testament Holy Place and the sacrifice of that innocent lamb and the application of its blood to the mercy seat in the Holy Place was to atone, cover the sins of the people for that year. Well, we have more than that in the New Testament as I preached before: Jesus didn't just cover, He removed them. I have given the illustration of a magician: he puts something under a piece of cloth (say it was an animal or

object of some sort). The audience is shown the object and then they put this magic cloth on top of it. When he pulls the magic cloth off whatever the object was, it's no longer there. It disappeared. That is what Christ's blood does for us. God the Father cannot see our sin because it's been removed when the blood is applied. When in the Old Testament did the people need to be reformed or reform themselves as a prerequisite, or even cleanse themselves as a prerequisite to the high priest applying the blood?

If you look at the types in the Old Testament, it exposes the heresy of Lordship Salvation or any similar message like the Lordship salvation one. Don't add, don't subtract from the Gospel record.

When Adam and Eve sinned, what did Adam do after they sinned? He went to gather a bunch of fig leaves up, sewed them together to make some type of clothing in an attempt to cover their nakedness. Did God accept that? No, He didn't. He rejected it totally and still today He rejects fig leaf religion. He didn't accept it back then and he isn't in the business of accepting it now. He didn't lower the standard. What did God do after He rejected Adam's attempt? He went out and killed an innocent animal, shedding its blood, providing skins of clothing for Adam and Eve. It was God's covering, not Adam's that temporarily provided what was necessary. That innocent animal represented the coming Messiah who would one day bleed and die for our sins, giving His precious blood to wash and remove our sins away forever. It was the blood that atoned for sin from Genesis to Revelation. Nothing has changed. The Bible proclaims the necessary information and the importance of Jesus' literal physical precious blood that cleanses and removes our sins away.

Hebrews 9:12, ***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

He didn't enter in an earthly holy place. It's speaking of a heavenly holy place here. Having obtained eternal redemption ... The one time that the King James adds words to the original, but it is understood to be that for us.

Having obtained eternal redemption for us. That is what Christ did. And after we understand that, and after we trust and faith in His precious blood and what He's done for us – not just believing in Jesus Christ but trusting. A lot of people believe in Jesus Christ but don't think the blood was enough to provide us Salvation, His death alone was enough. I'm sorry, it's not. Like I said, in the Old Testament, killing the unblemished lamb was not enough. The blood had to be applied too and that is what Christ did here. He entered the Holy Place having obtained eternal redemption. So, God the Father cannot see our sins any longer. And all Christ asked of us is to trust and faith in His precious blood. Understand that we are guilty sinners, a debt had to be paid because the wages of sin brought on death. He paid it. He paid it. And He asks us as oft as we eat and drink—and that is why I say you don't have to wait until you go to the elements to remind yourselves of Him and what he did for us. In a sense he gave us the formula; you have to eat and drink to survive, or soon you will be dead physically. And when you do partake in that eating and drinking, it is a good reminder to stop and remember what Christ did for us, for you and me. And that is what I teach. And I believe it's taught in the Word of God, not adding or subtracting from the Gospel. So, let's now thank him for washing and removing our sins away with His precious blood. Thank you, Jesus!

Come As You Are

Open your bible to Matthew 9:14.

I am going to preach on a familiar story I have preached on before but add a few more things to bring this story to life by looking behind the scenes of flesh and blood people. Try to imagine (if you can) and place yourself in the scene where this story took place. Let's dive in.

“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”

I'm not going to read Jesus' response because that isn't our subject matter in this message, but, He does respond to them. Then after this, we immediately go into verse 18,

“While he spake these things unto them [the disciples of John], behold, there came a certain ruler”—in the Greek it could be a chief ruler or a ruler who was first in rank; this person had clout, authority—“and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.” That is not our subject matter but the following verses are. “And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”

We find the same story in Luke.

Luke 8:43, ***“And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living [all her money] upon physicians [the doctors of her day], neither could be healed of any,”***

This woman tried all the natural means. In this story, we have the natural effort and the supernatural healing that takes place. Now, I'm not against doctors or hospitals. They have their place. Any Christian who tells you they don't is a fool. I think God can use doctors. He definitely can use hospitals as a source for how someone receives their health back from whatever ailment faces them; but there are times when all the medical expertise, even what we have now, helps very little or not at all. This woman had tried all the natural means to be healed of this type of hemorrhaging, this issue of blood she had been experiencing for the past twelve years of her life. We find the same story in Mark 5. Let's just start with verse 22.

“And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue,”—Ah! Now we have a little bit more information; a first ranking ruler or chief ruler of the synagogue—“Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians...”

Boy! I can identify with that. I have been to eleven specialists in the last nineteen months not including three different kinds of therapists and others.

“...suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse...”

I am not saying I am as bad health wise as this woman was. I haven't spent everything I have. I don't think she had health insurance in her day but I can identify with this lady suffering many things of many physicians.

What most people don't know is in the Talmud (a Jewish rabbinical book which has teachings and opinions) there are eleven different types of cures for hemorrhaging. I can't say with one hundred percent certainty this woman went through all eleven different types of treatment found in the Talmud for hemorrhaging, but, I am pretty sure these many different physicians tried all eleven on her. I've experienced that; you go to one and they say try this. When they are stumped, you go to someone else they ask, "Have you tried this?", and I reply, "Yes, I've tried that." And then they suggest another idea and so forth. One doctor after another, one specialist after another specialist. They had eleven different cures for hemorrhaging in the Talmud but nothing worked. This woman was in despair. There is no doubt about it. And when you read this story, put yourself in her shoes to try and understand the story. Having tried all the resources that were available to her, what was left? She was left to the realm of faith. In a sense, the supernatural. The natural didn't work. I am sure when she heard that Jesus was passing through, she felt the sense of an all conquering power. She faithed, trusted that Jesus had the resources that could make her whole again. The doctors couldn't. They physicians couldn't. It is a wonderful story because it shows that her faith allowed her to discover the wonderful resources that are available through Jesus Christ. She trusted with all her being, with all her heart and mind that somehow these resources of healing were for her. I mean read the story, go back to Matthew 9:20.

“And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:” and it reads, ***“For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”***

Now you could look at the story and you might even call her rude; how dare she disrupt Jesus' conversation with the chief ruler of the synagogue. Even though she was unimportant from a worldly point of view, she wanted His help.

There are two things that bring men and women to Jesus Christ: personal need and true genuine faith. When you look at this story, she had both. And if you continue reading this story, it was acceptable to the Lord Jesus. There were no barriers put up by Jesus. His love for us flowed through Him in this story, and in her case, faith had no barriers. When you put barriers upon your faith, it really is not faith you are operating in but sight. I hate that barrier. I know hate sounds strong but I hate when I put sight in the way of faith, in the way of trust. She didn't. And she had many barriers in this story, believe me, that were placed upon her life the last twelve years because of her condition. This is a woman who lived with and had a total grasp and understanding of barriers – but thank God her condition was no barrier for Jesus. His love transcends all barriers, obstacles that we face in life. If you read this story (because most wouldn't want to interrupt Jesus), not even the barrier of interruption was an obstacle for her.

Whether she realized it or not, that interruption—which I am sure wasn't planned way in advance—became an opportunity of faith for her to experience the love of Jesus Christ. If you read through the Gospel records, you won't find one story in God's Word where a person in need ever interfered with Jesus' ministry. He didn't look upon it that way.

There is another aspect to this story that I want to bring to life as we dig in. It is another fact of faith that we have to recognize (or someone who is a babe in Christ has to recognize, or if you are one who hasn't been saved by the blood of Jesus, they have to understand) you just have to come as you are. We can run to Jesus just as we are. This woman in this story had no other choice but to come to Jesus just as she was. And when you understand how Jewish traditions and the Law separated her from everyone, then you can understand that she really didn't have any other choice than to come to Jesus just how she was because she couldn't go to anyone else outside those physicians because of the Law. She tried with all her means to be healed using physicians with no success. Now she turns to Jesus just as she was.

Now, what do I mean by the Law? Go to Leviticus. If you don't apply what we find here to this story, you missed half the story and what this woman was experiencing for the last 12 years.

Leviticus 15 talks about unclean discharges from the body.

Leviticus 15:19, ***“And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days:”*** In the Hebrew, she shall be separated, for seven days, ***“and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.”***

Anywhere she lay or sat was unclean. If anyone touched her, they shall be unclean. You can't even hold her hand if she is sick if you are living the Law. Thank God we don't live under the Law anymore. She couldn't touch anyone and they couldn't touch her. If she laid down somewhere, it became unclean; and if she sat down somewhere, it became unclean. ***“And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.”***

Okay, that was good for seven days... tolerable. But verse 25...

“And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time”—I think 12 years is many days out of the time for that woman in the New Testament story who had an issue of blood—***“of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean.”*** What you just experienced for seven days continues in other words, no difference. So if their monthly visitor ran for seven days, she was unclean. If it ran a little over, she was still unclean. But what about 12 years? ***“Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.”***

So when you read this New Testament story, you have to remember what the Law required, and, they were still living under the Law. It was no easy road. It was bad enough you had an ailment, a disease, a condition, whatever you want to call it, but then you also had the Law heavy on you on top of that. For twelve long years, this woman really had no life if you think about it. What kind of life is that? For twelve long years she wasn't allowed to take part. Let's just look at the Feasts that happened periodically throughout the year. She couldn't participate in that. That is like telling someone right now, you have an issue of blood woman, and you cannot enter the doors of my church. So no fellowship among believers, among worshippers of any sort. That was taken away from her for twelve years. Not only that, she couldn't visit with her friends, say your neighbors, because there was a fear in the traditions and Law of that time that she might make someone unclean. And they looked upon her that way also, that she was unclean. You mine as well walk around with a banner saying I am unclean so stay away, don't touch me, don't sit where I sit, don't lay where I lay, I can't even worship at the Feasts festivals. Twelve long years. And if you understand the traditions that were added to the Law, she could not even have any family life. She had to live at a distance from them. I want you to realize the place this woman was at. It is a heart-felt story just reading it. But let's add all the background information to it to really understand what this woman was going through. This woman was longing to get her life back. This woman was seeking to get her health back. And if you think about it, here is Jesus Christ coming through. There was a risk; it was a great step of faith for this woman to even dare touch the garment of Jesus because under the Law. He would be unclean according to the Jewish perspective of the Law at that time. And knowing the information that we just read in Leviticus, what if Jesus flat out refused to see her or heal her because of her violation of the Law? Have you ever stopped to think about that? Don't you think that ran through her mind? Of course it did if you read between the lines, ***“For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.”*** If I only could touch His garment, the hem of his garment without being noticed.

This is a woman that came to Jesus by faith to be healed. Even today, unfortunately because of bad preaching and teaching, we somehow get this notion that we have to clean up first, we have to make things right, we have to clean up ourselves (like I mentioned before in communion message), somehow make ourselves worthy before we approach Jesus. How dare you even say that; it's blasphemous. Thank God our Savior calls us to come to Him just as we are. And because our faith in Him, we are ushered into His presence to receive His wonderful love, to receive His touch of healing or whatever our need is. In this story, He made this woman whole. It is His touch that makes us whole. It reminded me of the song, *Just As I am*, an old hymn written in 1836. The third stanza says,

*Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt
Fighting and fears within without
O Lamb of God, I come, I come*

Just as I am. That is how this woman came to Jesus. Her only thought running through her mind (and I am sure she rehearsed it with her lips) was how she was going to get close to Jesus when he came by and just touch his garment.

Matthew 9:21 says, ***“If I may touch His garment, I shall be whole.”***

Just imagine this with me. Have you ever seen those movies where there is no interruption in the movie but then all of a sudden you come to a part and everything stands still? That is what it reminds me of, how this happened because of the way Jesus responded. Everything came to a standstill and Jesus knew someone touched His garment. It's as if time stood still in this story. It's like watching a movie and the picture just stopped, freezes at that point and everyone is just frozen at that time and you are looking upon the scene. That is what I imagined happened. All eyes were on her and Jesus; Jesus walking through and all of a sudden Jesus stops and it almost seems, for the moment at least, that for Him no one but that woman in this story and nothing but her existed. She was just not a poor woman lost in the crowd. She was someone whom Jesus gave the whole of Himself. And it says in Luke 8:46,

“And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.”

The Greek word here for virtue is *dunamis*; a dynamic force or dynamic power is gone out of me. Verse 47 says she was healed immediately and His response in verse 48 was, ***“And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”***

You may say, Well that's a wonderful story and I know a little bit more about it now, I can add the flesh and blood to this story, but how do we make that kind of contact now? How do we touch the hem of His garment now, figuratively speaking?

It's simple. It's not complicated. By faithing and trusting in Jesus. You don't need to go to Bible school. You don't need to study theology. You just need to trust and faith in Jesus Christ. You simply need to reach out by faith. Not to your pastor, not your husband, not your wife, not your children, by faith to Jesus. In a sense, we must learn to touch Jesus where we are. It's that simple. In our weaknesses, in our afflictions, we must learn to reach out and allow Him to touch us with His healing hands. I am sure there are many that are dealing with all types of issues in their life. Some of those issues have plagued you for years. You've tried to deal with those issues, those afflictions with you own self effort only to find (figuratively) that your flow is still there. And you might think you've failed. You might not think you are worthy because of bad teaching. You might think you need to clean up. You might think you need to get right with God. However that thought process developed in your brain. You might think of all those things. But to touch the hem of His garment, we must simply come as we are in faith, trusting, having confidence that He can touch us back. Don't tell me it can't happen. I just read you a story that it did happen. And God's Word is as true today as it was 2000 years ago. He is looking for people who will trust and faith in Him no matter what. He's not looking for perfection before He allows you to touch His garment. He is looking for people to come to Him just as they are - just like I read in that hymn, *Just As I Am*.

Christ has made it so simple to be understood. But manmade traditions have complicated it with all its rules and regulations of how we approach our Savior. He is saying, Come as you are. Just trust and faith in Jesus Christ.

This is a wonderful story. After being healed, because they are still under the Law, I'm sure she had to go through the certain amount of days even though she was cleansed by Jesus. I don't really think Jesus cared one bit what the Law said. He healed her and this woman had her life back. She could have acquaintances, friends, family, whatever consisted of her being a member of society again.

For my ailments, even though I have used the medical world, I still pray and faith that Jesus heals me. I love to show off His healing power to a doubting world that thinks they have it all figured out without Jesus. But if you choose to use the medical world, that is fine. Like I said before this message, God is in control. But in the mean time, I am still going to reach out to touch the hem of His garment. I'll be the first to admit I'm not perfect all the time but that isn't a requirement. I live under the blood and He's the one that cleansed me and removed my sins so that is not even an issue. Nevertheless, He still is looking for people who will faith and trust in Him and will reach out and, figuratively speaking, touch the hem of His garment with their hardened mind that will trust and faith in Him. He is as real today as He was 2000 years ago. He's here right now through the Comforter. He's in your home right now no matter where you are in this world. His promise was that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He just wants us to keep reaching out to Him. That is what I am planning to do daily. I am His concern. He knows what I need and when I need it. He will see me through. That's what I'm banking on. That is where my faith and trust is, in Jesus Christ and His *dunamis*, dynamic power, dynamic force that still flows out of Him today. Hang on to that, claim it daily, whatever your need is and He will see us through. He will see us through.

My mentor use to say we made it through whatever year it was, well it is 2014 and we made it through this year also. We made it, folks. Now in the flesh there will be times we feel like we are not going to make it, but remember this woman's story, twelve long years separated. Well, Jesus didn't keep her separated from Him. She came as she was, not acceptable to the religious world of her day, but Jesus said, Your faith has opened the door to my overflowing love for the people who will trust and faith in Me. And that is what happened to her and it happens to us also. He's already proven that by going to Calvary. These are added benefits.

What Must I Do To Be Saved

This is the time of year when you hear messages about the Resurrection. You hear messages that lead up to how to be saved, many alter calls and unfortunately, the things you have to do to be saved. Friend, there are a lot of false prophets out there who teach that a person must forsake their sins to be saved. Famous false prophets and also not so famous false prophets keep teaching that damnable heresy and they really want to shove it down your throat during what they call this “Easter” week. It doesn’t matter what denomination or affiliation, from Catholics to Protestants, you hear you must forsake your sin to be saved.

Show me in the scriptures where it states that. Show me. There is nothing of the sort in the scriptures. Nothing whatsoever. Show me in the scriptures anywhere in the Word of God, Old or New Testament, where a sinner is required to turn from their sins. I have probably floored some of you, especially you new people, by making that statement.

“Well, that’s what I’ve always heard, we have to turn from our sins to be saved. That is a requirement.”

Again, show me in the scriptures where that is a requirement, that you have to turn from your sins to be saved. I wasn’t going to mention names but I changed my mind. I am tired of these false prophets. They might be right on some other issues but if you don’t get Salvation down right (because that is the starting point), then everything else won’t matter much. I am going to give you quotes from material that’s been written. So these aren’t my words, they are these false prophets’ own words. Everyone has probably heard of John MacArthur. He’s a preacher that writes a lot of books and has a fairly large church in San Fernando, California. Here is a quote from him:

“The life we live, not the words we speak, determines our eternal destiny.”

That is from his book *Hard To Believe*, page 93. Blasphemy, but it sounds all right, doesn’t it? He teaches the life we live determines our eternal destiny. My friend, that is a works-salvation message. I am not saying there won’t be things that you do in your journey as a Christian but you don’t get saved and stay saved by your works. You please God, you earn eternal rewards by those actions, but it has nothing to do with Salvation. And some of the best preachers have preached that over the centuries.

Here is another quote by David Cloud.

“A person who is not ready for the drastic changes which salvation brings cannot be saved.”

So what he is saying concerning repentance (and let’s use his words) is that you cannot come to Christ for Salvation unless you first intend not to walk in sin after you receive Him. This is what scholars call qualification by works. There are other names for it too. What it does is place a prerequisite for receiving Christ as Savior. I repeat, blasphemy.

Another false prophet (though he's not so famous so I won't give him the advertisement) teaches that a person must be willing to turn from sin in order to be saved. I've taught against this in the communion messages. Of course I also taught that misinterpreting the word repentance leads you down the road that some of these false prophets have journeyed on.

Repentance is not a willingness to turn from sin. It is a change of mind, a change of mind in turning to Jesus Christ, Christ our Savior for the covering and removal of our sins. They make the true meaning of being born again a process. It is not a process. A change of mind or faith are not two separate steps to Salvation, but rather, two parts of one step. You have to turn toward the Lord—there are no prerequisites, no special requirements—but have a change of mind (usually by what you heard and persuaded to be true) to realize you have to turn to Him with a change of mind that changes your heart. And a person who turns to Jesus in faith by what they have been persuaded by, their sins will be removed. So a genuine experience of any person who does what I just said has repented of their sins because they have turned to the Lord to have those sins removed.

Turn to Acts 16:25-31. This is where Paul is in prison with Silas and they start praising God. ***“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.”*** The keeper of the prison woke up and seeing the prison doors opened and drew his sword to kill himself but then in verse 28 we read, ***“But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*** Believe; the Greek word is *pisteuo*. They had a visual experience of what the Lord did for Paul and Silas. So what Paul is saying there with the *pisteuo* use of the word is since you had a visual experience of God's power, now ***Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”***

Where are any special requirements?

And by the way, some of you will cringe when I say the word believe. Unfortunately, it is one of those words where preachers just basically take modern definitions and don't use the original definitions for any particular word that is used in the King James. I use to believe the same thing; belief shouldn't be used there because *pisteuo* means a lot more than what I understood the definition for believe to mean. So what does believe mean?

To accept as the truth. But it goes beyond that because it also means, To have confidence in a promise or a statement. To trust; to have the utmost confidence in the existence in whatever you have confidence in. To expect or hope for with confidence.

So you are believing in something that you came to know about and trust what you came to know about with confidence because it is the truth. Like I said in the first definition.

When I have an opportunity to correct what I have preached in the past because I found new information in my journey, I will be the first to share that with you. The true definition of the word

believe (not necessarily how it is used today but how it was used back in the King James) is that you are going to basically come across information that you accept as the truth and once that is done, once that is set in your mind, you have full confidence to proceed forward, wherever that truth leads you or whatever that truth does to give you confidence with assurity that now you believe is fact.

That is what Paul is saying here, they said ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thine house.”***

Well, after that experience the keeper of the prison and the prisoners had, you’d think they would just rule it out that we just had an earthquake and look what happened. I’m sure it isn’t the first earthquake some of these people experienced. This wasn’t an ordinary earthquake though. It didn’t knock down the walls. It says, ***“so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”*** How did an earthquake unlock prison doors? So it wasn’t just a geological event. It was a supernatural event that couldn’t be explained away that happened when Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God. And they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. ***“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”***

No special criteria in becoming saved. But these pretender false prophets 2000 years later have come up with all kinds of different criteria that needs to be met, a checklist format to make you a candidate for Salvation. How ridiculous.

Now I am going probably tweak some emotions because this next person I am going to mention you would have never thought in a million years preached this same kind of blasphemy. And once again, especially this next writer and preacher because he had a lot of good afterthoughts once you’re saved and on your journey with Christ. Some things they get right but like I said, if you don’t get Salvation right, you’re in a heap of trouble. Everyone has heard of A.W. Tozer. If you can find a Christian book store, you will always find his five or six books on the shelf. I have them but he preached Lordship Salvation also. This is from one of his works, *The Best of A.W. Tozer*, Book 2. I am now going to quote from that book.

“In the Bible, the offer of pardon on the part of God is conditioned upon intention to reform on the part of man. There can be no spiritual regeneration till there has been a moral reformation.”

That is dead wrong. You cannot find that in Scripture. It is Lordship Salvation. It doesn’t preach that Salvation is receiving. It preaches that Salvation is giving on your part. I’m not talking about financial giving. I mean doing whatever you can do. Tozer requires, in his own words, sinners to reform themselves before they can be saved.

Romans 4:5, ***“But to him that worketh not, but believeth [pisteuo] on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”***

Not works counting for righteousness but his faith. Faith in who? Jesus.

Tozer expresses works-salvation. Reformation, education, rehabilitation can get no man or woman to heaven. That is what I am saying. That is what the Scripture says. And none of those three permanently change you for God, that is accepted by God. If any “regeneration” is going to happen, it is through the Holy Spirit of God through God’s Word, not works-Salvation, not reformation, education, or rehabilitation.

Everyone just loves The Salvation Army. And their charitable causes are noteworthy. I am not saying they aren’t but number nine on their official doctrinal statement list reads,

“We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.”

Now I am not saying we are not to be obedient to Christ, I am not saying that at all. But we are referring this in the context of Salvation. This is a lie concerning Salvation. Once again, it is preaching works-Salvation, something that we do to earn Salvation.

Some of you have heard of Ray Comfort. What does he say?

“If belief is all that is necessary for Salvation...”

Seems like that was all that was necessary for that prison keeper in the prisoners. Paul didn’t mention anything else and that is just one example.

“If belief is all that is necessary for Salvation, then the logical conclusion is one never need repent.”

Again, this individual believes repentance means to forsake one’s sins as a prerequisite to placing your faith in Christ Jesus. Folks, it puts a very heavy burden of departing from your sins, my sins, as a prerequisite to be saved.

Now let’s throw a woman in here too. There is probably no one who listens to me who hasn’t heard of Joyce Meyers. What does she say?

“We provide global humanitarian aid to the hurting people and teach Christians and non-Christians alike how to enjoy everyday life by applying biblical principles in all they do.”

How does one enjoy everyday life by applying biblical principles if you have rejected Christ? Because that is the category where “non-Christians” would fit. How do you enjoy everyday life by applying biblical principles but rejecting Christ? That one has me scratching my head. That, my friend, puts non-Christian believers of biblical principles (I am assuming the Old Testament principles and some New Testament principles) as a requirement to serve whatever god they serve but not necessarily believing Christ Jesus existed as the Son of God. It really opens the door to coexisting: “Ah, come on in. We can all coexist. We can apply the principles found in the Bible even though you reject Christ.” What kind of message is that? It sure doesn’t lead anyone to a change of mind about the Lord Jesus.

Acts 20:21 (Paul meeting with the Ephesian elders), ***“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance [a change of mind] toward God, and faith [pistis; hearing to be persuaded] toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Biblical principles have to include both God and Jesus Christ. And you don't turn from them, especially Jesus Christ, you go toward them, especially Jesus Christ. You cannot leave Jesus out of the equation.

These are false doctrines, making one's sins an event in itself to be saved. A change of mind or repentance (because that is the word most people remember) is not turning from one's sins. Repentance or a change of mind is turning to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved from your sins. That is what Romans 5 was declaring. They are perverting the Gospel, the simplicity of the Gospel, confusing it and there are many out there confused about it.

There is a very interesting fact concerning the gospel of John. Did you know that the word believe (in the right definition that I used it in earlier) is mentioned in John's gospel eighty-five times. The word repent is not even mentioned once.

Now the sinner who believes on Jesus as The Christ to forgive his sins has repented or changed his mind. The focus was not on what you are going to do about your sins. Their focus was on turning people toward Jesus Christ and He will handle your sins without any effort of your own or any prerequisite. We turn ourselves toward Jesus. We have a change of mind which leads to a change of heart—which I have preached so many times in the last year on what needs to happen. So He could wash away, remove our sins. By how? The precious literal blood of Jesus Christ.

The way Christians use the phrase you need to turn from your sin. Well merely turning from your sin is nothing more than turning over a new leaf. Which is a false gospel –which also, you have heard of this name, Perry Stone. I'm taking off the gloves to these perverted messages by these false prophets on this subject.

Go to Matthew 27:1.

“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders...”

Now circle that word repent. That is a different word that is used for repentance there. Meaning that Judas was only sorry that he got caught. His was a works-repentance if you think about it. He was repenting for what he did to Christ but he was not repenting with the mind that was changed about who Christ was and what Christ was about ready to do. See, Judas had a different agenda. And it says here Judas was only sorry he got caught but he had no faith toward God, toward Jesus.

Now it does say here when Judas saw he was condemned he brought back the thirty pieces of silver. And of course the false accusers, the Pharisees refused to take the money back, so Judas threw the money on the floor. Can you see what Judas was trying to do here? After the fact, he was trying to clean up his act and undo the wrong that he had done by bringing that money back. He was sorry. But I bet he went straight to hell when he hung himself and I am not nobody's judge. That is my guess, that he went straight to hell in his sins because he could never see Jesus, who He was and what He was going to do for him on that cross at Calvary. See, Judas had Lordship Salvation and he winded up in hell just as those religious hypocritical Pharisees. Man has always come up with or tried to come up with ways to include their own type of repentance. Judas is just a verification of that. He was regretful and sorry because he got caught. Now David got caught and his change of mind and repentance was totally different. He ran toward God and said unto thee God I have sinned. And he was seeking God's salvation to remove his sin. Judas didn't think that way. He thought because he repented within himself that by taking back the money, that would be the prerequisite for his sins to be forgiven. He was wrong, my friend. Dead wrong. Eternal life is a free gift from God. And people better stop trusting in themselves in their self-righteous ways or you may just wind up where Judas is at.

I'm sorry, he turned over a new leaf but that didn't not lead to true repentance or a change of mind that leads to a change of heart. Ceasing from sins is not repentance. It is changing your mind toward Jesus. I am going to get some people aggravated by saying this but giving up a sinful world is not repentance. Making a commitment (both Catholics and Protestants do this but Catholics really have this dominate their thinking, making a commitment) or surrendering one's life to Christ, which is a Catholic doctrine, is not repentance. Oh I got some of you just squirming in your seats right now.

Genuine bible based repentance is turning toward God by faith in his only begotten son Jesus The Christ, Lord and Savior, to have all your sins removed, vanish from the face of God. That very moment you become saved, born again, a child of God. You can never lose God's Salvation unless you deny His son. I'm not once-saved-always-saved but it is very hard to lose your salvation. You might lose your way but if you haven't denied Jesus Christ, that doesn't mean you lose your salvation.

Now once you get saved by none of your merit, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit will start doing His work in you and molding you and putting you on a journey that changes your life. And you will start looking at sin differently recognizing how ugly it is more and more. But just because you might fall back into sin or you might sin doesn't mean you stop being saved. I sin every day, some willingly and some unwillingly. When I do, I pray that the Lord Jesus alerts me to that fact sooner than later so I can run back to Him, the one who has bought me with a price, with His life and He cover me with his precious blood.

David in the Psalms kept saying it is thy salvation. Whose? God's salvation. It is in his hands. It is in His son's hands. It is the precious gift of God, I don't care what these false prophets say, and we have no part in God's Salvation except what I read to you in Acts 16:30, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have probably heard this next verse used and abused in many different ways. And of course these false prophets just grab onto this verse and take the confused on a wild ride with it.

Philippians 2:12, ***“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”***

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” I want you to highlight that in your bible. What is it possible Paul is saying here? What does Paul want you to notice? He makes it very clear. He said to work out *your* salvation. Not once here in the scripture, no matter what these false prophets declare, not once in the scripture does it say to work out God’s Salvation. It says to work out *your* salvation.

After God saves us with His Salvation, there is a lifelong growing in graces, some which I have mentioned before, the process of acknowledging the Lord in all your ways which will then direct thy path. It has nothing to do with God’s Salvation. If it did, Paul would have said work out God’s salvation with fear and trembling or work out the salvation that Christ gave you with fear and trembling. He never said that whether it is the original language or here in the King James version. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling in other words. Like I said, it is a lifelong growing process where all the graces in your being that are being delivered by the outside source that is now in you, The Holy Spirit of God and also through he Word of God, will direct your path in bringing you to completion. H will mold you, like I have said so many different times. It has nothing to do with God’s Salvation and what you do to first get it and then keep it. Christ did it all on Calvary. He didn’t need my help. He doesn’t need your help. He doesn’t need these false prophets’ help. He did it all. And it is because of Him and His precious blood, and what was promised from millenniums leading up to the event, that we are saved. Nothing else. He was our unblemished lamb. He was God’s unblemished lamb that we benefit from. He did it once on that cross and once only. Don’t let anyone else tell you differently. Don’t let anyone lead you to believing again in this works-salvation this Lordship Salvation nonsense and all the other things I have covered in the past. It is heresy. It is blasphemy. It is not scriptural and you can’t find it in the bible anywhere.

There is only one thing to say, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and His precious blood. Thank Him. Go to the table of the Lord realizing what a wonderful benefit we have that is a free gift from God without any of our doing. Who is going to do that for you? The only one I can think of is Jesus. So thank Him as we take the elements now for saving a wretch like me. I once was lost but (I am going to add to it), I turn toward you and now I am found. Thank you Jesus.

Bad People Go To Heaven

Open your bible to Romans 3:10.

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:”

There is none righteous, no, not one.

“Well, you have preached that you are righteous if you’ve been saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.”

That’s right. But as it is written, what is Paul referring to? Psalm 14:1.

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy [lit. stinking]: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

I have said good works do not make you right in the eyes of God. There is only one way to become right in the eyes of God and that is trusting what His son did on that cross, putting our faith, trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and not anything else, not any other religion, not any other belief system, not in your good works. Your good works do not make you right with God. Now I also said outside of Salvation as a disciple of Jesus Christ, Christ is going to have you doing good works. When you are giving the right way, that is doing something good because it is an obedient servant that responds to what Christ has asked us to do, lay up our treasures in heaven. It wasn’t a suggestion, it was a command. And if you lay up your treasures in heaven, you are following through on His commands. So you become an obedient servant, in that case, of good works for that particular act of worship that is a part of your life.

No not one, there is none righteous. We become righteous when we become bathed in the blood of Jesus Christ. How does that happen? By trusting and having confidence in Him and what He did at the cross; having a change of mind about what He did for your benefit, for the benefit of all of us, which leads to a change of heart. I have preached that enough. I think you get that.

Just play along with me and whether you are a Christian or not a Christian, you can still play along with me either way. If God would ask you after you died, Why should I allow you into heaven, what would your answer be? Think about it. For those of you who were taught correctly according to the rightly divided Word of God, that is an easy answer. But many Christians still believe their good works have a lot to do with that, of them having entrance into heaven. I’m sorry friend; that is a Salvation issue not a works issue. Our works do not get us into heaven. Our works will supply us rewards once we get there and that is why God wants us to obey His commands, because He wants to reward us. I have taught enough on that subject also. But what would your answer be? Say a person isn’t a Christian but they try to live a good life, and they finally recognizes there is a God and there is a heaven. And if he is asked, Why should I allow you in? What makes you think you deserve to come into through these pearly gates (if there were such a thing as pearly gates)? What do you think their answer would be? Whether you are a

Christian or not...Let's say you are a Christian, one of the answers could be: I never did whatever you taught was bad. So, keeping some type of Golden Rule like the Ten Commandments or something like that. That doesn't cut it. Or whether you are a Christian or not a Christian this answer could apply: Well, I always try to do good. Back to good works again. That is not going to get you in. And whether you are a Christian or not a Christian, this also applies: I try to live a good life. Strike three. That isn't going to get you in either.

See most people would assume that people that try to be good or good people somehow get to go to heaven. You can't find anywhere in Scripture. And you also find people with that kind of mentality are never sure if they have been good enough. They are always concerned about that; did I do enough. They just continue living life hoping that they did do enough and that is the problem. So the question is: How good is good enough for receiving entrance into heaven? Where do you draw that line? Are you sure of the standard that counterbalances your good deeds with your bad deeds? Whatever that standard is. Furthermore, for most people, it is dependent upon what kind of standard they are following. Say you are a Christian. Unfortunately, there is too much in Christianity that still applies a standard of the Old Testament Law. Well if you are going to apply the Old Testament Law as your standard, I got news for you, how much do you need to keep of the Law to have any hope ever to get into heaven? I'm not just talking about ten commandments. I'm referring to over six hundred commandments in the Mosaic Law. What happens if you miss just one? First of all, you can't even live all of them without failing somewhere along the line. That is why they needed animal sacrifices continuously. And eventually, Christ became our sacrifice and no other sacrifices were needed.

Now entertain me for a moment. Let me ask another question. I thought about this. Can bad people go to heaven? Think about it before you answer too quickly. Can bad people go to heaven. The most common answer out there might be, I don't think so. Well, let's look at it while remembering the question: Can bad people go to Heaven?

Luke 23:39-, ***“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.”*** Remember, Jesus had on either side of Him criminals who also were hung that day. And one of these criminals, these malefactors railed on Him. ***“But the other [criminal] answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”*** Jesus' response is really a mind blowing response. I'll tell you why in a moment. ***“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”***

Now you have probably read through all these verses and probably several times if not many times and you powered right through them and you stopped long enough to say at least someone recognized at the cross that Jesus did not deserve what He was receiving. And when he was hanging there on that cross, he must have heard about Jesus somewhere before his judgment because he asked Jesus, Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. He put his trust in Jesus. No matter how many times you read this it comes out the same way.

Let's look at this second criminal. Verse 41 reads, ***“indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds.”*** He admits, or is admitting here in these verses that he was getting what he deserved. Think about it. He was tried, found guilty for whatever he did, and he was getting what he deserved. This is not a good person, my friend. So don't try to paint him as one. This is

a bad person. And it goes back to my question: Can bad people go to Heaven? That is why I don't like to sit in judgment on anyone. I don't play the prediction game of trying to figure out who is going to get to Heaven and who is not. I don't know what is on your last breath before you have to meet your Creator. That is between you and God. This person does the unthinkable. Think about it.

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” I don't care how you analyze this, this second criminal was in no position to negotiate with Jesus. What do I mean by that? He had no opportunity from that point on to do good. He was hanging there. He was not going to come down from his cross and say, You know what, up to this point I have been living a life of just doing bad deeds. Now I am going to turn it all around and just do good deeds. Can I get me a time out? Hang me in about three or four days. I want to go and do just as many good deeds as I can. Then you can rehang me. Then I can have some assurance I can make it there because of my good deed. Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Well it is. He was in no place to negotiate with Jesus. But that is exactly what he is doing. But he was not negotiating with Him about works and doing possibly something good before he takes his last breath. No. All he did was put his trust in Him. This second criminal's time was up. He was at the end of his life and there was no way of becoming a do-gooder, was there? No there wasn't. He suddenly gets religious and asks Jesus for mercy.

This is the wonderful mercy that Jesus provides. If you read these verses, if Jesus was like the Pharisees, the religious folk, and believed that only good people go to Heaven and bad don't, He would have condemned that second criminal, and said, Nope, you lost that opportunity. Go to hell.

What do you think He was going to say to this criminal? If you read the Scripture, according to his own admission, he lived a life that was worthy of such an ending that he was receiving. Think about it. Put some real substance in this story. Think about it; we don't know what his crime was, or crimes. What if he was a rapist? Or a murderer? What if families or a family or people that knew what his crimes were all about and it affected their lives somehow were onlookers on the scene and they were waiting for justice to be carried out? If you were them, the onlookers, realizing now finally justice has come, how would you feel when Jesus says, ***“Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”***? Think about it. That didn't matter to Jesus at all. If you really think about it, if Jesus was looking just for do-gooders, people that do good, this guy would have never made it in. He wouldn't be in paradise with Jesus that day.

What I am trying to say is Jesus is not impressed with your good works if you think that earns you Salvation, salvation when you become saved and those works that you think keep your salvation intact. He's not impressed with it.

See Jesus knows what Paul was saying: no, not one, would ever be righteous according to God's standard. He let a bad person in. What was the criteria? Trusting in Him. The reason why He came and the reason He was hanging on that cross. That is what gets you in, my friend.

Back to the onlookers. This guy is promising a criminal a place in paradise. What if you were there to see justice and here comes Jesus, the self-proclaimed Messiah, announcing that this filth of a human being would be in paradise that same day?

See, He promised a person that day what the world didn't think that person deserved. And that is why most people don't take Jesus seriously amongst other things but one of the reasons why. Because you can't be serious. This is insane. This is why Jesus turned the religious world upside down. That is why they had to get rid of Him. They had to murder Him.

The New Testament implies that no one will reach Heaven by being good. I'm sorry, it just doesn't.

"Well, I practice a certain standard that is similar to the Old Testament Law or has parts of the Old Testament Law."

Well Paul in Romans 3 has something to say about that too. After he says there is none righteous, not one, later in that chapter he writes, "***Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.***" (vs. 20)

"What if I keep the over six hundred commandments of the Law. I'm not justified in the flesh?"

Nope, you're not. Sorry a waste of time. By the Law is the knowledge of sin. The Law didn't make you righteous. The Law just gave you the knowledge of how much of a sinner you were. And in the flesh, there is no way possible to keep all the commandments of the Law because we have sinners blood thanks to Adam. We have sinners blood. That is why the New Testament says no one will ever reach Heaven by good deeds. Yes, you can be a bad person and still get to Heaven. Now I wouldn't want to live my life that way because once I come to the knowledge of the truth and been blessed with that saving power of Jesus Christ and what He's done for me because I trust in Him and what He's done for me, and now have confidence He will keep me saved if I keep trusting and faithing in Him, I'm not going to want to go around and do awful and horrific things. And part of the reason why is because the Holy Spirit's in you and there will be a changing that is going to take place; a molding process being done in you. Less and less of the flesh's desires are creeping out and more and more the desires that God implants in you to get accomplished what He wants you to do in fulfilling what He has planned for you to do, what He has called you to do. And He will give us the strength to keep hanging in there and keep trusting in God and His word until the end. You'll have the strength to accomplish what He has set forth for you to do. I believe that with all my heart.

I understand that no matter the kind of standard of laws or Mosaic Laws or anything else that I come up with, I will always fall short of the standard that is acceptable to God. What is that standard? His only begotten Son and His precious blood that He spilt. I become righteous when I trust Him. If I don't, I'm unclean in front of God's throne. There is only one way, folks. Jesus is the Way. He is the one who gives life, both here and throughout eternity. It is through Him that we have eternal life. It is through Him that we have the truth. And that is really all that is necessary. All the other stuff will come along the journey.

And this is why we go to the table of the Lord; remembering what Jesus did for us. See that was also not an option. As often as you eat and drink, remember Him. Not just on occasion, not once a month, not just when your church feels like going to the table of the Lord that particular time when they choose to go. As often as you eat and drink. Jesus knew that we needed to sustain our bodies with food and water, liquid if you want to keep it alive. And He knew and knows that you have to do that quite often. When you do it, what a wonderful opportunity to remember what He

did for you. Now if you want to do it outside that, that is fine too. But just in case you forget to do it, or you find yourself too busy, it's not that hard to remember, well, I have to feed myself food to keep alive but why not also feed yourself some spiritual food by remembering Him and what He has done for you. He's died for you. He gave his life for you. He wants you to remember that. He wants you to remember to put your trust in Him because He did that, because our life will continue when our flesh body is no longer in existence, and He's promised us anew body. But the second part of that equation is He also included in His instruction to remember He is coming back. See, the job is not finished yet. The job and what He had to accomplish at the cross is finished but His commission is not completed yet until His return to do what He is going to do at that point. Don't only remember Him for what He has done for you, as He rescued us by giving up His life and blood, but also remember He is not through. He is coming for you, He is coming for everyone, He is going to put the last period on history and fulfill all things you find in the Scripture that we have been studying for many years now.

What a wonderful opportunity to remember. And what a wonderful opportunity not to sit in judgment of anyone going to the table of the Lord with you or if you introduce it to someone as an act that we can be participating in to remember Him. You don't have to be good enough to go to the table of the Lord. I repeat, a bad person at the last minutes of his life cried out to Jesus. Besides what anyone else would have thought of the act, He showed that He is still a God of mercy if you turn to Him, if you have a change of mind that leads to a change of heart of what He is about.

Thank God for Jesus. Thank God for the only begotten son of God who provides the only true way for our forever existence with Him and whatever He has for us throughout eternity to accomplish. I don't think we are just going to be floating on clouds and playing harps. We're just beginning our journey, my friend. And we are on a journey that never ends if you ever think about it. Not with all the toils and tribulations and trials down here. That has all been removed. Imagine doing what Jesus wants us to do without all that stuff that pains us, that brings us sorrow. I try to think about that on occasion and no matter where my imagination takes me, it still falls so short of what the feeling is going to be really like. Accomplishing and pleasing my Lord and Savior forever more without the trials and tribulations. Think about that. That is why He wants us also to remember that He is coming back. You go to the table of the Lord to remember what He did for you on the cross and how He has rescued you from damnation but also remember He is not done, He's coming back and our journey will continue in serving Him throughout eternity. And it isn't just for good people. It's for bad people also. I read you the story. How can you argue with it?

“Well, he turned good at the last minute.”

What I am trying to tell you is he didn't do it by good works. That is the point I am trying to get across. Salvation comes by trusting in Jesus. And keep trusting Him. That is why you put your eyes on Jesus and Jesus only when you go to the table of the Lord, because that is what really and only matters in our connection with Him, that reconnects us back to God the Father.

So let's once again take these elements remembering what Jesus has done for us and what He's still planning to do, which He has promised. Let's thank Him and praise Him and honor Him for He is the only one who is worthy of our praise. Thank you Jesus.

Striving Against Sin

We are going to go to a verse that Christians quite often like to use concerning what you need to do against sin. They use this verse twisting the scriptures, taking it out of context, and develop their own attack on yours and my sin, our sins.

Hebrews 12:4, ***“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”***

Anyone that has been a Christian long enough has either read this verse multiple times, or heard someone preach on it, or heard someone tell you that you must strive against sin.

“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” What does that mean? I want you to notice something about this verse. It does not read, Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against *your* sin, does it? No. So the striving against our own sin, the way it is preached and written about, the way it is understood, striving against their own sin, does it somewhere come to the point of drawing blood? How many of you have reached that point? I sure haven't.

Now let's look at the context and try and understand some kind of meaning from that passage without twisting the scriptures, without coming up with some private interpretation that leads man astray into some cockamamie doctrine of 'we have to strive against our sin' and all the ways they recommend doing that.

In the original writings, there were no chapters and verses. Both Chapters 11 and 12 are really the context, but let's start at verse 1.

Hebrews 12:1, ***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside [or put away] every weight [burden, hindrances, or encumbrances], and the sin which doth so easily beset us...”***

I've preached on this before, but I want to add to it now. And the way I preached it before can still be applied. You know what hinders you, you know what becomes burdensome to you, you know what encumbrances it creates in your life. I can't answer that question for you but this verse and verse 4 has a lot larger meaning than only about you, even though it is about you. I am now going to present it from a different approach than is preached out there, showing the certain way in how it relates to you.

“...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience [or endurance] the race that is set before us.” Things that will slow you down which trip you up so easily, put them away because you don't want anything to hinder what you do for the cause of Christ. It's that plain and simple. ***“Looking unto Jesus,”*** or keep your attention on Jesus, ***“the author and finisher of the faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners...”*** Endured such contradiction of sinners, keep that fresh in your memory. ***“...against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”***

As I pointed out already, this verse and verse 4 are not talking about our own sins. If you really think about it, we have sins every day of our life. But if we have our trust and confidence in God who is the remover of our sins through His son Jesus Christ, we need to get over that. What this is really referring to is persecution – and persecution will come in different degrees, my friend. Not all persecution will draw blood in other words. It has to do with persecution. What type of persecution? (This is what you must remember.) The sin of others. And who should we consider when we come under persecution, no matter what degree that persecution comes in, no matter what form it takes? Well it says right here in verse 3, ***“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”*** This has to do with sinners against us. The sinful things they do or the sinful acts they commit against us just as they did against Christ.

Now when we read chapter 11, we find all those saints, some resisting unto the shedding of blood—and not because they had some besetting sin in their life. It was because of the sin of others, the sin against them by others.

Hebrews 11:36, ***“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented...”*** Remember, verse 1 of Chapter 12 said, ***“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses”***. They had everything going against them if you really think about it because they were God’s instrument. But they laid aside every weight, every hindrance, every burden and the sin which so easily beset, and they ran with endurance the race that was set before them. And we are really instructed to do the same. And it continues in verse 38 in Chapter 11, ***“(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”***

These saints were under different degrees of persecution and the message is they did not give up the faith. They pressed on. They endured. I have read II Timothy 3 before; that those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. That is the good news of the day. Hebrews 12 and the verses that I read are not telling us, the saints (the believers of today, yesterday, or the future) that we are being chastised or punished for our sins. Christ was...on that cross. This is not about God playing the big bully beating us up, instilling fear in us. Everywhere in God’s book it says to walk in righteousness. And how are we going to do that? By putting our trust and faith in Jesus Christ. It is a Romans 4 message. It is His righteousness that is in us, His precious Son who allows us to have that righteousness because He paid the price to give it to us. That is why it is a free wonderful gift given by God. If you read through chapters 11 and 12 of Hebrews, it is really preparing the saints for persecution.

You may be saying, “Now I was hoping when you started teaching that you would give an encouraging and uplifting message.”

You should be encouraged that you were chosen to participate in this manner. And if you read through the rest of the chapter (verses 5-11), it talks about God using the sin of others to strengthen us. This is not a punishment of our own sins, my friend.

Hebrews 5:5-11, ***“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.***

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

And I can attest to that; that no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous. Amen to that! Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Just in case you think you are alone, that for some reason God has just selected you to go through what you are going through (whatever degree of persecution you think you are going through), Jesus also endured the discipline of His Father just as we read in verses 5-11. We are going to go through the disciplining of the Father. Jesus endured the disciplining of His Father through what? Through suffering under the sin of others. Highlight that in your mind. He suffered because of the sin of others.

Now this is meant to encourage us, folks, as we undergo whatever degree of persecution. Listen, you can be mentally unstable and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Mainly, the people I have talked to and seen go through it, it is a debilitating disease that you feel like you cannot even make it, not just the next day but the next hour. Now I am not saying that is going to happen to you for the cause of Christ. But I don't know how Satan and his minions are going to attack and who he is going to use. In some cases, and people that I have known, he uses others to breakdown a person that was involved in the cause of Christ to become almost a vegetable, not able to do anything for the cause of Christ. That is just one of hundreds of examples of what can be thrown at us. The obvious is if someone tries to eliminate your life and draws blood, however. But everything that leads up to that (and there are many things that can lead up to that) are numerous. This message is meant to encourage us as we undergo persecution, whatever degree it is, as well. Now Jesus went through the same thing. We see that in the same book in Hebrews 5:8,

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience...”

This is Christ. Yes, Jesus had to learn obedience. Think on that. ***“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”*** He learned obedience. So when you read Hebrews 12:5-11 and all that chastising that goes on because we are His children, we will be learning through our obedience by the things which we suffer for the cause of Christ especially when the sin of others tries to stop us, try to hurt us, try to harm us.

This is the Scripture, my friend. You might not be brought to the point where your blood is being shed at the hand of others, it could be false witnesses, accusers, it could be mockers, evil minions, etcetera. There are going to be times when people lie about you. Insult you. Whatever it is, I don't want you just to think that persecution always must be brought to the point of shedding blood. The scriptures say, ***“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, because of me.”*** It should be expected. It should not come to be a surprise in your life. People are going to falsely attack you, insult you, bring up all kinds of evil against you because of Jesus. That is just the way it is. If you do something for the cause of Christ that makes an impact, what do you think is going to happen? Satan and his minions go to work behind the scenes to direct his foot soldiers to try to stop your voice, to try to stop your actions, to try and stop bringing others to a change of mind about Jesus Christ.

I know it is not easy when we find people—and it could even be loved ones, family members—lying about you, accusing you, involved in character assassination, doing what they must do to stop you. What is the message? We have to lay aside every weight; we can't let it distract us. If we allow it, I guarantee you it will hinder us and may bring you to the point you feel like giving up. I don't think you should take anything personal. I keep telling that to myself. Why? Because it is Jesus who they are really attacking.

So I just wanted to point out to those who might be somewhat confused concerning verse 4, trying to figure out how to strive against the sin in their life, this has nothing to do with the sins of your life, my friend, whatever those are. This has everything to do with the sins against you committed by others. Keep everything in context. Keep in context what Chapter 11 lays down; how these people went through what they went through prior to Chapter 12 starting. They experienced different degrees of persecution, but they didn't let it slow them down. They kept pushing forward. Verse 39 reads, ***“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise,”*** but we can. The Promise hadn't come yet; that was Christ. ***“God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect [become complete].”***

My friend, we have so much more to go compare to Old Testament saints. We have Jesus that came, that went, and said He is going to come back again. In the meantime, He sent His Comforter, the Holy Spirit to lift us up, to see us through, to get us through. Quit being bogged down by your sins. Yes, I don't condone sin. But in this context, don't let those sins become a burden. Don't let those sins become a weight that just burdens you down and hinders you for the cause of Christ. The sin that is referred to herein verse 4 is not your sins or my sins, it is the sins committed against us because of what we do in the name of Jesus Christ. ***“You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”*** What kind of sin? The sin of others that are committed against you because of the cause of Christ. Most people think Paul wrote Hebrews. Whoever wrote Hebrews was reminding these people that, “Hey, this is nothing new. Look at your history and what other heroes of faith have gone through; how they were persecuted to bring and have faith in God, to be an example of what true love of God, trusting God, looks like through the eyes and life of a hero of faith.”

I will not let the Christian world attack you and beat you down, because of whatever besetting sin bothers you, and use this verse as their spiritual 2x4 out of context. This has everything to do with the sins of others committed against you to tempt you to give up. Don't, because just as God used those ancient saints and His only begotten Son to bring Him to the point of obedience, He will do

the same to us. In other words, another testing ground if you think about it, to see if we are going to be faithful even though we are going to be tested because of the sin of others who are going to try to put an end to our lives, or an end to our message. If God didn't love us—and this is the hard part for me to even digest sometimes—He would stop this all from happening. Well, if we are going to say that, then He must not have loved his Son either. But we know just the opposite of that. So, keep pressing on.

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward”—and this is our lively hope— “it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing [swell] up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”

And it goes on to forewarn about what to avoid and look out for. You can read the rest of the Chapter but verse 28 wraps up by saying, *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”* And then right into chapter 13, *“Let brotherly love continue.”* There is no greater expression of brotherly love than giving the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan will try to end the message any way he can, put a stop to it any way he can including others who will try to put a stop to it, and that is the sin committed by others that is referred to in verse 4. So, stop misapplying these verses. Keep this verse in context, folks.

Depart From Me

Open your bible to Matthew 7:13-23.

I've come against the Lordship Salvation and all similar doctrines that preach you have to "repent" in order to be saved and all the other junk attached to it that places works on an equal plane with Christ's redemptive work. I've come against it and I have come against it hard. It is a damnable doctrine that places man on an equal playing field with Christ (there is no other way to look at it); thinking that your filthy rags, labeled as works, could ever meet a requirement by God to make you right with God. It just cannot be done. The Law was given to show how short, not by an inch or two, by miles we fall short in fulfilling any part of that Law where we can say and present to God, "Look what I've done. I've kept this law, I've kept that law." And I have said many times that there are over six hundred rules and regulations and commandments in the Law of God, not just the first ten. Most can't even keep the first ten. So I have come hard against this false doctrine that tries to substitute works, like I said, for the redemptive work that Christ did, the spilling of his blood for our sake, for our benefit, that rescued us from darkness. It is only through Him, by Him that we are saved from that darkness.

Now, let's start with verse 13. And this is just a continuation of Jesus' teaching.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate:"

Now according to the religious self-righteous individuals, that isn't so easy. There are too many things you must accomplish on that spiritual checklist, otherwise, you won't be able to enter into that straight gate. I guarantee you they are the ones who won't be able to enter into the straight gate because they substituted their list of things you have to do, and they want to say "in the spiritual sense," for your entrance into heaven.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in threath:"

Now everyone who reads this including Christians, mostly Christians, will say, "Those heathens don't follow the commandments of God." Now do I have anything against the commandments of God? No. Jesus laid out two that we should keep. Love God. You cannot do that and not enter the kingdom of heaven. And love one another. I've preached on it enough that you already knew that if you've been around for a while. But a lot of self righteous Christians with their nose up in the air are looking at other (what they call) "carnal Christians". Well heck, the Corinthians were carnal Christians. They were babes. Paul calls them babes several times; those who haven't entered into maturity. And it could take years to do that. And let me tell you right now, Joe Cortes and anyone that is candidly honest with themselves will admit that they still have some carnality they have to deal with on a daily basis. And it is probably going to be that way until He takes me home, or comes back for me. Hopefully there will be less of that He has to deal with, but it is still there. I was born with sinners blood. Now I've been rescued by the blood of Jesus Christ and I have had a spiritual transfusion, but that old man is still there too. We have competing blood. Now, I almost don't like to say competing blood because I think the Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ is more

than a match for my sinners blood, but nevertheless, it's still there. I still have to deal with it. Nah, correction, He still has to deal with it. He's the one that traineth me. He's the one that traineth you. I've said many times and I will say it again, we are a work in progress.

"...and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therat:"

Now like I said, a lot of these Christians will point their fingers and say the heathen, the follower of iniquity is what Jesus was referring to. Yes, but not the only thing. I want to add to that list professing Christians. And I will show you why in a minute when I get to the verse. Professing Christians can be added to that list of that broad way that leadeth to destruction.

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,"

In other words, it means to get to the kingdom of heaven, to get to the kingdom that God has promised all of us—which includes eternal life in that kingdom—there is only a certain way and path that allows you the entrance; not a big wide variety of options to get there, not a broad gate of options to get there. And that is what we see in today's world, "Well, there is more than one way to get to heaven." No, there is not. There is only one way and that is why it is straight, that is why it is narrow, because there is only that option. The broad way allows you to have all these options, the smorgasbord of possible eternal life and how to get there or whatever heaven is to you—including I just have to be good enough, my good deeds have to outweigh my bad deeds. Deeds (period), whether good or bad, do not get you into heaven. Sorry to burst your bubble. They do not get you to heaven. That is Lordship Salvation garbage and its variations that is preached...and it is not just in one denomination. It's penetrated its poison in all the denominations. And it is up to pastors and teachers of God's Word to have enough gonads to resist that temptation, do their homework, do their studies, and come to the realization that what Christ has asked us to do is change our mind about Him and what He has provided us; understanding that he is the only way, it is only through that gate, as narrow as it is, it is still the only way to get to heaven, and live your eternal life in the presence of God and Christ forever. Everything else is a false doctrine preached by false prophets. That's it. Well I don't believe that. That is your option. But know why you don't believe it. If you cannot spiritually discern the reasons why you believe what you believe, at least come up with some logical conclusion why you believe what you believe and not just based on "this is my opinion". Opinion based on what? It's like the old saying—I can't say what it really says—opinions are like rear ends. You can fill in the gaps. I'll give you a clue, "A" "H". Opinions are like rear ends, everybody has one. But not everyone is God. Only Jesus and it is only His opinion that matters, not yours, not mine, His. So what is His opinion? What he taught.

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

And that is the really sad thing about preaching this message, a few there be that find it. We live in a time in the last hundred years where we have more population in this world, people coming and going, that fit all the thousands of years added up. And only a few will find the Way. Only a few will find the straight gate. Only a few will get on that narrow way. And you know what I think if you've been listening to this ministry for a while; some of that responsibility, a big chunk of it lays on the preacher, the pastor, the prophet, the teacher of God's Word.

Verse 15, ***“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”***

Beware of the false prophets. Keep this in context folks. What is Jesus referring to? And why are they false prophets? They're prophets because they are directing people not to the choice of the narrow way and the straight gate. They are directing people to the gate that is wide, the way that is broad, the way that leadeth to destruction. That is why they are false prophets. What do I mean by that? They are teaching a salvation that is based on something different than what Jesus said in God's Word, what He said you have to put your trust and confidence in and that is Him. “Well, I gotta stay saved. I have to do these things to stay saved.” No you do not. The only thing you have to do to stay saved is to keep trusting with confidence everyday you wake up and every time before you go to sleep that Jesus saved you. He spilled His blood, He died on that cross. He rose up from the grave, and He sprinkled His blood on the mercy seat of heaven to declare for the eons of time ahead, “I have paid the price for them and if they put their trust and confidence in Me, Father you cannot deny them that entrance in heaven and eternal life.”

I hate works but yet works are necessary. But it is not necessary concerning Salvation. Works come in after Salvation. I hate Lordship Salvation doctrine but I have no problem with Lordship Discipleship doctrine—though there isn't a doctrine out there that is called that. I am just stating what I believe what God's Word says. Works do come in play but they are for a different reason. And you receive eternal rewards for participation in those works. Giving is one of them. And it is not a choice. Matthew 6 makes it very clear,

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

This was not an option. And I have covered this before and it isn't the subject matter now. It was a command. This is something you ought to do. If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, a choice is not given to you of: Ya, you can sit this one out, God doesn't expect you to give ever. You don't have that option. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, if you want to please Him, if you want to please Him at the judgment seat of Christ where He is going to be issuing out those rewards, then you better get busy pleasing Him, period. And giving isn't just the only thing. But that has nothing to do with getting your Salvation and keeping your Salvation.

Lordship Salvation and similar doctrines like to combine the two and make them one. I'm sorry, that is just patting myself on the back and catering to my ego, thinking that I could do something to please God, to convince Him I don't need Jesus now because what I am doing now is good enough, my works, to give me entrance into His eternal presence.

False prophets preach the broad message and direct people to the gate that is wide, that leads to destruction. ***Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing:*** “Oh, they look religious. They look like little lambs. They're so kind. They're so nice. They're so gentle. They're so sweet. They're so compassionate. They're so loving.” They're so full of *you-know-what* because they preach a damnable message that substitutes works for Salvation and Christ called them

ravaging wolves. Wolves will tear you apart. You know what wolves also do? They hang around in packs, meaning, there are many of these false prophets running around. Their packs are their denominational doctrines and what they have to follow if they want to stay in the good graces of the denominational leadership.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

In other words what they produce. They are producing a message of works for Salvation.

“Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.”

Christ has called these false prophets out. What they are bringing forth is evil. Period. And I will tell you why in a minute, even though I’ve been leading up to it.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

No matter what they look like, no matter what they sound like, like I said, no matter how sweet, nice, compassionate, whatever their con game is, they are still evil and bringing forth corrupt evil fruit.

“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

That is the end result. It is something you don’t want to gamble on, my friend.

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

And this is why this message is not only disliked by the human element but also by the unseen element, because it comes against their works message and sets people free from the bondage of this damnable heresy and doctrine, which brings forth works for Salvation.

I repeat, works are important, works are necessary as a disciple of Jesus Christ; but, don’t confuse works as a disciple and what that consists of with works for Salvation. There is no such thing in the Scripture that you work for Salvation. Christ has done that for us; because no matter what we could have come up with throughout history, it would all fall short and be cast into the fire. Now that we’ve got that out of the way, let’s go to verse 21.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Now many will ask, What is the will of the Father? *Theléma* is will in the Greek. I made it very clear to you what the Father’s will is as it pertains to Salvation. Jesus says in John 6:40, ***“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”***

Or course, our Father's will for us does not end there. He also desires us to be His disciples, and with that, we deny ourselves, take up our cross—not our trials and tribulations, they will come with taking up your cross—but, take up our cross and follow Jesus for the benefit of others. Again, not to get us saved nor keep us saved. Jesus' cross was for the benefit of others. We can't save anyone like Jesus did, but in taking up our cross, we sure can lead them to who can. And believe me Satan and his minions will use human puppets against us because they don't want anyone to be lead to the true Salvation message and be set free.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

You mean there possibly might be Christians (let's just call them professing Christians for now) who won't enter the kingdom? Oh, they recognize Jesus. They say they follow Him. They might even say they love Him. But if they don't do the will of the Father as expressed in John 6...

What is the first thing you have to do to be in the will of the Father? Think about it, friends. Forget everything that comes after that. What is the first thing you have to do to be in the will of the Father? Don't deny His Son as the only way that can reconnect and keep you connected to the Father. If you don't get past that, everything else is a waste of your time. Recognizing what Jesus did is the only way you can be connected to the Father. Recognizing anything that you do as far as “deeds” go doesn't reconnect you to the Father.

Verse 22, ***“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied”***—underline that—***“in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?”***—underline that—***“and in thy name done many wonderful works?”***—underline that—***“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”***

Let's go back to that. Jesus is saying, Depart from me you workers of iniquity. I never knew you. “But we did it in your name...” Who is He talking about? Who else does things in Jesus name? I'll give you the general term, Christians. You don't see Hindus doing it in Jesus name. You don't see Buddhist doing it in Jesus' name. You don't see Hare Krishnas doing it in Jesus name or any other religion doing it in Jesus' name. You don't see Muslims. So who is He referring to? Those who profess that they are followers of Jesus Christ. I just labeled it in a broad category, Christians. Why? Have we not prophesied in your name? Haven't we told people about You in your name?

“Well, wouldn't that be wonderful. Now many people know about Jesus.”

The problem is you added all that other stuff, works for Salvation. You might have used Jesus' name but you really didn't teach what Jesus taught when referencing His name and what He's done.

And in thy name, have cast out devils? Or demonic beings in the original.

“Well, you'd have to be a Christian (think about it) to have that kind of power to cast out demonic beings.”

I haven't gotten there yet in the teaching that I will hopefully get to some day, but let me tell you, demonics have the world so bamboozled in thinking good is casting out evil, that they are casting out devils or demonic beings, from Catholic exorcisms to Protestant exorcisms of various degrees. And demonic beings are glad to be leaving in most cases that exorcism takes place because they have them so bamboozled in thinking that just because they name Jesus is the reason why they are successful in their exorcisms—which means, if they're successful in their exorcisms, everything else they teach about their doctrinal viewpoints must be right, because if it wasn't, How can we cast out devils? You're being played, friends, by beings much smarter than you, who keep you in this mind frame that this must be the right way of doing things because we couldn't do these things unless we did it the right way. They're playing the ultimate chess game, these demonics and fallen angels, and they've checkmated you so many times, it's pathetic to think of how many times they've checkmated you into believing that you are right with God.

“Well, you sound like you are judging.”

I'm not judging anyone. I wish everyone was on the narrow way, but, the only way you get on that narrow way through that straight gate is eyes on Jesus. Everything else is fruitless. What He did is all that matters. What I do, except putting my trust and confidence in Him and what He did, is worthless.

And in thy name, done many wonderful works.

“Wow! They gotta be Christian. Look all the good things they're doing. Only a Christian heart would do such things.”

And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from ye that work iniquity.

“You mean prophesying in your name, casting out demonic beings in your name, and doing wonderful works in your name does not get me into heaven? If that doesn't, then what does?”

I want you to look at verse 22 because this is the point of this message. Because of what these false prophets have been preaching for so long, it leads people to the situation where verse 22 is really a sad verse. Some people put their whole lives into doing these kind of things just to find out at a latter time it didn't mean anything. It cast them out into the darkness instead of being in the light, the eternal light of Christ. Notice what these people were trusting in, this is the point, they're trusting in casting out devils and demonic beings. They are trusting in prophesying in Jesus name. They're trusting in doing wonderful works. But take a close look. Dig in between the lines if you have to, to see the problem here. Notice they are not saying, I believe in you Jesus and I believe that you died for me, and I believe that all I had to do was change my mind and put my trust and confidence in You for my salvation and absolutely nothing else. No. They're putting their trust in casting out devils, prophesying in his name, doing wonderful works. Doesn't that sound like most of Christianity today? The sad thing about all this is those condemned here are the Lordship Salvation and similar doctrine proponents if you really think about it. They are the ones who are condemned for their teachings and beliefs. And what they are doing is rejecting the redemptive work on the Cross and God's unmerited free grace.

Don't be in that camp. Get out of that camp as far as you can. Run away from that camp and put your trust for your salvation in Christ alone. Put your trust, be persuaded, at least to have the confidence and trust, by the hearing of faith, that concerning Salvation Christ did it all. All I do is focus in on Him and what He had done for me, and every morning and evening when I go to bed thank Him and praise Him for rescuing you and rescuing me from that darkness that so many live in. Unfortunately they don't even realize it because they put their trust and confidence not in Christ's redemptive work only but in these false prophets who preach a false message and a false doctrine that you have to trust Christ but do this and do that and the list goes on and on. That is why this message is hated in the seen and unseen world, because it focuses in on Jesus and Jesus only for Salvation.

Step into the light. I encourage you, listen or read all the messages that are available in this series. Start from the beginning. Inform yourself. I give details on some of the usages in the language and how it should have been applied to give us the understanding of what Christ has asked us to do. And that is a *change of mind*, which leads to a change of heart concerning Him.

Not About Works

Open your bible to Romans 5.

I've been reading a little bit of history, refreshing myself on some of the doctrinal viewpoints of why works have been included as a requirement for you or myself to obtain Salvation. Faith alone in Christ is not enough, faith alone in what He did, His works are not enough according to those viewpoints. We somehow must do something. Now we weren't able to accomplish that for approximately 4000 years before His arrival, even when we had the Law. Those Old Testament saints tried. Even some new Testament saints. The Law is there to remind us how far from God's standard we really are and how we can never obtain it through any of our human efforts. We cannot obtain it. We cannot be at the level where God wants us to be. That is why Christ, for one, had to be born into this world. And the way He was born, just the physical element, he had to be born without sinners' blood. I have preached on this before. [Table of the Lord (10/20/13): *Jesus Blood Was Sinless*] See, everyone else besides Christ was born with sinners' blood. But His miraculous birth and the way it happened, He was born without sinners' blood. So, He's the only one who can actually fulfill the Law if He didn't sin after His birth, which He didn't. If we think we can produce righteousness that is acceptable to God through any of our own merits, He looks upon us as wearing filthy rags, not a robe of righteousness, which Christ provided for us if we put our faith alone in Him – not on Buddha, not on Mohammed, not on your neighbor, not on anyone except Jesus Christ. There is no other option. There is no other way. There is no other hope. Jesus is it, period.

But again, I was refreshing myself on all the silly nonsense that has been out there and I just took it from the 1500's starting with John Calvin (which I am not going to get into) who twisted the scriptures because he didn't understand what has been taught here in the *Change of Mind* series; that it is to be in Christ and Christ alone, in faith and faith in Him, His redemptive work alone is sufficient. Then I looked at the *Formula of Concord*. I won't be getting into that. That was approximately thirty years after Luther's death in 1546 AD. Then I was looking at the *XXXIX Articles of the Church of England*. That dates to about the late 1500's to around 1570's AD. Article XXII of the *XXXIX of the Church of England* reads:

“XII. Of Good Works.

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.”

You could read right by that statement, hear me read it twice and not catch the problems with it. Let me read you something.

“This statement suffers from the same problems as others, the assumption of necessity is built into the confession along with the mistaken idea that if spiritual fruit is not visible, one has not been justified by faith.”

Justification by faith according to the scriptures means you have been made right with God. And the way these people in the 1500's and even people today perceive you is if they don't see some type of spiritual fruit that is visible and acceptable to them according to what they believe a Christian should look like, then you haven't been justified by faith, or, put another way, you haven't been made right with God. Why? Because you don't live up to their doctrinal standards.

“There is no recognition that faith alone brings justification and that a working obedient continuation of that faith increases with a degree of maturity, a progressive sanctification in the child of God. This is a perfect example of the illegitimate marriage between justification and sanctification. Justification by faith is the basis of sanctification unto holiness, but justification by faith does not guarantee any degree of that sanctification. This questionable part of the Lutheran Confession is built upon that misunderstanding.”

What is sanctification? I am not going to get into the full details but sanctification means you've been sanctified, you've been set apart because now you've been chosen by God. And you can't even get that far if you haven't been made right with God through Jesus Christ.

Let's look at *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (c. 1600's). It's generally used by Presbyterian or Reformed churches. There is a section of it that states this:

'XI.ii Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification: yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.'

Faith is claimed to be the alone instrument of justification, which is ever companioned with all the saving graces, but what exactly are the saving graces? Which leads to, what are the saving works? What are the saving gifts? And how many of them are needed? And how many of them are there to start with? How does one know whether a grace is saving? If those other saving graces are works, they may be many or few but how many would be necessary for one to be justified in God's sight? If they are gifts of some sort, how would a person know for sure that God had given all that one must have in order to be saved? Reference is made to faith accompanied by these other saving graces as not being dead faith, but again, this misunderstands the teaching of useless faith as presented in James 2 where lack of works or obedience is presented as an unacceptable manner of Christian living but is never made a condition of whether or not a believer has enough saving graces to really be born again. Faith turns out to be not so much an 'alone instrument' in this confession after all.

The New Hampshire Baptist Confession (early 1800's). Some Baptist groups use this confession. Let's just read Article 7 & 8.

“VII. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure

our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.”

Can you imagine if Jesus made it this complicated? Which He didn't! Read the gospel records. He didn't pontificate how one becomes saved. He went right to the point, made it clear. There is no confusion about it. When you add all these up, and there are a lot more than we are looking at now, you could walk out of a study on this particular subject matter and be more confused than you were before you even started; about whether you are saved or not, who to believe, who gets it right, and, which big bag of air says it the best so you are convinced that they *may* be right and you *may* be on the track of really being truly saved.

“VIII. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Saviour.

Of course, let's not forget (in case you missed it), certainly the proper result of regeneration may and should be holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life. Article 8, however, presents the standard fare of Calvinists' reformed dogma insisting that repentance and faith are sometimes given by God, something like a bag of flour might be given to a baker rather than being a personal response when exposed to and confronted with the truth of the Gospel.

Of course this idea would arise from a Calvinist misunderstanding of Ephesians 2:8-9, which they think teaches that faith is the gift of God rather than one's salvation or justification by grace through faith alone.

The confession requires more than simple faith in Jesus for eternal life as is obvious. One must, according to this confession, be deeply convinced, have unfeigned and heartily received Christ while understanding his three-fold messianic office in order to for the Holy Spirit to produce repentance, and faith, and inseparable graces and gifts. How many hours of instruction would an unbeliever have to experience before he could qualify to meet such a standard? No indeed, the free grace position doesn't walk in lock-step with such Reform dogma and this is thankfully omitted.

Free grace proponents are satisfied with the last eleven words of Article 8 and do not require a person to have a theological education in order to believe in Christ for eternal life, and or, be assured of going to Heaven.”

How about John Wesley? Everyone has heard of him.

“Wesley affirms justification by faith as the cornerstone of the whole Christian building, that such is without works of the Law, but they, the works of the Law, are an immediate fruit of the faith whereby we are justified. Wesley’s conclusion is, ‘So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth: we are yet in our sins.’”

And you try to figure out and wonder sometimes why the church is in the state that it is in. These are just a few doctrinal view points and statements but there are many, all different types of opinions of what you should look like and be like according to their view point of what a saved person looks like to them.

“Not only does Wesley’s statement express what he would desire to see as a result of faith, but it also presses toward nonattainable perfectionism... all inward and outward holiness. Further it seems to impose the requirements of keeping the Mosaic Law upon believers in this present church age. That Wesley expresses what he believes proves that he believes it and nothing more. Such does not argue for the truth of his speculation at all. Wesley’s conclusion is that the justified by faith believer is left unjustified, we are yet in our sins, if he isn’t internally and externally holy and if he doesn’t keep the Law.

Whether or not Wesley’s perspective and conclusion is correct is not determined by what the historical Protestants believed or want to believe, but by what Scripture says. Have we lost our compass?”

No doubt. That is an understatement. And why did we lose our compass? It’s very simple. Man cannot get away from this idea that they have to do something outside of just trusting in Christ and what He’s done. I don’t care how much you try to complicate the issue, it’s really that straight forward and that simple. Man is always trying to figure out what he can do to produce righteousness. Unfortunately, they don’t recognize that it’s unacceptable to God and it sure does not reconnect anyone back to God.

“The Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths, 1916.

Wesley’s stated belief and this affirmation of the Assemblies of God show that those of the Arminian bent essentially agree with the Calvinist position on the matter of requiring repentance from sin and subsequent good works as a necessary ingredient for receiving eternal life. The confession reads, ‘Salvation received through repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ,’ and gives references [Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; Titus 3:5-7]. Luke 24:47 refers to God’s plan that repentance be proclaimed by Jesus name to all the nations but doesn’t attach the intended result of national repentance to personal justification. John 3:3 has personal faith in its context but there is no repentance requirement in that passage or in the entire gospel of John for that matter.”

You don't see it anywhere in the gospel of John.

“Romans 10:13-15 is found within the context of Israel’s future return to the Lord Jesus as a nation with a near context of Romans 9 & 11 and the first eventual faith of those remnant nations of Israel and salvation of the nation itself, not personal regeneration. Personal repentance from sin is not stressed in the context of this passage. Ephesians 2:8 only speaks of salvation by grace through faith as does Titus 2:11. Titus 3:5-7 speaks about personal regeneration by grace and toward His mercy and excludes one’s deeds all together. This passage says nothing about repentance.

All this simply demonstrates that the Assemblies of God and Arminianism in general follow the historic Protestant position by adding repentance and works as a necessary component of faith. The outward evidence to all man is a life of righteousness and true holiness according to this confession. But such evidence only indicates the possibility of salvation, it is not proof thereof. Evidence can be faked or planted. Vain righteousness was the quality of the unsaved Pharisees and Sadducees of their day, but it proved nothing as to their eternal destiny.”

I can't read any more. It just makes me sick the little I have read to you. The older and more mature of a saint I become, the more I see what has been substituted falsely to people. I am not even going to say gullible people because really, we're all gullible because we put, to a certain extent, our trust in individuals that we think are being led by God. If you are of the lucky few who truly see the light of what Christ asked us to do, putting our trust in Him and Him alone for Salvation, rejoice.

I've said it and I'll say it again, there are works involved but it has nothing to do with Salvation. It has to do with things Christ wants us to accomplish here for His glory and for His purposes. And we as faithful servants of His, obedient servants of His will be rewarded just as promised, in due season, and definitely at the Judgment Seat of Christ where He will be handing out eternal rewards based on our faithfulness and obedience to Him.

Now, it sickens me, and I thought I was going to read more but I just can't go through with this exercise. If you want to pursue it yourself, you can see it. Maybe I will at a different time, but, I have been reading a lot of the history of where we get some of this nonsense from and believe me, it has brought me to the point where I have thrown out more than half my library. And I already depleted a lot of it because I just couldn't take having something like that on my shelf that totally contradicts God's Word.

Am I the only one out here preaching this? No, but there are too few doing it. And I sat this afternoon in my library, my depleted library, and I kind of had it out a little bit with God privately saying if this is the message that people need to hear, you really need to send more faithful people to make it happen. I can only do so much myself and the few that follow. But it is a message that needs to be heard. Unless God reaches his quota of how many he wants in to share eternal rewards with, unless He has a quota of how many he wants to be in that eternal destiny, wherever that is going to take us, then that is fine. But I don't think that is the real reason. The real reason is it has

always been hard to find people who don't want to follow what is comfortable, what is easy, what is pleasing to them. People want what doesn't call for much commitment.

If works gets you in, then this is the wrong message. If works get you in, then this bible I am holding in my hand, God's Word, is a lousy example. It's a misleading example full of characters that most of their works, to put it in one word, suck. Look at David's life. He would be thrown out of the church today, even Abraham, the so-called 'father of faith' by most. He would be thrown out of the church. Jacob would never even get in the front door. Joseph would have been called a fanatic; he's always gazing at stars, designing buildings and he's not focused on being holy. How about Ezekiel? He would be called a religious fanatical nut, a lazy one because he laid on his side so many days and lays on his other side additional days. That crazy old man that keeps making holes in the side of his house just to make a point and he says he does it in God's name. My bible is full of characters that if works get you in, they would not make it. They just wouldn't make it.

Romans 5:1, ***“Therefore being justified by faith,”*** being justified, being made right with God, ***“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** You want peace? You want to be made right with God? Forget about your works, even though you are going to do works, but that doesn't get you right with God and it doesn't give you peace with God. Then what does? Through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ that made us right with God. It is Jesus Christ that brings peace. ***“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace,”*** we aren't left out in the dark with no access, ***“wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience*** [endurance]...” (And it goes on. I think I've preached on this before, I think it is called *Enduring Faith*.) Verse 10, ***“For if, when we were enemies,”*** enemies of who? Of God. We weren't right with God. And it doesn't matter how goodie-two-shoes you were, you were still an enemy of God. No matter how many good deeds you accomplish in your life that even others admire, “Wow, that's a good man,” or, “Wow, that's a great woman,” you would still be deemed as an enemy of God. ***“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,”*** how? By our works? No, ***“by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by,”*** our works? No, ***“his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,”*** or, the reconciliation.

There is only one way to be reconciled and that is through Jesus Christ. All these add-on statements and blah blah blah that I read to you, and I just read you short excerpts, pontificating spiritual ____... (I want to call them something but I can't say it on air) ...confusing people about how and what they have to do to become saved and stay saved with, “You got to do this to become saved, but you gotta keep doing certain things to stay saved.” Some will even recognize that, yes, you get saved only through Jesus Christ but now since you are saved only through Jesus Christ, you, “Stay saved by the things you do after that point.” So basically, you get saved by Jesus Christ, but to stay saved now, you are now on equal terms and an equal place with God as Jesus is and your works are now sufficient to keep you saved, not His any longer needed. You can put Jesus back on the shelf. And now you can pull back down the Law and say, “Wow, look at me! Look what I have accomplished in the flesh,” or as some will say, “in the Spirit.” No, it's in the flesh, it's carnal. And some will say, “Look at those carnal Christians.” That is what some even in Paul's day did when he was communicating with the Corinthians. They were carnal Christians to the nth degree but, as Paul was addressing those Corinthians, those heathen Corinthians, as the Christians world

would see them, Paul never called them unsaved. I'll preach on that in the future. He never did. He brought a spiritual 2X4 which was necessary, but he never said, "You did this and now you're not doing this as most other Christians are doing, so therefore you are unsaved."

Now some people think I am condoning sin. No, I am not condoning sin. Listen, I am not that pleased when I sin. And do I sin? Oh yes, I sin. As I mature as a Christian, I recognized what I am doing a lot quicker and how I am living in the flesh and letting the flesh have its way, letting the desires have its way. And that is why I go into my prayer closet and start communicating to God, "These things are bothering me, upsetting me. Now should they or shouldn't they Lord? Let's work it out. You do the working, just tell me what I need to do through your word." Most of the time He comes back, if not all, "My grace is sufficient. I've covered it." You have recognized something that you're not happy with in your life and it may or may not be a sin. People don't want to hear this. Listen, I know everyone struggles with it. But I have never been so sure of my salvation than the last few years of my life. I was always sure of it, but I had certain questions, mostly brought on because of works. Even where I came from, a background of decades in one location, believe it or not there were still works involved. How many times have you heard, for the few that are here listening to me who came from the same place I was, that if you don't give you are not saved. I'm sorry, that is substituting works for Salvation. I'll tell you, if you don't give you are not being an obedient servant of Jesus Christ. And if you are not for Him, you are against Him. But thank God, He does not now put you in such a category and say, "Now you are the unsaved."

My sins cost Him His life. He isn't going to give up on us that easily. He's not with a clipboard and checklist, "You didn't do this today, so you are back in the unsaved section." That is what too many Christians would have you believe but it is the furthest thing from the truth.

I plan to continue this teaching, I thought I could get myself into reading some of these statements and these doctrinal view points and what established some of these denominations, but every time I read it, I just get ill to my stomach thinking that this is what has been blinding Christians from knowing the truth of what God requires. And there is only one thing from us for Salvation, **trust in Jesus**. Trust in the reasons why He was sent. Trust in the reasons why He died and rose from the grave, and that it was enough for my and your Salvation.

Now, this didn't go as I planned, but maybe that is for the best. I think most of you in-tune ones with what I am doing here can sense and realize why I couldn't even finish it. It's sickening. It's a spiritual disease that needs to be eliminated and the only way it can be is by putting a straight stick next to that crooked stick. You will realize quickly the right path you need to take because it will be obvious when the cards are laid on the table about what God's Word says.

No Add-ons

Open your bible to John 6:47.

This verse and those like it are some of my favorite verses in Scripture. It reads, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”** It’s that simple. Christianity has complicated Salvation and the Salvation message. Why do people think there is more than just believing Jesus Christ to be saved? Is there a to-do list to be saved? Is there some kind of works to be saved? Do I have to act out holy to be saved? Is there some holiness that I must be doing to convince myself and others that I’m saved? Is it because the preacher says so concerning all the things I’ve mentioned so far? The reasons – and there are more – but those reasons negate what Christ and the Bible teaches. I have been saying for years nothing else is needed. Jesus says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” If you add anything else to belief on Jesus, then you start trusting in that something else that was added on.

What does verily verily mean?

At various times in the gospels, Jesus introduces a statement using phrases such as “Verily, I say” or “Truly, I say this to you.” In the Gospel of John, Jesus frequently uses the phrase “Truly, truly” (ESV) or “Verily, verily” (KJV) or “Very truly” (NIV). These expressions all use the Greek word amēn, taken directly from the Hebrew word ā mēn. This word has different implications depending on how and where it is used.

In modern use, the word amen is typically used at the end of a prayer. It may also be spoken to show agreement with some statement or idea. This is slightly different from, but closely related to, the original use of the term as seen in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word ā mēn literally means “so be it.”

I have taught about amen before, so-be-it. If you amen something, you are really saying so be it. That is how much trust and confidence you have is in whatever you are amening.

The term is an expression of complete and total agreement. Placing the word amen at the end of a statement is a way of accepting, agreeing, or endorsing what came before.

Jesus, however, was fond of saying, “Amen,” before making a statement or giving a message. When used in this way, the word amen has slightly different implications. Leading off with amen not only implies that what follows is true but also that the person making the statement has firsthand knowledge and authority about it. Saying, “Verily, verily,” before making a statement is a strong claim to truth.

So, when Jesus leads off with the words verily, verily, He is not merely saying, “Believe me, this is true.” He is actually saying, “I know this is true firsthand.”

Since many of these comments are on heavenly, spiritual, or godly issues, Jesus' use of verily, verily is part of His consistent claim of divinity. Jesus is not merely aware of these truths: He is the One who originated them!

The disciples and others listening to Jesus' words would have understood His use of these phrases in exactly that way. So, when we read Jesus' words and see statements beginning with "verily," "truly," or some variation, we should recall the deeper meaning. Those claims are not only Jesus' opinion on the truth. Those are ideas about which He has intimate, personal, firsthand knowledge.

Now, this is good, but it is not the complete picture. I have preached on the so-be-it/amen. If you ever listen to *Was Joseph Imhotep*, I preached on the amen in god. This is not unfamiliar term used in the New Testament 2000 years ago. Jesus is also referring to himself as The Amen and he repeated it twice, "Amen Amen, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." He is reminding them of what they have already heard or knew in those times concerning the Amen god, I am what I am, the I Am God. He is just making a further declaration about himself in the New Testament, which was prophesied in the Old Testament, "and I say unto you, he that believeth [one's who put their trust and confidence in Me] will have everlasting life." Do you believe Jesus died to remove our sin? Do you believe he rose from the grave as was promised and prophesied? And do you believe he went to the heavenly mercy seat and sprinkled his precious blood, that he spilled, on the heavenly altar as a reminder throughout eternity of what he did and why the Father cannot deny us access to Him once again? Therefore, Paul says we boldly come the throne of God. That is only possible because of what Christ did for us. That is why you can't add anything else to belief on Jesus because then like I said, you start trusting in something else, that something else that was added on.

Go to Galatians 5:1. ***"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."***

The yoke of bondage he is referring to is the Law. We have been made free from that law. Jesus says I give you a new law. If you really think about it, the first four commandments in the Law are all about loving God. The next six are about your neighbor, your love for your neighbor and how he is to be treated. And Christ said in the New Testament, he wraps all the law into two things, loving God, and loving your neighbor. But he never said you would not be saved if you didn't keep the Old Testament law. He came to fulfill that Law to release us from that bondage because no one could live up to it. No one could live it out. There aren't just 10 Commandments. There are over 600 commandments in the Mosaic Law. You are a hypocrite and arrogant individual thinking that you have never, past, present, or future, violated any of those commandments.

So, ***"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."***

If you want to be circumcised, go right ahead. They say that is a healthier choice. Go at it. If you circumcise your children as they're born, if they are male, do it. But don't do it because you are trying to keep the Law. Do it for health reasons.

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

Go ahead and circumcise yourself or your children. You aren't going to set them free from the bondage of the Law. All you are going to do if you did it for that reason is tie them back into it.

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”

If you are getting circumcised to keep the Law, then you better keep all 600 plus commandments because you are a debtor to it. You are responsible to keep it to perfection. Impossible.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

In other words, if you're depending on living out the law of Moses for Salvation, it makes Christ work on the cross meaningless; Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you who want to be justified by the law...for those of you out there who think (still 2000 years later) that you somehow are justified by the law. “Whosoever of you who are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.” So, choose one of the two options. Try to live out the Law, be in bondage to it, or, be made free and not under bondage any longer and a recipient of God's grace. Those are the two choices.

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

Even trying to keep the Law... For instance, pick out any commandment, and think if you just keep that one commandment, you're fine. No. A little leaven leaven the whole lump. Putting it a different way, if you can't keep one of the 600 plus commandments in the Law, that one that you couldn't keep leaveneth the whole lump. You're out of luck my friend.

“I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.”

Just think about that. Paul was saying, I have confidence in you Galatians that you are not going to fall back into trying to follow the Law – if you even know about the Law in the first place. You became saved and now somebody is coming by and saying you need to keep the Law too. Paul is saying that he has confidence that they will not fall for that ruse. No, but he said ‘he that troubleth you’, whoever brings a different message and convinces you that this is the way you really have to follow and put in practice in your life, whosoever he be, he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment whosoever he be. God help the people who try to bring people back from grace, or fall back from grace, and slip back into the Law – whether for the first time in their lives or thinking that, Ah well, you know what I thought I was a free man in Christ but now I have to live the Law too because my preacher says so, or I read this book.

God help those people.

Verse 13, ***“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”***

That is what I keep on saying. There is nothing else needed. Stop trying to add add-ons to what is so simple in the New Testament. We started with John 6:47, verily verily. Put your trust and confidence in Jesus and you will have everlasting life. Do you have trust and confidence that what he did is enough and removed all your sins? Because that is what will keep you out of reestablishing that connection with God once again, your sins. Sin cannot dwell in the same place He does, at least not our sins. (I’m still trying to figure out why, at least in the Old Testament you see it, God allowed that sinner Satan in his presence.) As far as Adam-like beings, we are cut off unless we start putting our trust and confidence in Christ, have a change of mind which leads to a change of heart about what Christ did, which will provide you Salvation. It’s not anything you add on, not any of your works, not anything whatsoever. Nothing else is needed. It has always been that way.

Let’s look at Moses as an example who added on to what God said. Numbers chapter 20 is an example of someone who added on to what God told him to do. Unfortunately, his disobedience cost him his entrance into Canaan. Besides what some might think, Canaan is not heaven. This act of disobedience had nothing to do with his salvation. This story is an object lesson about adding on to what God said. This is about adding on to what God said in His Word. So, let’s go to Numbers chapter 20. Let’s read an example of an Old Testament giant and how he added to what God said.

Numbers 20:1, ***“Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation...”***

Well, that’s a problem. See how long you can last without water. You can go days or weeks without food, but you can’t go very long without water, especially in a desert.

“And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.”

Here we go again; it seems like the story gets repeated so often in their journey in the desert. No matter how many miracles God performs, it was never good enough. As soon as there was an obstacle, they murmured, they complained, they became angry and they attacked Moses and in this case Aaron also.

“And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?”

Put flesh and blood on this story. You would think after all they had been through, after everything they had seen up to this point in the journey, they would approach Moses differently. Moses, you

seem to have a connection with God. Can you go communicate to the Lord what our problem is right now and see what He can do about it? They never learned. They were a rebellious bunch of people who refused to ever put their trust and confidence in the Lord. I preached a message *Seeing Is Believing*. Some people will never believe no matter how much they see and that is their case.

“And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.”

They are reminding Moses of all the things he promised, this wasn't it. Why in the world did you bring us here? And on top of that there is nothing to drink. We're going to die.

“And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.”

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye—speak ye—“unto the rock before their eyes...” Oh, by the way, they are going to watch what is going to happen here. You are merely going to be just the instrument I once again use to show them my faithfulness to my word, and this is how you are going to do it. ***“...and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.”***

So far so good.

“And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels”—a better translation of the Hebrew would be you bitter rebels. I am not saying that I wouldn't do the same thing, but that is not what God told him to say. He just said speak ye unto the rock before their eyes. It didn't say speak ye unto the congregation. It says speak ye unto the rock. And what did he do? This is where he starts going in the wrong direction: He starts speaking to the congregation saying, hear now ye bitter rebels, ***“must we fetch you water out of this rock?”***

Yes. You should. You're right that they are bitter rebels, but you should. Why? Because God said so.

“And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock [not once but] twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”

See, God told Moses to speak to the rock. Moses added to what God said and struck the rock twice.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”

Moses added-on to what God instructed him to do. Whether he did it out of anger or not, it doesn't matter. And I can understand, because I am flesh and blood also. He was tired of this bitter rebellious people. Well, it cost him...and it cost Aaron too. Aaron could have said, Hey Moses, this is not what God told us to do. He didn't. He always had a cement mouth with the occasion required something different.

That is the whole point of this message. This message is about adding on to The Gospel salvation message. Don't let anyone including preachers tell you that you need to do certain works to be saved. They are just adding on to The Gospel message. Adding-on; is declaring openly that God's Word is not enough. You, literally, put yourself above God when you think you must add on to the Salvation message.

I used this Old Testament story as an object lesson, not concerning salvation but adding on to what God said which so many are guilty of doing. When you add to the faith instruction concerning Salvation, it renders faith null and void in Jesus Christ. Either you believe, and it is all what Christ has done, or you don't. There are no other options.

John 6:47, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

It doesn't say he who believes and does all those other things, the add-ons, hath everlasting live, does it? If you believe Jesus is the Son of God, don't you think He was spiritually in tune enough, smart enough (if we use the carnal view) to add on the add-ons? This is an important issue; you can't get this wrong Jesus. Didn't you leave something out? No, He didn't. Believe in Him. Believe in Him in the Old Testament, the way He outlined for those Old Testament saints to believe in Him, and in the New.

When people, Christian or non-Christian, think believing is not enough, they don't believe in Jesus and the Gospel. There is no other way to say it. Plain and simple, they are unbelievers. And that, my friends, is a tragedy. It's a tragedy I'm trying to avert as much as I can by bringing the Good News to people to rectify this tragedy with Hope in what God's Word says and nothing added on. That's why it's important that this be sent to a world and proclaimed over and over.

Verily, Verily. Amen, Amen. I say unto you he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. Don't add anything to the message. Don't ever add anything to God's instruction. It's not spiritually healthy. Learn from those Old Testament saints. I just told you the story of Moses. There are others. And don't fall into this trap that you must be baptized, do this, do that, or whatever to be saved. Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. It's that simple. Put your trust and confidence in Jesus. He is the Way. He is the only one who provided the Truth. And only through Him do you have access to the Father. And through Him we can boldly come to His throne. Thank Him for what He's done; sent His only begotten son to rescue us. No add-ons.

Bring Me Sinners

Open your bible to Luke 7:36.

“And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him.” A Pharisee wanted to have dinner with Jesus. ***“And he [Jesus] went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment...”***

In today's world barging into someone home is strange and rude. You just wouldn't do such a thing. Let me read to you some of the cultural habits of those days and why this isn't strange at all.

“The scene is a courtyard of the house of Simon the Pharisee. The houses of well-to-do people were built around an open courtyard in the form of a hollow square. Often in the courtyard there would be a garden and a fountain; and during warm weather, meals were eaten outdoors. It was the custom that when a rabbi was having a meal in such a house, all kinds of people came in - they were quite free to do so to listen to the pearls of wisdom which fell from his lips.”

That explains the presence of this woman. This was their custom. We wouldn't even think about doing that in today's world; letting people in that you don't know. Afterall, there was no guarantee they would be quiet, just sit there and soak in whatever was being communicated. But that is what happened here.

“...behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner...”

So, the Scripture points out right at the beginning of this story that she was a sinner. Most think she was a prostitute. So, do I.

“...when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment...”

An expensive item of ointment.

“...and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”

Part of their culture was not sitting at a table like we do now. They would recline at a table. They laid on low couches usually resting on one of their elbows, leaving one arm free to eat, and their feet would be stretched out behind them. When you read this story, this is probably the position Jesus was in when this woman sat directly behind him. And what did she do? She did something that the host should have done. This (not just any host, this) Pharisee host, this religious man hosted this dinner and invited Jesus to participate. Three things were usually part of the custom when a guest entered a house (especially when a rabbi enters your home even if you were one also), that you would extend demonstrating your courtesy, demonstrating you had manners and respect for

the person of this caliber who entered your house. I'll just share some of the things they would do:

“The host would place his hand on the guest’s shoulder and give him the kiss of peace. This was a mark of respect which was never omitted in the case of a distinguished rabbi.”

You don't see that in this record as being done. So right from the beginning, if you want to understand this story, this Pharisee probably invited Jesus with the intent to trick Him into saying something to accuse Him of blasphemy. He also could have been curious, treating Jesus like a celebrity, but showing no honor or respect. Oh, look who came and ate with me... celebrity-type mentality. But he didn't show Jesus the honor or respect for what one would normally do to a person of Jesus' caliber, even if you don't think He is the son of God and just a rabbi. That was a mark of respect that was never omitted in the case of a distinguished Rabbi.

“The roads were only dust tracks, and shoes were only soles held in place by straps across the foot. So always cool water was poured over the guest’s feet to cleanse and comfort them. Either a pinch of sweet-smelling incense was burned or a drop of attar of roses was placed on the guest’s head. These things good manners demanded, and in this case not one of them was done.”

And they wouldn't just extend honor and respect just to the rabbis, they would do it for close friends. But none of that was done for Jesus. So, it sets the mood and scene right there. But here comes this woman who stood at his feet behind him, this sinner, she was more than likely a prostitute, and she began to wash his feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Just right there she broke tradition. In that day, women usually wore their hair in a bun out in public. She let her hair hang down and used it as a towel to wash Jesus' feet. She kissed his feet and anointed them from an alabaster box. She did all the things the host should have done but did not. There is a reason why he didn't, and I'll get to it in a minute.

“Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet...” Ah ha! He didn't believe anything Jesus said about Himself. Right there it points out he was either curious and he wanted to meet the man and see what all the fuss was about, or, he wanted to trap Jesus by enticing him into some action or word that could bring some type of charge against him. He sure didn't see him as the son of God, he saw him as a threat. ***“...would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.”***

I am so fed up with the phoniness of Christians who cross my path. They have a great facade of holier-than-thou. Have you ever been to one of these churches that when you walk in they just check you out? They make you feel uncomfortable. You feel that you must go through some type of inspection period to see if you can fit into their little group or church. They care less if you have been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. They care less if you are a new creature in Christ. Or they care less if you are not a new creature in Christ as long as you act properly in the way they think you should act, whether you've had a change of mind or not. Just make sure you don't make any waves. I'm not saying you should make waves at a church, but you know what I am talking

about. The Sister Sal types. Some of the ugliest people (and I am not talking about physical looks) I've ever come across were Christians. Bring me the sinners. One of the messages I'll preach to them after a *Change of Mind* is you have been saved by grace. So, from this point on, don't start using a measuring stick to judge everyone else, how they should respond, act, and look according to whoever you are, because that is way a Christian should be. Like I said, some of the ugliest people I have ever met are Christians. You get some Christians who put on this holier-than-thou facade while they are in church but as soon as they get in their car and behind the wheel, they become potential murderers. Have you ever been driving by a church and once the church is over everyone is getting into their car in the parking lot and leaving? The holier than thou group will run you over if you get in their way. They will curse you out if they don't like the way you are driving or if you are walking too slow across the cross walk. They're a bunch of hypocrites.

And this religious person says, "*if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*" Obviously, he didn't listen very closely to what Jesus had to say or he didn't get all the memos that He came for the sinners who are lost. He came for the people who want to be forgiven and understand that only through Jesus Christ is that forgiveness even available that they seek. No, they had their own set of rules and laws that they follow, which they fell short. I guarantee you that this pharisee wouldn't not have even seen the light of day with this woman but wouldn't object to using her services at night in private when no one is around.

"You are calling out the religious people."

You're darn right I am.

"And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

That should tell you everything you need to know. This story contrasts two different attitudes of mind and heart. Simon and some of those people who were looking on were not conscious of any need. Therefore, they didn't feel any love and received no forgiveness. Why? Because this pharisee Simon's and others impression of themselves was that they were good people, good men and good women in the sight of men and God. Works. They were good people because of their good works.

Now the woman in this story was just conscious of her need. She knew she was a sinner. She knew she had fallen short. Therefore, she was overwhelmed with love for Jesus who could not only supply forgiveness but also the love she so desired in her life.

I've said it so many ways, so many different times; the one thing which shuts off people from God is self-sufficiency. That is what happened to this pharisee. They get this notion that the better a person they are, the better a man or woman they are, that they're not a sinner. At least not a sinner as much as other sinners who are doing those sinful things, with the attitude of, "Don't waste your time on me God. I'm okay. According to whatever your law and standard was, I am okay." You are lying to yourself because the Law was just there to show you how far you are from the perfectionist you think you are, or, the illusion that you think that you somehow have gotten at least close enough to fulfilling all the Law that is required to be in the presence of God, as someone who is full of righteousness and not self-made righteousness.

I'm sorry, the Law was there to show you how far you've fallen, how far the gap really is between you and God. Take Paul for example, he could speak of sinners, and which in his words said, I am the foremost. That is in I Timothy chapter one. The greatest sin of all besides denying Jesus Christ, a close second would be no consciousness of sin. But if you are conscious to it, it will open the door to the forgiveness that God can provide because His only begotten Son is the only one who removes sin. None of your efforts, none of your works can do that for you.

The last verse in this story, verse 50, reads, "*And he said to the woman, Thy faith*"—the trust and confidence you put in Me and what I have been saying—"*hath saved thee; go in peace.*"

What saved her? The trust and confidence, the faith that she put in Jesus Christ as the Savior. It's that simple. The story is a simple story, but it hits the mark, my friend. Let me read you this from an old-timer. It goes back over a century. He wrote:

"Thanks to thee, most blessed sinner: thou hast shown the world a safe enough place for sinners - the feet of Jesus, which spurn none, reject none, repel none, and receive and admit all."

That is the story in a nutshell. Bottom line is, here is an example of a pharisee who was self-sufficient in *his* ways of how *he* interpreted the Law, the rule, the regulations, and how that was sufficient enough for him to be right with God. Obviously, they were trained in some religious understanding of what was expected, but most if not all of those pharisees missed the mark. They didn't recognize and didn't see Jesus even though it was prophesied for hundreds upon hundreds of years that Emmanuel would come. He just didn't fit the bill of what they were expecting as a savior. They wanted to be saved from the Roman Empire. They didn't think they were needing a savior to rescue their lives from the life of sin – even though that was promised all the way back in the early chapters of Genesis.

I'm telling you my friends; religious people are some of the dumbest people I've ever met when it comes to the understanding of what thus saith the word of the Lord is. They really are. And the dumber they are in the word of God, the harder it is to crack that head with a spiritual 2x4 so they can wake up and see why they need a **change of mind** about what they think is good enough

through their efforts, through their works, their self-sufficiency. All that falls short. God's not impressed with it. And in fact, it's the very thing that will keep you from Him.

“Well, I go to church. I do this in my church, I do that in my church.”

Whoop-dee-do. I'm not saying don't get involved in your church. I am not saying don't do things for your church. Not at all. But that doesn't make you right with God. What makes you right with God is Jesus and what He's done. Salvation has nothing to do with what you do for God. It is what He has done for you. Period.

There are really only two camps in this story. The religious people who think they are good enough by their merits, their good works, their behaving properly verses a sinner needing to be saved by grace and have their sins removed. And He will do that for sinners because they put their faith in Jesus alone to do just that, recognizing only He can provide that, no other can including themselves. When they recognize that, the joyous message at the end is hearing Jesus say, Go in peace. Peace is just coming to the point where you resist all that other stuff you've been taught (what you should do, how you should act, and what rules to follow) and throwing it out the door, coming to the conclusion that you are going to put your trust and faith in Christ – not what man says you should do but what His word clearly declares over and over throughout the record we have in Scripture, which is that He provided the truth, provided the Way, and He is it. Then you can stop fighting against all those things that really have you in an insecure state of mind.

I have talked to many Christians who think they have Salvation, but they aren't sure because they don't know if they've done enough to first earn Salvation. Or if they believe they didn't have to earn it, they believe once they have received it, they have to do works to keep it. Works. You want to keep your Salvation? Every day, every morning when you wake up, remember Him and what He's done for you. That is what the table of the Lord all about: I put my trust and confidence in You. The Lord who saved me yesterday, still saves me today and tomorrow. And He is not a Lord and Master and Savior that lets go very easily even when I mess up, even when I screw up, even when I stumble. He is not a person who says, “I wash my hands of you, you're on your own.” He is there to pick you up. He is there to dust you off when everyone else will leave you in the dust. He will pick you up and get you moving forward again because He has a destiny for all of us. He has a purpose for all of us. We are not just here by accident.

“But I don't know my purpose.”

Deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow Him. That is all our main purpose is. That is His will for our life. If you are seeking His will, start by denying yourself, take up the cross for the cause of Christ, and be a follower of Jesus. I preached on this before, *In His Likeness*. In other words, what did He do when He was here? Obviously, the main reason was to provide a rescues plan for us and make us right and connect us with God again, but in the manner of speaking, it is bringing the message of what He did for us to others. I think I've made that clear over the years. I'm telling you right now, deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus. You will find that peace because when you are a part of something like that, you are finding yourself in a place where you are trusting and having confidence in Jesus. Without it, you aren't even going to make it halfway. You won't even make it to tomorrow morning, spiritually speaking, you will be a spiritual wreck. The

forces and dominions of evil that want to see you fall apart are great. Their whole object is to see that severed connection and they will do anything they can do to make that happen. But greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. And Jesus has already won that battle. He has already provided us victory. The way to seize that victory is to have trust and confidence in Him and Him only. If we do that, we can hear His word saying to us, Thy faith has saved thee, thy faith in Me has saved you. Now therefore children, therefore joint heirs, go in peace. Leave those religious hypocrites behind. Bring me the sinners and together we will go in peace, trusting and having confidence in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Please email us at email@teachingfaith.com if this has encouraged and strengthened your faith.

In 2 Corinthians 9:7 it reads, “God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Greek word for cheerful is Hilaros which means when someone is prompt to do something, they are ready in mind, with a joyful heart. In the Septuagint it also means to cause to shine. Today I am looking for Hilaros Givers who are ready and full of joy for the opportunity to cause others to shine by hearing, learning, and growing in God's Word.

Join with us today and participate as a Hilaros Giver. If you wish to participate use the following link: <http://www.teachingfaith.com/giving>

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