

The Continued Centrality of the Gospel - Noticia, Assentia and Fiducia explained.

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[0 : 00] And to note, the title of the message this morning is the Continued Centrality of the Gospel, Part 2.

I would like you to please turn to Paul's letter to 2 Corinthians. And we'll be looking at 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5.

And we'll be looking at verses 14 through 21.

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

And he died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

[1 : 04] Therefore, from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.

And he has committed to us, and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us.

[2 : 17] We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Hearing a crying baby reminds me somewhat of a comment I heard some time ago. It says, God tells babies to cry and to wiggle.

And you tell babies to sit still and be quiet. Who do you think they're going to listen to? That's the nature of a baby.

We've all been there. And in many respects, crying baby is music to your ears. It's just another sign of life.

By the way, speaking of life, if you didn't get your baby bottle out in the hall that is designed for the Pregnancy Resource Center, make sure you pick up one, if you would, and fill it with coins or bills or checks or whatever, and bring it back on Father's Day.

[3 : 39] And that turns out to be one of the more profitable things that the Pregnancy Resource Center does all year long. And it is all designed for rescue and saving lives.

And sometimes it isn't just the life of the baby that's saved. Sometimes mothers get saved as well. And speaking of saving, we're looking at a passage of Scripture that in many regards ought to be considered an update to what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission in Matthew 28, 19, and 20, where Jesus commanded the disciples to go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, and so on.

Passage that they certainly made every effort to fulfill. It's interesting, however, as you read on in the book of Acts, clear up to chapters 8, 9, 10, and the 12 apostles are still in Jerusalem.

You wonder, well, what's going on? Well, weren't these guys supposed to go into the whole world and they've never gotten out of Jerusalem yet? Well, that's a good question to ask, and it's something that you ought to ponder, because the answers to it is very significant.

When our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, that was a kind of stellar moment for the world. It was the pivotal issue, the pivotal event around which absolutely everything in God's universe

revolves.

[5 : 10] That was the single event of all times. When he who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Most incredible thing that anybody could ever imagine. In fact, it was the plan that the Father and the Son and the Spirit of God devised whenever, and sprung it, if you will, upon the world that is so unsuspecting and unknowing that much of the world has never yet picked up on that message, even though it has been available for 2,000 years.

I do not know of anything that is more confused, more unsettling, more unknowing on the part of great numbers of people than the theme of biblical Christianity.

And it's for that very reason, in fact, that we began the radio series called Christianity Clarified. And these are reflected on CDs that are available on the table in the back.

And by the way, for those of you who are visitors, you are welcome to take any of the CDs back there you want. They are all free of charge. If there's anything there that strikes your fancy or you are interested in, feel free to pick it up and take it with you with our blessing.

[6 : 32] And they make great companions for those who are commuting, because each of these segments is just three and a half minutes long, and each one has got 20 segments on it.

So I say that for your information and your edification, and you're more than welcome to pick them up and take with you anything that you want. They are provided through the generosity of Grace People who contributed to the Barbara Wiseman Memorial Fund a number of years ago when my first wife passed away.

And that was 2006. So that's the genesis of Christianity Clarified. But now we are dealing with this passage that I have referred to as a kind of an update, because in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, virtually everything changed in the plan and program of God.

And then when you come to the ascension of Christ, and he is now in the heavenlies, where he was when he contacted Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road, he, as the risen, glorified Lord, has provided an actual update, if you will, to the commission that he earlier gave the twelve apostles in Matthew 28.

And that update is that which assigns to us the responsibility of being ambassadors. And I'm talking about the passage that Gary just read.

[8 : 02] And if you will note in verse 20, it reads, And the we here refers to Christians in general.

It isn't speaking to a select group of twelve apostles, as was the case when our Lord addressed them right before his ascension. This business of being an ambassador for Christ is for everyone who knows Christ as their Savior.

You are automatically an ambassador for him. Whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not, whether you do anything about it or not, you still are an ambassador for Christ.

And of course, some are better ambassadors than others. An ambassador is simply someone who represents the interests of the one who sent them. Whether it is a nation, like our government sends ambassadors to England and to France and to all the countries throughout the world, and we receive ambassadors from them.

And they represent their various countries. So this is not at all a new concept. It is as old as the Bible itself. The only question is, how do we function as ambassadors?

[9 : 16] And what it is that we are to be ambassadors about is communicating the word of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the opposite of separation or apartness.

When people have some kind of quarrel or difference or disagreement or whatever, it may be in a marriage, it may be something that ends in a divorce, there is a distancing, a separation that occurs.

And if it happens to be a marriage relationship, sad to say, it usually begins with an emotional separation where you just aren't as close emotionally to each other as you were when you were convinced that this person was Mr. Right or Ms. Right, and you got married.

And over the years, something happened, and we deal with that in the Marriage on the Rock also. It is always an offense of some kind that is unresolved, that creates pain.

It hurts inwardly. It hurts inwardly. And if it is not addressed, it begins to multiply and to grow.

[10 : 33] And it can turn into resentment and bitterness. And it can actually get to the place of where the person whom you thought was the most wonderful individual in the world, and you could not possibly spend the rest of your life without them.

Now, everything they say and do irritates you. Once you resent someone and get it in for someone, nothing they can do or say is ever right.

What needs to happen? Well, there needs to be some recognition of the offense, some apologizing, some repenting, some asking for forgiveness, and some granting of forgiveness.

And when that happens, then there is a reconciliation. And this is what I call the good part. This means that you can kiss and make up.

That's the fun part of it. At last, it doesn't always happen that way. However, that does not relieve us of the responsibility of trying to affect a reconciliation.

[11 : 43] And insofar as spiritual things are concerned, the need for reconciliation ought to be quite obvious. There's a separation. It's already occurred.

Because man is not right with God, that keeps him from being right with man. Because we have a kind of relationship, very simple, very basic.

It is a relationship between God and us. And this relationship is vertical.

There is also a horizontal relationship between us and others. And the quality of our relationship with others is determined by the quality of the relationship we have with God.

So human life is made up of a vertical relationship between us and God. And it's made up of horizontal relationships between us and others.

[12 : 53] And if you want to know why the world is as it is, why are things in such a mess, how is it possible that people can arrive at a level of hatred that would actually enable them to cut off somebody else's head?

A fellow human being. Has it ever occurred to you, what is wrong with the world? What's going on? You know, we have an organization that is referred to as the United Nations.

Sometimes referred to as the Useless Notions. They seem to excel in just about everything, but keeping world peace.

And I won't wax eloquent regarding that. I will just say that when these bodies deliberate and they have ambassadors, representatives from all over the world, all the nations of the world get together, and it's supposed to be a kind of meeting of mutual concerns and keeping the peace and information and improve the relationships between nations and everything.

And do you know this august body that has been meeting since the late 1940s doesn't really have a clue as to what the problem is with the world.

[14 : 17] Isn't that amazing? They are the ones who are officially put in charge by all the nations of the world to address the problems of the world. And these leaders, as they gather together, are in a complete fog as to what the real problem actually is.

And the reason nations don't get along with each other is because nations are made up of people, and people don't get along with each other because they don't get along with the God who made them.

Everything begins with that vertical relationship. And in many respects, this is something that is even denied, ignored in so many cases. And we pay the price.

And we have the wars and the rumors of wars and the conflicts and all these things going on all over the world. In our last session, we talked about the Bible presents a plan that is a panacea.

And a panacea simply is something that is designed to cure all ills. And that's exactly what the gospel does. I'm not overselling the gospel, and I'm not overstating it.

[15 : 22] And I know I'm not because that can't be done. There isn't any way that you can oversell the gospel. You cannot reach it.

You cannot match it. It is beyond in its depth, in its provision. It so far exceeds anything and everything that we could imagine.

So I don't have to worry about exaggerating the gospel and its power. There is in this gospel, this good news, the dynamic, the formula, the recipe, if you will, that none of us understand.

But when this thing is enacted in the heart and mind of the recipient, the individual, it results in a complete interchange whereby this one who was previously separated and alienated from God becomes reconciled to God.

And as Paul stated earlier in his first epistle to the Corinthians, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Well, actually, it's right here in this. It's inferred in 1 Corinthians.

[16 : 48] But here in verse 17 of the text, he says, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature or a new creation. The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come.

The content of that single verse is so grand and so incredible and so far reaching that, well, I just wonder how many of you here saw the film.

I can only imagine. A lot of you saw it. Yeah. Well, in that film, there was an illustration of the dynamic of the gospel applied to an unreconciled heart.

And what happened? And you know the story about father and son, the bitterness, the animosity that developed there in the home because Christ had no place in that home.

And when the father came to faith in Christ, the change was miraculous. And we've seen this time and time again. It's happened in thousands and thousands of cases.

[17 : 52] And yet, something seems to be lacking in some of them. And I have a question for you. Why is it, do you suppose, that at least for some people who make a profession of faith in Christ and yet their lives don't seem to reflect that at all?

Maybe they did for a little while, but there was no sustaining power. And later, they succumbed to the same old kind of lifestyle and the same kind of habits and the same kind of problems, et cetera. And everyone wonders what happened. Do you know what these people are usually called by those who are looking on? They're usually called hypocrites because there was a time when they made a profession of faith and they may have even noise out abroad.

They may have told friends and family and yet look in on their life maybe a year or two years later down the road and what happened? Why wasn't it sustained?

Or was it real? Or was it not real? And there are reasons for that, but they are all detrimental to the cause of Christ because they made a profession of faith and then later on they completely seem to reverse that.

[19 : 18] And people say, well, yeah, he got religion, but it didn't stick. You know, it didn't affect him. He said he got religion, but he soon got over it.

Well, in the first place, you know me, we don't we don't call this religion. We call it a relationship. And it is very possible that the person who made some kind of a profession of faith in Christ wasn't real at all.

It wasn't genuine at all. And I'm going to give you an illustration now that ought to peek the ears of those who are parents, especially with small children, because sometimes, sad to say, this is what happens.

Small children usually have a deep desire to be approved of by their parents and to please their parents. And that's a pretty natural thing.

Of course, there is the little renegade who has his spurts of difficulty and opposition and so on. But by and large, most children want to please their parents.

[20 : 24] So, if a parent presents the gospel to a child, perhaps at a very early age, the child may be able to understand and comprehend what is involved.

It may not. Someone has asked the question, how old does a child have to be in order to come to faith in Christ? And the answer is, they have to be old enough to understand the concept of sin and the fact that they qualify, that they are a sinner.

Because anyone who understands that they are a sinner and have a need is then eligible and available for salvation. But if they don't understand that, then they are not going to understand the gospel.

And they make a profession of faith simply to please their parents. And it isn't real at all. And a mom or dad, of course, is very zealous to see that young child come to faith in Christ because they are so dear and precious to them.

And the possibility of their not being saved is more than they can bear. And this works for grandchildren as well as children because their grandparents feel that way about their kids. and you may get overly enthused and want them to come to faith in Christ and they want to please you and they agree with whatever you say but they don't understand.

[21 : 41] And I've talked to people like that who later in life came to realize that when everybody thought they were saved when they were four years old at their mother's knee, they weren't saved then at all.

They were just doing what mom said and they were just trying to please their mother and so on. And they didn't have a real change of heart. They were not regenerated at all. I remember as a student at Cedarville University and I think I'm quite sure that they still do this.

They have an evangelistic week usually in the first few months of the new school term just about every year. And they bring in someone who is a noted Bible teacher or evangelist and they preach essentially salvation to what is supposed to be a Christian student body.

And to be sure probably you know probably 95% of those in the student body are Christians and have been for quite some time. But I well remember one case and this will date me now because I'm going back okay I'm going back 55 years but I can I can remember a young man who was a freshman and an invitation was given at the end of the week of evangelistic services and this young man was one who went forward and was counseled and said that he had placed his faith and trust in Jesus Christ and that he had been told his whole life that he was saved but he didn't understand it and he just took it he just went to church his father was a pastor and he went to church and he sang the hymns and he was involved in the youth work and all the rest of it grew up knew the language knew the lingo knew what was expected of him and everything but he had never really understood the sin issue and how it applied to him and how that

Jesus Christ was to be his savior and that that results in a changed destiny and a changed life and it changed everything and he said I never experienced that at all so when he did come to faith he was elated and he had a typical response which included I just feel like a tremendous burden has been taken off of me well in essence it had and the burden was the sin that he was carrying that he didn't realize and he was so elated and so jubilant because he really had come to grips with the reality of his sin and the salvation that Christ afforded and he called his father who was the pastor of a prominent church and told his father dad I got saved this morning and dad's response was what yeah

[24 : 41] I got saved this morning you were already saved you were saved when you were four years old well dad I didn't I didn't understand and I didn't it never connected and his father was actually kind of embarrassed and put out by it instead of being overjoyed that his son had really seen the light and made a decision he kind of took it personally as if he was deficient in communicating the gospel and it reflected on him and that can be just the flesh flaring up in the case of a father you know we're all capable of that and then there are instances another I recall young man was at a youth rally and the invitation was given a powerful salvation message was given and the guy was sitting there saying to himself I don't want to do that that's that's not for me the invitation was given and people were young people were getting up all over and walking down and he was saying to himself

I'm afraid if I did that I wouldn't be able to do this wouldn't be able to do he actually had a moral problem with the gospel and what changed his mind was star football player got up and walked down the aisle and it had an impact on him and he said to himself gee so and so big man on campus everybody looks up to he's the role model he's this he's that if he's doing that then maybe I should do that too so he got up he walked down the aisle he stood there there was a group of young people maybe 30 40 of them had responded the counselor came over had a word of prayer with him and said now now you've got a new life now you're forgiven now you're saved now you're all Christians and so on and find a good church and so on and start reading the Bible and dismiss them all you are not to believe the gospel because somebody else believes it you are to believe the gospel because you have examined its contents and you have concluded that it is true and you believe for yourself because it is the right thing to do not because the big man on campus believes and there's a lot of that going on and what the end result is these people are not really saved they don't really understand they just did something religious they went forward and it's just like some kind of ritual it's just like somebody pronounces something over them and presto chango they are a new person in Christ no they're not no they're not there has to be a comprehension and understanding of what the problem is and the problem is sin sin is anything that is contrary to the nature and character of God that's what the Bible defines as sin it means to miss the mark it means you don't measure up to the standard that has been set and the principle is very very simple actually it's a it's a familiar old thing that we've been through before so we'll go through it again and I'm doing this primarily as a reminder to grace people who've heard it and that may be something that is new or reinforced to young people or the children who are here and we appeal once again to the simplicity that is found in some

Latin expressions and I'm sure most of you will remember this and the first one is noticia that's a Latin word it simply means notice in the English notice and that means when you hear the gospel see if I can get that a little clear that's probably about as good as it's going to be can you see that in

the back noticia from which the English word notice is taken and all this means is that the gospel has to have been presented in a very basic way so that the hearer is able to take note of it it doesn't mean that you believe anything it just means that you hear it means you've been put on notice you've been given the gospel

Christ died for your sins you need to repent of your sins it's repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ that is the formula for salvation and it begins with having heard the very basic information it doesn't mean you've done anything about it all it just means you've been put on notice you've heard Christ died for your sin well what have you done about that I haven't done anything about it what's to do about it I just heard about that's all Christ died for us it's a fact of history it's in the books and you see it everywhere you know in churches and so on and that's what noticia means it means you've been put on notice everybody everybody everybody everybody everybody everybody everybody and everybody who has ever become a Christian started here no way you can skip that everybody starts there that's the very basic most elemental information that you ever got about the gospel you had that presented to you you haven't done anything about it but the next word essentia and essentia is related to the

English word assent and it simply means you agree you hear the gospel message Christ died for your sins you understand something about what your sin is how it displeases God how it is an offense to God how it condemns the individual because of sin you hear that and you hear that Christ died for you and you agree now right here is where a lot of people stop they do not assent they do not agree they say all kinds of crazy things like well maybe he didn't really die on the cross maybe he was just you know the swoon theory maybe he just seemed like he was dead and then they took him down and they put him in this cool tomb and he revived in the cool air and as an emaciated individual who was supposed to have been dead for three days he was revived and he got up and from the inside he rolled away that massive stone all that nonsense so when you come to the conclusion that

[32 : 01] Christ not only died for your sins but he rose again from the dead and you agree with that you say history verifies it the bible teaches it millions and millions of people have believed it for 2000 years I guess there is pretty strong evidence indicating that Christ died on that cross and that three days later he was resurrected and came back from that tomb with a glorified body I believe that I agree with that you're still not saved agreeing with that doesn't provide salvation there are lots of people who agree with this I meet them all the time and yeah I believe that yeah I believe that and they really don't understand what they're saying I'm not questioning their sincerity I'm just questioning their accuracy they often really do not understand and there are a lot of people like that in fact it scares me to think of how many there may be like that they put on notice they understand the gospel and they agree with it

I believe that Jesus died on that cross and I believe that three days later he came back from the dead you believe that then that makes me a Christian no it doesn't no it doesn't it just makes you more informed than a lot of people but that does not make you a Christian and what does make you a Christian is the third level of belief and that is in the Latin fiducia and in the Greek or in the English it is related to our word faith fiducia wonderful word fiducia relates to the subject of faithfulness reliability dependability all the kind of things that you look for in someone or some institution that you really want to trust and here by the way is where other terms that you're familiar with comes in the word fidelity is related to this fiducia fidelity and fidelity simply means you are faithful you are reliable you are dependable if you engage in infidelity that means if you are married you have been unfaithful to your spouse that's called infidelity it is the opposite of trust we have another word that you're probably all familiar with you may even have a dog by that name

Fido Fido Fido Fido that's the name of the dog and have you ever encountered an animal that is more faithful and dependable than a dog I mean even dogs that are mistreated are still glad to see you that's amazing isn't it and we had a dictator south of here some years ago in Cuba and his name was Fidel remember Fidel Castro is related to the same word of course he didn't turn out to be as faithful as a dog he turned out to be something else didn't he and it's fiducia and fidelity is often in the letterhead of a bank or an institution this is a national bank and trust and national fidelity they want you to trust them with your money and it's all related to the same issue here and how is it that this is implemented how does this fiducia and this faith come about it is through exclusively through an act of the will you can have been put on notice and you have assented to what you have heard you agree with it but if you have never acted on what you agree you are not saved many

people never get past the first others don't get past the second it is the third that really brings salvation to the individual and that is as an act of your will you choose to put your case your trust your everything into the hands of the savior who died for you this is the ongoing nature of the gospel it has never changed it has been here for 2000 years but it is often misunderstood and sometimes it is referred to as easy believism

I've even heard people say and would you turn in your bible please to Acts chapter 17 I've even heard some grace people say that you cannot require people to repent of their sin because we are saved by believing not by repenting and when you tell people that they need to repent of their sin you are adding to the gospel and you are adding to the justification by faith alone thing and I just simply do not understand how they possibly arrive at that I am not in favor of adding anything to the gospel of grace because everything that needs to be there has been placed there by God and it is simply waiting for us to act upon what God has already provided and here in Acts chapter 17 Paul is addressing the group on Mars

Hill and he tells them if you would look at verse 30 verse 30 of Acts chapter 17 therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance and this has to do with times in the past this would be Old Testament times or even prior to that God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent and I don't know how many times we've been over this word repent here at grace but I'm going to do it again repent simply means you change your mind it doesn't have anything to do with penance now penance penance is considered a virtue in the Roman Catholic church and Roman Catholic theology whereby you offer some kind of payment for your sin or some kind of punishment you may be required to say 50

[39 : 29] Hail Marys or you may be required to do penance by saying a hundred our fathers or something else and in the Roman Catholic theology that penance is a kind of self inflicted punishment that you are undergoing for the particular sin that you have committed and in their theology very often this is something that is done in the confessional booth and I understand some Catholic churches now don't even have a confessional booth but I'm sure that probably most of them do and the individual goes into the booth and there is a curtain between them and the priest and you tell the priest your sins what you have done and the priest announces what your penance is and what your punishment is if you want to call it punishment you have to say these things or do these things etc and that's called a penance that has nothing to do with repenting of your sin when you repent of your sin you simply change your mind about your sin what was your opinion regarding your sin previously well if you're like most people it was probably something like this well

I'm not perfect but I'm a lot better than most people or I've always tried to do the right thing or so and so goes to church and they do thus and so and so and I don't even go to church but I don't do those things all of this is self justification it's rationalizing and you compare yourself with somebody else I've often said you can always find somebody else that makes you look good we don't have a problem with that we can all do that and when you repent when you repent of your sin you don't compare you don't excuse you don't justify you don't rationalize you say not my father not my brother but it's me oh lord standing in the need of prayer this is something

I must own I must take responsibility Paul says those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise as I said you can always find somebody else to make us look good but when we face the reality that we do not measure up to God's standard of good when we acknowledge that then we're on the right track and what's God's standard for good his name is Jesus and if your righteousness equals the righteousness of Jesus you're home free you've got nothing to worry about now I've been preaching this gospel for over 50 years and telling people about it but in all those 50 years nobody has ever mistaken me for Jesus because all of us fall short don't we far short when you measure yourself alongside God's standard of righteousness you're sunk you just admit it

I don't measure up to him I can't measure up to him no matter what I do I'm laden down with my own personal sin maybe I'm not as bad as a lot of other people but I'm certainly not as good as a lot of other people either and we like to think that we're somewhere in that sin one single offense on your record before a holy God you're sunk you're out of it you're lost you're doomed this is because if your faith and your trust is in anything or anyone other than the person of Christ there is no absolution for you because Christ is the only one that was provided by God the father to do the job that needed to be done that's why he alone wears the title savior do you know of another thou shalt call his name

Jesus why for or because he shall save his people from their sin and the name Jesus is actually a form of Yahashua or Yeshua and it means savior deliverer rescuer that's what he's all about that's why Jesus came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves and when we put our faith and trust in him he does what he is charged to do he saves us rescues us delivers us from our sin and he cleanses you totally completely entirely so that there is not one transgression to your name that is your positional truth I want you to look at this passage again 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 I'm going to close with this and it's a very powerful passage 2nd

[45 : 14] Corinthians chapter 5 in verse 18 he says God has reconciled us to himself through Christ and in verse 19 God was in Christ reconciling the world the world the world everybody yeah everybody absolutely everybody reconciling the world God so loved the world that he gave his people so loved the world that he gave the world to himself not counting their trespasses against them and he has committed to us the word of reconciliation this I refer to as universal redemption now don't confuse that with universal salvation because it's not the same when Adam and Eve sinned how many in the world actually sinned with them according to the scriptures how many fell with them everybody everybody because

Adam and Eve transferred to the next generation everything that was in their genetic makeup and it included sin Adam and Eve passed I hate to say it but they passed the terminal disease germ of sin to the next generation and that's why we die physically and they transferred that sin nature to Cain and Abel and it was so effective and so disastrous that it enabled Cain to rise up and murder his own brother the human race is off to an incredible start isn't it and we've been killing people ever since do you realize that in the century between 1900 and the year 2000 the human race succeeded in eliminating more of its own kind than all of the centuries of time past combined doesn't sound like humanity is improving does it the only thing that is improved is our efficiency in killing more people more quickly that's what's wrong with the world and when

Christ died for the sins of the world he effectively cancelled the sin death that was against humanity from a righteous God and he balanced the moral scales of the universe by what he did and what I am saying is the act of Christ's death effectively cancelled out that which sin brought into the human race so that we are if we are in Christ we are completely free of all sin now let me explain something this doesn't mean that you and I are lily white and that we cannot sin of course we can because God did not alter our volition he gave Adam and Eve volition which is the power of choice enabling them to choose good or evil and we still have that choice today so it is with this volition or with this will that we respond to the gospel that

God has provided it is an act of the will and that's why it comes down to fiducia that is the faith faith is nothing more than your answer to what God provided through Jesus Christ when you place your faith in him you are taking faith in any other person or object away from them and putting it in Christ you know where most people have their faith in themselves it's called self righteousness I think I'm good enough Andy Stanley wrote that little book since nobody is perfect how good is good enough I don't deserve that well of course you don't deserve that that's why it's called amazing grace nobody deserves it look at what the text says as he concludes here in 2nd Corinthians 5 he's already told us that we are reconciled the world is reconciled in verse 19 then in verse 20 he turns right around and says we beseech you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God well I thought we well the difference is the universal redemption was applied to all of humanity and this is the basis for babies this is the basis for babies going to heaven when they die they were under the redemptive provision that Christ made for all of humanity and they have not reached an age of accountability where they are able to render a decision and they are in the same category as David's baby was Old

[51 : 14] Testament and David said he cannot come to me but I shall go to him here the plea is for individuals to be reconciled and you you can in other words you can come to God through Christ and be reconciled to God because Jesus Christ paved the way for you to come he opened the door of access so that you can come to him through Christ because of what Christ did for you and that is an act of your will you repent of your sin and you place your trust and your confidence in Jesus Christ I want to close with this question that I've asked before it's what I call the diagnostic question I think grace people probably have it memorized if something should happen to you today and you were to die and stand before your maker and God looks at John

Doe why should I allow you into my heaven what would you tell him typical answer is well gee I tried to keep the ten commandments and I always tried to do the best I can I never robbed any banks I

never murdered anybody and I always tried to be a nice guy and I'm generous and I did this and I did these are all wrong answers they're all wrong answers there's only one answer that God will accept you should let me into your heaven because the son you sent to earth to die on that cross died in my place and he paid my sin debt and my faith and my trust is in him that's why I'm entitled to come into your heaven it is because of

Jesus that's the only right answer and someone says God has a big tent you can come to him any way you want well that may sound good but the Bible doesn't support it and when Jesus said I am the way the truth and the life no one comes into the Father but by me in each and every one of those instances the definite article is there it is articulated Jesus did not say I am a way and a truth and a life and of course there are many others so choose the one that suits you he didn't say that it's very specific he is the way the truth and the life there is but one savior and you are either in him or you are not and if you are in him what you have is his righteousness that last verse says that we might become the righteousness of God in him friends that is your official position if you are in Christ and it doesn't have anything to do with your behavior it has everything to do with your position when you go into a court of law you may be as guilty as sin for whatever you're charged and your case goes to the jury and the jury comes back and says we find the defendant not guilty and you say how can I am guilty I did it I did the crime I am guilty and that may be true but do you know what matters it's what the jury said that's the official verdict and in this case God is the jury and if you are in Christ you are set free from sin and from death we are given eternal life in Christ who said because I live you also shall live that's his glorious gospel been around 2000 years still not really understood by many and my prayer would be that perhaps just perhaps somebody here today has heard it and maybe understood it for the first time and if so praise God that's what we're all about would you pray with me please father we are so grateful for this glorious gospel that's been presented to us thank you for the willingness of the son to be sent and for the father to send him we do not understand that kind of love how you being holy could be willing to part with your son in a way that we do not understand giving him to be sin for us and him being willing to be made sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him we pray that this truth from your word will penetrate the hearts of each and every one of us and for those who have perhaps heard this for the first time and have never really thought about acting on it we simply pray that you will lodge this truth in their heart and enable them to build on it with additional truth from your word as time goes on to the end that ultimately eventually they may come to know the joy and the forgiveness that is in Christ alone in his name we pray amen to the Lord thank you line to m next bessie to the if too 22 to the missing we're over to the