

THE SALVATION OF SOULS II Peter 1:9. We are not saved by repentance; however, we can not be saved without it. Is repentance a part of the gospel or is that adding to the gospel? This message will clarify the matter!

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[0 : 00] I would like you to please turn to the book of Romans, and this morning we'll be in Romans chapter 10.

And in Romans chapter 10 we'll be reading verses 6 through 15. But the righteous, based on faith, speaks as follows.

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.

But what does it say? 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 will be saved.

[1 : 36] For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness. And with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

For the scripture says, whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

For the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him.

For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved. How will they call on him?

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things. Thank you, Gary.

[3 : 19] And I would like to add to that a few verses from 1 Peter chapter 1. Because we're going to be talking about and opening a series of studies on the subject of salvation.

And the salvation of souls. And in 1 Peter chapter 1. And beginning with verse 3, we read, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away. Reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.

That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 38] And though you have not seen him, you love him. And though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Obtaining as the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. And that's the subject matter that we want to begin addressing.

I guess you could say this is, as much as you could call it, a return to basics, because this will be as basic as basic can be. We are going to engage an in-depth examination of the mechanics or the dynamics of personal salvation of the human being.

Many today are not even convinced that there is such a thing. The Bible makes it quite clear that there are mechanics and dynamics involved in an individual created by God being brought into a personal relationship with that creator.

Some would call it, in familiar terminology, the plan of salvation. The scheme. The formula for how an individual is placed in a proper relationship with the God who made them.

[6 : 06] You can call this salvation experience. You can call it being born again. You can call it being regenerated. You can call it becoming a Christian. Those are all synonyms for the term.

The scriptures make it very, very clear that such a formula not only exists, but is set forth in great detail and repeated in many places throughout the testimony of scripture.

Someone has said, The Bible is a book that is not designed to tell us how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven. It is a book of connection, of relationships.

And it is made quite clear throughout scripture that God places a very, very high premium on relationships. There is one that is eternal in existence, existing between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

That is relational. And God is so committed to relationships that he went to incredible lengths to restore a damaged relationship brought about by man's sin.

[7 : 15] How that damaged relationship can be repaired, and man can be brought back to God through the means that he has provided, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although it is an issue, that of salvation, that is made quite clear in the scriptures, people and churches have managed to complicate it with rituals, and religion, and penance, and infant baptism, and water baptism, and communion, and confirmation, and church membership, and do-goodism, and trying harder, and keeping the Ten Commandments.

All of those things serve to muddy the water, and to keep things obfuscated, so that people do not really understand the simplicity that is in Christ.

The salvation that God has made available to us is very simple, very basic, very elemental. It is a crime to complicate it, and to keep people from understanding and appreciating it.

We will see as we move on, that it is an age-old struggle between what man wants to do to merit favor with God, and what God has already done through Christ to provide the merit for him.

[8 : 40] It is a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, between law and works, between man's work and God's work.

The struggle goes on. The most logical thing in all of humanity is to operate on the merit system. You be good, and you do good, and you be a nice person, and God will reward your niceness, and the reward is heaven.

You can earn your way to heaven. Sounds perfectly logical, because virtually everything else we do is based on the merit system, from your employment, to school work, to whatever.

You do the job, you put forth the effort, you get the credit, you get the benefit, you get the results. And man just has a natural tendency to carry that right over into spiritual things.

How do you go to heaven? Well, you've got to be a better person, you've got to reform, you've got to join the church, you've heard it all, you've heard it so many times. And yet, after 2,000 years of New Testament content being available, the world still has not gotten the message.

[9 : 59] We have not succeeded in getting it out in a way that is understandable. Most people out there hear about spiritual things, salvation, etc.

in bits and pieces. They get a little bit of religious talk here, a tract there, a gospel program here, a song on the radio, an occasional sermon in church, but very often they are not able to connect the dots and put it all together.

See the comprehensiveness of it so that they can act on the information. And that is what I trust we will be able to present. Now today, today, the big thing is religious pluralism, which is nothing more than preferentialism.

Religious pluralism says all faiths, all beliefs, all religions, all occupy the same level of legitimacy. There is no difference between them.

No faith is superior or better to any other faith. That's religious pluralism. It is married to political correctness. And political correctness means you should never have to contradict anybody's belief about anything.

[11 : 19] No one has the right to tell anyone else that their religion or their faith is wrong. Why not? Because religion and personal faith is a preferential thing.

It is a matter of personal opinion. What right do you have to tell someone else that their personal opinion about religion is wrong? wrong? It's their personal opinion.

They are entitled to it. You don't have the right to tell anybody that they're wrong about that. And they don't have the right to tell you that they're wrong. And of course, this means conversion is passé.

What's the point? Everybody's fine where they are. There is no room for preaching the gospel because the gospel proclaimed is designed to convert people.

Convert them from what? They're fine where they are. Are you implying that they are wrong in what you believe? What they believe? You don't have the right to do that. That's what religious pluralism is.

[12 : 25] It has absolutely inundated the country. And if there is anything that religious pluralists hate with a vengeance, it is the exclusivity of Jesus Christ.

Because everything that they see about religion is a matter of personal taste, personal preference, it is subjective opinion, it is not objective truth.

And of course, they are convinced there is no objective truth. Everything is how you see it. You see it differently, you see it differently, you see it differently, and you completely contradict each other in how you see it.

Well, which one is wrong then? Oh, nobody's wrong. Isn't that nice? That's the beauty of it. Nobody's wrong. And that means we have peace and tranquility because there's nothing to argue about.

Everybody's right. Isn't it wonderful? Well, you've heard me say before, everyone is entitled to their own opinion and their own preference.

[13 : 35] I would not deny them that. But no one is entitled to their own facts because facts are stubborn things.

Facts correspond to reality. You cannot contrive it. If a thing is true, it is true because it is true.

It is not true because I say it is or because anyone else says it is. It is true because it corresponds with reality. That is what is true.

So, that brings us back then to this concept of what the scriptures set forth as the Christian gospel. And, for a jumping off place, we've already read from Romans chapter 10.

Gary read that just a few minutes ago, but I would like to add to the mix, if I may, a very brief passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and then we will continue on with the subject matter.

[14 : 42] 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and I'm sharing this, parts of it, from my translation of the New Testament from 26 translations, which I've found very helpful over the years, but I'll be reading from the King James.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received and wherein you stand, by which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.

And I must stop here and just inject a comment. What Paul is talking about and the possibility of the Corinthians having believed in vain is related to the issue of the resurrection.

And that's what he's talking about. And he is saying that you Corinthians have believed the gospel in vain for nothing.

It's empty. It's worthless if Jesus Christ did not come back from the dead. But if he didn't, our preaching is empty and your faith is empty because you have put your faith in a lie and it is vain.

[16 : 00] That would be what believing in vain means. But then he goes on through the rest of this glorious chapter and demonstrates how that their belief is not in vain because he is risen.

And that gives validity and stability and assurance to your faith that there is no resurrection. then of course you have believed in vain.

And then he goes on to say for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

And then he goes on and talks about the eyewitness testimony. Now we are going to return to the passage that was read earlier in Romans chapter 10 and use this as a jumping off place because we want to deal with these issues.

What actually happens between God and an individual in the process of salvation of the human spirit or of the human soul?

[17 : 14] Many times people use these terms interchangeably. Soul and the spirit. I personally am convinced that they are definitely very connected but that they are not synonymous.

And this is a study we will be engaging or re-engaging on Wednesday evening a couple of weeks down the road. It is a fascinating word study on soul, spirit, mind, and heart.

And we will be developing that and it will show up from place to place as we move on through this passage. So in what order do these events transpire?

What is man's part and what is God's part? Also, in our last session together before we began this series, and I was gone for a couple of weeks, I posed a question at the conclusion of our study and I mentioned to you that repentance is a key or critical issue in the subject of salvation.

that no one can be saved by repenting, but you cannot be saved without it. And I realize that may sound confusing or even somewhat like double talk, but I can assure you that it is not.

[18 : 32] And you will see the valid place that repentance plays. And by the way, when you hear the word repent, what do you think of? I won't ask for a show of hands, but you usually have some kind of a concept in mind when you hear the word repent.

Before I engaged a word study of this and really put a handle on the word so that it just enriched my soul, I always had a mental flashback when I heard the word repent of this nerdy, bald-headed little character wearing a long robe and carrying a big sign standing on the street corner that says, repent, the end is near.

That's the idea that a lot of people have of repenting. And if you were to repent, what would you do? How would you go about it? What does that actually mean?

Now, most of you grace people have been around here long enough to know the word metanoia, simply means to change the mind. And believe it or not, it is a purely intellectual, mental exercise.

Matter of fact, the word repent originally had nothing to do with anything spiritual. spiritual. The word gospel originally had nothing to do with anything spiritual.

[20 : 12] The word apostle and disciple originally had nothing to do with anything spiritual or religious or biblical. These were just good terms in the Greek language that existed long before the New Testament was ever written.

and the New Testament employed those words from the common vernacular of the day, the Koine Greek language of the day, because they were terms that described what the biblical writer was talking about.

He didn't make up new words. Apostle, disciple, repent, those are not biblical words per se. They were words that were in existence long before the New Testament ever came into being.

And they utilized them because they communicated. So what we have done is we have religionized those words because they are more often used now in a religious context.

Do you ever hear anybody talk about repenting apart from something religious or gospel or disciple? Always connect it with religion because that's the way it's used. So we have come to define the word as a religious word, but it isn't.

[21 : 19] And the word repent simply means to change your mind. And more details about that later. It's one of the most fascinating things that I have ever discovered. And we want to jump in here with Romans chapter 10 and beginning with verse 6.

We are talking about the salvation of souls and what is involved. The apostle is laying out the mechanics and the details and the order here in which this salvation takes place.

And he says in verse 6, the righteousness that is man being pronounced righteous before God, which is of faith, that righteousness which is obtained or realized on the basis of faith, speaks on this wise or speaks in this way.

Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven. Now what he's doing is setting up a hypothetical and he's saying this. Look, if you want to connect with God, if you want to establish a relationship with God, how do you do that?

How difficult is it? Well, I guess you have to go where God is. Where is God? Well, God is in heaven.

[22 : 39] Well, how am I going to get there? I can't do that. How can I establish that connection? How can I this is some deep, dark, mysterious thing?

And you know, this is really the concept that the world has. In the first place, many deny that there is such a formula or such a manner spelled out that is understandable in communicable terms.

We call this a communicable concept. It can be taken from one person's mind and put into another person's mind without losing anything. It is a transferable concept. And that if such a thing exists whereby man can come to know God, it has to be very, very complicated.

Very dark, deep, and mysterious. Very hard to get. In fact, probably only the real intellectually elite can get their brains around it.

Why would anybody think that? Now, follow me. Many would think that because this God is an infinite being.

[23 : 55] He's got to be very mysterious, very aloof, very far off, unreachable, unapproachable, infinitely great in intelligence and power.

God is so complex and so indescribable and so out of our league.

after all, he is transcendent. Yes, he is. He is transcendent. That means removed, unlike us.

But, he is eminent. Eminent. What does that mean? He's closer than a brother.

He's very near. Well, now, wait a minute. Which is he? Transcendent or eminent? He's both. That's part of his job description. And only he can be that way.

[25 : 09] How can he be a God who is near and a God who is far off? That is part of his infinite character. So, you don't have to ascend into heaven to bring God's salvation to us.

Look at what the text says. That is, to bring Christ down from above or who shall descend into the deep. That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. Resurrection, is that something you can manage, accomplish?

Can you do that? Of course not. So, we don't have to go up there. We don't have to go down there. Where do we have to go to make this connection with this God?

You don't have to go anywhere. You don't even have to go to church. All you have to do is just be you to make that connection.

How so? Well, let's keep reading. What does it say? Verse 8. The Word. The Word. The Logos is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.

[26 : 20] Goodspeed renders this. God's message is close to you, on your lips and in your mind. Amplified reads it, the Word, God's message in Christ is near you, on your lips and in your heart.

And here we've got this play of words between heart and mind. The scriptures use them synonymously. We do not think in terms of thinking taking place in the heart, but in the mind.

Scripture uses both. You think with the mind, you think with the heart. We think of the heart as being purely emotions. The mind is being purely intellect. That's not the way the Bible uses it.

To believe in your heart relates to the core of your being, not the blood pump in the chest, but the inner essence of your makeup.

Read on. That is, Taylor, in his living translation, which is a paraphrase, says, is already within easy reach of each of us.

[27 : 30] In fact, it is as near as our own hearts and mouths. That is, the word of faith which we preach.

And Weymouth renders it, that is the word which we are publishing about the faith. 20th century New Testament says, which means the message of faith which we proclaim.

And here it is. that, verse 9, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, Goodspeed says, and with your mind you believe.

Amplified says, and in your heart believe. Now, they cycle back and forth between this mind and heart thing, because as I pointed out to you, the scriptures use these terms.

Interchangeably. They are synonyms. We don't see them that way. But if you want to understand the scriptures, you've got to look at the words the way the scriptures use them, not the way we use them.

[28 : 39] And that's where the difference in translations comes into play. That's why other translations sometimes can be so helpful, because it is really confusing. You ask a little child, do you want to receive the Lord Jesus and take Jesus into your heart?

What does that communicate to a five-year-old? Stop and think about it. In the first place, most five-year-olds don't even know they have a heart. And if they do, they think about the blood pump.

They know that somebody has a heart attack, the heart is sick, or somebody had a heart bypass operation, or grandpa had a stent put in his heart. And that's all they know about. How do you get Jesus into that?

It's a good question. And sometimes we adults use terms like that, that just profoundly confuse children, and we don't even realize that we're doing it. Believe in thine heart, Goodspeed says, with your mind you believe, amplified, and in your heart believe, or adhere to, or trust in, and rely on the truth, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. This is saying, there is a level of belief that has to be involved, or salvation cannot and does not take place.

[30 : 12] This is the heart. belief is not realized in the core of your being, it is an inadequate belief.

It is a superficial kind of belief. I've got those three words. You recall them? By the way, the overhead I want you to think of as just another old friend that's been called out of retirement.

Okay? We've talked about this before. The levels of belief, essentia, and fiducia.

All of these have to do with belief. Noticia is the first level. And by the way, nobody, nobody can come to the third level without going through the first two.

You can stop at any one of these. Many people have, but you cannot get to the third one. And this is where the heart is. This is the heart belief.

[31 : 28] You cannot get to fiducia without going through these. No one can. Because the first has to do with receiving notification of the message.

And the message is Christ died for your sins. That puts people on notice. That gives them the initial word. It does not require any kind of response.

You are simply letting them in on a piece of information. salvation. Now, most people, even if they don't believe that, have heard that, at least in the United States or maybe in the western world.

And they are generally reminded of it, particularly every Good Friday and every Easter. Christ died for the sins of the world.

Many of them accept that as a historical fact. many do not. But this is the first level of belief. All that means is you have heard the word.

[32 : 34] You haven't done anything with it. You haven't rejected it. You haven't accepted it. You've just heard it. You have been put on notice. You have been notified. That's what the word notitia means.

This is just a Latin term. And I use these Latin words just to impress you. And the second Latin word, essentia. It's very closely related to and translated with the English word, assent.

When you give assent to something, you agree to it. You are in agreement with it.

You assent. You assent to that. That is another level of belief. And fiducia is the third step of belief which many people have not taken.

There are a lot of people who stop right here. There are even professing Christians who stop right here. They have heard the word.

[33 : 36] They agree. I believe that's true. Christ died for my sin. Then they are saved. No, they aren't. No, they aren't.

Many believe they are. And they even call themselves believers because I believe Christ died for my sin. That does not save you. It does not save anyone.

It puts you on the way. But it does not complete the transaction. Why doesn't it? Because you have not acted upon it.

well, when you believe it, isn't that acting upon it? No. That is accepting it, believing it, as a historical fact.

That's all. You register it, or you log it as being true. Well, what else can you do? Isn't that all that's required?

[34 : 43] No. And that is why there are a lot of people who think they are Christians, and they are not. They are sincerely deluded.

Now, I want you to think about this. Let it sink in a little bit. Because you're wondering right now, well, I thought that's all there was to it.

What's he going to add to that? When you accept something as a historical fact, and you log it as being true, that's all it is.

And let me tell you something, that will not change your life. And that will not change your eternal destiny. all you've done is agree with history.

What remains is this. In addition to your assenting to this, or agreeing with this, there has to be a human response to this.

[36 : 08] And this word fiducia is related to the term, and you're familiar with this, fidelity.

Fidelity means trustworthiness. Banks and lending institutions, which, by the way, have lost a lot of their credibility over relief.

But they want you to trust them with your money. And they say, we are a fidelity institution.

You can put your money with us and rest easy. We are trustworthy. This word fidelity, if you put an N in front of it, you get infidelity.

infidelity in a marriage is when one partner is not true or trustworthy to the other partner. And they have adulterated the relationship with a third party.

[37 : 15] And they are guilty of infidelity, which means unfaithfulness. And faith is the human response to notitia and essentia.

It is what you do about what you hear. What is there that you can do? You can entrust yourself to the reality of what was provided for you through Jesus Christ.

That is the human response to what God has done in Christ. We say Christ died for your sins. And the retort is, so, all right, Christ died for my sins.

I believe that. My question then is, what have you done about it? very often the response is, what's to do?

It's a historical fact that happened 2,000 years ago. I can't do anything about it. Oh, yes, you can. You can embrace that truth.

[38 : 35] You can commit yourself to this Savior who gave himself for you. How do you do that? You do that with your will.

You do not wait for a feeling. You do not wait for some mystical kind of sensation that might put you in a religious mood that would make you feel like doing that.

It is an act of the will. It is an intellectual decision. Now, this turns a lot of Christians off because they don't want anything to do with mind or thinking or intellect.

They think that it should be all mysterious, deep, dark, spiritual stuff that nobody can really define. You know, just like something floating around mysteriously that just kind of zaps you.

That's nonsense. That is mysticism. There isn't anything scriptural about that. This is information that is provided so that you may act upon it.

[39 : 34] And when you act upon it, you place your faith, your trust, your confidence, your reliance in the person of Jesus Christ, who he is, what he did, and why it matters.

That results in regeneration. That is the act of salvation. That is an act of responding to what God has done in Christ, and regeneration is the result.

God regenerates upon the basis of the human response to the finished work of Christ. And understand, you cannot do that.

You cannot do that without repenting. Now, let me explain what I mean, because this is critical, and I want you to get this all in one setting. The word repent means change your mind.

It is the word metanoia, and it simply means through the mind. metanoia.

[40 : 43] This is the word from nous, which is a Greek word for mind, and meta, is true or beyond. The mind. It is a mental act.

The repentance means that you change your position. You change your conviction. You change your belief from something to something.

And there is only one reason to repent about anything. And it is always the same. It has nothing to do with anything necessarily religious, although it can. But it means the word metanoia in the Greek repent means to change your mind about anything.

About anything. I thought the Cincinnati Reds might win the pennant last year. Until after the first few games of the season.

And then I repented. And then I repented. Now, you wouldn't use that word. Because we tend to think that's a religious word. But it isn't. It is association with religious things that has made it that.

[41 : 48] All it means is you change your mind about anything. And there is only one reason to ever change your mind about anything. And that is this. You discover that what you have been believing up to this point in time is wrong.

Is wrong. Now, hear me. It doesn't necessarily have to have anything to do with something moral or religious or sinful. It just has to do about anything that you discover you were wrong about.

I met this girl and I thought she was Miss Right until after we had a few dates and I repented of that.

Which means I don't want to live with this woman the rest of my life. You changed your mind. Why did you change your mind? You discovered you were wrong.

You were wrong. How did you discover you were wrong? What makes you think you were wrong? In formation. Always the same. The formula is always the same.

[42 : 58] You change your mind because you discovered you were wrong. And you discovered you were wrong because of information that you got. The information updated you. The information clued you in.

What was the information? The information you got was she had terrible table manners. and not only that but I soon learned by way of information and experience and dating this girl you couldn't believe the thing she said.

She lied six ways to Sunday. You don't be married to somebody like that. What's she doing? What are you doing in the dating process? You're collecting information. That's all you're doing.

You're collecting information about each other. We go all through life collecting information about all kinds of that causes us to formulate opinions and take positions and establish biases and all the rest of it.

All on the basis of what we take in. Through what we read, through what we see, through what we experience. This is all information. And we gather information, we put it in our mind, and we process it.

[44 : 04] And the wheels start turning. And after a while, we start, hey, wait a minute. This doesn't add up. This is not what I thought.

This is different. I'm learning more and more. And the more I learn, the more I discover I have been wrong.

I'm changing my mind. And that's all it means. Now, when we apply this to salvation, you cannot be saved without repenting because you cannot come to Jesus Christ without changing your mind.

From what? From, well, I'm not such a bad person. I'm a good person. I've never really tried to hurt anybody. I've never robbed any banks or killed anyone.

I'm basically a good person. You know what you need to do? You need to repent. you need to change your mind about that. That's a bunch of nonsense. You need to really change your thinking.

[45 : 15] Now, when we talk about change your mind, sometimes that doesn't connect. And I'll tell you why I think that is. Because we're looking for a more radical change. So we use the term change of heart.

Doesn't that say something a little bit more than a change of mind? Because when we say change of heart, we automatically bring into the mix behavior, emotions, feelings are involved with the change of heart.

Let me make this really clear distinction. Now, this is very, very important. It has to be mental before it is emotional. Because the emotion is a response to the mental.

You feel the way you feel because you know what you know. The knowing always precedes the feeling.

The intellect has to come into play. That's why *essentia*, *noticia*, are critical. But *fiducia* brings the totality of the individual into play.

[46 : 35] It is the whole person. So, when an individual is converted, what is it that is converted about them? It is their whole being, the totality of their being.

they are converted in their spirit, and they are converted potentially in their body, which put together, body and spirit comprises the soul, and that encompasses the totality of the individual.

We do not now realize the benefits of a converted body, but we will when it is glorified. and our physical body will come up to the positional state of our spiritual salvation, and then we will be as Christ is, and it will be absolutely glorious.

But for right now, we deal in this complex of the intellect and the feelings, and when you know what you know, that is what prompts you to move.

why do you think the word emotion has motion in it? It's what moves us. You may see a child, a two-year-old toddler, out playing near a busy intersection, completely unaware of the danger that is out there, but when you see that child, you are aware of the danger, what did you use to become aware of it?

[48 : 17] Your mind. You immediately process the information you had. Busy intersection, irresponsible toddler child out there, in harm's way, and you compute that in a split second in your mind.

Just like that, you put it all together and you see that great danger is involved. So, what do you do about it? Nothing. It's not your responsibility.

You just assess the situation, so, child is out there playing, may very well get run over. Too bad. You don't stop there, do you?

Do you know what you do? You go to fiducia. You act. You respond to the situation. Why do you do that?

Because you are an emotional being. And immediately, the horrors of that child being seriously injured or even killed floods over your mind and you rush into action.

[49 : 29] I won't say, I won't say, without thinking, because you did think, that's why you rush into action. Your thinking pulled your emotions in and your emotions cause you to run full speed out there and gather up that little youngster in your arms and carry him back to safety.

And all these things work together. It is part of our being fearfully and wonderfully made. It is an incredible transaction. How many times have you heard me say, biblical Christianity is a sinking faith.

God has given us wonderful minds, intellects, to be used and stimulated and to be used in response to him. And when we hear this gospel message, the response that is required is our trust, our faith, our confidence, our reliance placed in him.

And let me close with this. This is important too. Do you realize that the word faith applies across the board to everyone and everything, whether someone is a believer, religious, irreligious, or even an atheist?

Everybody has faith. Everybody. I don't care who they are. They cannot escape faith. You cannot live without it.

[51 : 03] When you turn on your tap water in the sink, you do so in faith. You just believe. You believe that there's going to be water coming out of that. When you flip the light switch, you just take for granted.

That's exercise. When you get on an airliner, you have confidence in the airline that they're not going to let just anybody in that pilot's cockpit, pit, but it's somebody who has experience and knows how to get that thing off the ground and fly it and land it.

You exercise faith. The only thing that distinguishes Christian faith from any other faith, whether it's a Muslim, atheist, Buddhist, or whatever, is the object of the faith.

That's what makes it different. Everybody who is planning to go to heaven is counting on something to get them there. whatever that is, that's the object of your faith.

And your faith is no stronger than the object in which you have placed it. So if it's in yourself, you're in a world of hurt.

[52 : 16] If it's in a religion or a church, it will not suffice. Your faith has to be placed in the one who is capable of delivering, capable of saving.

We only have one that fits that description and that's why we call him Savior. He's the only one that can do it. When you put your faith and your trust in Jesus Christ, that is your response to God's provision.

So what can you do about Jesus Christ dying on the cross? That. That. With your will, will, you can embrace him and take him as your own.

You do that with your mind, with your intellect. You do not wait for some mysterious bolt out of the blue. You do that if you want to do that.

Because you don't have to do that. This is the way you appropriate God's grace. It is through faith. But you don't have to appropriate God's grace.

[53 : 24] You may opt for God's justice. Take your chances with that. Frankly, it isn't much of a chance.

It isn't any chance at all. We need to understand that anyone who spurns or rejects God's grace will have to deal with God's justice.

And that will not be a pretty sight. God doesn't like that any better than we do. That's why he made a way of escape through Christ.

God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to faith. Wonderful, glorious concept. This great, great gospel is good news.

It's very basic, very general, but very, very important. And you see why you cannot be saved apart from repenting.

[54 : 26] But if you repent, and that's as far as you go, then that means you change your mind about Christ, but you never make the commitment. You never make the response. And that's why repentance alone will not save you, but you cannot be saved without it because you cannot embrace Christ without changing your position about him formally and about yourself formally.

so it is an integrated whole. It cannot be dealt with separately. Questions or comments? Anyone? Bernie?

Bernie? I'm sorry, I cannot hear you. Is there a mic back there? Is there a mic back there? Christianity changes your life, your walk, it's everything, and of course you depend on him.

It's nothing in you. It just changes your whole life. I'm not the same person I was before I was saved. You're not supposed to be. I know it. Thank you.

You're right. You're right. Christianity permeates to the very core of your being. No one can have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and ever remain the same.

[55 : 54] It's just not possible. Just not possible. Anyone else? In the back, Brad, let's get the mic over there if you would, Roger.

It's frustrating for the people who are listening who aren't here because they can't hear the question. Thank you. Okay. All right. You've been talking about Christianity being the true religion, but what sets it apart from other religions?

They have books. I've talked to many Muslims. I've had Muslim friends that say that Allah is God. God. It's like the same religion, basically, is what we follow.

But I'm assuming any other religion may think, you know, our religion is the religion. Everybody else is wrong, you know? Yeah.

That's a very good question, Brad. And I have said before that there is only one thing that all religions have in common that I've ever been able to discover.

[57 : 02] And the only thing that they all have in common is that each one of them believes that they're right. That they all have in common. So, how do we know that we aren't guilty of the very same thing?

So, what you say about Christianity is the same thing they say about Islam, about Buddhism and everything. So, what makes you right and them wrong? And the only answer I have to that is the scriptures.

And that, of course, opens up a whole other issue, such as, well, what makes you think the Bible is right and the Koran is wrong? Or the Bhagavad Gita is wrong?

What makes your scriptures right and everybody else is wrong? What makes Christianity right and everybody else wrong? Again, I can only say the scriptural revelation that we have in the Bible in and of itself demonstrates the veracity and the truthfulness of God's word.

But there is one element that stands out so powerfully and just bold relief that does distinguish biblical Christianity from every other faith, religion, ism, cult, split, splinter, you name it.

[58 : 14] There is one thing and this one thing is this. It is a system of grace whereby man comes unto God and it is predicated upon what God has done for man, not what man can do or will do for God.

Every faith, every religion except Christianity is based on a human merit system. The individual adherence to that faith, whether Islam, Buddhism, or whatever, the individual adherence to it have to comply with the rules and regulations of that faith.

They have to practice that faith. And biblical Christianity is a grace-based faith that simply puts one's trust and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and what he did for us, not what we can do for him.

So, that in and of itself probably separates biblical Christianity from everything. I do not know of any other faith, small or large, that operates on the grace system.

That alone distinguishes it. In my estimation, very, very powerfully. God did for man what man could not do for himself. That is grace.

[59 : 40] Why should God do that? Well, because we're so wonderful. No, it's because he's so wonderful. We are class A stinkers.

That's what we are. And God loved us. Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, God commendeth his love toward us.

Sent Christ to die for us. That's incredible. No other faith, no other religion, has anything like that to offer. Only biblical Christianity. And you know what?

I make a distinction. Biblical Christianity has that. Christianity in general, as it is broadly known throughout the world, is not much better than any of the other faiths.

Because they too are for the most part based on do goodism, be good, be nice, because it's nicer to be nice, rather than trust in the finished work of Christ.

[60 : 40] Was there another comment? question. Lois, and then Bernie again, and we'll close. Here comes the mic. Here comes the mic. Is there any other faith in which someone walked upon the earth as Jesus did?

No. No, there simply is not. And I'm not saying that as a matter of personal opinion. I'm saying it as a matter of historical record. There is none other. And absolutely everything, I mean everything, hinges on the identity of Jesus Christ.

Who is he? I know what people are saying about me, Jesus said, but whom do you say that I am? Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

That's it. Over and out. I rest my case. Bernie, your comment will be the last. I was trying to talk to my brother about Christianity and about God.

Of course, he was arguing with me. And I said, have you ever told a lie, Dick? Any kind of a lie? He said, well, yeah. I said, well, you can't go to heaven then.

[61 : 59] I said, have you ever taken anything that belongs to somebody else? Anything, even a piece of paper? He said, well, then nobody's going to heaven. I said, that's why we need a Savior.

That's the point. That's a wonderful note to close on. May we stand, please. Once again, Father, we know that we do not begin to merit what you have done for us.

We don't even merit the reception of this information. And we are here this morning on the basis of your grace. You have simply extended to us the air sufficient for us to breathe to allow us to be here for this moment.

And even that is a gift, and we thank you for it. And we pray that should there be one in our midst who has not made that commitment of themselves to Jesus Christ for what he did for them, we pray that the simplicity of this message will connect with their heart, and that they will be able to intelligently make that transaction and respond with their confidence and their reliance in Jesus Christ.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.