

# Benefits of Belief XIV -- A MUST LISTEN! A WONDERFUL MESSAGE OF SALVATION!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 06 December 2009

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[ 0 : 00 ] To Gary, let's exercise our option, shall we? Father, we are grateful for the power and the comfort and the enlightenment of your word. And as it was just delivered, we pray the Spirit of God will take the truths that are found herein, drive them into our very innermost being so that when we leave here, we will be different people than when we came in.

We thank you this morning also for the joy of music, for providing us with a medium that can satisfy the soul when mere words will not do.

We are grateful for the manner in which you have created us and made us creative beings, given us a capacity to bring music and notes and sounds to life for our mutual enjoyment and enrichment.

We bless you for being the creator God that you are. Continue to pray for those of our assembly who are undergoing need, and especially we think of our brother Lamar and the loss of Mary.

And we simply pray that he may remind himself that one is not lost when we know where they are. And we thank you for her life, for her testimony.

[ 1 : 19 ] And most of all, we thank you for the life that was given for her, that she might have eternal life and enjoy it even as we one day will as well. So we ask this morning that you will bind up broken hearts, comfort, and sustain them simply on the basis of what they know to be true, because you have been pleased to reveal it.

And to this end, we want to give ourselves this morning for the reception of your truth, and we look to you for what you have to share with us. In Christ's wonderful name, amen.

Over the past several weeks, we have been revealing and explaining numerous assets that God has made available to all believers.

They are made available on the basis of grace, and this means they are yours as a free and undeserved gift.

They are appropriated on the basis of faith. This means that if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, and I'm not going to now stop and explain what is meant by that, suffice it to say that I do not mean what most people mean by that.

[ 2 : 38 ] When they say they believe in Jesus Christ, all they mean is they believe there was such a person. We are talking about an entirely different level of belief than simply recognizing his historical reality.

that if you are a believer because you have appropriated his finished work, you have appropriated it to yourself on the basis of faith, then these divine operating assets are yours, just by virtue of the fact that he provided them for you in his death.

One of the key verses that we use is that verse in Romans chapter 8 that says, He who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

And then you'll recall the verse from Ephesians chapter 1, how that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

These spiritual blessings are God's truths. They are spiritual truths and realities that God has revealed to us.

[ 3 : 51 ] Those are the blessings with which we are blessed. They are not material things. They are not houses and lands and wealth and health and all of that. Important as they are, they do not begin to compare with the eternal spiritual blessings with which we have been blessed.

Because they are eternal and they are enduring. They will be on beyond this present life. So, when we say these assets, these realities, these truths are appropriated on the basis of faith, that means you believe you have them because he says you do.

You do not have these assets because you feel them. Nor are they yours because you have the faith to believe they are yours.

You have these assets whether you feel them or not, whether you even believe them or not. They are still true of you. This does not mean that God provides these assets upon the condition that you have the faith to appropriate them.

Because God has provided them even for the believer who does not appropriate them by faith. They are still his. You are aware, I am sure, as I am, that every now and then you see something printed in the newspaper or some other public type document, usually under the auspices of the state of Ohio.

[ 5 : 26 ] And in it, there will be several names listed with an unknown address.

And these are people whom the state is obviously, for whatever reason, unable to contact. And all of these people, and there may be dozens and dozens of these names, all of these people are put on public notice that there are certain amounts of money that belong to them.

And all they have to do is claim it. But the state is unable to locate them, doesn't even know where they are. And this money is on deposit wherever it is, unbeknownst to the people who have the money coming, and they're trying to locate these people.

And some of them have a tidy sum of money. And some of it is a relatively insignificant amount. But some of these unclaimed funds may be several thousands of dollars.

And all this person has to do is come forward and prove who they are and claim it. But they don't even know that those funds are there. And they aren't able to get any benefit from them.

[ 6 : 46 ] They might as well not even have legal access to that money because it doesn't do them any good. And that is precisely what happens in the body of Christ.

There are believers who know and love the Lord and are going to be in heaven for eternity. And they live lives of a spiritual pauper because they have no idea what has been secured for them and provided to them in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Some Christians think that all God has provided is salvation, eternal life. And that's tremendous. And for them, that's the beginning and end of it.

But there is so very much more. Many times Christians have been ridiculed for their faith and their belief as people who embrace these religious truths and think of it just in terms of this salvation, this Christianity bit is nothing more than pie in the sky by and by when you die.

Well, may I say, it is that. It is a whole lot more than that, but it is that. And such delicious pie you will never have been able to imagine.

[ 8 : 20 ] But what is also incorporated in the death, burial, and Jesus Christ is a divine dynamic, spiritual operating assets for here and now.

As someone said, Christianity isn't just for the sweet by and by. It's also for the nasty now and now. And it impacts your quality of life.

It impacts the enjoyment that you have in life. It impacts the reduction of the stress factor. It allows you to rest, to snuggle down in the arms of a loving Heavenly Father, knowing that He does all things well and He knows what He's doing, no matter the depth of the pain or the heartache that you are experiencing.

God has a plan. He knows what He's doing. And as I've said so many times, more than anything else, God wants you to believe Him.

He wants you to trust Him. That's the message of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. God wants to be believed. He is worthy of being believed. He is trustworthy.

[ 9 : 42 ] He is reliable. He is dependable. You will not be embarrassed or ashamed for your faith in Jesus Christ. So, having these assets and benefiting from them are two radically different things.

I began this series in talking about the premier assets, and I suspect that it's probably illogical for me to try to name one above another, but there is this one that is so great and so powerful, and I've often described it as the greatest single need that the human being has.

And I want to reiterate that before year's end. I do so without apology because it is such an incredibly important aspect, and it is so liberating and so enabling, and it frees us up more than anything else, and that is simply this.

It is the knowledge, the assurance, the confidence that you really are fully, freely, forever forgiven for your sin.

You have no greater need than that, and the knowledge of that. This is one of the principal things that God wants his people to know, relax in, and enjoy more than anything else.

[ 11 : 27 ] And I really want to emphasize this enjoyment aspect because too many Christians endure the life they have in Christ rather than enjoy it.

God wants us to really get a bang out of our Christianity and enjoy it to the fullest. We are perpetually to dine at a spiritual feast that is empowering and liberating and confident building.

And I'm not talking about a bunch of psychobabble and the power of positive thinking and all of that. I'm just talking about knowing and resting and relying in what God has provided for you as he's provided it for every member in the body of Christ.

And it just saddens me deeply to see so many believers impoverished and living under the circumstances.

I was talking years ago with Paul Pontus, and he said, guess who I ran into the other day? And I said, I don't know, tell me.

[ 12 : 41 ] And he said, well, so-and-so. And I said, really? I haven't seen him for a long time. And Paul said, yeah. And I asked him how he was doing. And he said, well, okay, I guess, under the circumstances.

And I told him, what are you doing there? Under the circumstances. And I want to emphasize something.

Now, when I talk about living above the circumstances, I'm not talking about psyching yourself out. I'm talking about reminding yourself of what you already know to be true.

And have I not told you that that's the principal job of the preacher? Is to just persistently and consistently remind you of what you already know.

Because we need perpetual reinforcement. I don't have anything new to tell you. I am not creative. I am not original. I just repeat myself one way or another.

[ 13 : 44 ] But I try to repeat the things that are the most important. And I don't know of anything more important than this. There is a spiritual, there is an inner exhilaration that comes from knowing, not suspecting, or praying that, or hoping that, but in knowing that you really are forgiven.

And God has nothing against you. There is nothing on the account against you. It is all wiped clean.

On what basis? On the basis that he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

That is what Christianity is all about. It is a substitutionary faith. It is the innocent dying for the guilty.

That makes no sense at all. That does not compute. And you know, this is the reason why a lot of people have great difficulty accepting this.

[ 15 : 10 ] Because we just tend to think in terms of justice as being merit and desert and so on. And to a certain extent, it is. But this theme called grace comes along and just bowls that over.

And justice is overcome by grace. Or justice is served by grace. By God doing for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

That's grace. By God withholding from us that which we do deserve. That's mercy. It's just incredible. So, Paul starts many of his letters, Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace, the basis for it all. Mercy is God withholding his justice. Peace is the product that comes as a result thereof. We have peace with God being justified by faith.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have the peace of God that rests and rules in our hearts. And we have the God of peace.

[ 16 : 25 ] Every believer has that. And some do not have it in greater amounts than others.

The truth is there for all of us. It just depends on our appropriating it. And that's principally what we are talking about. While we are nearby in Philippians, take a look at this if you would please.

The passage that Gary just read in Philippians chapter 3 where Paul is giving his pedigree from his past life. And he says in verse 8, I count all things to be lost, worthless, in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Do you see that? In view of... What is there that equals or compares with the value of knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord?

Nothing. Nothing the world has to offer can compare with that. And Paul listed a whole bevy of things here that impress people.

[ 17 : 37 ] And he says, it's all loss. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish. Some translations render it dung, awful.

What kind of value do you put on that? Not much. In order that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him.

So many times this phrase is used by Paul. In Him. In Christ.

He uses that term dozens of times. In fact, he's the only one that does. And I think that this is because prior to the time that God revealed what Christ accomplished through his death, burial, and resurrection, being in Christ the way we are in Christ was not available.

This is a new spiritual dynamic that did not occur until after Christ paid that ultimate price for our sin. Then we can be in union with Him.

[ 18 : 52 ] We are members of His body. We are placed into Christ as members of His body. And this has nothing to do with church membership.

It has everything to do with belonging to Him. We are amalgamated. We are infused. We are welded into Him. Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh.

We are part of what and who He is. That is as secure as you can get. And be found in Him. And then Paul says, be found in Him.

Not having a righteousness of my own, which is through the law. Folks, do-goodism doesn't count for anything except to impress our fellow men.

But it doesn't count for anything with God. to be found in Him. Not having a righteousness of my own, which is by the law.

[ 20 : 02 ] Do this, do that, and do, you know, jump through all of these hoops. And people say, and I live by the Ten Commandments. Have you ever told a lie?

Oh, well, who hasn't told a lie? You know, I mean, everybody's told a lie. Okay, well, there's one down, nine to go. You know, have you ever murdered anybody?

Oh, no, I've never murdered anybody. Well, have you ever really hated anyone? Well, yeah, I've done that.

Well, the New Testament makes it quite clear that murder begins with hatred. and if you hate a brother in your heart, it's just like killing him in your heart.

You wish him dead. You ever done that? Well, I remember this particular boss or this army sergeant I had, and I, well, have you ever stolen anything?

[ 21 : 09 ] Well, not anything big. Well, is a thief a thief? And how many times do you have to steal to be a thief? I remember when I was about seven years old, during the war, went over to the local drug store across the street to buy a comic book.

And, as I was paying for it, I saw these really neat little flashlights there. and I thought, and it was like 29 cents, you know, big money.

Here I had my dime for a comic book and the clerk turned his back to do something and I thought, just by impulse, you know, I just reached over and took that and slipped it into my shirt pocket, just hardly without even thinking about it.

Well, every boy seven years old needs one of those. besides, they won't miss it. I got home and I was entertaining myself with it and my dad said, what do you got there?

I said, it was a little flashlight. Where'd you get that? Oh, I found it. See, I was a thief, now I'm a liar.

[ 22 : 32 ] I found it. You found it. Where did you find it? And I made up some story. And he was halfway satisfied and I probably would have gotten away with it.

But mama wasn't. And she started asking some questions. And the grilling kept up. And the sweat came. And finally, I broke.

Dad marched me right back over to that drug store across the street. Talked to the owner. Says, now you tell him what you did. And I said, well, boy, is it?

Well, Mr. Wiseman, he said, I'm going to have to call the police, you know. And I didn't know that he and my dad were cooking this thing up.

but he went over there and he made what I thought was a telephone call. And boy, I thought the man in blue was going to be coming out and take me away to juvenile detention school and they'd probably never hear from me again.

[ 23 : 43 ] And I was sweating it. Who isn't guilty of some kind of theft like that? So you live by the Ten Commandments. Here I am seven years old and I'm already a thief and a liar.

At age seven, you know. And this is the picture of humanity. We're all like this. And James says he who would keep the whole law and offend in one point, he's guilty of all. And I've used the illustration like the Ten Commandments, ten links in a chain and you're dangling over this cliff held by this chain.

Would it be so bad if only one link broke? But all ten might as well break. The result's the same, isn't it?

guilty of all. So this is what we've got to contend with. Paul said, you know something, this is the only kind of righteousness that I can provide is a flawed righteousness, a deficient righteousness, a righteousness that might make me look good compared to yours, or might make me look worse compared to yours.

but what does God compare it with? God compares righteousness with his standard, not yours.

[ 25 : 06 ] God has his own standard. What's God's standard? What's God like? God is perfect.

God's standard is perfect. perfect. So what does he require? Perfection. Well, I can't provide that.

Nobody can. That's the point. Nobody can. Does it seem fair that God would require a level of righteousness that we cannot provide?

is there anything fair about that? Doesn't seem fair. Seems like unreasonable expectations. You tell these people, now, I demand from you absolute perfection.

But I know you can't provide that. And do you know what God does? He said, so, I'm going to provide it for you.

[ 26 : 18 ] Well, why should he do that? That's what grace is. Why should he love me so?

Why should my Savior to Calvary go? Why should he love me so? He just does. It's his nature to love. It's his perfect nature to love.

and he has grace available that will do for us and provide for us what we cannot provide for ourselves. But here's the big problem.

It isn't that God is unwilling to save us. It's that we tend to be unwilling that we can't manage it on our own.

We tend to be unwilling to admit that. We think we can do something that we can measure up, that we can somehow make it, and we can't.

[ 27 : 24 ] And our Lord calls this being poor in spirit. What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

It means internally in your human spirit you admit to yourself that you are morally poverty stricken.

You are poor in spirit. That is a tremendous thing for a human being to be able to admit spirit.

Because our ego is such we want to be can-do people.

I can make it. I can fix this. I can do it. I can provide what's required. No, you can't. You can't. Give it up.

[ 28 : 31 ] Forget it. You can't. And you don't have to. And God doesn't expect you to because he knows you can't. That's why he sent a savior.

God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world. It was already condemned. But to save the world.

Save the world through a savior. is that so hard to understand? Saved through a savior. That's his business.

That's why he came. That's what he specializes in. That's why he is the only one in all of the universe who can justifiably wear the title.

Savior. Nobody else is eligible for that. Not Muhammad. Not Joseph Smith.

[ 29 : 30 ] not Judge Rutherford. Not Mary Baker Eddy. Only Jesus Christ can claim to be savior. So Paul says the righteousness which is through faith or through believing in Christ the righteousness which comes from God.

Then what kind of righteousness would that be? It would be a perfect righteousness. righteousness. And how is it obtained? It is obtained solely on the basis of belief.

This is what faith is. It means to believe. It is a righteousness which is received on the basis of faith and it is a righteousness that God has to give.

So let me say this and this is the best way I can explain it. The righteousness that God receives is not an issue or a question of an amount.

It is not how righteous do you have to be or how much righteousness do you have to have. That's not the question.

[ 30 : 43 ] The question is what kind of righteousness because it is not qualitative it is quantitative.

It is not a degree of righteousness it is a kind of righteousness. So you need to understand that only a perfect righteousness which Jesus Christ provides is the only kind that God can accept because that's the kind of righteousness that is in keeping with God's character and quality.

It's perfection. So if we think that God is unreasonable because he demands perfection from you the unreasonableness goes right out the window because God also provides for you what he requires from you and all you have to do to get it is believe him.

Put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ gives his righteousness to you. that's amazing.

That is called amazing grace. How sweet the sound. God does that. On the basis of what?

[ 32 : 07 ] Just you're believing him. Just and lest you be prepared to say that's too easy. That's too easy.

Let me remind you God has done the most he could do in giving his son so that he could require from you the least that you could do which is just believe him.

Just trust him. That is just astounding. that is a plan the likes of which no human being would ever come up with.

We've never thought of this in a million years. And God does it on the basis of substitution. Just absolutely spellbinding. And that's what Paul is talking about here.

Not having a righteousness which comes from God on the basis of the law, but the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

[ 33 : 11 ] Just simple trust in him. And I have one more that I want to share with you before we conclude. And it is in 2 Corinthians back just a few pages. It's a very familiar passage like this.

And it says basically the same thing only in a little different way. And it is a marvelous passage. I'm talking about verse 21 of 2 Corinthians chapter 5 where it says that God made him, Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf.

To what end or to what purpose? That or in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Now you dare not leave off those last two words because they are what make this work. that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

And let me say this, God does not have any other vehicle for imparting his righteousness to you apart from his son, Jesus Christ.

[ 34 : 29 ] That's why he is the way, the truth, and the life. and he is the exclusive way and the truth and the life.

This is a legal, forensic thing, and it means that this is your official standing before God. It is the perfect righteousness of Christ, and if you don't have that, you're sunk.

There is no help for you, and there is no hope for you, if you do not have that. If you stand before the Almighty clothed in your own tattered garments of sin and unrighteousness, and you try to pass that off, it will never work.

God has one standard, and that is Christ. And if you are in him, you have Christ's righteousness.

You know, the old barnhouse question that we've used here so many times, that Donald Gray Barnhouse used in a radio program back in the 1950s that resulted in Dr.

[ 35 : 58 ] D. James Kennedy coming to know the Lord. If you were to die today, and you stood before your Maker, and God looks at you and says, why should I let you come into my heaven?

What would you tell him? There are dozens and dozens of wrong answers. There's only one right answer.

You should let me come into your heaven because you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sin, and my trust, and my confidence, and my hope, and my everything is in him.

He is my entree into heaven, and I don't have anything else. God will accept. That's it. That's all I've got. That's all you need.

That's all God will accept. Is that what you have? And if so, how do you know you have that?

[ 37 : 07 ] How do you know that you enjoy that kind of forgiveness, that legal position? God accounts you judicially as perfect in Christ.

We know you're not, and everybody who knows you knows you're not. But I'm talking about the way God reviews you and sees you in your official standing before him, legally before him, in accordance with the demands of heaven's court.

that's how God sees you, positionally in Christ, forgiven, freely, fully, forever. That is releasing.

It is exhilarating. It's liberating. It enables you to move out in life with a confidence and a joy that the world doesn't know anything about and can't understand.

And it's real. and the only way that you can know you have that is because God says you do and you believe him.

[ 38 : 20 ] Oh, but I don't feel forgiven. Well, lots of times you feel really ratty, terrible, nasty. You don't feel forgiven. You just feel out of sorts.

Your day has gone wrong. Your week has gone wrong. And this has collapsed on you. And that's died on you. And this was left on you. And that fell apart. And this is a reversal. And adversity.

And all the rest of it. And you just feel rotten. Feel anything but forgiven. So, what are you? You're forgiven.

You are forgiven. You are in him. Maybe you're having a bad day. Maybe you're having a bad month. Doesn't change the facts. Because this is not contingent upon your feeling it.

Listen, it isn't even contingent upon your believing it. Because it's true of you even if you don't believe it. It's just that you don't get any benefit from it.



[ 39 : 25 ] It's true for everyone who is in Christ. And your basis for this confidence is not your ability to feel it. it is God's integrity that said it.

And that's a lot more reliable than your feelings. Mine too. This you can take to the bank. That we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Typical response is, well, nobody is that righteous. Yes, you are. If you are in Christ, you share his righteousness. If you are in Christ, you share in his death, you share in his burial, you share in his resurrection, you share in his ascension, you share in his enthronement.

That's what it means to be in him. And you have his eternal life imparted to you. Not because you're a good guy, not because you deserve it, but because you have realized your deficiency and that you can't hack it.

Admit it. Christianity is not for weak people. Don't you ever think for a moment it is.

[ 40 : 52 ] Christianity is not for weak people. Weak people, weak people cannot and will not admit that they can't hack it.

Weak people think they can. Morally strong people have faced the facts and they know they can't and they're not trying to kid themselves.

They're facing the reality. I am undone. I am unworthy. I can't make it. Neither can anybody else. And that's why Jesus Christ came.

So I want to take my trust, my confidence, my future, my hopes, my dreams, everything. I want to deposit it in the person of Jesus Christ. I want his salvation because mine is worthless.

His is priceless. Have you done that? How do you do that? You do it as an act of your will. You do it as a volitional, intentional act.

[ 41 : 58 ] You decide to do it and you do it. That's how you do it. It isn't mystical. It isn't mysterious. It isn't ethereal.

It is just positively responding to what God has done in Christ. It is simple, but it is so important.

Would you pray with me, please? Loving Father, principles that we have considered this morning that saturate your word need to be part and parcel of everyone here this morning and everyone in the world for that matter because Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world.

world. And we know that many reject him as Savior. Many do not see him as Christians do. This does not change the reality of it.

And we pray that should there be one here this morning, boy or girl, man or woman, young or old, who's never really understood what it means to be in Christ, what it means to really be forgiven.

[ 43 : 17 ] We trust that the Spirit of God will take these passages from this precious book, apply them to their hearts so that they will be able to say, that's it, that's what I need and I want that.

And I have lots of questions and lots of fears and lots of doubts and lots of things I can't resolve, but I know one thing, I've come to the reality that I can't do this on my own, I can't be what you require of me, so I want Jesus Christ to stand in for me and I want to be in him.

Lord Jesus, best as I know how, I just want to put my trust and confidence in you. I want to believe that you are who the Bible says you are and you did what the Bible says you did and I want the benefit of that because you did it for me as well as the rest of the world.

And Father, if anyone here has taken that position, may they have the courage to tell another. We know that you will provide for them the assurance and the comfort that only you can, as your spirit bears witness with their spirit, that they are indeed a child of God.

Thank you for this simplicity of the message and for the profundity of it at the same time. We bless you for being the God that you are and Jesus for being the Savior that he is in his wonderful name.

[ 45 : 04 ]    Amen. Amen. Amen.