

*** An In Depth Look at PERSONAL SALVATION ***

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[0 : 00] I'm to the conclusion that there is a tremendous need for our returning to some very basic elements that have defined Christianity for the last 2,000 years.

I think it's rather apparent that our message has been greatly obscured over the past generation. And I think that there are a couple of things that are largely responsible for that.

One has to do with the depreciation of life itself. And we see that demonstrated in the callous attitude that some have toward the subject of abortion and the termination of the lives of the unborn, which tends to depreciate the value of life itself at all stages.

Because these things are never confined to the area for which they are intended. There is always a permeating splashover effect that is occurring and has been for over the last 50 years.

And then there is another concept that has taken on a new kind of energy, and that is religious pluralism. And with the rise of religious pluralism, which insists that all faiths are equal, that all roads lead to God, and it doesn't make any difference which path you're taking up the mountain, everybody gets to the top.

[1 : 27] And of course, this completely negates the whole concept of evangelism. Because if everybody is okay wherever they are with whatever they believe, whether it's something or nothing, doesn't make any difference.

Humanity is just one big happy family, and everybody is eventually going to get reconciled with God. And this kind of thinking, of course, just completely guts or neutralizes the gospel.

You don't have any valid basis for evangelism, if that be true. And that is the kind of thing that we are dealing with today. It is apparent.

You see it through the media in so many ways. You see it in the decline in churches. You see it in the lack of interest in and involvement in evangelism.

And we are very much committed to the idea that the scriptures maintain the need for evangelism, and that people are really lost.

[2 : 37] And when you come to grips with that and are willing to do nothing about it, then you become part of the problem instead of part of the solution. And we certainly at Grace Bible Church don't want anything to do with that kind of an attitude.

I remember hearing, or actually overhearing, in a place of business one time where people were waiting in line and discussing, and somebody said something about somebody who's going into the ministry.

Really? Is that right? Yeah, I heard he's going to become a preacher. He said, well, I just hope to God he's not one of those preachers that's going to run around telling people they need to be saved. Well, but that's what the need is.

And once again, at the outset, let me reiterate something that I have done for a long time and will continue to do. And that is a little expression, a little saying.

It's all about authority. Always has been. Always will be. What you believe, what you teach, all depends on the authority under which you are operating.

[3 : 54] Who has the ultimate word? And people even ridicule the idea of being saved. I remember hearing a personal testimony of Marv Rosenthal, who at the time was the president of Friends of Israel.

Marv Rosenthal grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And he worked as a cashier, and he was only about 16, 17 years old.

He worked as a cashier in the family delicatessen there in Philadelphia. And there was a lady who was identified as a home missionary, and she often came to their delicatessen for lunch.

And this one day, she was there, and as she went through the line to pay her check for the lunch that she had enjoyed, she said, Marvin Rosenthal, I just want you to know that I am praying for you.

And he said, You're praying for me? What are you praying for me for? And she said, Well, I'm praying that you might be saved.

[5 : 11] And he said, Lady, the only thing I want to be saved from is nuts like you. Do I look like I'm drowning? I want to be saved.

Well, Marv Rosenthal, of course, perhaps largely due to the extent of that dear lady's prayers, came to know the Lord Jesus Christ, and they pulled a stint in the U.S. Marines, and came out and went to Bible school, and got his spiritual act together.

And he is, to this day, a stellar Bible teacher, and has published a number of things. So, Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given among men under heaven, whereby we must be saved.

And Romans, or Acts 10.9, Romans 10.9, Believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. And 1 Corinthians 1.18, The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are saved, it is the power of God through faith unto salvation.

And Paul wrote to Timothy and said, spoke of Christ who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling. And Ephesians 2.8, By grace are you saved through faith, not by works.

[6 : 42] It is a gift of God. And to be saved means to be rescued, delivered, delivered, it is the opposite of being lost.

It means being found. It's a very good concept, and a very solid biblical word, for which we offer no apology. And if you are not saved, then you are lost.

And there is no in between. We have a gospel to propagate, and the gospel is designed to convince people, to show people, that they are lost, that they need a savior, and that Jesus Christ is that savior.

And there is none other. And that gets us in a lot of trouble today, too, because with that religious pluralism thing, when you go talking about Jesus being the only way of salvation, you're going to cause some difficulty for some people.

And I remember hearing people say things like, it's a position of arrogance to suggest that Christianity is the only way to salvation.

[7 : 48] And all I can say is, it's true that Christians preach that, but it wasn't our idea. We didn't think that up. This is what God said about his son.

And he's elevated him to a position of savior and Messiah and Lord. And he has provided his death, burial, and resurrection, whereby we can place our faith in the reality of that, and who he is, and what he did, and why it matters.

And God saves us. He delivers us from our sin. He delivers us from punishment. He delivers us from spiritual death. He makes us alive in Christ.

But he only does that in Christ. One of my favorite lines by John Lennox, who's been teaching mathematics at Oxford University for several years, said, how can a Christian be thought narrowed or arrogant for receiving something from Jesus Christ that no one else even offers?

Think of that. So we're going to talk about salvation and those who have it and those who don't and those who aren't sure and so on. And we're also going to devote some time to the subject of contrition and repentance because these are very good terms and they are, I believe, essential for one to receive the salvation that Christ died to provide.

[9 : 15] These are absolutely necessary. And I have actually heard of some grace preachers and I don't care to identify them, but maybe you've heard from the same thing, that to tell people that they need to repent of sin is adding to the gospel.

And you don't need to repent. All you need to do is believe. And it is as simple as that. And when you tell people that they need to repent, you're adding to the gospel. But then I would refer you to the scripture sheet, if you would look at it, please, that is in your bulletin.

It's a very good concept. And the word repent means nothing more than to change your mind. And my contention is, it is impossible for anyone to be saved without changing their mind.

Because you already hold some position, some idea, some concept about what it means to be saved or what it means to go to heaven or what it means to be forgiven or whatever it is.

But if it isn't rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ, it's wrong because the Bible says it's wrong. And what you need to do is change your mind about that. That's repentance.

[10 : 28] I suspect that part of the problem might be some think that you are to confuse repentance with penance. And I really want to make that clear because that has no connection with penance.

Our Roman Catholic friends take the position that there are things that you can do or say to atone or to make right your violations of God's law or your sins.

And you are assigned certain items of penance. You have to say 50 Our Fathers who art in heaven, hallowed be 50 times or hail Mary however many times or you have to light candles or do something else in the church.

And that is doing penance. It is kind of a payback. Well, that certainly would add to salvation and that's not what we're talking about at all. That isn't even close. The word metanoia literally means through the mind.

Meta, M-E-T-A, is the word that means through. And when we use that word with something like metastasis, it's a word we don't want to hear.

[11 : 34] When somebody has an outbreak of cancer somewhere in their body, we're very, very concerned whether it has metastasized because if it has, that means it has spread to other parts.

And the stasis, the metastasis means that the disease has spread to other parts.

And it's a word that is found very often in a number of Greek words, but the one that we're talking about now is metonymy and so on. The one we're talking about now has to do with repentance.

And what that word means literally is metanoia. It means through the mind. It is a mental process. And when we engage the mind, we hear information.

And by the way, this is why the gospel is so critical. This is why it needs to be propagated because the gospel is nothing more than information.

[12 : 49] That's all it is. But the question is, is this information about what? Information about who? And when you dispense information, you give someone the gospel, which we would define as the good news, you are providing them with data, with information that they did not have previously.

And this information goes into their mind and they begin thinking about it. And this is why I insist, and we've been saying for a long time, Christianity is a thinking faith.

And when people hear information, they then begin to process the information. They think about it. They mull it over in their mind. They ask themselves, is this true or is it not true?

What should my response be to this? And sometimes they're just given a little bit of information and they do just a little bit of thinking about it. But the seed has been planted.

Someone says it's like a pebble in the shoe, that it's there. And it can be added to time and again. And sometimes as the years go by, it is added to.

[14 : 02] And a person may be in gestation for years before they actually come to faith in Christ because they've gotten information. The seed has been sown. And somehow, somehow, someone, television program, radio, TV, evangelist, crew, whoever is watering that seed.

And the case is growing and building in the mind of that person. And then when they reach a conclusion, this is true. I need to do something about it.

And that's when the commitment comes. So, that is essential. And I'm just giving you a broad kind of introduction now, which you'll be elaborating on in future sessions. And contrition.

Contrition is another element. And it is one of those that is often misunderstood. But the word contrite, as it is used in the Bible, literally means, as it comes from the Greek, it means crushed, broken.

Think of that. Look at that first reference, if you would, from Isaiah chapter 66 on your scripture sheet. Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

[15 : 18] Where is the house that you build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord.

But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

And when he talks about being poor, even as the Sermon on the Mount does, it talks about the poor in spirit. He isn't talking about poor in that you don't have much cash, or much change, or much money.

It means a spiritual poverty, and a recognition thereof, to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit. Your spirit here is speaking of condition of your inner being.

And contriteness has to do with a brokenness of your spirit. And this is essential. You know, no one is of any purpose to God until and unless they have been broken spiritually, and then God puts the pieces back together.

[16 : 33] This is a very important concept, and it comes in two ways. It comes even before salvation, where one has to be broken. And that too sounds like you're adding some kind of a condition to the gospel, that all you have to do is believe.

Let me tell you something. There is no merit in mouthing words. We do not come to Christ by uttering some abracadabra, open sesame formula, whereby you just mouth the magic words, and voila, you're saved.

Now, Islam has something like that, and they even force it upon people, and they have done so for centuries, and they do so today. Or sometimes at the point of a gun, or at the possibility of being beheaded, people are required to recite the Shahada.

Shahada. The Shahada says, there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet. There. That makes you a Muslim. Bonafide.

You're a Muslim. And you may have just saved your life by doing that. Christianity does not have an equal. You cannot mouth the words, God be merciful to me, a sinner, and save me for Jesus' sake.

[17 : 50] And you just mouth those words, and all of a sudden, the change takes place, and you are regenerated, and you are now a child of God. Now, it's entirely possible that those words can be uttered very meaningfully against the backdrop of what one has already concluded in their mind, and they have already met these conditions or qualifications.

And this contrite heart thing is very, very important. It has to do with, with, okay, let's put it this way.

It has to do with your feelings. Now, we are not saved by our feelings, but can we be saved without them? When God saves us, he saves the entirety of our being.

And when someone says, you don't have to feel any particular way at all, just believe. Well, let me ask you a question.

If that's the case, and you need not feel any contrition, any sorrow, any regret, any remorse over your sin, is it okay if you're proud of your sin, and defensive about it?

[19 : 11] Is that okay? You see, what we are talking about is a salvation that addresses the entirety of the person, intellectually and emotionally.

And when you hear the gospel proclaim that Christ died for your sins, how does that register with you?

How do you feel about that? And for someone who says, meh, I don't feel anything, well, you need to really stop and ask yourself if you're looking at that which the Bible defines as salvation.

there ought to be some kind of an emotional response. And I'm not saying you have to shed crocodile tears or anything of the kind, but it needs to impact you in such a way that you at least have some appreciation, some gratitude, some, if your response is, well, no big deal, well, is it possible that that kind of an attitude could actually be doing business with the Almighty, could actually be connecting with the substitutionary death of Christ?

Now, I'm glad for one thing, we don't have to, we don't have to feel certain things certain ways, and I'm so grateful that God reads the heart. He knows what is there in the heart of the individual, whether there is sincerity or not.

[20 : 57] But if there is flippancy, if there is a no big deal attitude, one wonders whether that person mentally or emotionally is in a posture to actually do business with the Almighty.

When you come to grips with the realization that what Jesus Christ did on that cross is designed to save you from your sin and give you eternal life with Him and you feel nothing?

Nothing? Really? Really? Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, uphold me with thy free spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted to thee.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

[22 : 17] And the word despise means literally that God would not look down upon but that he would take into consideration. When it's used of people despising one another, it means to look down your nose at when you despise someone.

Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

Humble spirit. A humble spirit has to be a submissive spirit. It can't be a proud spirit. Someone has said that God will save you from your pride. He will not save you in it.

You have to come to a position of where you recognize you have nothing to commend you to God. And if that doesn't affect your feeling, I wonder where your humanity is coming from.

We live in a world that is just, granted, I would be the first to admit that sometimes people put entirely too much in the feelings and not enough in the intellect and the doing.

[23 : 36] But you cannot discount feelings. It's a very dramatic, dynamic, integral part of your humanity. And life would be terribly boring without feelings and emotions.

You have to feel something. And if you feel nothing, then we can only ask, do you understand? Have you been touched? Do you not see the significance of it?

There are two potential areas here in connection with this salvation issue. And I'm just just approaching the subject in a very superficial way and we'll be spending more time on it.

But the two areas of great concern, number one, is being saved but lacking in assurance of it. And you can be personally miserable in your own mind and I know because I've been there.

It is not an unusual thing at all for people to be unsure or doubtful of their salvation, especially for newer Christians. Christians. And I well remember, despite the fact that it's been over 60 years ago, I well remember the agony of my own spirit when I lacked assurance of my salvation as a relatively new Christian, had not even been a believer for a year.

[25 : 03] And yet, I understood and knew enough to know how very important it was. and yet, I didn't know, I didn't have any assurance that I truly belonged to Christ.

And my question, I guess, was, have I believed enough? Have I confessed enough?

And maybe I didn't really believe at all. Maybe I just thought I did. Maybe it was just some emotional thing and didn't have any reality to it at all. And I don't mind telling you, I was one miserable puppy for about three weeks until I finally got this thing straightened out, thanks to one of the faculty members at Cedarville College, because he was one who himself had gone through the same kind of uncertainty.

And it is torturous. And you find yourself saying things like, well, if I never really received Christ as my Savior, before, I want to now. And yet, that somehow didn't change anything.

And what I desperately needed was the assurance that came from the Word of God, but I didn't know exactly where to find that, and he helped me and it made all the difference in the world. So being saved but lacking the assurance of it is not unusual.

[26 : 29] It's very common, especially for newer Christians. Of course, it makes you miserable in your own mind, and it also makes you closed mouth and unable to witness to others because you can't tell anybody about the joys and the glory and the wonder of the salvation that you experience when you're not sure you have.

You're not going to try to pass that on to anyone else because you're not sure that you're saved. So you're not an effective witness at all. And then the other great area of concern is being unsaved but thinking you are.

And this is even worse because it can have more profound consequences. And I've talked with people over the years, and I'm sure many of you have as well. Well, I was raised in a Christian family, always went to church, always went to Sunday school, always took my Bible, always did this, always sang the hymns and all the rest of it.

And they just kind of fell into step with the family, and with the routine, and this is just the Christian thing to do, this is the church thing to do, and you just do it kind of automatically without, but there never was any real honest commitment of themselves to Jesus Christ.

Someone has said that, someone has said that God has children, but he doesn't have any grandchildren. And no one is a Christian because mom and dad were Christians.

[28 : 00] I don't know how many people I've talked to over the years. Oh yeah, well, actually, I don't go to church myself, and I don't have time or interest for that, but my granddaddy was a preacher, and my great granddaddy was a circuit riding preacher.

You know, these guys who rode horses around and preached in different churches and everything, and they just thought by some kind of a genetic imposition, it just kind of filtered down from their grandparents, and somehow or another it settled on them, and that they are Christians because that's the kind of family I'm from.

Yeah, we're all Christians. Well, maybe some are and some aren't, because it just doesn't come genetically. It comes personally.

It comes as a result of an intelligent, deliberate decision that one makes on one's own. Responding to invitations and walking the aisle.

I know I'm saved because an evangelist told me I was. I said, all right, well, can you explain that to me? Well, I went to this meeting, and it was a Youth for Christ evangelistic meeting, and so-and-so was the speaker, and he got up and spoke, and he invited people to come forward, and nobody started coming forward for salvation, and then finally a few people came forward, and I sat there in my seat, and I thought, well, this is not for me, because this Christianity thing sounds to me like it would be very inhibiting, with a bunch of rules and regulations that I don't want to, you know, I don't think I could hang in there.

[29 : 37] I don't think I could do that. I don't. So another hymn was sung, and another invitation was given, and a few more people went forward, and I sat there in my seat, and I decided that, and then the strangest thing happened.

the big man on campus got up. He was the captain of the football team, and he was well respected and admired by everybody, and he went forward, and I thought, wow, if he's doing that, and he is the coolest guy on the campus, then that's for me, and I went forward, too, and after the meeting was over, the evangelist leaned over, and he says, no, I appreciate all of you coming forward.

You've all received Christ as your Savior. You've all, you all need to go and get a Bible and get yourself located in a church, and he had a word of prayer with them and pronounced them all Christians and dismissed them, and years later, this same man who was so influenced by the big man on campus who went forward, came to grips with the reality that your salvation is not something that you do because somebody else did.

It's something that you do because you are convinced that it is right for you, and it doesn't matter who else does or doesn't. That's entirely beside the point, but we are influenced by that, and I don't want to depreciate the value of personal witnesses or personal testimonies because I think they can be very effective, but we are not supposed to believe because certain other people believed.

some high-profile movie star, actor, musician, whatever, we say, boy, if they would come to faith, think of the influence they would have.

[31 : 48] Well, maybe they would, but the gospel isn't something that you believe because somebody else did. You believe it because you are convinced of its truthfulness, its veracity, of its importance, and you believe for you because you need it, and you accept that need.

Doubting one's salvation is a common experience. Resolving and settling the issue puts you on a growth path, but if you don't have assurance of your salvation, growth is virtually impossible because you don't even know for sure what you're growing in, and it isn't a question of being cocky.

It's an issue of being confident, and people don't understand that. When you give the gospel to someone and you let them know that salvation is a certainty and that you know, for instance, that you know when you die you're going to heaven.

Do you know what they're thinking? Boy, you must think you're really something. You must think you've just, you're a paragon of virtue. You are so sure that you are so good that you are going to heaven.

No, no, no. That completely misses the point. Can't tell you how much it misses the point. What we are saying is we are so sure of what Jesus did and why he did it, and my confidence and my trust is in him.

[33 : 23] It isn't in myself or my good intentions or anything else. It's in him. He gives me security because he is one who can be believed.

That's how I know I'm going to heaven because Jesus did a full and complete work and my trust is in him. Now, regarding the subject of belief, and I've got, I dug out of antiquity this old machine here.

All you technocrats out there can make fun of me if you want, but it's still my old faithful. And we've been through this a number of times, and I thought it was probably a good idea maybe every six months to go through this again, and I especially want the children to pick up on it, young people, because it's very, very important.

And we've talked in time past about the three levels or the three spheres of belief. Recall those? And the first has to do, this is from the Latin.

No tissue. I know a little bit of Latin. Yes, thank you. I know some Latin. In school, we called it pig. Pig Latin.

[34 : 44] And this is a good word from the Latin that's designed to impress people. And it's the word from which the word notice comes.

And you can see the connection, relationship between notitia and notice. This is the very first level that anyone has to experience before they can come to faith.

And the word simply means they have to be notified. They are put on notice. And when the gospel is given to someone, they take notice of it.

This is the beginning. It doesn't make any difference how elaborate the explanation of the plan of salvation is, how powerful the evangelist is, or whatnot. It's immaterial.

It has to do with their initially receiving the information they have noticed. They have heard the gospel. You have explained the gospel, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

[35 : 47] And notice is given to them. And then the second level is essentia.

And the English word assent comes from that. And the word assent means to agree.

You get the information. You are a sinner. You are lost. You are undone. You cannot save yourself. Jesus Christ died for the express purpose of providing salvation and a payment for your sin that you could not pay.

And he wants to offer that to you as a free gift because he bought and paid for it and he's offering it to you. Now, when you've gotten the notice, then the next step is, after hearing that gospel, you process it.

You take this information in. First of all, am I really a sinner? Well, case closed, okay?

[36 : 58] If we're honest at all with ourselves, I think we can come to that conclusion rather quickly. That we all know we have done things we should not have done and we have omitted things that we should have done.

That's part of the human condition. We're all like that. Every one of us. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Do you agree with that? After hearing and being put on notice, then you have to process the information and you have to decide whether or not you agree.

Do you buy that? Or do you reject it? And some people do. They say, no, I don't buy the idea. I'm not a sinner. I am a good person.

Well, in addition to being a sinner, they are also self-deceived. But that's another subject. So they assent or they dissent. If you disagree, you dissent.

You are a dissenter. You say, I don't agree with that. I don't buy that Jesus stuff, the cross and all the rest of it. I don't buy that. Then you stop right here. That's as far as you go.

[38 : 07] You don't go any further. You've hit an impasse. And you cannot go further. There is no possible salvation for you until you change your dissenting opinion to an assenting opinion.

If you don't do that, then you remain lost. Time may come when you change your mind and that would be repentance and you would do that later on.

Maybe years later. Maybe months later. Maybe never. Maybe you die that way. Lots of people have. These are steps through which everyone must go in order to come to Christ.

You have to at least have heard the word and you have to agree. And then the third step is fiducia.

And that is faith. Fiducia. The Latin word fiducia is translated to the English word faith or actually there's a synonym that goes with that.

[39 : 17] Might even fit better but they both belong to the same family. Fidelity. Fidelity. You often see a banking institution that has in its logo or in its title or something savings and fidelity.

And that simply means we will be faithful, reliable, dependable with your money. You can put your money here because we are a fiduciary and we have integrity and so on and this this word it has a lot of English expressions and we well you all know this one people name their dog this don't they?

Fido? Yeah. And you remember that that famous communist 90 miles south of south of here Cuba?

Remember Fidel? that was well he wasn't but he had the name but he didn't have the reputation that's for sure but he was called Fidel and that's an expression of faith in the individual and fiducia and fiduciary and it all has to do with dependability and reliability and when one exercises faith you do so on the basis of having heard having agreed and then the fiducia involves what you do about it that we call the commitment that is the engagement that is the receiving that is the believing you can buy into these two and stop right there and if you do you are not saved salvation comes when you act upon what you have assented to many people stop right there and I remember hearing someone make the statement and I'm sure it's been made by a lot of people over the years yeah

I believe all that stuff and I really believe that Christ died for my sins and I believe I know that I need to be saved but not now not yet I've got you know I want to do things first I want to I want to clean up my life or I want to experience things or I don't want to hem myself in or I don't want to put myself under that obligation etc so they agree with everything but they've done nothing about it and somebody here may be in that position right now for all I know I can't read minds I don't know that but I would not be surprised I would not be a bit surprised if there is someone here in our audience this morning who says yeah I've heard that gospel I've heard it over and over again and yeah I even believe it and yeah I think that that's something that I ought to do about it and one of these days I'm going to get down to business and I'm going to make that decision but you haven't done it and you know if that's the case you are actually standing in greater peril than if you had never heard because unto whom much is given from him shall much be required now this is just a very simple basic elemental thing that we're dealing with here but it is so very important and I'm especially mindful of any of the younger people who may not have been exposed to this kind of thinking because sometimes sometimes kids make decisions that are not genuine but they make them because that's what mom and dad want them to do and they want to please their parents and this is where parents have to be very sensitive and very careful in leading their children to faith in

[43 : 15] Christ which is of course something that we always want to do because we love children we love our own children like more than we love our own lives and there's anything that we want it's for them to be saved and sometimes it's possible for a parent to be over zealous and push or promote their child into a decision that the child is making not because they understand and not because they really want to come to Christ but because they really want to please mom and dad and I well remember as a student of Cedarville many years ago I don't know if they still do this or not but they did back then and that is they always had a week of evangelistic meetings real early in the school year they'd bring in an evangelist and he would preach the gospel and there were a number of young people there attending this Christian college who did not know the Lord and some of them would respond to the gospel and get saved and I remember that was a case of the young man who was in the same class as I was and he went forward and I talked to him afterwards later about it and I said I was surprised I thought you were a

Christian he said well actually he said I thought I was too but when I heard the gospel and heard it explained and understood it all I discovered that I didn't know what I was doing I didn't understand and my dad who happened to be a pastor of all things thought that he sufficiently explained the gospel to this young man and he knew that this was something that was very important to his father and he didn't want to disappoint his father so he did what his dad told him and he mouthed the words and bowed his head and said that he received Christ but he didn't he didn't understand it it didn't make any sense to him but he knew that it would make his dad happy so he did that and then years later there is a freshman at Cedarville College he heard the gospel really understood it and came to the realization that he had not personalized it himself but he just did what would please his dad and he came to know the Lord and the change in the young man was rather dramatic and everybody was noticing it and you know the saddest thing was when he called his dad the next day all excited told him that he came to faith his father rebuked him and said you were saved when you were four years old I led you to the Lord myself well dad you didn't I'm sure your intentions were good but the young man was actually led astray he was just trying to please you and he went along with whatever you told him he needed to do and you know it's a very easy thing to do don't we love our parents and our children really responsive to and don't they want to please their parents of course they do and it's entirely possible that someone can make a decision just to please their mother or father or grandmother or whoever it is and they don't really understand or make the decision on their own can't get any more vital or important than this and we've just opened this a little bit to explain a few of the intricacies and some of the difficulties and some of the misunderstandings and we're going to pursue this for the next couple of weeks and I think that there will be some additional enlightenment

I know personally I've gained some from it and I hope to share that with you so let's close shall we father we are truly thankful for the simplicity of the gospel and we recognize that there are there are objects that are in our way because of confused thinking because of misunderstanding because of miscalculating of who we are or our sin or your rejection of us because of sin and just so many areas here that are not clearly understood that need to be and our prayer for each and everyone here today is that anyone who might have come here without understanding the reality and without having assurance that they may be able to even see themselves here or get some inkling that they may be put on a path of understanding and appreciation of what is involved and that is our prayer and for any who have been exposed to the gospel who agree that this is something that needs to be believed it is a provision that God has made and they need to do something about it but they've been neglectful our prayer is that you would give them no peace and no rest until they find it in the Lord Jesus Christ and should that individual be here this morning and now willing to make that decision our prayer for them is that they may simply come to the end of themselves and with that contrite heart with that crushed spirit admit Lord

Jesus there is nothing I can do to save myself and I recognize that and I understand that's why you came because you love me and didn't want me to perish and you took my sin upon your own person you died on that cross for me I understand that I want to appropriate it and as best as I know how I want to simply deliver myself to you right now for your salvation Lord Jesus here I am I'm yours thank you for dying for me come into my life and heart and make me what you want me to be that's your prayer dear friend and that's a decision you've made please tell someone else so that they can be of encouragement to you and if I can be of any help or encouraging I certainly want to be feel free to approach me after the service or to call me sometime during the week if you want a private meeting be happy to talk with you Lord

Jesus we are truly grateful for this great plan of salvation it has depths to it that we still have not plumbed but in its most basic form you have made it understandable you've made it simple and you've provided that that we can engage the will and our trust our prayer is that that is precisely what someone either has or will experience here soon thank you for your gracious gift to us of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord amen you