

Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part XIV.

Personal Salvation - A new creation in Christ!

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[0 : 00] As we were reading the scriptures, it became apparent that the passages have to deal with the power and the authority of the Word of God to transform and to regenerate.

We do not know exactly how God does that in our internal being, but we know that He does it through the Word, through the Word that is communicated.

This is reflected in Romans 1.16, wherein the apostle said, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God through faith unto salvation to everyone who believes.

The dynamic is wrapped up in that which God hath spoken. It, the Word, has the power to penetrate, to cleanse, to actually regenerate and make a new person of the individual who believes on the inside.

This is called the miracle of regeneration. And the main reason that I am dealing with this right now is because of where we left you in our last session.

[1 : 18] In connection with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, when he is reiterating the account, as he did on at least two other occasions, probably many other occasions, but two that are incorporated in scripture.

And the one that we looked at last week was in Acts chapter 22, when Ananias came to Paul, not to be confused with Ananias the liar of Acts 5.

But he came to Paul and laid his hands upon him, and Paul was able to receive his sight. And then Ananias said to him these words, Now, what are you waiting for?

Why are you tarrying? Arise and be baptized, washing away your sins. Well, what is that all about? Baptism, washing away sins. That's what the text says. And there are some today, not a few, who believe that water baptism has some kind of mystical power to wash away one's sins.

[2 : 31] There are verses that seem to imply that, and one of them I just gave to you. Another is Acts 2.38. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Well, there it is, black and white, Acts 2.38. It is a chief verse that some denominations base their whole theology on. How are we supposed to approach these things?

What are these differences that exist? How are they all justified? Each one, of course, is justified in the minds of the followers, and each one believes that they have the true position.

Do we also believe that we have the true position? Of course. Of course. Why else would we teach it? How else can we justify believing what we do believe if we do not believe it to be true?

So this is the only thing that all of these various groups have in common, is that each one believes that they are correct. And we are no different from them in that respect. We believe that we're correct.

[3 : 38] They believe we're wrong. We believe they're wrong. And so, the fussing and the arguing goes on for centuries, just as it always has. Someone has said that you can prove anything by the Bible.

It's all in how you interpret it. No question about that. It is all in how you interpret it. And, this has led me to take the position that no mere mortal, including myself, is capable or competent to really interpret the Word of God.

That, I do not believe to be an overstatement. I believe it to be a truthful statement. I just have a few propositions that I want to share with you, and then we will get into several texts.

We have taken the position that the Bible itself is its only valid interpreter. Only the Scriptures can authoritatively shed light upon the Scriptures.

Our job is to let it. Church fathers, numbering in the dozens. And, by the way, we've talked about these church fathers.

[4 : 50] They were really good men of God. They number in the dozens. I'm not going to reiterate their names.

We've talked about some of them. But, the church fathers are those individuals whom God raised up, first and second century, who came hard on the heels of the original twelve apostles.

They were of the next generation or the generation following. And, they are consequently referred to as the church fathers. Just in the same way that Washington and Jefferson and Adams are referred to as our nation's founding fathers.

These men were true men of God who loved the Lord and who were, in every sense of the term, committed to the authority of Scripture and to the person of Jesus Christ.

They are very frequently appealed to, in the positions that they took, as our authority. And, I have books lining my shelves in there, the writings of the church fathers.

[6 : 02] And, we can appeal to them for enlightenment, for some understanding, for some inspiration. But, we dare not appeal to them as our authority.

And, many churches do. Many denominations do. And, we do so at our own peril. These men, godly though they were, sincere though they were, mentally competent though they were, do not constitute an authority.

And, if they did, how in the world would you ever sort it out? Because, these same church fathers are very frequently in strict disagreement, one with another.

So, which church father are you going to go with? They had their own differences. They had their own quarrels. And, many of them condemned one another in some of their beliefs.

And, it was not unusual for them to engage in charges of heresy and what not. So, how can we possibly appeal to, we do appeal to the church fathers for some enlightenment.

[7 : 06] For some understanding. For their expressions. For their appreciation of the text. For inspiration. But, you cannot appeal to them as your authority and say, well the reason we believe this is because this is what the church fathers taught.

Which church fathers? Because, whatever they taught, there were other church fathers that taught virtually the opposite. So, you cannot use them as an authority. The reformers, likewise.

And, to whom are we referring? We're talking about, I suppose you could begin with the late 1300s, 1380s, up through the 1600s.

These reformers were men like Calvin and Melancthon and Luther and so on. Who, again, were brilliant individuals.

Very well educated. And, very much committed to the authority of scripture and to the person of Jesus Christ. But, they too. Like the church fathers earlier.

[8 : 11] Had severe disagreements about a number of points of doctrine. So, to which ones do you appeal? For many years. All that Martin Luther promoted was embraced and accepted by Lutherans.

As without question. If you were a Lutheran and you were trying to research a point of doctrine as to what position you should take as a Lutheran. Or, what position the Lutheran church should take.

All you had to do was appeal to Luther. And, whatever Dr. Martin Luther said. That was it. End of argument. This was Luther's position. This is the position the Lutheran church takes.

However. Cultural shifts. And, public sentiment changes. And, as late as the 1900s. World bodies of different Lutheran groups.

Found Martin Luther's invectives and diatribes against the Jewish people. To be embarrassing. And, in need of disavowing.

[9 : 16] I say that to say this. Even Dr. Luther. Whom I greatly admire and respect. Had his blind spots.

As do we all. Our blind spots. Our biases. Our limited perspective. All of which I personally partake. Prevent all men from being the capable and honest interpreters of the scriptures. With the authority it deserves. And, that is why I insist that the Bible itself is the only competent, consistent interpreter of itself.

The statement that our Lord made in John's gospel. The words that I speak unto you. They are life. And, they are true. They are spirit. And, they are true. They are spirit. And, they are life. What does that mean? The words that I speak unto you.

[10:26] Jesus said in addressing his disciples. The words that I speak unto you. They are spirit. And, they are life.

It's an incredible statement for him to make. They are spirit. And, they are life.

Do you realize that no other, no other human being has the ability to make a statement? Like that? I certainly don't. Unless, of course, they are quoting scripture. But, Jesus could speak those words without quoting scripture.

Because, when he spoke, his words had the authority and the ring of scripture. They were on the level of scripture. This is one of the things that astounded his hearers so much.

[11:27] Because, he spoke with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees. Because, the scribes and Pharisees were limited to quoting.

And, very often, they didn't quote the scriptures anyway. Very often, they quoted rabbinical statements and interpretations of scripture. Rabbi so and so. Rabbi so and so.

Rabbi so. Jesus didn't do that. He just spoke straightforwardly from himself as the authority. So, in saying the words that I speak unto you.

There in John 6. They are spirit. And, they are life. Life. Is he saying that the words he speaks have the ability to impart life?

That is precisely what he's saying. And, when he says they are spirit and they are life. He is talking about energizing or causing to come into life one's human spirit.

[12:45] We all have a human spirit within us. Makes no difference who you are or what your theological position of belief is or unbelief. You have a human spirit.

That human spirit is the real you. It influences. It affects. It is part of your personality.

Your norms and standards. Your values. Your imagination. Your creativity. All of these things make the real you who and what you really are. And, when you become a new creation in Christ.

It is that human spirit that is renewed. Or, that is regenerated. Or, that is saved. It isn't the body.

The body. The body will be regenerated later. At the resurrection. When this corruptible puts on incorruption. And, this mortal puts on immortality.

[13:46] But, for now. It is our internal being. This immaterial part of our being. That is the human spirit. That is what is made anew.

And, by the way. It is your spirit. It is your human spirit that dictates everything your body does.

Your physical body takes its orders from the internal, immaterial mechanism that is involved with your mind and your spirit.

Not to be confused with the physical brain. That is different. The brain and the mind work in concert. But, they are not the same. The brain is physical. It weighs about three pounds.

The spirit is immaterial and not physical. And, it doesn't weigh anything. But, it is a very real part of your being.

This is where you formulate your position. This is where your volition is. This is where your will is.

This is where your decider is.

[14:54] You activate your spirit. And, your spirit, your mind, activates, works with your brain. And, send signals to your body to do whatever you tell your body to do.

Now, this is an amazing, absolutely, incredibly complex thing. Called the human being. And, we all know that our physical bodies are capable of being regenerated.

They are capable of being renewed. They are capable of being revitalized. You do that every night.

You rest your body. And, while you are resting your body, while you are asleep, there are incredible things taking place in your body that you are not even aware of.

And, that you don't even feel. But, the brain is resting. The mind is resting. The spirit is resting. It is a period of shutdown. And, when you awaken in the morning, theoretically, some of us have problems with insomnia and sleeplessness and whatnot.

But, theoretically, you awaken regenerated and refreshed. And, you are ready for another day's activities. Well, same thing happens to our immaterial part of our being.

[16:17] Except, it isn't ministered to in the same way. There is a spiritual dimension that ministers to that. And, that is the word of God.

The scriptures. When Jesus says they are spirit, he means they appeal to and minister to the spiritual part of our being.

Same kind of expression when he was talking about man shall not live by bread alone. But, by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And, here, Christ is simply acknowledging that there are two dimensions to our being. One is physical. One is spiritual. Because, man is to not live by bread alone. But, he is to live by bread. That's food we eat. That regenerates and refreshes our physical body. [17:17] It is amazing how exhausted we can be. How utterly worn out we can be. But, a good meal and a good night's sleep can make a whole new person out of you.

It does that for your body. And, Christ said, man shall not live by bread alone because he is more than a body. But, by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And, what is that? That is spiritual content. That is truth from God. That truth has the power. And, nothing else does. Has the power to regenerate the human spirit.

To make a person new on the inside. If anyone is in Christ. He is a new creation. Spiritually. You are not a new creation with your body. If you have bodily defects before you trust Christ as your Savior. Guess what? You still have them.

[18:18] If you are bald before you accept Christ as your Savior. You do not trust Jesus and get a new thick mane of hair. It does not work that way.

It does not do anything for the body. But, it does something for the internal part of our being. That is our human spirit. It is the word of God that does this.

Now, when we talk about differences that people have doctrinally. There probably isn't any greater difference. Or, any more significant difference.

Or, any difference with greater implications than this. How is this human spirit regenerated? How is it brought into connection with the Creator?

How does the individual make contact with the divine? How is it that God makes someone into a Christian?

[19:26] A believer? A follower? How does he do that? There are two basic avenues and two basic schools of thought. And, one of them I will just deal with briefly.

And, it is called sacramental. It is salvation or regeneration via the sacraments.

Sacraments. The word sacraments simply means sacred things. Holy things. Well, what are some of the holy things? Well, one that comes to mind automatically is water baptism.

It is looked upon as a sacrament. And, some denominations, large and small, practice infant baptism. And, the idea is that the baby is regenerated.

Or, that original sin is removed from the baby by the miraculous application of water. But, it isn't just any water. It is holy water. It is water that has been consecrated or blessed water or holy water or whatever you want to call it.

[20:36] And, then there are other sacraments such as church membership is looked upon as a sacrament. Partaking of the Eucharist.

Receiving the body and blood in communion and partaking of them. That is a sacrament. And, some believe that this is utilized by God to regenerate the individual.

This is how some feel they receive Christ. You receive Christ by mouth. When you ingest the cup and the bread.

That is receiving Christ in a literal way. When the elements are consecrated and they become the body and blood of Christ. And, so on. So, this is regeneration in a sacramental way.

And, however you slice it, it simply indicates that there are various requirements that are laid down by different religious bodies.

[21:39] And, you subscribe to those requirements. And, you experience those requirements. You involve yourself in them. You receive these things. You receive the sacraments.

And, in being obedient through these religious acts or religious deeds. That is how you come into favor and connection with the Almighty.

So, it is, if you will, salvation via sacramentarianism. Or, sacramental salvation. Now, I can easily understand how people can adopt these positions when you look at the scriptures overall.

And, you see indications that might possibly justify this. And, then you take the minds of men. Some of whom are, many of whom are very brilliant and very capable.

And, they put their spin on that. And, they come up with it. And, it sounds good. And, it's convincing. And, the next thing you know, it is accepted as doctrine and authoritative.

[22:39] And, a group is built around it. And, the group grows and becomes a movement. And, the movement grows and becomes a, voila. A denomination. A religion.

And, this is how and why people differ doctrinally. Why they arrive at different conclusions. And, many times, being born into it. As, many are.

You just kind of adopt whatever it was you were born into. And, that seems to be good enough for you. Because, it was good enough for mom and dad. It's good enough for me.

And, that kind of thing. So, this is where we are. Worldwide. It works this way for Muslims. It works this way for Mormons. It works this way for those who call themselves Christians.

It works this way for Jews. And, so on and so forth. This is the way belief comes about, for the most part. The scriptures provide a divine methodology that, in my estimation, cuts across all of this.

[23 : 45] And, does not provide a series of religious hoops through which one must jump. Or, ideas that one must subscribe to.

Or, rituals. Or, whether it's the Lord's table. Or, baptism. Or, whatever. The Bible takes an approach that is just utterly different from anything that is really man-made.

And, it is not salvation by sacrament. It is called justification by faith. It is, well, let's look at Romans 10 for just a moment.

Shall we? Let's go to Romans chapter 10. We've spent some time in this passage before, but it bears repetition.

Romans chapter 10. And, let's begin reading with verse 1.

[24 : 53] Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them, he's talking about Israel, is for their salvation. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

And, that could be said about a whole lot of people, couldn't it? For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. But, the righteousness based on faith. Now, this is what we're talking about. The righteousness based on faith speaks thus.

Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down. Or, who will descend into the abyss? That is, to bring Christ up from the dead.

[25 : 59] But, what does it say? It says, the word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart. That is, the word of faith which we are preaching.

If you want to connect with God, if this is your intent and your desire, you want to be aligned with the Almighty.

You want to know that you have a relationship with God. How do you go about that? How do you make that connection?

If Jesus Christ is the mediator, if there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, and that's the man Christ Jesus, then it would certainly seem that if you want to connect with God, you've got to connect with his Son.

Because he who has the Son has the Father, and so on. So, how do you connect with Jesus? Where is he?

[27 : 08] He's at the right hand of the Father. How are you going to get to him? Do you have to go where he is in order to meet him, or to connect with him? Is he remote and removed from you?

Is he so distant? And after all, have you seen him? Have you shaken hands with him? Have you talked to him? No. Of course not. Where is he? He is removed from our presence completely.

So, does that leave us at a loss? No. Why not? Because of this dynamic of justification by faith. Jesus Christ is reachable and attainable through your mind.

Through your mind. Through your human spirit. You don't have to make personal contact with him. You don't have to see him. You don't have to reach forth your hand into his side, or feel the wounds in his hands.

You don't need that. God has provided a dynamic that is exercised with your will and your mind.

[28 : 20] That's all you need. This is what he says when he goes on. What does it say? Verse 8. The word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart.

That is, the word of faith, which we are preaching. That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart, that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.

The connection will be made. How is that? And why is it? Because with the heart, man believes, resulting in righteousness. Now we have talked about the difficulty of the heart, and how the blood pump in the middle of the chest is not what involved here.

The heart is the core of our being. And as best as I can determine, the heart is inseparable from this thing we've been talking about with the human spirit. When we talk about the heart in a biblical sense, we are not talking about that four-chambered thing that receives and pumps out blood. We are talking about the heart as the core of our being, as the centerpiece of our totality.

[29 : 39] We talk about the heart of the matter. So when you believe on Jesus Christ with your heart, it denies the idea of superficiality.

It means that you bring your whole being, the totality of your being, to rest upon this person of Jesus Christ. It means that it involves you and affects you to the very extent of your being.

There's nothing flimsy or superficial about it. And what this results in doing is it provides for the individual a completely renewed perspective on life and on death.

When Jesus Christ comes in, it's a whole new ballgame. Everything is changed. All things have become new. Old things have passed away.

It is a dynamic that we do not understand. It is something that we cannot really fully appreciate.

[30 : 58] We do not know exactly how it is that God renews us or remakes this spirit being inside of us.

But he does. And millions have testified to the fact that once Jesus Christ comes in, when we trust him as our Savior, everything is changed.

The world looks different. People look different. Values change. Goals, objectives change.

Everything gets rearranged in our thinking.

It is radical. It is aptly called a new birth. A new beginning. Nothing is the same as it was.

This is the dynamic of human conversion. Have you experienced that? It isn't terribly important to be able to pinpoint exactly when if that took place.

[32 : 06] But what is terribly important is that it has taken place. that you know there was a time in your life when you connected with God through Jesus Christ.

And he made you a new person. For me, it was December 8, 1956. Nothing has been the same since.

And I would not go back to that prior to that time for anything in the world. How does God do that? He doesn't do it through sacraments.

He doesn't do it through the repetition of various religious practices. He does it solely on the basis of utilizing His Word.

We are cleansed, regenerated through the Word of God. nothing else can do it.

[33 : 07] The Gospel incorporates the Word of God. Paul said, I am not ashamed of the Gospel. How can I be ashamed? How can I be ashamed of something that is the power of God to salvation?

How can I possibly be ashamed of something that just radically changes my life and my goals and my objectives and my desires and everything? There isn't anything else that can do that.

Someone has said, Christian conversion cannot be accomplished on a psychiatric couch. Nobody can talk you into this.

There is a strange phenomena that takes place that God superintends that when an individual comes to the place where they see themselves as disconnected and as unable to make the connection and maybe they have tried this and tried that and tried a host of other things.

You know, church membership and baptism and all the rest of it. But it just does not fit the bill. It just does not do what needs to be done. the only thing that results in regeneration, the renewing of the word, the washing of regeneration that Titus is speaking of, not by works of righteousness which we have done.

[34 : 45] In other words, one could almost say not by works of sacraments, religious holy things that we have done, but by his grace he has saved us through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.

This washing of regeneration is the cleansing of the life. You may want to think in terms of water baptism as depicting that cleansing.

And I'm not going to fuss with people who make that connection, but I'm just going to say that the cleansing that counts is the internal cleansing.

It's the cleansing of the human spirit, the making alive, the reconnecting that was lost through Adam's sin.

And when that takes place, that's how we are regenerated. When we simply embrace the truth of God, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, we put our confidence, our trust, our everything in who Jesus Christ is and what he did for us.

[36 : 09] God responds to our response with a remaking, a regeneration. We are set on a different path, we have a different destiny, everything is new.

That's Christian conversion. That's being born again. That's being regenerated. And it isn't done by a system of religious deeds, it isn't done by joining this, or promising that, or anything of the kind. It is a simple act of the will. So that when we hear the gospel, now that's critical, we've got to hear the message. And this is the burden here in Romans chapter 10, when Paul talks about, listen, if this publication of the word, if it is the word that does the job, and nothing else will, then what can compare in importance to the preaching of that word and making it available?

Nothing! Nothing! It becomes absolutely critical. That word is the life-giving thing that God has provided. This is exactly what he is saying in verse 11.

Look at this. Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all abounding in riches for all who call upon him.

[37 : 42] For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. And in that calling, in that calling, can you not see inherently that there is built into that a recognition and an admission of need?

Why are you going to call if you do not have a need and an awareness of a need? Why are you calling upon God if you feel so sufficient and satisfied in and of yourself?

And do you know many people do? And do you know what the result of that is? They don't call.

They don't call. They feel that there is nothing going on in this world that they can't handle.

They're sufficient. They're adequate. They can do it. They're just as good as anybody. They're just as clever. They're just as religious, just as righteous, just as good as anybody.

I don't see any particular need. Well, don't call. And they don't. So, in calling, there is an admission of need.

[38 : 56] It's just like in praying. Why do we pray? pray. When we pray, we are admitting two things. Our inability coupled with God's ability.

We are admitting that we are weak, that we don't have answers, that we have needs that we can't meet, and we are also suggesting that God can. So, and this, of course, is why atheists mock prayer, and why they wouldn't pray.

They wouldn't consider praying. Pray to whom? They're self-sufficient, they meet their own needs, etc. So, when we call, we acknowledge a need. However, look at verse 14.

How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

Just as it is written. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things. This is the whole dynamic of missions. This is why we send people wherever we send them.

[40 : 13] This is why evangelism is what it is. It is communicating a spiritual concept. The gospel that saves, that regenerates consists of a truth.

Information that is to be believed and received. That's what the gospel is. That's why it is called good news.

It's information. Not only is it a concept or an idea or truth that needs to be understood and embraced, taken to oneself, believed upon, committed to, not only is it that, but it is gloriously transferable.

What does that mean? It just means that once I have believed this message, once I have taken it to myself, once I have trusted Christ as my Savior, called upon the Lord, once my spirit has been regenerated or renewed, I can pass it on.

I can tell somebody else about it. I can take the thoughts and the ideas and the truths that are in my mind and formulate them into words that constitute a message and give it to you.

[41 : 47] And you can embrace it and receive it just like I did. That is the glorious thing about this gospel. It is designed for proclamation.

That is why the preaching of the word is so critical. When Paul wrote his last letter to young Timothy, he said, Timothy, preach the word, exhort, rebuke, proclaim with all long suffering and doctrine, because all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, and righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

I charge you, therefore, before God, preach the word. because nothing else will get the job done. Don't preach a religion. Don't preach sacraments. Don't preach hoops to jump through. Just preach the essence of the gospel. I delivered unto you that which I first of all received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, that he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

scriptures. That's it. That's the gospel. You believe it. You take it to yourself. You receive it. And God uses that word to cleanse, to pardon, to forgive, to restore, to regenerate.

[43 : 34] And he does all of that on the inside of us in a way that we do not understand. But we know one thing. everything's different.

I see the world through different eyes. I have a different perspective. Nothing is the same. This is the old, old story. It is the gospel.

It is how God makes new men and women out of old ones. just amazing.

Absolutely amazing. And you know what? It still works with the same power and the same ability as it had 2,000 years ago.

That is amazing. You don't have to give anything. You don't have to join anything. You don't have to promise anything. you just believe.

[44 : 39] And for those who say, well, that's too easy. That's too easy. Well, just let me remind you that the incredibly hard part was done by Jesus so he could make it easy for us.

nothing difficult about it except and I have described this as the hard part of the gospel and it is.

The hard part of the gospel is with my ego that forces me to admit I can't do it.

I can't be good enough. I can't be religious enough. I can't do enough good things. I cannot in any way, shape, or form through my behavior or my good intentions measure up to what God requires.

And that really strikes a blow to my ego. What do you mean telling me I can't do it? I can't handle it? No, you can't. And as long as you think you can, you'll never put your faith in Christ.

[46 : 04] You'll keep your faith right in yourself. That's called self-righteousness. This is the hard part of the gospel. If you can get beyond that and see yourself as God really sees you, then the easy part is turning to the Savior who can correct it.

But we have such an ego problem. self-righteousness. Well, I'm not that bad. I'm not that bad. I'm better than a lot of people.

And do you know all of the good things I've done? And on and on. That's the ego speaking. That's the part that says, hey, Jesus is fine for the real down and outers, but for people who are nice like you, you can make it.

You can manage. God will accept your righteousness because you're a nice person. That's the ego speaking. And that's what prevents people from coming to Christ. But once you can get past that, once you recognize that you really are how the scriptures describe you, then you will say, oh, woe is me.

I am a man of unclean lips, dwelling in a generation of people of unclean lips. Where is there hope for me? How can I possibly be connected with God?

[47 : 34] That's when you call upon him. Wonderful. Wonderful. Perhaps every single person here has done that.

Perhaps there are some who have not. I do not have the ability to read people's hearts, but I can assure you that God does. I'm going to close this with a word of prayer, and I would invite you to join me.

Loving Father, we are enamored anew as we should be with the simplicity of this gospel that requires nothing from us, because all that was required was paid for by Jesus Christ.

Christ. And we are simply to acknowledge that and respond to that by putting our trust and our faith in this one who died for us.

Lord Jesus, if there is anyone here struggling, looking for answers, looking for assurance, looking for a way to make that connection, salvation, we just pray that the simplicity of this message of salvation by grace through faith will capture their hearts, and that right now, wherever they are,

listening by way of tape, or here in this auditorium, they may come to the place where they say, Lord Jesus, I can't do it.

[49 : 09] I can't be what I need to be to measure up to your standards, but Jesus Christ did that for me, and I want him.

I want his righteousness put to my account, and I just want to put my faith and my trust, my confidence, my everything into this one called the Savior.

I want to trust him, and I want to leave the remaking and renewing of my human spirit to you. Thank you for the regenerating power of the word of God.

Make it to be a reality in my life, even now, I pray in Christ's name. Amen. Dear friend, if you made that your prayer, please let somebody know before you leave here today.

I'd be happy to talk with you about it. God bless you. You are dismissed.