

ONCE SAVED

BEING SAVED



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN

BY PASTOR JORDAN BIEL

COVER being completely orange with a white life saver floatation device in the center and rope attached

FORWARD BY

Pastor

SAVED.

WE ARE SAVED.

WE ARE BEING SAVED.

AND ONE DAY WE'LL BE ETERNALLY SAVED.

By Pastor Jordan Biel

INTRODUCTION

SALVATION

Confused. That's where most Christians are on the topic of sanctification. How is salvation different from sanctification. I mean, we don't even use that word anymore. But maybe we should. Why? There are people who profess Christ as Savior and check the "Christian" box but don't have a desire to glorify Christ in their life. And on the other side of the spectrum, there are people who are bent on earning their way to Heaven. They think thoughts like "If I go to mass or church enough times, then I'll ____" "If I bury this statue in my backyard when I sell my house then I'll have the blessing of God and then I'll get ____" "If I knock on enough doors and do enough good deeds, then I'll get ____"

The problem with all those thoughts is that they begin with "I" Whenever you insert yourself as the noun - the one on whom salvation or blessing even is contingent then you've missed the message of Grace. God's grace was extended to you by God Himself. Jesus came to you in your weakness and loved you despite your mess. "While we were still sinners Christ died for us." the Bible says in Romans 5:8

First of all know this: God wants you to be saved! God wants you to accept the gift of His Son Jesus and for you to be forgiven of your sins. He wants you to come to personally know Father God.

Jesus speaking of why He came said in John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." ESV

I want to begin with that because if you're here today or if you're watching this online - if you believe that God delights or somehow takes joy in a cynical kind of way when people go to hell or when people are shamed, you'd be wrong. That's not who God is. God is love. PURE kind, love. He is FOR you. He wants the BEST for you! He is a Father who has amazing things in store for you. So know that going into this message. God sent Jesus to die for you so that you could be restored to relationship with Him AND enjoy Heaven for eternity.

THE INCREDIBLE VALUE OF YOUR LIFE

In business, the value of something is determined by the price people are willing to pay for it. We know that to be true in economics across the globe.

That being said, look at the price that God paid to purchase you! God paid the price of a son, and not one of many sons, but His only son. He was willing to let him die a brutal death so that you wouldn't have to. WOW! That means you are valuable to Creator God! You are LOVED by Father God in Heaven! Whether you've accepted His gift of salvation yet or not, you are LOVED by Father God. Christians, this MUST be your message - because it is the message of the Gospel!

I released a book called Truth And Love in 2018 and it's message was two fold. First, if Jesus Christ really is truth and the visible image of the invisible God, if He is who He says He is, and He saved you by His grace, why is it important to tell others? My second aim was to tell Christians *how* to minister to others based solely on Scripture. We took a hard look at how Jesus ministered to people and noticed His motive was always love and His goal was always reconciliation to Father God. In my writing and sharing of that book, I noticed that I was writing from a revelation of something God made so clear to me while I was preaching to a group of teens around 2008.

I was reading to them passages from 2 Corinthians, Ephesians and others about Paul describing his process of being saved. We noted that infamous portion where he says "I do what I don't want to do and don't do what I want to do" a sentiment we all can identify with. We'll discuss all of those passages in this short book.

God gave me such a simple illustration

In the words of my first campus Pastor, Joey Yergan "I'm glad the goal of the Gospel is forgiveness and the receiving of grace because if it was perfection, I'm done! I'm not good at being perfect. Broken, yup, I'm good at that!" When we realize our need to be saved and that intuitively we are selfish and self-destroying apart from Christ, that is the beginning of salvation. If you struggle with that and feel that you have no need for salvation, I encourage you to tackle this question within your heart, "Did God create man or did man create God?"

Did man create God as a way to just *feel* transcendent? Did man create the idea of God so as to create just a moral code or code of ethics? Or maybe the idea of God just came about as man tried to console one another after the death of a loved one. Or is it possible that there *is* a God and that He created all things, including man. It's possible that God did give us the Bible, His Word to tell us His story. His story is one of sending Jesus, His only son, to die in our place and be raised to new life all for this one purpose: to save us, his creation. He did this to reconcile us back to Himself. He wanted us in genuine relationship with Him - one of love and trust.

I encourage you to read on if you want to understand God's heart in wanting you saved and His plan to save you. His plans for you are "good" and they are "plans to prosper you and make you successful." They are plans to make you and I into a group of people who are in a relationship with Him. He wants us to know that He is God our Father & Creator and that He can be trusted. Sanctification is the idea of trusting God - allowing Him to be Him and us to be His people.

CHAPTER 1 - SAVED

"They will be my people and I will be their God."

God wants you to be saved.

Saved from what?

God, the Creator who put this whole thing we call "life" into existence" once said this to Moses, the leader He chose to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt "They will be my people and I will be their God"

He actually said this over and over in the Old Testament. It tell us His desire to have a people who are truly His. He wants a people who truly love Him and want to know Him and glorify Him. He wants a people who just trust Him completely. Our sanctification is the process of learning to trust God and His ways. It's the removal of thoughts in our mind that don't glorify Jesus. It's submitting them to the Holy Spirit when He says "Don't think like that. Don't be rude to them. Treat them as God's creation because they are. Treat them as a potential prince and princess in the Kingdom because they are."

So, what is sanctification? Sanctification is what comes *after* Salvation. It is the renewing of the mind that the Holy Spirit does in partnership with your will. And this is where much of the church has it wrong. So many have put the cart before the horse so to speak and demanded that unregenerate hearts get sanctified. I've seen many Christians blast people for their sin while never considering that until someone receives salvation, their mind will not yet be renewed to begin to think like God thinks. To demand that unbelievers need a call to holiness and need to change their ways is like demanding a teenage to play a G minor 7th chord before he's ever given a guitar.

I remember being given a guitar by my brother in law, Jim Popovich. To this day, it's gotta be the best gift I've ever been given. The truth is that I am able to enjoy creating music to this day not solely because Jim gave me a guitar but because I sat down every day to practice, spending thousands of hours on it, honing my craft. But I would not enjoy playing music at all if I had not *first* been given the guitar.

The gift of the guitar came before my commitment to understand it and learn how it works. The enjoyment of playing is in learning "What can I do with this thing!?" So too is the gift of grace. Jesus came to offer us grace - forgiveness of sin and the free gift of eternal life spent in God's perfect Heaven, free from sin, disease, pain, etc. What an amazing gift! Knowing Jesus is somewhat like playing the instrument that was given to me. Sure I'm going to hit some sour notes as I'm learning, but the more I learn, the fewer sour notes I hit and the more I play, the more I enjoy playing.

Following Jesus hasn't gotten old to me and I've been following Him since I was 11 years old when I was saved. This is the story of millions of Christians across the globe. Why? This is our experience because the Holy Spirit of God teaches us what it means to follow Jesus and He takes us on so many adventures in our following of Jesus! He enables us to heal the sick, love those who are hurting, give a home and a family to the orphan. He teaches us to care about what He cares about. He teaches us to love as He loves. He teaches us to join in the song of Heaven where God the Father is the composer, the Holy Spirit is the conductor and the song is all about Jesus!

So when I say "saved" what do I mean?

What are saved from? We're saved from two things. We're saved from our sins. We have missed the mark of godliness. We are born into sin the Bible tells us and if you don't believe that just have children. They don't insist on sharing. They insist on keeping. They don't naturally concede to others and defer to others. That's learned behavior. Parents have to teach children to be kind, to share, to not hit, to not be rude, to not take. We parents have to teach our children to show generosity, to love without condition, to be kind and considerate, to share, to forgive, etc. If you don't believe me, have kids. If you have kids you're either laughing or crying right now due to this truth and every time you've ever thought "What's wrong with my children!?! Are other kids this way? What am I doing wrong!?" LOL

God had to do something. He sent Jesus to us. He sent Him "into the world not to condemn the world but to save it." John 3:16-17 And He simply wants to be believed - to be trusted. "All who believe in Him will have eternal life."

¹ John 1:5-9 "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we

deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Jn 1:5–9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

THE LIFE SAVER

So here's the illustration I want you to see throughout the rest of this book. It's that of a life saver.

Explain it

The Criminal

There was a convicted criminal hanging on the cross beside Jesus at His death.

...

Romans “It is by grace you have been saved through faith.”

Simply having faith in Jesus as the one to forgive you of every sin and make you righteous - that is what saves you.

The rope in the pit ILL - you are in a pit.

Our minds are being renewed every day as we surrender our thoughts and emotions to God.

Born Again

There was a man named Nicodemus that was a priest who became curious about Jesus and the possibility of Him really being the Messiah. He came to Jesus in the middle of the night for fearing of being seen by the other Jewish priests who would often aim to trap Jesus into a heretical statement, anything that could give them evidence or probable cause to convict Him. Nicodemus was being drawn by the Spirit of God into truth. He knew there was something special about Jesus. He knew that Jesus wasn't just some crazy man

When we are saved, the Holy Spirit of God comes and dwells on the inside of us. Our very being is “born again” Jesus says.

Jesus uses this illustration, I believe, to ensure that we understand that we become a new creation, an entirely new person.

The reality is though that this new person has some changes that need to take place.

To assume that when someone gets saved and is instantly going to behave perfectly according to the Word of God is just not reality. Yes, there are times when God will deliver someone from a drug addiction or another substance abuse and that IS a miracle and that DOES happen. But for the most part, God renews us from the inside, we are born again, but then we have to mature and “grow up” if you will.

We face new challenges every day that test our faith. We face new opportunities to trust God and put our hope in Him. We face new temptations as we progress through seasons of life and as we are learning to trust God in all of those scenarios and life seasons we are being made into the image of the Son - we are being transformed - we are being sanctified. We are *being saved*. Once saved, being saved.

Paul says in Romans 5 and 6

I am saved.

I am being saved.

And on that day when I am saved.

We are saved when we confess Jesus as Savior - the one who died in our place!

Romans 10:9 “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” ESV

Romans 8:38-39 tells us nothing can ever separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is no power in hell and no ruler on earth that can separate you and me from the love of our Father God. We choose to live in that love or reject it. Period. No one can take that away from us. Our faith to receive this incredible love is our responsibility. It is ours to accept and ours to reject. We often want to blame others or even blame God. Salvation comes to us when we stop the blame game and realize that it is our sin that separates us from God. While God's love is always there, always ready to fill our hearts, it is us who walk away and sadly, reject God's grace. Maybe you've heard it said like this before ... If you're far from God, guess who moved. It wasn't God. God's love is consistent, more consistent than the waves of the ocean Psalms says. His consistent love is seen in the extended arms of Jesus who is always willing to receive you back into God's family if you've wandered away and rejected Him. His grace is unfathomable!

Only Jesus

Luke 19:10 tells us “There is no other name by which man can be saved.”

Jesus IS the way the truth and the life and He is the way to the Father. He is the only way to Heaven. Accepting Him as your Savior, *saves* you. God then invites you into a life dedicated to Him - a life of being saved - a life that glorifies Him. The Bible tells us that He is the visible image of the invisible God. If we want to know what God looks like and acts like, we simply need to look to Jesus. God sent Jesus to show us what love is, who *He* is.

Expound on the supremacy of Christ. ..

2 Th 2:13-14 “God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel...”

God chose you and I. While it's up to us to accept the call to forgiveness, it's God who voices the call. It's God who is our Shepherd who comes to find us and calls out to us ... “Come home! Come home! Let me care for you!”

CHAPTER 2 - BEING SAVED

1 Co 15:1-11 “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

While we are truly saved when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are continually being saved as we hold fast to the Word and keep our focus on Jesus. We are being saved just as in the illustration, one would hold on to the life saver while being pulled to shore. No amount of kicking will truly help as the currents of sin are simply too strong for any human to overcome with good works or will power. No amount of education will save someone who is drowning. The raging river of sin doesn't care if you're a doctor, a professor, a machine builder, an engineer, a farmer, a house wife, a graphic designer or extraordinary athlete. The currents of the sinful nature are just too strong.

This is why we need Jesus. Only Jesus was the perfect one who came from the Father in Heaven to die in our place and as we keep our eyes fixed on Him as not only the author but the finisher of our faith, we are being saved! We are continually headed toward heaven. We are continually going to feel the angst of this world, the sense of “we belong somewhere else... we belong with Jesus in His perfect Heaven”

So what do I mean by “hold on” in this visual? If you can picture it, you are the person struggling in the water. You know you are drowning and in need of help. Someone sees you in your pain and out of compassion throws you that life saver. You're saved! Thank God! You're saved!

But now, you have to put that life saver around your chest and hold on! You have to fully trust that it will save you. You have to admit your need to be saved by grabbing ahold and by continuing to hold fast to it. As the compassionate man pulls you to shore, imagine there's a good fifty yards to go. You must hold on. You can't simply remove the life saver before you're on shore. You will feel the current now against you more than ever before. The ways of the world are no so harmful and more obvious than ever before. You will be tempted to actually just let go because now there's just too much friction. It's actually a bit easier to go with the flow and let the current take you. But you know if you, it's certain death. So in humility, you hold on, you endure, you trust that you need to get to shore.

Shore represents heaven and the Holy Spirit will continue to pull you towards heaven every day of your life. He'll send person after person to share the truth in love with you. He'll often use someone to encourage you to not give up and to keep your eyes on Christ. He'll use pastors, small group leaders, and many more to embody that person on the shore, pulling you towards righteousness, towards truth, towards safety, towards freedom, towards heaven.

This action of the life saver being thrown to you and the pulling towards heaven can be described as one word: grace. The action of you grabbing hold of that life saver and holding on can be described as one word: faith.

“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith.”

Paul says it like this when speaking of grace and our need to persevere.

2 Th 2:13-15 “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first-fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” ESV

We are being saved as God's Spirit works in us to make us into the character of Christ. We are continually changing into the character of Jesus as we let God do His work in us.

2 Cor. 3:18 "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

We will one day be saved forever when Jesus comes in glory to take us home to Heaven to be with Him; we'll rule and reign with Jesus forever, forevermore worshipping Jesus in eternal glory, in God's very presence! To revisit our metaphor, there is a day coming when we'll reach that heavenly shore. There's a day coming when the struggle against sin is over! There's a day coming when grief and pain, loss and heartache fully come to an end. There's a day coming when Jesus will make all things new! When you and feel grief and loss, it's our body and soul's way of informing us that something isn't right here - that we are made for another place. When we grieve, our soul (mind, will and emotions) are feeling the pain of something being wrong.

Eccl 3:11 tells us that "God has set eternity in the heart of every man." That is why there are no atheists on their death bed. When our lives are coming to an end, we all discover the feelings of "This can't be the end. There must be more than this." And that's true! We are feeling the very thing God intended us to feel. That longing and feeling is placed there by God so that we reach out to God to find salvation.

God Wants A People / Our Exodus Story

We are completely saved when we accept Jesus as our savior. There is nothing we can do to earn it. We talked about that in our last section. Only God does the saving. It is simply our faith or belief in God and His Son, Jesus, that enables us to be saved. The blood of the lamb came before the Israelites could do anything to earn being rescued. The blood comes first. Exodus comes before the promised land. Too many people want the promised land and yet don't want the Exodus. Exodus comes first. First, you must admit that you're in trouble and in need of the blood of Jesus to purify you from all unrighteousness. Then comes the exodus - the leaving of Egypt - the choice to leave behind the addictions and bondage of sin and step out in faith in the unknown with God.

The Exodus of Israelites we read about in the Bible is their story from slavery in Egypt. This is a great picture of our Salvation. God miraculously saved them. God miraculously saves us. God uses a man named Moses to rescue them with miracles, even cheating death. God used Jesus who came as a man to rescue us doing the miraculous, even cheating death.

The wilderness serves as a picture of the "being saved" process, what we termed earlier as "sanctification" Again the Israelites are no *less* saved when they're learning to trust God in the desert. They are no *less* saved from Egypt when they're learning to be thankful for the mana. They're no *less* saved when they learn to look upon the bronze serpent hanging on a cross in order to be healed. All of this wilderness experience is their story of being saved. It's the time in which they are between Egypt and the Promised Land. We too are in between! We who have accepted Jesus as Lord have been rescued from the bondage of sin, the evil Pharaoh of our sinful nature that held us bound to actions that caused pain and regret. But we're not yet in Heaven! At least if you're reading this, I would guess that is safe to assume.

You and I are the people of God, saved from Egypt and on our way to our Promised Land. You and I are the people of God, saved from sin's rule and on our way to Heaven where Jesus rules and reigns. Jesus is the new human who saved us, the Moses who led us out in miraculous signs and wonders! So be encouraged today that while you feel things just are not right in the world, you're being made more aware of your exodus story. You're being made more aware that you are going somewhere where there is no more pain, sorrow, regret, cancer, heartache, sin, grief, pain or confusion! You're on your way to the Promised Land! You and I are being saved! WOW! What a joy and privilege to continue to look upon Jesus who took the curse of the serpent so we could be healed! What a joy and privilege to look upon Jesus who defeats every enemy as we simply walk around Jericho and then praise Him! It's a funny thing to be the people of God isn't it? To know we live in a tension of here and not yet, to know God is taking us through the wilderness teaching us to trust Him for every provision we need, every healing we need and all the forgiveness we need. The Exodus story is our Exodus story.

& The process of Salvation being we are on our way to the promised land. (what we're talking about today)

Promised Land = Heaven - Jesus promised "I am going to prepare a place for you in my Father's House..."

What we soon discover is that their story is my story. God's people are my people. It's not that they were saved. It's that we were saved. We are the people of God. Those Israelites are in a way, my ancestors, my people, my heritage. God wants a people and the exodus story is our exodus story!

1 Cor 1:2 those sanctified in Christ Jesus & called to be holy

2 Tim 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life

A Good Work

Hook / Story that catches their attention.

Php 1:3-11 *"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."* ESV

Php 1:6 "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus."

Christian, never forget the following:

GOD has STARTED a good work in you.

He will CONTINUE to work in you and through you while you're on earth.

He will FINISH His work on the day Christ Jesus comes in glory.

GOD has STARTED a good work in you the day you received Jesus as Lord and Savior. So don't give up! Aren't you glad God saved you!? If you've accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and been forgiven of ALL your sins and given the HOPE of eternal life will you just thank God right now?! GOD saved you! You couldn't save yourself! You were drowning and God threw you a rope and rescued you! God did the saving. "No man comes to the Father unless the Holy Spirit draws him." Scripture is replete with this concept that it is God who does the saving. God often begins His messages to the people of Israel like this ... "I am the Lord your God who rescued you from Egypt." Why would He often begin with that? He begins with this fact, this premise because He knows if we forget that, then we ultimately will believe that we are self-made and that we saved ourselves. He constantly reminds us that it is HIM who began the good work in us. It is God who reached down and initiated the rescue. It is God who was merciful towards us and saw us in our need.

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

I want you to notice who's doing the work in this vs in Php 1:6 GOD is doing the work. "He who began a good work...". He. Not you. Yes, there's an element to faith where we believe and we partner with God. We must say "yes" to God not just the day of our repentance and salvation but really each and every day, we have the choice to say "yes" to God and participate in the supernatural. But we must remember that it is GOD doing the work.

A few verses to remind you of this truth.

"No man comes to the Father except the Spirit draw him."

God does in the inviting.

God invites us to believe in Jesus His Son so we can be born again and saved from the penalty of our sin.

1 John 5:1,4-5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

God's Word is crystal clear that there is no other way for you and I to be saved from our sin.

¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³ I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

If you're listening online today and wondering what is the truth about eternal life? How do I go to heaven and what is this Christianity thing all about? I can tell you in one simple sentence Christianity is about believing in Jesus the son of God who came to save you from your sins. Isn't it powerful God's word says ...I write these things to you so that you believe. It doesn't say do these 20 things or do these hundred things. The word of God consistently tells us to simply believe in Jesus the son of God the only one who was perfect - the one who died in our place in rose again to new life.

STORY Modern Day of SALVATION

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No one is too far from God! No one!

Saul / Paul

This week we read in our daily Bible reading in Acts chapter 9 about Saul's conversion experience. By the way, if you haven't yet joined us, it's not like the rapture - it's never too late =) On Facebook every day, one of our church leaders, staff and lay leaders, reads the text from the Bible App then shares a few thoughts on it - a devotion. This week we read about Saul who was pulling Christians out of their

homes, throwing them into prison for being part of “the way” He was ruthless. He thought he was doing God a favor! He was a devout Jew and yet Satan had deceived him into thinking he was right by killing Christians!

But God in His incredible mercy forgave Saul and not only gave him a second chance, but called him to be an Apostle and incredibly instrumental in building the church!

My point? There is no person who is ever too far from God. Everyone, no matter how cruel or evil, can be forgiven and made new by the power and love of Jesus! GOD starts the good work in you!

Listen to Paul describe this experience of salvation.

1 Timothy 1:12-16 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent.

But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

God has started or wants to start a good work in you!

Do you know Jesus Christ? Have you given Him your life? Have you surrendered to Him, admitting that you tend to ruin things on your own? Have you allowed GOD to begin His work in you? If not, at the end of this message, I'm going to invite you to do so - to let Jesus forgive you of your past and put you on a path to a better future - a future where HE is King and HE is trusted and HE is directing your life.

GOD will CONTINUE to work in you and through you while you're on earth so don't give up!

Nothing breaks my heart more than to see God begin a good work in someone then that person not allow God to continue His redemptive work. God is ever changing us into the image of His Son of Jesus. This is truly the goal of life - that we become like Jesus.

In what many have called “sanctification” God continues to teach you what is right. Once we accept God as our Father and Jesus as our Savior, we are given an incredible gift. We are given the Holy Spirit who operates as the voice of God on the earth. He teaches us what it means to follow Jesus and become like Him. He convicts us of sin when we've made a mistake and even prevents us from sin when we're thinking about it. I'm so thankful for the Holy Spirit aren't you? He protects you from the harm Satan wants to bring your way. I'm so glad God hasn't given up on me! God has not given up on you either! In fact, Scripture promises that God's Son, Jesus, protects you from sin as His Spirit speaks to your heart - telling you to avoid sin!

1 Jn 5:18 “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”

God speaks to us to lead us away from sin so that we become increasingly holy - set apart for Him and Him alone.

Engaged To Be Married

I'd like to give you a picture to help you. In the Bible, we're given many pictures of a Galilean wedding when Jesus is teaching His followers about waiting for His return. He tells them “I will not drink of the vine until I'm with you again in my Father's house.” This was a phrase used only in weddings. When Jesus told the disciples this at the Last Supper, He was promising them that He was going to His Father's house in Heaven to prepare a place for them.

Traditionally, the soon-to-be-bride would then prepare herself spending months dedicating herself to her fiancé. She was anticipating his return, knowing he could come at any moment, often in the middle of the night. Because she didn't know when he'd finish the addition on his father's house, she would be constantly prepared for the day of His arrival. She would not allow herself to be with any other man. She was totally committed knowing her Bridegroom was totally committed to her.

In a similar way, we are engaged to Jesus! There is a wedding supper of the Lamb that Jesus has prepared for us. There is a day when He will come back to get us and we will meet Him in the air according to 1 Thessalonians 4. In the same way that any man wants his woman all to himself and doesn't want to share her, Jesus wants us all to Himself. He doesn't want to share you with the world; He doesn't want you to love the selfish ways of the world. Instead, He wants you to anticipate being solely His. In fact, He even says of Himself that He is a “jealous” God. He loves you so passionately and has sent His Spirit to cause you to love Him in return. This love causes us to forsake all others, in better or worse, to commit to Jesus.

This “good work” mentioned in Php 4:6 is a continual work God does in us until that day when He comes to take us home. God continues His work in you after your initial moment of salvation! He teaches you what's right and wrong. Aren't you glad that God hasn't given up on you? Aren't you thankful that God not only offered you friendship, but freedom! God doesn't just offer us friendship -

as if we're just going to be buddies with God. He also offers us freedom from sin. He gives us a way out of our mess! He calls us OUT of darkness, out of chaos, out of confusion, out of living in a pattern of regrets, and He calls us IN to light! He offers us friendship and freedom - freedom from sin. He continues to work in you.

He continues to mold you and me into the image of His Son, Jesus! Again, we are being formed into the image of the Son while we remain on earth. In sanctification, we are being saved. He is working out the parts of us that don't belong there - the parts of our heart that demand to be served, demand to be right and demand to be first. His Spirit prompts us to serve, prompts us to listen and prompts us to prefer others ourselves. And this is NOT natural.

It's a work isn't it? It's a continual work that He is doing. While we are saved the day we admit our sin and accept Jesus as our Savior, we are also being saved. God's Spirit is preparing a bride for Jesus and in the preparation for the great wedding day, we are purifying ourselves of all things that look like the world - things that look like sin. As we gaze upon Jesus and fix our eyes on His majesty, we are taking on the purity of Jesus. God will continue to work in you and through you while you're on earth if you let Him. His Spirit continues to make you more and more Christlike as He is restoring God's image on the earth.

Part of this "good work" that God began in you is to reveal His goodness to others on the earth. God wants to reveal His power in you. God wants to show how good He is through you! So, not only is God's Spirit teaching you right from wrong, "convicting the world of sin" as scripture says, but He's also teaching you how to work for HIM and build HIS kingdom instead of your own.

Learning To Be Faithful

God is always preparing you in your current season for your next season. I believe that every skill you're learning at work is somehow able to be used and going to be used by God in your future. I believe that every talent you're developing, every opportunity you've said "yes" to, every time you've learned something new, it has the potential to be used by God in your next season. You just don't know it yet.

When I auditioned to be a worship leader in Bible College, I was told "No, not yet." That bothered me. That bothered me all 6 times it happened. But in being told "No" I learned how to say "Yes" to God. What do I mean? God was asking me "Will you still serve me wherever you're needed even if you don't get what you want?" *Yes, Lord.* "Will you take this time to learn how to play lead guitar well like the staff is asking you to do even though you'd rather lead worship?" *Yes, Lord.* "Will you wait for Me to promote you in due time?" *Yes, Lord.*

What I didn't realize was that God was preparing me for my future with Innovate Records. If God had told me "Yes" then I would've never become a great musician and lead guitar player. These are skills I would need later in life as I was forming a Christian Music Label and music studio to launch Christian artists. God was pruning me, testing my faithfulness and teaching me faithfulness. These are lessons I needed to learn. I was being saved.

Karate Kid

God is teaching you and me to be faithful to Him and Him alone. God asks us to be diligent in our current season in our effort to please Him. God is preparing you for something greater. Karate Kid was one of the best movies ever made wasn't it!? I remember I'd do that pelican kick for hours as a little 9 year old boy. I was probably kicking over lamps, maybe kicking my sisters, I don't know but I just know Daniel LaRuso was THE MAN.

Long story short, serendipity or maybe destiny, led him to meet Mr Miagi. The wise old sage who was a Karate master. But his ways of teaching young Daniel were unconventional to say the least. He made Daniel wash all his old classic cars by hand. Daniel hated it! He tried to quit the training! But Mr Miagi was patient with him and encouraged him to just trust him. Next thing you know all that "wax on, wax off" paid off when his arms became strong enough and fast enough to defend the punches and kicks in the ring.

Daniel was learning defense by washing cars.

God's like Mr Miagi. You are like young Daniel.

God's ways of teaching you what He needs you to learn are often unconventional and uninvited. Nonetheless, He's making you more like Jesus in the process... IF you'll let Him continue *His good work*.

So what do you hate right now? What situation is causing you frustration and pain? It's probably linked to your calling into how God will use you in your next season.

David - pasture, palace

David had to first learn how to serve the king before he was elevated to be King. He was anointed to be the next King, yes. BUT there was a time of testing David's ability to be faithful and honor the authority given. David learned how to fight off bears and lions as a shepherd boy, defending his sheep. In so doing, he learned how to be brave a skill he would HAVE to have as a General in Israel's army just a few years later. He learned to use the slingshot - a skill he would use to slay Goliath.

He learned to protect the sheep - a skill he applied as King when protecting his people from foreign enemies who tried to take over and oppress God's people.

God taught David what He needed David to learn in unconventional and united ways. Nonetheless, David was faithful in his current season so God honored him and promoted Him to his next.

Faithfulness is doing the best you can where you are with what God's given you. You heard me say in my sermon on The Good Steward ... Faithfulness is the goal, not success.

Let's go back to our story from Acts chapter 9.

Ananias. He was saved. He was following “the way”. He was just minding his own business but suddenly God’s business became HIS business and God gave him an assignment. God gave him a word of knowledge and a prophetic word about Saul and asked him to go speak to Saul and lead him in a sinners prayer!

God was WORKING IN Ananias!

God was continuing His work to redeem and restore all things on this earth for the glory of Jesus and in that special moment, it was uniquely Ananias’ responsibility to lead Saul to Jesus! WE don’t know much about him. Maybe he was like an Usher at church. Maybe he was a greeter. Maybe a Life Group Leader. We don’t know. Maybe he was on the Special Meals ministry team because he loved to cook. We have no idea. All we know is that God gave him an assignment and he was faithful to obey. WOW. God was continuing His work in Ananias.

My question for you now is this ... Are you allowing God to continue His work in you? Are you allowing God’s Spirit to stretch you and use you for His glory in new ways? Like Allison said when she read this passage this week ... “What can’t God do!?!? He will use anyone for His glory!”

Knowing that God is working in you and still working in others gives you the knowledge you need to maintain unity.

It’s amazing how many Christians will just write someone off - forgetting that God is still doing His work. God is workING. It’s a present reality. He is working in people so you and I must learn to be patient with people knowing that they are a work in progress just like we are. Remember our passage ...

with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

When you bear with one another in love, you are being patient with them in their weak areas. You’re allowing them to grow. I’m not saying you allow someone to sin. I’m just saying you and I need to be gentle and humble with someone when they approach a situation different than we would. Give the grace that you expect to receive.

To recap so far ... 1 GOD has started the work in you. 2 God will CONTINUE His work and ...

3. God will FINISH the work on the day of Christ Jesus and that is your true hope!

God will finish the work on the day of Christ Jesus and that is your true hope, not what you see here and now! So don’t give up!

Romans 8:11-20

¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Future Glory

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Ro 8:11–20). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

You and I are foreigners here! You and I are going somewhere! John 17, Jesus promises us that He has prepared a place in the Father’s house in Heaven just for us and one day, 1 These 4 tells us that He will come again. We’ll meet Him in the air and He’ll take us home to HEAVEN and THAT my friend is where your hope must truly lie. If your hope is in this earth, you will be continually disappointed. If your hope is in Heaven and “the day of Christ Jesus” knowing He’s doing a good work in you, then you’ll be continually hopeful and happy.

D

In fact I want to give you the three things ahead of time so they really stick in your heart when you leave here today.

You Can Walk Away

Reword this article ...

Our Father has given us wonderful promises, and our salvation is not some flimsy thing that can be found one day and lost the next, nor is our salvation dependent on our ability to "stay saved."

It is God who is at work in us, and He will finish what He started. He will hear your cry for help, He will have mercy on you in your weakness, and He will forgive 100 times a day if you come to Him

for cleansing. But He will not keep you against your own will, which is why the Lord gives us so many warnings in the New Testament.

- And you, who were formerly alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight, if you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not removed from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant (Col. 1:21–23).
- For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then turn back from the holy commandment that was delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb, "The dog returns to his own vomit," and "the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mud" (2 Pet. 2:20–22).
- Therefore we should be more attentive to what we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken by angels was true, and every sin and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation, which was first declared by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him? (Heb. 2:1–3)
- Be attentive, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, and you depart from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence firmly to the end, while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion" (Heb. 3:12-15).

The New Testament authors had no trouble issuing strong warnings to believers, sometimes putting these warnings side by side with God's glorious promises. Both are true, and both should be taken to heart. That's why Hebrews 12:2 (NET) can speak of Jesus as "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith," while Hebrews 12:25–29 can warn us about the dangers of refusing to obey God's voice. In the same way, Philippians 2:12–13 (MEV) put our responsibility side by side with God's responsibility, saying, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but so much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For God is the One working in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure."

To help put all this in perspective, let me give you some further background. Within evangelical circles, there are three main beliefs concerning the possibility of a child of God forfeiting his or her salvation, and countless thousands of pages have been written debating the question. These are the three main views:

1. The teaching commonly known as "once saved, always saved" (OSAS) states that once you are truly saved, no matter how you live or what you do, even denying Jesus and turning your back on Him, you cannot lose your salvation. Although your sin might shorten your life or lessen your future rewards, you will still be eternally saved.
2. The teaching called "perseverance of the saints" states that a true believer will not ultimately turn away from the Lord, and therefore if you claim to be born-again and die in sin, denying the Lord, you were never truly saved.
3. The final teaching doesn't have one specific name associated with it, but it states that a true believer can choose to apostasize, reject God's grace and forfeit salvation. Although we are secure in Jesus, if we ultimately reject Him, we forfeit our secure standing.

Those holding to the first view point to verses like Romans 8:28–39, which state that nothing that can separate us from God's love, or John 10:26–29, which state that Jesus' sheep have eternal life and no one can pluck them out of His hand.

Those holding to the second viewpoint emphasize those same passages but also point to verses such as 1 John 2:19, which states that those who left the church were never really part of it, or 1 John 3:6, which states that those who continue to live in sin have never really known the Lord. Those holding to the third viewpoint look to verses such as Colossians 1:21–23, which state that our salvation is assured if we persevere in faith to the end, or 2 Peter 2:20–22, which state that it would be better never to have known the Lord than to know Him and then turn away from Him. For the most part, modern grace (also called hyper-grace) teachers emphatically hold to the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" (viewpoint number one), although some seem to hold to the doctrine of "perseverance of the saints" (viewpoint number two) making comments such as, "It is totally impossible for a true Christian to reject Christ, since true Christians are one in spirit with Jesus. If someone claims to be a follower of Jesus and then denies Him and chooses a life of sin and rebellion, that person was never saved, no matter what they claim." (This is a paraphrase of some common hyper-grace teachings. You can find exact quotes in my book, *Hyper-Grace*.) Of course, there is an irony when modern grace teachers hold to views like perseverance of the saints, since it ultimately puts the emphasis back on the believer's "performance." In other words, "If I claim to be a believer and I'm living right then I'm saved, but if I claim to be a believer and have turned away from God, I guess I was never saved." This is obviously the last thing intended by hyper-grace teachers, but again, it is the logical conclusion to statements like the one just quoted. How then do we sort things out?

It's really very simple.

God's promises are to believers—to those who want to follow the Lord and whose lives belong to Him—not to rebels who have chosen sin and rejected His lordship. Put another way, there is not a single promise anywhere in the Bible that God will bless us with eternal life if we ultimately reject Him and choose rebellion, and we give people false assurance when we make that claim. (In other words, viewpoint number one is not true.)

Find me one verse anywhere in the Bible—just one—that gives assurance of eternal life and blessing to an unrepentant rebel who is living in willful, persistent sin, denying the Lord in an ongoing, hardened way, and I will invite you to join me on national radio or TV and tell the whole world that I was wrong. Just one verse!

Without a doubt, you'll find many verses promising mercy and forgiveness to those who turn back (thank God) and you'll find many verses assuring us of God's keeping power, but note clearly that the promises are given to Jesus' sheep—to those who know His voice and follow Him (John 10:27)—rather than to those who reject His voice and walk away from Him. In short, viewpoints number two or three could be right, but number one cannot.

So, on a practical level, it comes down to this: If you have put your trust in the Lord and desire to serve Him, He has given you absolute assurance that He will never leave or

Our world simply seems to be going crazy at times right? We look at the news and think "Why are people are so angry? Why are people so deceived? Why is there so much sin and anger and death in the world?"

The Bible tells us.

Romans 8:18-22

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (Ro 8:18–22). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

God is doing a good work in you and if I've learned anything powerful from God in the last 2 months it is this: God is always doing a *good work* in the background even when you don't see it!

STORY.

Let's look at Romans 8 again to understand how we as God's children are anticipating our full redemption.

Romans 8:23-28

And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

I want to tell you loud and clear church. God is working all things out for your good when you are putting Him first in your life!

Story

Think of the time when Jesus told the crowd that God was working and they couldn't even see it.

Lk 19:42

If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes". God was right there among them

Performing miracles and His own people didn't recognize it, even though they knew the scriptures!

This third point again is about knowing that ultimately our hope is heaven and it is NOT here on earth. I want to give you another scripture to point to this future reality.

Eph 4:29-32 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." ESV

Did you see that verse 30?

You were sealed for the day of redemption. Other texts as we've seen call this "The day of the Lord" or "the Day of Christ Jesus"

You were sealed for that day! You're HIS! He is working to preserve you for that day! But notice our responsibility in letting His Spirit preserve us and purify us. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

There's clearly an element of choice here. God is telling us ... CHOOSE to be kind and forgiving of others - patient with them in their faults.

It doesn't mean you let people walk all over you. I'm not saying that. But it does tell us to choose to be kind. Choose to remove all bitterness and anger from your heart. Choose to be tender and gentle towards one another. And then God tells us how. He says HOW this is possible. By remembering that Christ does this for us. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

When I remember how patient God is with me, I'm able to be patient with others.

Today is about remembering that GOD is doing the work and that all you have to do is let Him do His work. This is what grace is all about! It's knowing that God can do what you can not.

Open up your heart and let Him do His work in you!

If you're struggling to let go of something, if you feel the need to control something or someone, that doesn't come from God. If you feel the need to control then you may be missing the purpose of grace. Maybe instead of trying to convince someone of something you just need to pray for them.

Maybe for others in the room or watching online today, you are striving and working so hard on something but to be honest, it's in your own strength!

Psalms has so many powerful one-liners of truth. One of them is Ps 127:1 Unless the Lord builds the house it's builder build in vain.

It's lately and conversations you're trying to prove how valuable you are by listing your accomplishments or previous positions held so as to impress people then you are missing the point of today's sermon and the premise of the scripture in Philippians. You're forgetting that it is God who does a good work in you. It is God who does a good work through you.

This striving is exhausting and NOT why God intends. This need to prove your value by the work YOU are doing is NOT what God intends. God wants you to know that HE is doing a good work in you! We are simply along for the journey being faithful in whatever the Lord places before us.

When you begin to understand that God does a good work of grace in the heart of every person who will let him work then in every conversation you become increasingly excited about the good work that God is doing in them. You become less concerned with proving your value or demanding center stage. When you realize that you are one and 7 billion and that God is doing a good work personally in the heart of every single individual you become increasingly grateful - increasingly gracious - and increasingly easy to be around because now you're full of the joy of the Lord.

The most prominent attribute of God is FATHER.

Jesus taught us to pray saying "Our Father who lives in Heaven..."

1 John 2:1-2 "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 2:15-16 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world."
ESV

Why would John talk about God in terms of Father so much? Because he walked with Jesus for three years who always referred to God as Father. Jesus talked about The Father ALL the time. Jesus taught us how to view God in Heaven - as FATHER.

Knowing that God is our Heavenly Father, what does that tell you about His desire to keep you in the faith?

Of course He wants to keep you in the faith because He's adopted you as a child! You're one of His once you accept Christ! He's not going to send you away once you've slipped up. When you sin, it doesn't mean immediately that your salvation is "lost" In that moment, the Father sends the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin and remind you of who you really are - you are HIS. That conviction

CONVICTION VS. CONDEMNATION

Conviction leads you *to* God. Condemnation leads you *away* from God. Conviction is from the Holy Spirit of God. Condemnation is from Satan, the enemy of God.

I am so thankful for the many times God's Spirit has convicted me. He warns when I'm about to do something foolish and He stops me. That's conviction. That's God's way of keeping me in His grace. He stops when I begin sinning and doing something foolish. Why? He loves me and wants the best for me. He wants my life to please and honor Him. He knows what I don't know. He's God. I'm not. When His Spirit prompts me to change my attitude or way of thinking or even behavior, I have a choice. I can ignore Him and His message to me or I can heed His instruction and

Room To Grow. Room To Love.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much and desires that we grow in the knowledge of His love. We can't live without the room to grow. God gives us free will, the room to grow and learn and change because without free will there can not be love. God's love aims to fill us to overflowing. God's love gives us the identity we all desire.

The Holy Spirit being our teacher.

Glory to Glory

One of my favorite passages in the Word of God comes from 2 Cor. 3. Here we get this beautiful image of man beholding the majesty of Jesus and being transformed into the image of Jesus. We are transformed into the thing we behold.

2 Corinthians 3:3-18

You are a letter from Christ written with the Spirit of the Living God not on tables of stone but on tables of human hearts."

God in His wisdom, gradually changes our hearts, in His brilliance, He doesn't see that we fail at the first 10 laws so He makes up 20 more. He changes the desires of our hearts - making us want to serve God. Let's read on...

"Such is the confidence that have through Christ toward God." We are confident of a loving God who saved us! This is why the 10 Commandments begin with "I am the Lord Your God who saved you from Egypt."

The reason God introduces Himself in that way is to ensure that we don't forget who He is. He is the Saving One. He is the God who saves. He is the God who rescues! We can be confident, not in our superiority to other people of other faiths, but we can be confident in

our salvation - knowing full well, that we have been saved by a Mighty God! This is the confidence that we have, not the arrogance that we are often accused of.

I saw a video this week of a Jewish Rabbi who is actually a Universalist by all definitions because he believed that all roads of faith lead to the same God and it doesn't matter if you call him Allah or Jesus or whatever. He was in a great debate with Pastor and Dr Michael Brown.

Here is the link you can go to if you'd like to check it out: [LINK](#)

It was a great debate where both of them argued their reasons for their faith and it did it with civility and kindness which was awesome. By the way you should be able to do that too. There is no place for being rude or condescending for Christ-followers. Speak the truth in love. In the debate, the universalist minister said to Dr Michael Brown "Don't you think that's awful arrogant and rich of you to assume that you know the *only* way to Heaven - that you're right and everyone else is wrong?"

But herein lies the irony. Christians are not arrogant; we're confident.

There is a difference between arrogance and confidence. Ironically when a believer is confident in God, they are often accused of being arrogant. When young David came out and said "Who is this vile Philistine that mocks my God and mocks all of Israel, God's people!!?? I'll kill him!" The other soldiers and his very own brothers accused him of being arrogant! It's the "go to" accusation for those who are either atheist or pantheist. Those who believe there is no God and therefore no life after death or for those who believe all roads lead to Heaven. The default position after any extensive conversation around this often results in the Christian being accused of being arrogant for believing that Jesus is the "only way" to Heaven. I'm not sure why there's so much difficulty with believing in absolute truth. We have no problem believing in absolute time. No one argues about Greenwich Meantime suggesting we should all "find our way way and sense of time." That would lead to chaos. We have no problem with believing in absolutes when it comes to history. Something happened, it was documented and reported by all who were present. It's history. Why do so many have such a problem with even the idea of absolutes in the area of religion? I believe it's because deep down we all know that if there is real God, a true and living God, then we'll stand before Him one day and give an account. The Gospel message though is that that day is not to be feared but celebrated for one day we will be eternally saved because Jesus, our advocate, has died in our place and taken our punishment and given us the spoils of war.

This man did this same thing to Dr Brown. He accused him of being arrogant. He conflated humility with humanity. He assumed that confessing all humans are broken and in need of a "god" is synonymous with all humans finding their way on their own and that he "has no right" to tell them which way is best.

What's crazy is that we don't do this in any other area of life.

If you go to see the Dr at the Hospital and he comes in to see you and says "Well, I know what's wrong and what we need to do to fix it." Do you say "How rude, How arrogant! I want a new doctor! You're so presumptuous and audacious! You're a bigot!"

No! Of course not! You're like "GREAT! I'm glad that you've studied. I'm glad that you have aptitude to carry out your profession. I'm glad that you're confident in your findings. I'm thankful that you've discovered the correct course of action for me being I'm in need of help!

Confidence is not arrogance. We must stop conflating them.

If I'm a beggar and homeless and I stumble across an abundance of food and I then go tell some other homeless friends of mine "Hey! I found some food! It's right over here!"

Does that make me arrogant? No. It makes me confident and rather generous if I might add.

I'm a beggar who found some food - I did NOTHING to earn or deserve the grace of God. God reached down into the mess that was my life and saved me and now I'm going to tell everyone I can about it.

And if you're a Christian, God did that same thing for you and you know that to be true. So what are you doing with Jesus? What are you doing about that life saver that's been thrown your way?

You and I both are in a process of being saved. We are saved but we are also *being saved*. We were once saved and we are also being saved. Every day, we learn more about God through His Word and just communing with Jesus and we're being transformed. Our thoughts are changing. If we were racist, then we no longer are racists as God's truth breaks us free from that lie. We realize that all men of every color are made in the image of God and are destined for great things in Him. If we are judgmental, we become gracious learning from the Spirit of God that all people are to be given the very grace that we've been given. If we are stubborn and hard to get along with, our personality even changes and we become softer and more open to dialogue; we become better listeners, better friends, better spouses and even better parents. Why? We are being saved by the grace of God. God through the power of His Spirit, is teaching us what it means to glorify Christ with our lives.

AN INVITATION

If you haven't yet surrounded your life to Jesus, I want to invite you to do so. I want to invite you to give your life to Jesus Christ as He is the One, the only One, who can save you from sin and make you into the person you want to be. No one wants to be full of anger, full of regret and remorse, full of pride or jealousy. No one does, if they're honest anyway. God can change you. God can save you. God can bring you to a place of truth, a truth that sets you free to be truly you - a person made in the image of God created to bear the image of God's goodness on the earth.

Let's go back to our passage. 2 Co. 3

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. The letter kills but the Spirit gives life!

For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation (through the old covenant - the law condemned men) the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. Indeed in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory surpasses it. For it what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.

15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

There is a glorious presence of God that can only be experienced as you surrender your thoughts and emotions, your future and your past to the Lord completely. There is a reward of integrity. It's intimacy with God.

God did the saving. Not us.

God often introduces Himself to us by saying "I am the Lord your God who rescued you out of Egypt."

He even says this before giving us the 10 Commandments. The 10 commandments don't ensure we are saved. God made sure we are saved. The 10 commandments only taught us how we remain protected by our Heavenly Father. He wants to know how it is that we are now to live and think and act. Doing the commandments don't save us. Yet hearing them from the One who saved us tells us that He cares enough to give us rules.

God did the saving!

HUMILITY IS NEEDED

We must be willing to admit that each of us are still growing and still learning. We must choose humility and admit that we are still becoming more and more like Christ. None of us have arrived. In fact, it's in admitting our weakness that Christ's power is made perfect.

2 Co 13:4

"For Jesus was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God."

In Chapter 12, verse 9 he says one of the most quoted scriptures known to Christians...

"God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." ESV

It seems so odd to say "When I am weak, then I am strong." and that God's power is made "perfect in weakness" It's not just a beautiful line of poetry. Indeed it's poetic but it's not just poetic, it's powerful!

It's truth!

I have found that when I am willing to admit my weakness that it can in-turn glorify Christ and His redemptive power!

I have discovered even as a pastor, that the more free I am to admit my need for grace over the years, the greater the revelation of God's grace is in the midst of that service. On the contrary, if I pretend to be perfect or at least give the impression that I'm perfect or have been perfect my whole life, I squelch the power of God in that meeting. When I admit my need for Jesus and celebrate when and how He's saved me and even specify what He saved me from, the Spirit of the Lord brings freedom to those sitting in the audience and gives them the courage to believe God to also forgive them.

Why is it so powerful when we admit our need for God?

Why?

We are once saved and we are being saved!

We are being transformed daily by God's Spirit from Glory to Glory!

When someone is willing to admit that they do not have it all together and they do fail at times, it glorifies Christ and His forgiving power! When a pastor is no longer willing to serve in certain roles such as cleaning up or moving chairs or doing some simple to help someone who's in need, he's bought into the lie of arrival. The truth is we haven't arrived. We'll arrive in Heaven when Jesus comes to

take us home. If you're reading this right now, you have not arrived. I doubt there will be Kindles and eBooks needed in Heaven; so trust me, you're still being saved.

If you pretend that you don't need to change or that you never needed to change or that other Christians are somehow less spiritual than you than you are missing the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in your life and you're reducing the resurrection power of the Gospel to mere religion that only brings condemnation.

Now is it true that some Christians do end up quitting the faith? Yes. We know that to be true.

Some Christians do in fact reject Christ later in life.

I don't believe you can "lose your salvation" Why? Because that word "lose" is the wrong word. Words imply meaning. So we must be careful with the words we choose.

If I say to my kids "you're going to lose me as a father if you don't ..." How odd and terrible would that sound? I would never say that. And if we think we are kind, how much more kind and loving and patient is our Heavenly Father?

And if I say "I lost my keys" then I'm telling you "I want my keys. I value my keys. But I can not find them. It's an accident that I have lost my keys."

That is NOT how salvation and lack of salvation works. You don't accidentally lose your salvation. Once you accept Jesus as the One who atoned for your sins - the One who came from the Father full of Truth and Love and died in your place to pay the punishment for your sins - once you accepted that as truth that *you* needed; once you accept Jesus as your Savior, then you are saved! You are gloriously saved! You are new from the inside out! You're adopted into the Family of God!!!

It won't always be easy.

Part of "being saved" is understanding that we don't belong here and we find that increasingly obvious the longer we're a Christian. The sense that comes being a foreigner, a citizen of Heaven, is that we are mocked or even persecuted for our faith in Jesus. It won't be easy! Being saved is about holding on to our faith in Christ no matter what comes our way. This is where God calls us to remain faithful. As we said in a previous chapter, the aim for our lives is to be faithful, not successful.

Jesus says in Matthew 10:22 (ESV): "...and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The Bible tells us that some people just quit trusting in God for salvation

1 Timothy 1:15-19 "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.*" ¹⁷ *To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. ¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, ¹⁹ holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith...*" *ESV*

Because I don't know to what extent people are holding on to grace, I'm not going to put someone in heaven or hell. Sure there are people whom we can see are not serving God or trusting Jesus. But I'm likely not going to be there in their dying breaths. I'm not there living at home with them, day in and day out. If I can't see how they live, if I can't see if they read their Bible and talk to God and trust Him with their hearts, if I can't see whether or not they've trusted God with their money and future, if I can't see if they've given their hurts to the Lord, then I can't judge whether or not they're saved.

Sure, we can tell if someone is a follower of Jesus because we can see their fruit. And if I see that the fruit of their lives is rotten fruit - if they are constantly rude and demanding, if they steal people's dignity by being racist, or steal people's money because of greed, then yes, I can surmise like Jesus told us, that they are not a Christ-follower and therefore not saved. However, I do not know what will happen to them next week or next year or in their final breaths. I've heard too many stories of people encountering Jesus on their death beds or having Jesus appear in their rooms inviting them to trust in Him for salvation.

FROM A DISTANCE

We must be careful not to assume that someone isn't saved when you only know them from a distance. There's a powerful story told in a book called Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus where the author tells of an encounter he had with God in his pursuit of knowing God. He wanted to truly know God, the real God and in his search God showed up and changed his life forever! You have to realize that some people are in the midst of seeking. Some people are right on the verge of grabbing that life saver as they are becoming more and more aware of the failure of the human race all around them.

To judge someone based on where you saw them or who you saw them with is what the pharisees did. If we judged people the way they judged Jesus, even Jesus would've have been a Christian. Please be careful also not to throw someone out of the family of God if they have a different view than you on something or if you see them spending time with non-believers. Jesus was often accused of being a "friend of sinners" and maybe we need to have that said about us more often.

There are so many facets of the Body of Christ! As I proceed here, please do not equate my comments with universalism. I'm not a universalist. Talk to me for five minutes or less and you'll know my entire life is centered around Jesus and His saving work. Read chapter one above and you'll know that to be true as well. Yet I have been troubled lately a the number of Christians who feel that their denomination is the only ones who are truly Christian. That sort of narrow-mindedness is a result of pride that needs to be uprooted from our hearts. Grace needs to invade.

There are things I've learned from Catholic Christians while ministering in their churches. My band has played in probably 50 Catholic churches over the years. There are some beautiful Catholic Christians who have put their hope in Jesus as the Son of God, not in Mary, the human mother of Jesus, but in Jesus the Son of God. Sure, there were also Catholic churches where it was evident that their trust was in Mary and the Saints, mere men and not in the redemptive work of Christ. Those people are deceived and we can say Biblically that they need to be saved. But again, there are plenty of Catholic Christians who have put their trust in Jesus as Savior. Evangelicals and others need not to put them out of the Kingdom when Jesus, the King doesn't do so.

There are Messianic Jews who have put their trust in Jesus, Yeshua. They've been born again and realized that Jesus is the Messiah. Dr Brown whom I referenced earlier is one. There are Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of God, Assemblies of God and various types of Christians all over the world. And guess what, that's beautiful! The Family of God is one!

Ephesians 4 tells us that "We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Savior" and that should unite us in worship to Him!

God is at work in us daily. Through His grace, He makes us more like Jesus every single day. We read His Word and it challenges us. We ask His Spirit to speak and He speaks. We attend a Bible Study or church service open to hear from God and what happens? We hear from God and are changed! We move from glory to glory!

God is the one who transforms us & we partner with Him and allow Him to sanctify us. It's a partnership because God's word is based on love and love can't exist outside the context of free will. An excellent book on this is "The Discipline of Grace" by Jerry Bridges. God's Spirit speaks to us inviting us into a life in the Spirit, a life of separation unto God, a life of adventure doing the works of God and even a life of holiness.

His Holy Spirit makes us Holy.

We are saved.

We are being saved.

And one day we'll be eternally saved!

Ephesians 2:1-14

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

God's Word says that you and I were "sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit" who is the guarantee of what it is to come, meaning the eternal beauty of Heaven! WOW! You can have confidence that once you've put your hope in Jesus Christ that you are saved! Out of that thankfulness, let a desire to honor and praise God with your life be birthed in you!

We are saved. We are being saved. And we will one day be eternally saved!

We are saved by confessing Jesus as Lord.

1 John 1:9

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Jn 1:9). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.*

God offers us salvation completely free! He is so kind! He is so good to us!!!

We are being saved by allowing the Holy Spirit to continually renew our minds and behaviors by changing the way we think and feel and act. *Hebrews

We will one day be eternally saved when Jesus comes back in all His glory!

I want to read from 1 Co. 15:1-11 again, the passage we opened up with when we began this chapter. God's Word makes this continual work so clear.

1 Co 15:1-11 "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

...⁸ he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” ESV

As you mature as a Christian, you discover that the Holy Spirit can be grieved. He has emotions. And when we say “Holy Spirit” we’re talking about God Himself because God is a triune God. He is Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit often speaks of the emotional part of God. The Holy Spirit is the one without a physical body at least that can understand from Scripture.

The Holy Spirit is the one who comes into our hearts and begins to renew us.

The Holy Spirit is seen as wind, as fire and even as a gentle dove who descended upon Jesus at Jesus’ water baptism.

When that happened, I like to think that “I don’t want anything in my life to make that dove go away.”

I don’t want anything my life to grieve the Holy Spirit.

Why? I love God.

I love the Holy Spirit.

I love that He wants to make me Holy.

Why does He want to make me Holy? It glorifies God and it brings me back to my original make-up and purpose - one who is set apart by God for God. In Ephesians 2, we learn that God lavishes His grace upon us. He is generous in His grace. It is unending, as deep as the ocean and as tall as Mount Everest. To imagine the vastness of God’s grace, imagine you climbed Everest to reach the top and see there’s another 5 mountains twice as tall. That’s the beauty of Grace. It’s never ending because grace speaks of God’s goodness and His goodness is never ending.

Ps 41:12 “But you have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in your presence forever.”

I know that I love the presence of God. And I know that God is Holy. I love the beauty of His holiness and I never want His Holy Spirit to feel unwelcome in my life because of sinful or evil things or even areas of compromise.

God wants to teach us and we should want to be taught.

David said it like this in *Psalm 25:5 “Make me to know Your ways O Lord; teach me Your paths. Le me in Your truth and teach me for You are the God of my salvation.”*

It’s a beautiful thing to be taught by the Lord. Again we are taught by the Lord, we are sanctified in three mediums: The Word of God (The Bible) The Spirit of God (His Voice Speaking To Us) and The People of God. In all three ways I choose to be receptive to what God wants to speak to me. In all three avenues I want to be open to what God wants to do in my life.

TEACH ONE ANOTHER

Colossians 3:16 “Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.” God’s Word tells us that we teach one another through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

1 Peter 4:10-11 “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in it’s various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

Then He continues to save us by His Holy Spirit from shipwrecking our faith. His Spirit leads us into all truth *See John 14 and His Spirit reminds of what Jesus said? Why? To help us remain strong in our faith - to help us fight the temptations to sin.

We will be tempted every week if not daily to sin. We are tempted to allow things into our lives that don’t belong. We are the Holy temple of God, God’s Word says therefore the Holy Spirit teaches us how to give glory to God and become holy - where our bodies literally become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit of God. That is powerful!

I’m so passionate about Christians learning to do this properly I wrote a book about it called Truth & Love. You can pick it up on Amazon or at www.TruthAndLoveBook.com

Jehovah my Macadachem

This idea of God saving us then continuing to save us and make us holy for His glory was stated so beautifully in a devotion I came across by Charles Spurgeon in 1896 and I want to share it with you.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling”

—2 Timothy 1:9

The apostle uses the perfect tense and says, “Who *hath* saved us.” Believers in Christ Jesus *are* saved. They are not looked upon as persons who are in a hopeful state, and may ultimately be saved, but they *are* already saved. Salvation is not a blessing to be enjoyed upon the dying bed, and to be sung of in a future state above, but a matter to be obtained, received, promised, and enjoyed now. The Christian is perfectly saved *in God’s purpose*; God has ordained him unto salvation, and that purpose is complete. He is saved also as to the *price which has been paid for him*: “It is finished” was the cry of the Saviour ere he died. The believer is also perfectly saved *in his covenant head*, for as he fell in Adam, so he lives in Christ. This complete salvation is accompanied by *a holy calling*. Those whom the Saviour saved upon the cross are in due time effectually called by the power of God the Holy Spirit unto holiness: they leave their sins; they endeavour to be like Christ; they choose holiness, not out of any compulsion, but from the stress of a new nature, which leads them to rejoice in holiness just as naturally as aforetime they delighted in sin. God neither chose them nor called them because they were holy, but he called them that they might be holy, and holiness is the beauty produced by his workmanship in them. The excellencies which we see in a believer are as much the work of God as the atonement itself. Thus is brought out very sweetly the fulness of the grace of God. Salvation must be of grace, because the Lord is the author of it: and what motive but grace could move him to save the guilty? Salvation must be of grace, because the Lord works in such a manner that our righteousness is for ever excluded. Such is the believer’s privilege—*a present salvation*; such is the evidence that he is called to it—*a holy life*.

Spurgeon, C. H. (1896). [*Morning and evening: Daily readings*](#). London: Passmore & Alabaster.

Psalm 16:11

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Ask yourself this question - When do you feel satisfied and full of joy? From another possession - something you buy - or the Lord’s presence

He’s changing us from the inside out! GLORY TO GLORY

With that in mind, ask yourself.

I will not put someone in hell who once believed in Jesus. Why? The Mercy of God is so great that I can’t really know where someone stands with God. I can’t and you can’t.

It’s true what Jesus said that ... “You will know them by their fruit.”

Jesus describes those who follow Him - those who are true Christians by their fruit - “Fruit” of course indicating their behavior and demeanor - their actions.

James echoed this idea that “Faith without works is dead.” Yes, that is true.

Again, be careful not to assume someone isn’t a Christian based on one thing they see differently than you. Yes, there are things in the Bible that state that clearly keep you from Heaven. But there are many things and topics in which we simply each trust the Holy Spirit to be our teacher in.

Be careful with the words that you speak. I’ve heard over the years these kind of comments.

“Are they really saved?” “Do you know his stance on ____”

There are Christians who are pre-trib. There are Christians who are post-trib.

There are Christians who will attend non-Christian events with the aim of winning someone’s heart to Jesus - like Jesus did with drunkards and tax collectors often.

Association does NOT and should not equal accusation!

That’s a belief but it is not a Biblical belief! It’s not a Christ centered belief!

Here’s what they said about Jesus ...

If a Christian is the same room as a non-Christian who firmly believes ____ fill-in-the-blank, it does NOT mean that the Christian condones what the non-Christians believes!

We live in an era of sound-bites!

Don’t just people by a sound-bites. That’s just responsible and immature. Yet, it’s what a lot of Christians do.

So how do know if you know you need transformed some more? Besides the Bible telling us, there are times when

Ask yourself

Is there racism in my heart?

Does the color of someone's skin make me at all judge them? If so, God needs to transform me from glory to glory! God MUST begin a work in my heart and remove any ugly attitude and ungodly attitude toward anyone based on the color of their skin or where they grew up.

David, in Psalms, says

“Search my heart and see if there's any wicked way in me.”

Why would he pray this? We can all pray this beautiful prayer - Lord if there's anything in me that doesn't please You, take it out of my heart. Forgive me of it.

Tt 3:3–11

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ⁸ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

⁹ But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰ As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

To believe the lie that says “Because we are in an age of grace, God's love covers all our sins so it doesn't matter how we live” is to ignore God's Word which tells us otherwise.

1 John 3:9-10 “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). (1 Jn 3:9–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The reason it says “He cannot keep on sinning.” is because at least in my experience, when I sin, I feel God's Spirit telling me “NO!” “Don't sin! You're mine! You are to be holy and pure!”

If you have failed and you've sinned, take the path of David and repent. Repent before God and before your spouse if you're married. Be honest. Be humble. Be broken. Let God heal you and restore you then get back to serving Him as King and Lord of your life. Satan will want you to stay down and try his best to convince you that God doesn't want you anymore. Nothing could be further from the truth. God's love for you hasn't changed and His plans for you haven't changed. Be a man or woman after God's own heart!

Tell them what you'll tell them

Tell Them

Tell them what you told them

Personal Stories

WHERE CAN THIS PASSAGE GO IN THE MESSAGE

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison,

and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Heb 10:26–36). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you.

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Jn 3:1–7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

[The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Jn 3:9–10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

WORK IT OUT ALONE

There’s an argument and a valid one at that, that each Christian should work out their own salvation alone before God. And when it comes to you growing and maturing as a believer, that’s true. “Work out your salvation

WE CELEBRATE WHAT WE VALUE

LOST & FOUND

Three parables that tell of something lost then found then a reaction of those present. All three parables have that common thread.

Lost coin

Lost sheep

Lost son

CLOSING

The Family of God

I don't want you to read this little book and think "Ok, so you're telling me, I'm going to be stuck in this raging river called life and just suffer horribly until I'm in Heaven? No. Not at all. You are a child that's discovered the love and forgiveness of Father God! You are an heir of the Kingdom! In Christ, you are born again. You were lost and now you are found! There's no greater joy than that!

THE LOST COIN, SHEEP & SON

What do these three consecutive parables teach us about God and about man? Well, a lot of things. In classic Jesus form, we learn multiple truths that take quite a while to fully digest when it only took seconds for Jesus to say the words.

As we close, I want to come back to one of my favorite scriptures and it comes from 2 Corinthians 3:16-18. I want to read this again like we did early in the book because I don't want you to believe that Christianity is just this big *struggle*. I want you to know that while this illustration of the life saver is helpful and I'm praying it moves you towards humility and compassion for others, it's certainly not the only way to view the Christian life. This is why I wanted the closing to share about the family of God, the Kingdom.

Yes, you'll still feel the raging currents as God's grace is pulling you towards Heaven, but let me tell you. The more you follow Christ and let His Spirit lead you, you will have joy unspeakable! You will be full of the joyful presence of the Lord! The glory of the Lord will fill you and you will be transformed into the "person" of Christ! You'll have His Spirit giving you peace, joy and the beautiful expression that is God Himself in your midst. He is Emmanuel, God with us! The more you know Him and serve Him, the more you move from glory to glory and the more you move from joyful expression to greater joyful expression!

¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:16-18

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