

THE SALVATION OF SOULS III Peter 1:9

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- [0 : 00] Now, I don't know whether you looked at this morning's message, but it has to do with repentance. And we're looking at three different scriptures this morning, but we're all in one book, and that'll be the book of Acts.
- Please turn to chapter 17. And in chapter 17, we'll be looking at verses 28 through 31.
- For in Him we live and move and exist. As even some of your own poets have said, for we also are His children.
- Being, then, the children of God, we ought not to think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
- Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent.
- [1 : 40] Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.
- Then, please go back a page or two to chapter 20. And in chapter 20, we'll be looking at verses 17 through 21.
- From Miletus, He sent to Ephesus and called to Him the elders of the church.
- And when they had come to Him, He said to them, You yourselves know, shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Then go back a number of pages. To chapter 26. And in chapter 26, we'll be looking at verses 19 and 20.
- [4 : 02] So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring, both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem, and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.
- Thank you, Gary. We continue with this subject that is absolutely critical to an understanding of what is involved in the mechanics and the dynamics of our salvation.
- And this is a word that we have given considerable attention to and will continue to do so, because it is an oft-omitted ingredient to the presentation of the gospel.
- We have said from the outset that no one is saved by repentance, but you cannot be saved without repentance. It is a key ingredient.
- We could say the same thing about an issue like, for instance, sincerity. No one is saved by being sincere, but you cannot be saved without sincerity.
- [5 : 42] And I trust that the meaning of those terms makes it axiomatic as to their understanding. I've got a proposition now I want to present, and then we'll go on and pursue this subject. We've been talking about repentance, and we've been explaining that essentially all it means is to change your mind.

The only basis for repenting about anything is because we have discovered that our former position about an issue is wrong, and we understand it to be so.

Please, please know this is not limited to areas religious. Repentance is an applicable word to any aspect of life in any endeavor.

All it means is that you change your mind about anything, about the weather, about a boyfriend, about the kind of car you're going to buy, about the kind of car you did buy, has nothing to do with anything specifically religious.

It just means change of mind. And you change your mind only because of one thing. That is, you have received new data or new information that causes you to change your mind.

[6 : 58] You reverse yourself. I used to think thus and so and thus and so, but since I learned about this, I have to change my mind. I have to go with a completely different idea because I learned that that was all wrong.

We, all of us, believe all kinds of things that are not true. Sometimes we believe them simply because somebody else believes them, and we respect that person.

I think it was in the previous message that I mentioned, something to the effect that, of all people, the Beatles, the Fab Four, had something to do with the change and the shift that has taken place in our culture.

You better believe it. Now, please don't go out of here and say, Marv said that the Beatles are the blame for a whole mess that the world is in. I am saying that the Beatles, unsuspecting as it might have looked on the surface, were a huge contributor to the change in thinking and philosophy that began making inroads in the Western world.

This was primarily due to the fact that it was they, more than anyone else, who popularized and brought into the country Eastern mysticism through their fascination with the Maharisha and Hindu mysticism.

[8 : 32] When the Beatles came to the United States, and this is difficult for some of the younger people to understand, but those of us who were old enough and who were here when it happened, realized this was a rock musical group that took this continent by storm.

I mean, it was absolutely incredible the impact that these musicians, young musicians from England, made on the rest of the world.

Our young people particularly were so taken with them. I mean, they had appearances and it was young people swooning and fainting and it was just amazing.

It was just unbelievable. And when they became infatuated with Eastern mysticism, it caused a lot of our young people who are now young or older adults to likewise become fascinated with Eastern mysticism.

Why? Because the Beatles were. How could anything that the Beatles think or do possibly be wrong? And they began giving credence to this and following the teachings and young people picked up on this and it was back in the time of the hippie movement and it solidified that.

[10 : 02] It was a curious mix and it had a tremendous impact on the whole psyche of the Western world. And sad to say, so many people are influenced toward belief in something because of who else believes it.

You should never, ever endorse anything simply because someone else believes it. Unless that someone, of course, is deity.

It is a tragic fact, but it is all too true that people are often more impressed with what other people think or say than they are with what God Himself thinks or says.

I've even heard people say things like, well, if that's what Marv believes, it must be good. That saddens me.

It does not make me encouraged. It does not make me feel in any kind of satisfaction at all. It saddens me.

[11 : 10] We are to believe what we believe because we are convinced that it corresponds to reality. That it is true. Not because of who else believes it.

And for sure, you shouldn't feel that way about me because I've told you a number of times how many times I have changed my mind about something. So, don't believe anything because I say it.

It may well be wrong. You've got to be a Berean. You've got to go to the Scriptures and check it out. Don't believe on the basis of what someone else believes.

Understand. Work through the process yourself. Come to your own conclusions. The basis for believing anything about anything is because you're convinced that it's true.

And that's it. And once you're convinced that it's true, you align yourself with it regardless of who else believes it or who does not. So, when we change our mind about an issue and we reverse course to embrace what we now know to be true, that's repentance.

[12 : 19] The need for repentance or reversing our course is always because of information received that reveals the wrong position. We reverse ourselves because information received enlightens us to its being wrong.

When we proclaim the Gospel, we are merely providing people with a reason to change their mind. We're giving them information that can lead to their repentance.

It may be merely an intellectual decision or it may involve much emotion depending upon the nature of the reversal and the issue involved.

Repentance may be accompanied by an overwhelming sense of guilt. And I'm talking about repentance now in a spiritual area having to do with salvation. And we're going to get into the area of remorse, regret, and ruin and so on.

All of this is part of the package. So, repentance may or may not be accompanied by an overwhelming sense of guilt in connection with what we were wrong about before.

[13 : 30] We receive information that caused us to reverse ourselves. If the repentance extends to a positive embrace of the person and work of Jesus Christ, it may well be accompanied by bitter tears, guilt, also a sense of great relief and joy over the realization that God's grace offered to us through Jesus Christ and the realization of the forgiveness that accompanies it.

I think by far and away the most profound instance that I can think of in connection with repentance, one we've already touched on, and that is the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

When he had that experience on the Damascus and remember why he was going to Damascus, he had received special permission from the chief priests at the temple in Jerusalem to chase down these Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah.

And those locally had been persecuted. Many of them had been rounded up, had been imprisoned, had been beaten, and several fled the country.

They got clear out of the country. They knew that they were not welcome there where they were, that their own countrymen, and by the way, this was not persecution from the Romans. This had nothing to do with the Romans.

[15 : 03] This was purely Jewish, all Jewish. And when they heard and realized that they were persona non grata from their own countrymen, fellow Jews, they left the country.

They fled to Syria up north, capital of which is Damascus. To this day, it's the capital of Syria, and Damascus is the oldest continually inhabited city in the world.

And that's where these were seeking refuge. Word got to Saul of Tarsus that that's where they had gone. So, they left the country, have they?

All right. So, he went to the chief priest, with whom he was already friends, there in Jerusalem, told them that a bunch of these renegade Jews who were propagating the idea that Jesus was not only the Messiah, but that he had actually come back from the dead, and that people who believed this had fled the country, and they were up to Syria.

Now, he said, that's out of our jurisdiction. How can I go up there? They said, not a problem. And they gave him letters of introduction, because he was going to a foreign country.

[16 : 24] He would be crossing an international border. They gave him letters of introduction to the authorities in Syria that he would present to them in Damascus when he got there.

These were Syrians. And the letters say, this will introduce to you Saul of Tarsus, who is coming to Syria under our jurisdiction and under our auspices, and he is there for the purpose of rounding up these rebel Jews who have fled to your country and returned them to Jerusalem.

And by the way, we would deeply appreciate your cooperating with him and realize that he is not there to do the Syrian people harm and blah, blah, blah. And the idea was to secure the cooperation of the Syrian authorities so they would be willing to turn these people over to Saul of Tarsus so he could bring them back.

That's why he was going there. Now that is zeal. That's aggressive. And by the way, do you think all the while that Saul of Tarsus was doing this and pursuing these people, do you think he was sincere?

Absolutely. Do you think he thought he was doing the right thing? Absolutely. I'm sure he probably prided himself on being such a zealous Jew.

[17 : 47] He is going above and beyond the call of duty. That's how much I hate those people and that's how much I love my God. I'm willing to go to this extreme to serve Jehovah.

And how will stamping these people out serve Jehovah? Very simple. These people teach that Jesus is the end of the law.

And that these people are teaching that the law of Moses has been superseded by this Jesus person. He is a cancer that is growing on Judaism.

You've got to eliminate these people. That's what he was doing. So when he met the risen Christ on the road and was smitten from his horse and with blindness and Christ revealed himself to him, can you imagine the trauma?

it must have just been overwhelming. And they lead him into town by the hand because he is stung blind.

[18 : 57] Can't see a thing. Lead him into town and he goes to this man's house where he is given accommodations and we are told that he doesn't eat and he doesn't drink and he sits there blind for three days.

What's going on in his mind? Mentally and emotionally, this man is a basket case. He is engaging in 72 hours of repentance.

That's what he's doing. He is reliving scenes from the past. He is reliving the punishment that he inflicted upon these people.

He is reliving the account of the stoning of Stephen when he held their garments. All of the bitterness and invective that he has delivered against those people, it all comes tumbling back to his mind.

He was wrong. He was wrong about this. He was wrong about that. He was wrong. He was wrong. He was wrong. How could I be so wrong? How could I have been so blind? I can't believe it.

[20 : 17] How could I have not seen it? How could I do that? How? And he talks about he did it ignorantly and in unbelief.

Now listen. Listen. When Paul wrote to Timothy and said that he persecuted Christians, he did it ignorantly. That means he didn't know.

And in unbelief. Unbelief about what? Do you think he believed in God? Of course he did. That's why he was doing it. He believed in God and his actions were totally wrong.

Totally contrary to God. All the while he was believing in God. Oh yes, absolutely he believed in God. Think of that. And here he is having to confront himself with all of his attitudes and actions and with the wrongness of all of them.

there in my in my estimation there is not a greater 180 anywhere. I do not know of any instance of greater repentance than this, greater reversal than this.

[21 : 38] And then can you not understand perhaps in light of that the incredible unflagging zeal that he had for Christ after he did come to faith and after he did get the information that he needed, here was a man who literally burnt himself out, wore himself out, spent himself, literally gave every ounce of everything he had wherever he went, and the expression that was often used was we labored among you with the gospel.

And the word labor in the Greek means we toiled to the point of exhaustion. How many of us serve the cause of Christ to the extent that we have absolutely no energy left?

We are completely worn out. Paul did that on a daily basis. You know what he was doing? playing catch-up.

He was trying to make up for all of the ill he had caused to these believers. Not in any wise or to be construed in any way, shape, or form as some kind of payback to God or paying for what Christ did for him.

Nothing like that. He knew better than that. But he was so captivated by how wrong he was and relished the opportunity to reverse it every time he could.

[23 : 24] And he never lost an opportunity to do so. That is repentance that is just incredible. And it was all based on the same thing.

It's always based on the same thing. It is information. And the more information he got, the more repentant he was. Now let's talk a little bit about remorse. Someone said, do you have to feel sorry for your sins in order to be saved?

No. No. Remorse is a feeling.

It is an emotion. remorse is an act of the will. It is of the intellect. Repentance means you change your mind. But remorse is a feeling or an emotion.

It is like grief or happiness. Remorse is a sad feeling that you have about something. What causes that? Once again, it is information.

[24 : 35] Where does the information come from? It comes from the mind, from the intellect. Now let me give you a little scenario here. This is really important because this is what takes place when an individual comes to faith in Christ.

The day I was saved, December 8, 1956, I, with only the pastor and Barbara present, I remember kneeling by a pew there in that little Baptist church, Main Street, Baptist church in Ellensburg, Washington.

And the minister had just asked me if I wanted to receive Christ as my personal Savior. And I said, yes, I do. And he said, all right, let's kneel down.

And I knelt down there. And he said, you pray and then I'll pray. And I just, like I said, I just stumbled through a prayer. It was probably the first time I'd ever prayed in my life that wasn't now I lay me down to sleep or maybe the Lord's prayer.

And I stumbled through this prayer and then he prayed and I got up. And do you know what I felt? Nothing.

[25 : 52] I didn't feel anything. I didn't feel, like some people say when they got saved, feel like a thousand pound anvil had been lifted off my chest.

I didn't feel that. They just felt overjoyed and wept with tears of joy. I didn't cry. I didn't weep. I didn't feel anything. I do remember turning to the minister.

I stood up. I turned to the minister and I said, is that it? And he said, well, did you mean what you prayed?

And I said, oh, yes, absolutely. There's no way that I would not mean something like that. Yes, I know. And he said, all right then. He said, based on what God said in his word, he has saved you.

And I said, okay, that's good. Thank you very much. No emotion. No tears. No remorse.

[27 : 04] No regret. Boo-hoo. Oh, I'm such a terrible sinner and I'm so glad that God, no, no, although that was true. That was no feeling that I had.

When did the feelings come? The feelings came as the information base grew, as I learned more and more information from this book, I began to develop an appreciation for what had happened to me, for what had actually taken place.

it. And I began to tell others about it. And when we came back to Springfield, all the way across from Olympia, Washington to Springfield, I was telling my parents, my mom, my dad, my sister, we invited them to go to church with us.

They hadn't been going to church anywhere. Good people, salt of the earth people, honest, hardworking, never went to church. I invited them to go with Barbara and me to church and they did.

And do you know what happened? They started getting information. And one day when an invitation was given in an evangelistic meeting or a service, my mother and my father and my kid sister all came to faith in Christ.

[28 : 42] Then I had some emotion. I had an appreciation of what had happened to them. And it so moved me. I was so much more relieved and excited about their salvation than I was about mine.

What made the difference? What I learned in between information. Folks, let me say it again and again and again. You cannot use what you do not have.

You cannot use what you do not know. we are all the while gathering information from all kinds of sources. Many of them are not good.

Many of them are just dribble and trivia that comes from the TV and the billboard and the small talk and all the rest of it. But mingled in with all of that is something that really matters.

Something of substance, something of eternal consequence, something from God himself provides that information. And it begins making a case in our mind.

[29 : 52] We begin an information bank. We begin storing this information. And then we have enough information to act on. Either to repent, to reverse ourselves with something, or to take a course of action that we never considered before.

All based on this information. And it is an absolutely glorious thing. Feelings or emotions are important. I don't want to minimize them.

What causes or produces feelings? We feel what we feel because of what we know or think we know.

You may think you know something that is correct, but it isn't correct at all. But because you think you know it, it generates a feeling. This is amazing.

I read an article just the other day. It's just absolutely fascinating. It was in the little Acts and Facts booklet that comes out. And it talks about the food chain and how it begins with the sun, which I'd never considered before.

[31 : 04] A couple of other things I haven't considered either. And then it talks about the ingesting of food, where the process begins when you take a bite of food.

And we think, well, it begins with taking the fork and putting it. No, no, no, no. The process begins in your brain before you've tasted anything.

The brain, the brain knows through seeing or smelling, the brain knows food is on the way.

And the brain says to things in your body like salivary glands, did you know that your brain communicates with your salivary glands?

And that you may produce a quart of saliva in one day? the brain says to the salivary glands, here comes something good, get ready.

[32 : 06] And the salivary glands start secreting and all of this is taking place in the brain. And what you are feeling by way of an emotion, if you are sitting down to your favorite dish or your favorite food, you've got your taste buds all geared up for that and anticipating that.

they know what's coming and oh boy, this is my favorite dish, this is something that's really good and so and you know what you feel? You feel you feel elation, you feel satisfaction, you feel enjoyment, all based on information, what you take in through those other senses and lo and behold, if somehow or another it doesn't materialize or it's taken away from you and you can't have it, then you've got another emotion.

And what feeds that emotion? Once again, it's information. That which you thought you were going to get isn't there, it's taken away and you reverse yourself. And now it's feeling of sadness, disappointment, whatever.

This goes on. It is a process that is set in motion. Feelings are generated by what you know or what you think you know. They cause you to feel the way you do.

Here you are just going through life, having just an ordinary regular day and all of a sudden you get a phone call. Who is it?

[33 : 44] Someone you haven't heard from for a while. What do they have to tell you? A very dear old friend of yours passed away unexpectedly. me. What do you feel?

Oh, man. Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that. And all of a sudden information has invaded the scene and controls how you feel.

And you feel terrible because of what you know. it works the same way with the gospel. God doesn't use some special mechanical spiritual device when it comes to salvation.

It is a standard operating procedure. What makes it different and the only thing that makes it different is the content. It's what the information is.

And in the case of the gospel, it is Christ died for our sins. feelings are generated by our intellect. This is the basis of remorse or regret or ruin.

[35 : 00] Remorse, regret means that if you could change the situation and reverse it, you would. There's a common term that is used among realtors.

I think it's probably used among automobile salesmen too. It's called buyer's remorse. Have you ever experienced that?

Buyer's remorse. That means you bought it today. It was a bargain. It was an opportunity. You just couldn't pass it up.

So you bought it. And then you slept on it. Usually you want to sleep on it first. You slept on it.

And the next morning you wake up and you take out your checkbook and you look at your bank balance and you say, why did I buy that?

[36 : 00] Why did I do that? I can't afford it. I shouldn't have bought it. That's called buyer's remorse. That's why a lot of contracts have a phrase written into them that the deal can be canceled within 72 hours or 48 hours or something like that.

Sometimes that's part of the contract and that is to allow for buyer's remorse. You change your mind and I want out of this deal. You regret it. You rue the day.

Have you ever heard anybody say, she's going to rue the day she married that guy. What's that mean? That means one of these mornings after the wedding she's going to wake up and say, why in the world did I ever marry this guy?

That was a bad decision. That's buyer's remorse. That's rueing. That's regretting. That means if you could go back and do the whole thing over again, you'd do it differently.

doesn't that point out the importance of knowing your mind before you make that major purchase or major commitment?

[37 : 18] You better really make sure so that you don't have the remorse or the regret later on. In the phrases that we have been using, notitia, essentia, and fiducia.

We've got them right here. Let me just refer to them. The reason that this level is so important is because, and I am convinced that this is true, notitia, as regards the gospel, notitia simply means that people have been noticed.

someone has been told Christ died for your sins. Essentia means that they agree, unless of course they disagree, in which case it is dissentia. But if they agree, it is taking the information of which they have been notified, examining it, and saying, yes, I agree with the information.

many are persuaded, and this is really important, I want you to get this, many are persuaded that it is this agreement, or this assent, that is all that is necessary for salvation, that the fiducia, which I have labeled the commitment, or the entrustment, is not part of the gospel, but it is human works.

That is not true. That is not true. That is not true. It is not sufficient to stop at assentia, where you agree that Christ died for your sins.

[39 : 08] The next question is then that should follow, alright, if you agree that Christ died for your sins, what have you done about it? And here is where people say, well, if you have to do something about it, that's works, not grace.

faith. But fiducia is where the word faith or fidelity comes from. And until you have acted upon what you agree to, until you have acted upon it with your will, salvation has not occurred.

do you know who else believes to this point? These are three levels of belief. Notitia, essentia, fiducia.

Do you know who else agrees with number one and number two? Satan does. James chapter two. You believe that there is one God?

You do well. The devil also believes and trembles. Satan believes this, of course he does. Why wouldn't it? Corresponds with reality.

[40 : 21] He knows what's true. He's the father of the lie, but he knows what's true. You can't be a father of the lie if you don't know what's true. This is where Satan is.

And this is where multitudes of people are who call themselves Christians, but are not. Because they have never taken this step. This step, this fiducia is faith.

The very first chapter of Romans, turn to it if you would please. Romans chapter one. This is, to me, this is really significant. Romans chapter one. The exercising of faith, or the making of a commitment or entrustment to oneself, of oneself to Jesus Christ, is not an act of human works.

It is an act of non-meritorious faith. It is simply the human response to what God has done in Christ. And in Romans chapter one, the apostle said, gives his credentials, his calling in the first few verses concerning his son, verse three, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his namesake.

To bring about the obedience of faith. Belief is an act of obedience. But wait a minute, wait a minute, say they.

[42 : 10] in Acts chapter 2, Paul wrote to the Ephesians and said that you were children of disobedience.

That means they were unbelievers. They had not believed. They were dwelling in disbelief. And they are called to obedience as an act of faith.

And here's the rub. Many take the position that to make a commitment or an intelligent entrustment of oneself has to be a human work because it is impossible for man to respond.

Otherwise, look, let's put it this way. this is a difficult concept, but you've got to get your brain around this because it will loosen up so many things for you, I trust as it has for me.

Many take the position that man is unable to believe because he is spiritually dead. He does not have the capacity to believe.

[43 : 27] So, when you preach the gospel to someone who is spiritually dead, he cannot respond. Okay?

And the reason he cannot respond is because he isn't able to. He's spiritually dead. Well, the analogy is given if you take, and the one that I've used in the past, if you take a man who is a confirmed alcoholic and he has been drinking all of his life and he never passed up a drink, and here he is in his casket and he's passed on, and you take a bottle of his favorite whiskey and you set it right there on the casket in front of him, he is not going to rise up and take it.

And the only reason he isn't is because he's dead. If he weren't dead, he could. So, you being dead in trespasses and sin cannot believe.

You don't have the ability to believe. You don't have the power to believe. Therefore, it's not your responsibility to believe. And this goes back to the Calvinism and election and so on.

And here's the issue. You cannot believe because you're dead. What is death? How do you define death?

[44 : 49] death? More often than not, death is defined as a complete inability to do anything.

And with that definition, they're probably right. But that's not a biblical definition of death. Biblical definition of death, nor is it a cessation of existence. Biblical definition of death is just one thing, and that is this.

Separation. Separation. Physical death is separation of the spirit from the body.

Spiritual death is separation of the spirit from God. death is so even though man is spiritually dead, that means he is spiritually separated from God.

It does not mean that he possesses no ability to respond. It simply means he's separated from God. So here in Romans chapter 1, Paul says the very reason I was called and made an apostle is to bring about, verse 5, to bring about the obedience of faith.

[46 : 11] Faith is an act of obedience. It is a response to what God has done for you in Jesus Christ. What do you think of that?

What do you make of that? What are you going to do about that? And if you say, well I'm not going to do anything about it, that means you are maintaining a position of disobedience.

that's the sphere in which an unbeliever dwells. Ephesians 2, children of disobedience. When you hear the information and you respond to it in a positive way, since Jesus Christ died for me, he died for me in my place, he died the death that I deserve, that being the case, I want to deliver myself to him as his purchased possession.

I want to entrust myself to him for his salvation, this one who died for me. That is the obedience of faith.

That is the human response to God's provision. obligation. And let me make it very, very clear, we are all responsible for that, particularly when we have gotten the information or gotten it repeatedly.

[47 : 43] And the more we get the information without responding to it, the more accountable and culpable we become. Because unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required. faith. That's the obedience of faith. And I think it's very significant that right from the very outset, Paul makes that crystal clear. That's why he is out and about.

That's the purpose for his missionary journeys. That's why he suffered shipwreck, imprisonment, beatings, flogging, stoning, and all the rest. Just for one thing, to bring about the obedience of faith among the Gentiles.

that's how he opens this tremendously important doctrinal epistle. Now I want you to look at how he closes it. Come back to Romans chapter 16.

Last chapter in the book. Romans chapter 16. Verse 25. Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past but now is manifested and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the eternal God has been made known to all the nations leading to obedience of faith.

[49 : 17] They can't believe if they haven't heard. They can't hear if you don't give them the information. And Paul says that's what my ministry is all about.

That's all I'm doing is going all over these continents delivering information. Giving people something to respond to.

Nothing has changed. And to say that this belief can stop with item two without going to item three is absolutely impossible.

It short circuits the whole plan of salvation and it leaves people with a false sense of assurance and they go around saying things like, oh I believe, I believe, I've always believed.

And this is what they mean. *Essentia*. What have you done about it? *Fiducia*. You exercise faith. This is your response to what God has done in Christ.

[50 : 20] Without the response, there is no salvation. There is just an agreement to a certain fact that you have not acted upon. It is the act that is accomplished with the human will.

This is not an emotional thing. Hear me now. It is not an emotional thing. It is purely intellectual. It is a decision of the will.

And it may be followed or accompanied by emotion. There may be great elation. There may be tears of joy. There may be remorse and regret over the life that one has lived, the sinful past of one, realization that it was your sin that contributed to putting Christ on the cross.

That's all appropriate remorse and regret. But you are not saved by that. That is all a consequence. What you are saved by is an act of the will.

That is human faith responding to what God has done in Christ. And my question for you is this. Had you done that? Do you know some point in time when you have done that?

[51 : 42] Your answer to that question is most important you could ever give. This is the only subject I know of in all of the universe that has eternal consequences.

That makes it outshine absolutely everything else by way of importance. There is nothing that compares with this.

What God did in Christ is the ultimate great singular transaction of the universe. And how you relate to that is more important than anything else you could ever do.

Bar none. This is repentance. This is the gospel. This is faith.

This is the nuts and bolts of our salvation. This deals with the mechanics, the dynamics of what actually happens and how God brings this about.

[52 : 55] And it is absolutely wonderful in that he has committed to us, the mind, the intellect, the ability to appreciate and comprehend these things, so that he took something that is so absolutely profound that originated in concert with the triune Godhead, and yet he has brought it down and put it on the level of humanity so we can embrace it and respond to it.

That is amazing. That is amazing. I trust that you have done that. If you have not done that and you are aware of that, you can change that right now, right here.

All that is required is for you to activate your mind. I want to give you an opportunity to do that right now. Let's pray. Father, there may not be anyone here in this position, or there may be several.

The answer to that is known only to you, because we don't know. But we do not want to presume that there are none here. We need to make that decision.

So, our prayer for them is that in our addressing you right now, publicly and in their presence, they would be led with their will, not their emotion, but with their will to say, I have received information about Jesus Christ and who he is and what he did, what he did for me.

[54 : 57] And I still have many questions, many things I don't understand, but I understand enough to know this, Jesus died for my sins, and I want to embrace him, I want to thank him, I want to believe on him as my sin substitute.

I want to commit my life to this one who gave his life for me. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for doing for me what I could never do for myself.

I'm asking you now to take charge of this life and make me what you want me to be. I want to cooperate in every way I can.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your great salvation. Dear friend, if you've made that your prayer, this is your spiritual birthday.

Some might think that this is too simple, but let me remind you, it's only simple for us to do. It was a great thing for God to do.

[56 : 08] God did the most he could do so that he could require the least from us, and that is, our trust. Thank you, Heavenly Father, for your availability.

Thank you for your always honoring our repentance, and for your always being more willing to embrace us than we are to embrace you. For any who may have made that decision, give them the courage of their conviction, enable them to talk to others about it, and enjoy the great life that you've provided them in Christ.

pray in his name. Third question or comment? We've got a few minutes left. Anyone? Bernie?

I'm sorry, I'm not hearing you now. you're right, and that comes about as a result of growth, and it's a maturity factor.

Yeah. sometimes it begins right away. With others, it's more gradual. It's related to that, if anyone be in Christ, he's a new creation, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new.

[57 : 32] Any other comments or questions? Okay, let us stand.

And let us leave rejoicing. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.