

The operation of the Faith Principle must of necessity leave room for doubt

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[0 : 00] Good morning. What Pastor Marv will be preaching on this morning is the faith principle pursued, doubters welcome.

The passages in the Bible this morning will follow that thought. So please turn it this time to Luke chapter 22.

And in Luke chapter 22, we'll be reading verses 31 through 34.

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

[1 : 28] But he said to him, Lord, with you I am ready to go, both to prison and to death.

And he said, I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied me three times that you know me.

Then also, please go back another book to the Gospel of John, chapter 20.

So remember the crowing of the rooster.

And then, in John chapter 20, we'll be looking at verses 24 through 31.

[2 : 38] But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples were saying to him, We have seen the Lord. But he said to them, Unless I see in his hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

After eight days, his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, Peace be with you.

And then he said to Thomas, Reach here with your finger, and see my hands. And reach here your hand, and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believing.

Thomas answered and said to him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, Because you have seen me, and have you believed, blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.

[4 : 39] Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in his name.

Amen. Thank you, Gary. And let's go back now to the launching pad, if we may, for the message we'll be bringing this morning, and that's found in Romans chapter 4, and chapter 5, where we need to touch on just a couple of things in connection with the kind of faith that we offer to God when we come to belief.

We have been considering the aspect of justification by faith. Justification simply means being considered or being brought into a position with God whereby we are acceptable to him.

this is the most incredible thing that can ever visit the heart of a human being. That is being declared righteous and acceptable to your maker.

And we are told in Scripture that it is solely on the basis of belief. It cannot be on the basis of merit because we have none.

[6 : 26] It cannot be on the basis of justice because we would be in deep, deep trouble. But this justification by faith is predicated solely upon grace.

That is God's gracious disposition toward us when he has a right to be anything but gracious toward us. It is because he is the kind of God he is not because we are in some wise deserving or that we have it coming.

We do not. Justification by faith eliminates eliminates all human effort and all works that we would offer to God and simple because we have none that are acceptable.

All of our works are as filthy rags. All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. They are contaminated. They simply cannot be accepted. So, what God says is and this begins all the way back in Abraham as we saw earlier, I cannot accept your righteousness. righteousness. You don't have any that I can accept. But I will accept in place of righteousness your simple faith and trust.

[7 : 40] Your confidence in me. That is justification on the basis of faith. It means being declared righteous and acceptable to God on the basis of simple exercising of faith or trust in Him.

And I want you to realize something. When you do that, if you do that, you are repenting of your sin and you are confessing your sin at the same time.

We ordinarily don't think of it that way. But, it is axiomatic if you stop and think about it. When we have a righteousness that God will not accept and we are willing to exercise faith in the grace of God and in the provision of God, that is in itself an admission of our sin.

There is a reason why we have to exercise faith to be accepted of God. And that is because that is the only thing He will accept. He cannot accept our righteousness.

It is sinful. Right away, the wheels have to be turning in one's mind that the only reason to exercise faith is because what you have is not adequate.

[9 : 06] What you have is not acceptable. That's your good deeds, your righteousness, and all the rest of it. We don't ordinarily think of that as a repentance, but that's exactly what it is because the word repent means to change your mind.

So when you hear the gospel and you understand your righteousness is not acceptable, in order to exercise faith, you have to change your mind about your righteousness.

And what most of us are changing our mind from is this. I'm not a really bad person. I'm not a terrible person. All in all, I'm a pretty nice guy. That's where most people are coming from.

You have to change your mind about that because it isn't true. It simply isn't true. And when you change your mind, you repent. We don't think of it in terms of repenting, but that's exactly how it is, and that's how God reads it.

And then we are actually confessing our sin. Do you have to confess your sin to be saved?

Absolutely. Absolutely. But the word confess does not mean you go to a confessor and you pour out in detail all of the wrongs that you have committed.

[10 : 23] That is what has become known as confession and that's what a lot of people think of. But all the word in the Greek, in the New Testament means when we confess our sin, all it means is this, we agree.

We agree. That is tied with the repentance. You acknowledge, you understand that what you are and what you have is not acceptable to God and you need to change your mind about that.

So if it's not acceptable, what is? God has said that faith is acceptable. He says that he will accept that in place of righteousness that I don't have.

So, there is the repentance and when we confess our sin that means nothing more than this, it means we agree with God that sin is what it is and that it separates us from God.

So you see this whole thing is a package. People, when they are coming to faith in Christ, they do these things, they think through these things, they do them automatically and perhaps they do not think of it at all, but it's taking place in their mind and heart and God reads the heart.

[11 : 36] And no one says, let's see, I need to do thus and so and that's repentance, yes, and I'll do that and I need to confess my sin, yes, and I agree and so on. We just don't go through the terms like that and think of it in that way, but that is precisely what we do when we come to faith.

That is why repentance is essential and confession of sin is essential. All confession of sin means is you admit it. You have to come to grips with that fact.

You are a sinner. How big a sinner is beside the point. If you have committed theft, how much do you have to steal to be a thief?

Well, the law says there is petty larceny and there is grand larceny. I guess that's true technically, but you know what? It's all larceny and it's all theft.

And however little it is, if it is a paper clip you steal from your office or if it is a million dollars that you steal by scamming someone, you're a thief.

[12:50] You only have to commit murder one time to be a murderer. You only have to steal one time to be a thief. You only have to lie one time to be a liar.

So right away, all of us are in a position of being a liar or a murderer and a thief. Because anyone who hates his brother in his heart has committed murder in his heart against that individual. So it just kind of wipes us all out. And when you come to grips with the reality of that, you actually repent, you change your mind, and you confess your sin in that you admit you are a sinner. I think it's just wonderful that someone has said that you have to confess all of your sins in order to be forgiven of them.

And this goes back to a traditional thing, largely influenced by Roman Catholicism and the confessional and all the rest, or the saying of the rosary, and where you enumerate all of the sins and name them.

[13:47] The problem is when you're really gut-level honest with yourself, you can't even think of all the sins you've committed. There's probably more that escaped me than what I could recall.

And I think it's that way with all of us. It just comes from being a human being and living in a world that's filled with temptations and vices and distractions and everything else.

So what we do is we don't enumerate, name all of our sins, would be here till the cows come home. But we acknowledge the fact that we are a sinful being, unacceptable to God.

That is what it means to confess your sin. You agree, you own up to, you take responsibility for. Both of those things, the repentance and confession, are necessary before anyone can exercise faith in Christ.

Because until you've dealt with those first two issues, putting faith in Christ doesn't make any sense. What do you need that for? what's the point in that? And when you talk to some people about it, they say, hey, I don't need that.

[15:00] I'm not that bad a person. You see, that's right back to the thing. They need the repentance and they need the confession. And they don't even know that. So how do we clue them in? We give them the gospel.

The gospel is information. It is wonderful information. It gives them something to repent of and something to confess.

and then they can exercise faith. Then they can look at themselves and say, boy, I can't do this. I can't measure up. I can't try hard enough. I can't be good enough. I can't pray enough. I can't give enough. None of that stuff works. None of it counts.

What can I do? Abraham believed God and it his belief, his trust, his confidence was accepted by God in the place of righteousness which Abraham did not have.

[16:09] That is incredible. That's what faith is. I can't, he can. So, any trust or confidence or hope that I have in myself and my own ability, I have to transfer that from me to him.

That's what it means to put your faith, your trust, your confidence, your reliance in Jesus Christ. That's what it means.

You aren't trusting you anymore. You aren't trusting your church. You aren't trusting your lodge. You aren't trusting your good reputation. You aren't trusting your good intentions.

You are trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. That is faith in him. Now, let me ask you another question.

just what kind of faith is that? Well, we say it's simple faith. It's childlike faith. Yes, but how else would you characterize it? What's the quality of that faith?

[17:23] Well, it would seem that since God is perfect, faith would be perfect. What God is saying then is, listen, you don't have the righteousness that I require, but I've made provision for you and there is a substitute that I will accept in place of the righteousness that you don't have.

It is just your simple childlike faith. It's just your simple belief in me. But it better be perfect belief.

I don't want any of this doubting business. faith when you put your faith and trust in me, it has to be a faith that I'm worthy of.

It's got to be all of your faith. And I don't want any doubting. I don't want any falling back. It's got to be a faith that is all the way and forward or nothing.

Forget it. Do you have any idea how underpopulated heaven would be with that kind of faith? What kind of faith will God accept from us?

[18:50] Well, if we cannot provide a perfect righteousness, what in the world makes you think we could provide a perfect faith? Not only can we not provide a perfect faith, we can't even come close.

we don't come close in any area which the Almighty might require. That's what makes grace so incredibly wonderful.

It is in spite of our shortcomings and our failures so that all of the emphasis and the credit is on Him where it rightfully belongs. So, what is God saying?

God is saying, yes, I'll take your weak faith, I'll take your sloppy shoddy faith, I'll take your flagging failing faith, I'll take your flawed faith, because Marv, that's the only kind you've got.

And that's the only kind you can provide. I'll still take it. I'll accept it. Can you imagine that?

[20 : 02] That's exactly what he does? Have you ever doubted the existence of God?

If you're a thinking person, I dare say you have, at some point or time. All of the people to whom we appeal in Scripture as our examples, people upon whom the ends of the world have come and things written before time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have.

All of these people that we look up to as the paragons of virtue, they weren't that at all. They were flawed human beings, just like us. They put their pants on the same way we do, guys, one leg at a time.

Well, I guess they didn't wear pants back then. They look like bath robes, so whatever they put them on, they put them on the same way as we do. This faith that is fickle and flimsy is still a faith that God will accept because it's the only kind of faith that we have to give.

And it is sometimes replete with doubt. The capacity for doubt and questioning is in the heart and mind of every rational human being, including true Christians, because doubt is the purview of thinking people.

[21 : 42] And the only people who never doubt, never think. You have to live in a world where you see everything as being just wonderful.

Someone said, the difference between a pessimist and an optimist is an optimist thinks that this is the best of all possible worlds.

A pessimist fears that this is true. If you think everything is just wonderful and hunky dory with the world and because God is in his heaven all as well with the world, then you probably never doubted.

But do you realize that God loves sincere doubters and he can handle our doubt. He isn't put off by it. He isn't insulted by it. He knows our frame that we are but dust.

And doubt is something that we do rather automatically. Have you ever wondered why God allows the world to go on as it does?

[22 : 52] And why he doesn't step in and change certain things? This is one of the big obstacles that many atheists have and they simply reason and it's logical reasoning when you stop to think about it.

There is this benevolent God who is all powerful and he's in control of everything and look at the stuff that he let's go on.

I certainly wouldn't permit these heinous crimes and deprivation and massive death tolls and tsunamis and all of that.

If I had the power to change it, I certainly would. But I can't change it. I'm just a human being. And if this God who is supposed to be so all-loving and all-caring and all-powerful is really on the job, why in the world doesn't he do something?

Why does he let this go on? These are good logical questions of thinking people and there are very, very satisfying answers. We'll not be able to go into them now, but I just want to point out to you the legitimacy and the normality of doubt.

[24 : 08] There's nothing wrong with that. God can handle it. Job is set forth as one of the premier examples of his faith and his trust in the Lord, but do you think that it never flagged?

Of course it did. Read the book of Job. There were times when he was perplexed. There were times when he just couldn't figure out what God was about or why he was allowing these things to happen.

And Job's faith vacillated. One day it was up, next day it was down. One day it was though he slay me, yet will I trust him. The next day it was, what have I done to deserve this?

And all he was was just a human being, just like the rest of us. And as you move on through Scripture, you come to people like Elijah. Incredible victory he had with the prophets of Baal.

And he ended up slaying 400 or 450 of them. And these were vile, wretched individuals. who quite frankly, needed killing.

[25 : 16] And Elijah carried out the task. And he called down fire from heaven and devoured the sacrifices and licked up the water in the trench. And it was an incredible demonstration of God's presence and God's power and God's concern, God's ability.

And it had to have been such a faith strengthening thing. for Elijah. God came through for him. And he could say, why halt you between two opinions? If God is God, worship him. If Baal, then worship him. And God showed himself strong on that day, devoured those sacrifices, and boy, Elijah, his faith must have stood ten feet tall.

But you keep reading. And that wretched lady by the name of Jezebel had him in her crosshairs, and she was after him, and she made a vow, and she said, you get word to Elijah that by this time soon, he is going to be in the same shape as those prophets of Baal that he executed.

So what did he do? He got up and lit out. God, who called down, who brought down this fire and devoured all of these sacrifices, wasn't able to deliver me from this woman, so he lit out and took it out on a dead run, got all the way down south to the brook Cherith, and the Lord commanded the raven to feed him there, and he's sitting there under a tree, puffing and panting, and he said, oh Lord, this woman Jezebel is after my head, and there's nothing I can do, and I wish you would just, Lord, why don't you just kill me?

[27 : 17] Just kill me right now. I'm done. I'm the only one left. I am the only one left who believes in you, and here he was just having this big pity party, come all the way down from the faith mountaintop with the prophets of Baal down in the valley of despair.

The God who brought down the fire from heaven and devoured the sacrifices obviously wasn't up to the challenge of a Jezebel. Do you know anything about that woman? She was a one wicked woman. I don't know if you can handle her or not, God, so I'm taking on the lamb and he ran. Boy, he got out of there and Jezebel and the Lord said, Elijah, you aren't the only one left. Sometimes you feel like it maybe, but I have 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal. They're true to me.

You're not the only one. What happened to Elijah's faith? He just bottomed out. Why did it? Elijah was a human being. You think he was some kind of a super saint?

[28 : 23] None of these people were super saints. There are no super saints in the Bible. There are none. They are all human beings with feet of clay, just like us.

Some of them accomplished outstanding things and they stood head and shoulders above their peers, but they were still living, breathing, homo sapiens, just like us.

David described as a man after God's own heart. Really? A man after God's own heart?

What about this little number called Bathsheba? Flawed, failed, human, David.

And you know, the nasty characteristic about virtually any sin we commit always requires another because you've got to cover up the first one.

[29 : 37] And you can never cover up a wrong with a right deed, so we cover up a wrong with another wrong deed. and here David stood in the likelihood of being found out about Bathsheba, so you've got to cover your trail.

So the word went out to one of his trusted captains. When Uriah, the Hittite, gets to the battle site, I want you to make sure that you put him right up in the front line.

And all he was trying to do was secure for certain the death of Uriah. The object was he wouldn't survive.

And then, of course, what does that make Bathsheba? A mourning widow. And who gets to be the hero and come to the rescue and take her for his wife?

David, the man after God's own heart. Are you kidding me? Fast forward a thousand years to John the Baptizer, child of miracles, born to Elizabeth and Zechariah, both of whom were well over the hill.

[31 : 10] I mean Elizabeth, Elizabeth had gone through the menopause who knows how many years ago. And now she's having a baby?

And the father is smitten with muteness, unable to talk until the baby is born. It's going to be John the Baptizer. And he will be a man sent from God whose name was John.

John came fearlessly out there into the wilderness and began proclaiming this incredible electrifying message that the nation Israel had longed for and lived for for fifteen hundred years.

Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Messiah, Yeshua, Hamashiach, is right around the corner. And it's going to be glorious.

And he was fearless. You couldn't intimidate him. You couldn't scare him. You couldn't buy him. You couldn't do anything to control him. He just went out in the desert and began proclaiming and thousands of people came around and he baptized them, preparing them for a priesthood to the entire nations.

[32 : 30] Boy, his faith was up here. And when Jesus came on the scene, he and John were cousins. And he introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God, one whom God sent.

What an incredible ministry. What an incredible man. And fast forward about a year and what do we find?

this same one, this John, who was the proclaimer of the coming of the Messiah, this one who went in to the place of royalty into Herod and pointed his finger at the king Judea and said, it is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.

You're living in adultery. Had the gall, the brass to do that to the king. And we know he would put in prison.

And what happened then? Doubt. Big time. I present the Messiah. Here is the Messiah.

[33 : 57] Messiah. I think. But if he is the Messiah and he is going to bring his kingdom and it's going to be glorious and wonderful and Israel is going to be elevated and the kingdom is going to be restored, what am I doing here in jail?

So he called his disciples together and they came over. I can see old John now leaning through the bars if they had bars or whatever. And his disciples were there and he says, guys, you've got to find out something for me.

Because this thing isn't turning out right. This is not the way the script is supposed to be written. Something is really wrong here. And I'm wondering if I just made a really big mistake.

You know what? could it be that this Jesus of Nazareth is not the promised one after all?

I mean, John made so much noise about this. Everywhere he went, proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. And now he sends his disciples from prison where he is there in Machaerus in Herod's prison.

[35 : 17] Please go find Jesus wherever he is, preaching up in Galilee or wherever he is. And when you find him, tell him, I sent you, you're from me, and I've got to know, are you the one that should come?

Or ought we to be looking for another? Because this isn't right. and they find Jesus and they tell him exactly what John said.

And Jesus simply said, you go back and tell John that the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and blessed is he who is not offended in me.

Go tell John that. I'm sure they went back and told John that. And I think it must have been reaffirming to John. I think that John must have said, I'm really glad to hear that.

Now, you know what? He still couldn't make sense out of what was happening. He still couldn't make sense out of what was going on and why he was there in prison and why Jesus didn't come and say, abracadabra, and the cell opens up and he walks out a free man and he gets on about the business of the kingdom.

[36 : 37] That seems like the way it ought to be. And because things aren't the way that we think they ought to be, it tends to produce doubt in our minds and hearts, misgivings, questions, wondering, what's going on?

It's supposed to be like this. Are you there? Do you care? Do you really know what's happening? all of this is purely, totally expected.

It is part of our humanity. Deal with it. It's what we are. Can't help it. It's part of being human. And God is okay with that.

He is not insulted and he doesn't give us the boot because our faith in him flags from time to time.

Listen, all spiritual growth is is nothing more than developing more and more confidence and trust in God and doubting him less and less.

The likelihood is we will never get to the place where we never doubt at all. And doubt is not sinful.

[37 : 55] it is part of the human condition. Don't beat yourself up with a ton of guilt because you don't think you believe as much as you should.

Well, who of us does? It's part of the human condition. God knows that. God knew that when he accepted our faith in place of our righteousness, he still wasn't getting much.

he knew that. But being as gracious and as loving and as kind as he is, he was willing to take it. And God reads the heart.

He knows what you want to believe and what you want to do and the faith that you want to have even though you're often not able to deliver on it.

He knows that. He understands that. Someone has said God knows everything about you and he still loves you.

[38 : 55] That's amazing. That's wonderful. I tell you, nothing tends to build confidence more than focusing on God's amazing grace and his love.

Gary read this morning about Thomas whose doubt was so famous that is forever stuck to his name.

There's a doubting Thomas and there was a doubting Peter. Peter with all of the talk all of the braggadocio though I have to die with you I will not deny you Jesus said Peter in just a few hours years the morning cock is going to crow and before he does you're going to have denied me three times that you even know me Peter how can you say such a thing because I know you Peter I know you and I know how you'll cave when the chips are down Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you like wheat that he may toy with you like a like a dog would with a rag doll that's what Satan wants to do with you but Peter I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail but did it ever have a low time absolutely absolutely that's what those denials were all about but his faith didn't fail ultimately and I think that's a result of our Lord's praying for it because on the day of Pentecost this same man who cowered back in the corner with a little Jewish maiden accusing him of being one I charged them with the death of their

Messiah you you have by wicked hands crucified and slain the Lord of glory how unlike that is I don't even know him I've never laid eyes on I don't know what happened I think I know I think it was 40 days and 40 nights many infallible proofs drummed into them they weren't going to doubt anymore do you know what they would die before they would deny and most of them did including Peter because when you know what you know and you know that you know you are not going to allow yourself to be divorced from reality by saying it's all a fantasy never happened it isn't true you know what you know and you're not going to deny it that's where

[42 : 35] Peter was and that's where Thomas was after those 40 days and 40 nights and I don't bring these failures of past believers and highlight them to in any way shape or form to put them down these are still memorable human beings they are still worthy of cherishing in our memories and in our studies and in the way God used them but I point out there are many flaws of all of them simply to let you know you're in good company we've all got some of that flawed faith and none of us has this thing called faith altogether none of us is free and rid of all doubt and as you go on thinking and studying and praying the idea is to have your doubts doubted more and your beliefs to believe more that's what spiritual growth is more and more you trust him more and more you rely on him less and less you rely on yourself that's spiritual growth and

God accepts this kind of faith because it's the only kind we've got and if he doesn't take that there is absolutely nothing that he can do for us or with us so he takes us with all of our foibles and faults and all the rest and he says hey I will not accept your righteousness because it's not acceptable but I will accept something in place of righteousness just give me your heart give me your trust give me your faith and I know you may mean it when you do it and you want to give it all to me and you're very sincere next month next year it's going to cause you to doubt me and I can understand that I won't kick you out I didn't let you in because you had anything going for you I let you in because you put your trust in me incredible absolutely incredible

I tell you the more I study things like this smaller I get the bigger God gets somehow I think that's the way it's supposed to be have you a question or comment a few minutes Terry in the back could we have a microphone back there please since we are I don't know if that's on yeah since we are all you know we lack much would you talk a bit about judgment because we all have to face judgment I sorry repeat that question I got my ears in now we all have to face judgment and since we are you know failures how does that work in we all have the same judgment we have to face God's judgment is that right yes yes so we have to face God's judgment well in one sense if we have placed our faith and trust in

Jesus Christ God's judgment has already been faced because that's exactly what Christ did on the cross he bore the judgment of God in our place and when we place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ God gives us all the benefits that accrued to the death of Christ including payment for sin in full that is placed to our account that's the meaning of the word reckoned that's used there several times in chapter four and five it means that God placed it to our account and if we do not receive the grace of God in Christ as a simple act of faith substitutionary death of Christ if we do not do that then we will face God in judgment with his justice we can either meet

God on the terms of grace and Christ is our substitute and our confidence is in him or we can reject that we can say I want to go it on my own I want to try to stand before God on my own righteousness I think I'm good enough if that's our attitude then we will face God's justice and as I said before justice is the absolute minimum that God can dispense toward anyone no one will receive anything less than God's perfect justice that means exactly what you deserve so God cannot do less but God can do more and more is where grace comes in that helpful a little bit well go on let's try to clarify we all have to face

[48 : 17] God's judgment so we we're all sinners if we become saved that wipes the slate clean for the prior sins but what about sins that occur after you're saved how do we face that judgment and how do we answer for that because God knows that we're imperfect right but we still we believe and if we truly believe in him I mean we're still going to sin even after we're saved so what happens to those sins and how do you face that judgment of God well there is a judgment there is a judgment for believers it's referred to as the the bema seat and that's first Corinthians chapter three that's where Paul lays out the idea of wood hay and stubble and gold silver and precious stone so every believer is going to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ the meaning of the word judge or judgment krino has the idea of evaluating distinguishing between you do that all the time we cannot live a life without discriminating when you go to a showroom to buy an automobile when you buy one car instead of another you are discriminating you are discriminating against the car you didn't buy and you are in favor of this you exercise judgment so the believer is going to be evaluated

Romans 14 we will all stand before judgment of God as believers we will all give an account for the deeds done in the body and those things we do as believers after salvation will be evaluated by God probably on the basis of our motive because God is far more concerned about why we do what we do as much as he is what we do because you as a believer you can do a lot for outward show you can do a lot that men will acknowledge and honor you for but God reads the heart God is interested in the motives as to why we do what we do and that for believers I think is going to be the basis for judgment so we either are going to receive a reward or we'll receive no reward but the issue of our eternal destiny is already settled because that's wrapped up in the finished work of Christ so we are not going to be judged for sin per se because Christ died for our sin that's a past penalty that's already paid but what we do as believers matters a lot that's why Paul put an emphasis on not saved by works but saved by grace through faith and that not of works lest any man should boast then he goes on to say but our works matter we are saved unto good works so that means that at salvation God equips us to do things for his honor that we could not do before we were saved Ruth I think that just the realization that the Lord Jesus Christ died for my sins and he knew me and he knew what

I would do after salvation and he loved me anyway and he died for me anyway he can see all that he knows all about it it is made accepted in the beloved and he has forgiven us all transgressions you're free the slate is clean it that that is I just run out of words to describe it nothing I can say in my vocabulary even becomes begins to be adequate for what we're talking about it's just glorious beyond words someone else may we stand please loving father once again we have been privileged to revel in something that not one of us beginning with me fully understands or appreciates yet we have been able to pull back the cover of this enough to know that there is so much there to be appreciated and for which to be thankful we recognize that we are an incredibly blessed people simply because you are the

God you are and you have done for us what you have done and all you ask of us is to trust you how can we do less there is nothing that we can offer you apart from our imperfect faith how grateful we are that you are willing to accept that and loving father if there is one here now man or woman boy or girl who with doubts and fears and questions and all the rest can say to you I don't know about all of this but I want to know I want the truth and I want to be open to the truth and if Jesus Christ really is that truth and what he did really is the core matter of the universe then as best as

[54 : 46] I can with my imperfect faith and my doubts and questions I just want to say I want this Christ to be mine I want to trust him I want to put my faith and my confidence in him best as I know my heart with all my doubts and questions I want the Lord Jesus to be my savior and I want to be his child thank you for doing for me what I couldn't do for myself in Jesus name amen you are dismissed