

# Benefits of Belief

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] And again, I suppose it ought to be quite customary that we have something to do with God's grace, because after all, that's what we name this church, isn't it? So while you are turning to the Word that is alive in 1 Peter chapter 1, I want to share with you some introductory remarks while you are turning there.

You are as aware, I'm sure, as I am what's taking place with the real estate market, with the banking and mortgage industry, with the investment portfolios of numbers of people that have been radically reduced and some have been almost completely eliminated because of what is transpiring in our economy.

Lives have been turned upside down in many cases. And a number of people have been brought to financial ruin and emotional despair based upon what has happened with their stock portfolio or with their retirement program.

We have seen life savings virtually wiped out. And the Scriptures speak of that which is provided for us that is not subject to any of those things because it is contingent solely upon the provision and the grace of God.

And that is spelled out here in 1 Peter chapter 1. I should like to begin reading with verse 3. Then we have a number of propositions that we want you to consider. And we will be attempting to put some meat on those bones for the next few sessions.

[ 1 : 3 8 ] And I have not forgotten, I want to remind you, I have not forgotten about a series that will be upcoming where we will be treating the reasons for so much confusion within the body of Christ as regards spiritual matters.

And that will be coming just as soon as we finish addressing these particular issues. So I'm going to begin reading with 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 3 down through verse 9.

Follow along please, whatever translation you have. 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. By the way, that's radically different from what Wall Street has to offer and from what Main Street has to offer.

This is what God has to offer. Imperishable, undefiled, 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.

[ 3 : 0 8 ] 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.

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. Now, I want you to turn, if you will, please, to some other references, and we will be commenting on these just briefly.

But we will be using our fingers and flipping through the pages. So, I want you to come back, please, to Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 3.

Back toward the Gospels. Stop at Ephesians chapter 1 and beginning with verse 3.

[ 4 : 32 ] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.

In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him. With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens, and things upon the earth.

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose, who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end, that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Now, another yet, come back further to 1 Corinthians chapter 2. 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

[ 6 : 30 ] And let's begin reading with verse 9. Cannot resist the temptation to tell you that this passage has nothing to do with heaven, which is usually the first thing that everybody thinks about.

Now, there might be some application. There might be some similarities. But the context makes it very clear that He is not talking about heaven. Inspired Apostle says, Now, if you stop reading right there, you can understand how and why some people think that's talking about heaven.

We cannot begin to imagine the things which God has prepared for us that will confront us when we get to heaven. That's true. And nobody's denying it. But this verse is not talking about that.

And the context makes it very clear. He's talking about these wonderful things that we could not imagine that God has prepared for us. And then in verse 10, he says, For to us, God revealed them.

That means they are for our knowledge now. What the text is saying is, that which God has prepared for those who love Him, are things that you've never seen, things that you've never heard of, things that you've never even been able to imagine.

[ 8 : 08 ] But God wants you to know what they are. So He has revealed them. And they are here in this book, and this is exactly what we are going to talk about. What are these things?

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. What are those things? Well, they're not material things. They're not houses and lands and automobiles and bank accounts.

Not those things. The things which God has prepared for those who love Him are spiritual things. These are the kind of things that impact and affect your very life from the inside out.

These are not material things. These things are truths. They are realities. They are concepts.

They have to do with that which God has been pleased to reveal so that when you understand these things and receive these things, they completely change your life, your actions, your attitude, your agenda, your destiny, everything.

[ 9 : 24 ] These are spiritual truths, spiritual realities. And we are told in verse 9, God has prepared them for those who love Him.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. You have a spirit.

You have a human spirit. It is the intangible part of your makeup. Nobody has ever seen it. But it's very real. It is that portion of your being that when you believe and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, it is that component of your being, your spirit, that is regenerated.

That is what is made new. That is what is born again. Not your body. Your internal component. Your internal being.

The real you. And at the point of physical death, it is that real you, your human spirit, that vacates this physical body and is joined together with the Lord.

[ 10 : 47 ] That is our spiritual being. Only those who have been made alive by God's Spirit, those who have had their spirit quickened, can receive these truths that we are talking about.

Unbelievers do not have this capability. Unbelievers have a spirit. Every human being has a spirit. It's part of what makes you a human being.

If your spirit is alive toward God, that means you have been regenerated. You have been made a new person in Christ.

You have received spiritual life. Heaven is your destiny. Christ is your Savior. Eternal life is a gift that is given you.

And you are locked into that, safe and secure, preserved by the grace of God. And that also means that you have a capacity or an ability to receive truth and information from the Spirit of God who is our teacher.

[ 12 : 00 ] It is His Spirit that bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. And the text makes it very clear that this is privileged information.

Only those who are in Christ have access to this information. Unbelievers have a spirit. But it isn't alive toward God.

It is alive toward their body, but it is dead toward God. And when God quickens that spirit, He makes it alive. So then, the line of communication is open between God and you and your spirit.

So, the text goes on to say, God revealed them through the Spirit. But the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?

Aren't you glad nobody can read your mind? We would all be terribly embarrassed if we could read one another's mind. Nobody knows what is going on in your mind except you.

[ 13 : 21 ] This is privileged territory and no one else can enter it. It is your own little sanctuary. It is your spirit, your thoughts.

No one knows what's going on in your mind. No one knows your thoughts, your fears, your dreams, your secrets. Nobody knows those. Just you. In your spirit.

Even so, the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we, and Paul is using this term collectively, addressing the Corinthians whom he already has identified as saints or those who have been set apart in Christ and he includes himself with them and he says, now we, you Corinthians and me, we have received not the spirit of the world.

We already had that. You received the spirit of the world just by living in the world. The world is constantly bombarding you from every vantage point with its value system its philosophy, its ideals, its values, everything.

The world is coming at us all the time with this. We already have that. That's the spirit of the world. The zeitgeist, the Germans call it, the spirit of the age, the atmosphere that is out there.

[ 14 : 44 ] You could call it the cosmos diabolicus, that cosmos that is under the rule and dominion of the God of this world, 2 Corinthians 4, who has blinded the minds of those who believe not.

We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God, that we might, oh, I like this, that we might know, not guess, not wish, not pray to know, not have a hunch about, not be suspicious of, but that we might know.

There is incredible value in knowing something and knowing that you know. That's why God has given us this information.

It isn't to leave us in the dark. It's to bring us into the light. And any believer who remains in the dark has only himself to blame for that because we are given these things that we might know, the things freely given to us by God.

What are these things? As I told you, they are spiritual values, spiritual truths, biblical concepts, stuff that you can use to build stability into your life, enjoyment into your life, abundance into your life.

[ 16 : 16 ] all comes through appropriating these things. Which things we also speak.

Paul is saying, I'm going to tell you what these things are. Not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

But a natural man, that is the man who has a human spirit, but it's dead toward God. It's not active, not operable.

That's the natural man. The unregenerate man, the unconverted man, the non-Christian man, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for their foolishness unto him.

He looks at those things that believers prize and value, things for which we are deeply grateful, kind of turns his nose up at them and says, ah, you, you, this whole, whole religious bit, this whole Christianity thing is, pie in the sky when you die, by and by.

[ 17 : 36 ] No, it isn't. That isn't what this is about at all. But we're not talking about heaven. We're talking about now, planet earth.

No doubt, heaven is going to be more incredible and more wonderful than anybody, including me, can imagine. But Paul's not talking about that. He is talking about what God has provided, made available to you for your use as a believer right now, today.

And it's just mind-boggling. My mind's been boggled by it. No reason yours shouldn't be.

We'll boggle our minds some more together and it is just just incredible. Natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to him.

He cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised. That means you've got to have a functioning, operable spirit in order to understand God's spiritual truth.

[ 18 : 43 ] And if you don't have, it's just like the old analogy, it's just like beating a dead horse. It's not going to get up and run. You cannot share these spiritual truths and things that we're going to be talking about with an unbeliever and expect him to say, my, that is really something.

Isn't that wonderful? All he can do is give you a blank look and a duh because it just doesn't register with him. He does not have the equipment that is necessary to interpret it or appreciate it.

And he never will have because these things are not grasped on the basis of human intellect. these are not for the intellectual elite.

These are for the common, ordinary, everyday Joe who is in Christ. No special equipment needed other than regeneration.

They are spiritually appraised. these realities and these truths are available to all. They constitute the divine provisions for life and living and death.

[ 20 : 03 ] And death that God has made available for all who are in Christ. They are for the believer and the believer only. These are truths that are intended to be implemented by all who are in Christ in order to have an abundant life.

Jesus Christ came and said, I came not, I came that man might have life and have it more abundantly. I think he meant exactly what he said.

God wants you to enjoy your salvation and to enjoy life. And he has provided certain divine operating assets that when you implement them they will incredibly enrich your life, increase your enjoyment, reduce your fears, double your joys.

There's just no end to it. This is as much and as good as God can provide in the here and now. these are benefits that come from being a believer.

Understanding and believing the things that are true of you as a believer provides the basis for stability of life, confident living, and an inner peace regardless of the curves that life may throw at you.

[ 21 : 33 ] Every believer possesses these things. these are true of every believer. Some possess them in ignorance and some possess them in awareness.

Our goal in this series is to make you aware. It is a tragedy for a believer to go through life have all of these wonderful assets at his disposal and never implement them.

live as a spiritual pauper. I well remember hearing a story many years ago when oceanic travel was a lot more common and the airplane hadn't even been invented yet and people were coming over from the old country and going back and visiting the old country and I mean Ireland and Germany and Russia and England and so on and they were going back and forth and this man had relatives that had moved to the United States and he began saving his money.

He was living someplace in Europe. He began saving his money and it took him years and years and years to save up enough money for passage to the United States and most of his family was over here and he was so eager to see it and been years since they left and finally after a lot of labor and hard work and toil and everything he was able to book passage on a steamship to come to the United States and he got all of the foodstuffs that he could together and he got dried apples and he got dried this and dried that and he put together as many sandwiches and things that he thought could sustain him on the voyage all the way across because it takes several days to make it to the United States and as he was on board ship he noticed that when he would go off to his cabin and have his meager little lunch and his sandwiches and his dried fruit and what not everybody else just seemed to be enjoying themselves and they didn't have the brown bags that he had and he didn't understand any of that because he'd never been on one of these voyages before and it wasn't until they docked and he was making conversation with a fellow passenger as they were just about to embark and the fellow passenger was saying how scrumptious and how wonderful the meals were that they served on board the ship didn't you enjoy them and the man said well actually I

I kind of brought my own food and the fellow said you brought your own food what do you mean and he said well I brought some dried fruit I brought my sandwiches and I brought this and I brought and the man looked at him in unbelief and said you did why did you do that he said well I didn't want to be hungry on board the ship but sir don't you realize that when you paid for your passage that included all of your meals everything was provided for you and it was sumptuous you forfeited all of that and the man said but what what I didn't know I didn't know that came with the ticket there are multitudes of Christians who travel through life eating old dried fruit and stale sandwiches when they could be dining at the king's table because they don't know what all was provided for them in their salvation salvation someone has said salvation is the end of the gospel but it's the front end there is so much that is provided for every believer in the finished work of

[ 25 : 32 ] Christ and those are the things that we're talking about these things many Christians sad to say and it is so unnecessary many Christians experience a downright miserable life of inner turmoil guilt anxiety confusion that produces a neurotic kind of lifestyle when it could be and should be the opposite only believers who are aware of what they possess in Christ can draw upon these things and derive benefit from them and I want you to understand the process that's going to take place here it's very simple very basic and yet at the same time it's very very profound because it all has to do with learning and taking in information you realize that's all any preacher does that's all any preacher can do is dispense information that's what this is all about we are just dispensing information information received into your spirit your mind your spirit processes that information and reaches conclusions now again let me stop here and say this is why it is so important to be particular what you open your mind to receive it will make an impression on your mind good or bad you ought to be very very particular about what you take in mentally about what you make available to yourself

I know of people you probably do too who are very fastidious when it comes to their diet we call them health food addicts why they buy organic everything they wouldn't think of eating some of the stuff that you and I think are yummy they would die first they are very very fussy about what they put into their body and when they go into a restaurant it is almost impossible to please them but these same people sometimes can be very careless and very reckless about what they feed on with their mind and let me tell you something what you put into your mind is going to have a far greater impact on you for now and eternity than what you put in your body you take information into your spirit and your mind you process the information and you reach conclusions your conclusions then provide the rationale and the logic for the course of action you take or the attitude you will have it really impacts your thinking and your doing this is as gut level as you can get to living in this present world receiving this information and believing it provides the basis for spiritual and emotional security this is so critical security is essential in order to grow and develop in your life as a believer

I never became so aware of this as when Pastor Rosenthal took us through a book by Bob George on the Christian life you remember that on Wednesday evening we went through that and it was a real eye opener for me and I enjoyed the whole book but there was one part that I especially enjoyed it was just a couple of sentences and it just grabbed me and I thought that's it that's it I have long labored over the puzzlement that surrounds the issue of why is it how is it that someone can be a Christian and be a Christian for years make a profession of faith and nobody doubts there being a Christian and yet there seems to be little or no spiritual growth how can that be why is that they seem to have the same perpetual struggles they seem to always be in defeat they seem to always be a life of confusion and difficulty not enjoying their Christianity at all they are moaners and groaners and complainers and grippers and on and on and on and they just don't seem to mature or grow why is that and in that book by Bob

George he made the observation that people who do not have a grasp of positional truth and know who they are and what they are in Christ are people who are prevented from growing spiritually that hit me like a sledgehammer I thought that's it that's it the basis for growth and maturity the basis for stability is security understanding who you are and what you possess in Jesus Christ gives you the rationale for moving out with confidence in the Christian life like nothing else will in fact nothing else will it is linked to this you have to understand your position in Christ that is baseline and if you don't understand that if you do not have security then you have to be spiritually emotionally adrift no anchor and it's really hard to grow that way it's not impossible that's why so much is made of these things that

God has provided knowing where you stand with God and that your standing is not based upon your performance but upon the finished work of Christ these are all grace based provisions purchased for you at enormous cost to not know these truths or to ignore them as a believer is tantamount to squandering the benefits provided for you via the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and that is real sadness many Christians experience a downright miserable life of internal turmoil because of what they do not know and God wrote through the prophet Hosea to his own people Israel at the time and I thought my same could be said for the body of Christ Hosea said my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge a lot of

[ 33 : 24 ] Christians lives are brought to wreck and ruin anything but enjoyment anything but peacefulness anything but stability because of what they don't know there's an old saying you've heard it many times what you don't know can't hurt you oh yes it can it can hurt you a great deal these assets will enrich and enhance your life like nothing else because this is precisely why God gave them and I want you to understand up front these things these spiritual realities are yours as a believer not in a probationary way but in a perpetual way these things will always be there for you and God does not withdraw them because of bad behavior think of that

God does not withdraw them because of bad behavior our positional truth is the basis of our security and positional truth I mean knowing where you stand with God is vitally connected to your growth it is the basis for a dynamic growing and enjoyable relationship in any sphere that is directly dependent upon the security factor a deep and abiding relationship desperately needs to know and be assured of its grounding relationships worth anything are not sustained by the tentative but by the permanent and by the permanent we're talking about unconditional love God's love is unconditional and it just doesn't quit we see meager attempts at this made by humans when we say things like our wedding vows we know that there have been numerous painful instances where people do not always make good on their wedding vows but I dare say that

I think in the vast majority of cases they are intended they are intended to be fulfilled at the time we make them and when a young couple any couple stands at an altar to be married they make this expression to each other sickness or health poverty or wealth better or worse so long as we both shall live what's that designed to do why do we do that are those just words when we make a pledge a vow a commitment to someone like that what effect is it supposed to have in the one to whom it is made how is it supposed to make them feel loose disconnected uncertain floundering no the opposite of all of those when we make that kind of pledge to someone it is designed to provide them with assurance with security with stability with a relaxed mental attitude whereby they can enjoy the relationship without being on tender hooks wondering from one day to the next whether the relationship is still intact do they still feel that way about me can you imagine this poor wife in her kitchen with her daily supply of forget me nots and plucking them off one at a time he loves me he loves me not he loves me who wants to play a silly game like that what is the basis for a real secure stable relationship is it not in the assurance the knowledge the confidence that the one who made those promises to you is going to keep them intends to keep them will die before they break them that's the meaning of that now we all know that however well intentioned we may do that as a human being we know that our flaws and frailties sometimes prevent us from making good on what we promise but you don't have to worry about that with

God we say God's love is unconditional it's unconditional man's love to his fellow man and mate's love to their fellow mate is intended to be and is supposed to be unconditional but sometimes in our flawed characters we just lack the ability to pull that off there are circumstances that intervene that change things but you don't have to worry about that with the deity one who is in control and says he loves us unconditionally he loves us unconditionally he does not love us probationally he does not love well what what if you do something and you don't deserve his love if you don't deserve his love if if you don't deserve it that's assumed that's what makes this so remarkable you don't deserve it well what if you really don't deserve it oh come on are you suggesting that you can out sin the grace of

God just how efficacious was it that which Christ accomplished on the cross great enough wide enough deep enough to handle most sins but not your biggies such nonsense that that's human arrogance speaking we think that we are a special case beyond God's forgiveness beyond God's grace nonsense God's love and provision for all believers is unconditional and unending God wants you to be secure and feel secure in his love as a permanent provision rather than perpetually or even periodically questioning it this is why he's given us this information not that we can worry about it wonder about it or doubt it but so that we can believe it and appropriate it rest in it relax in it enjoy it since the day we heard we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding what's he talking about he's talking about what we're talking about he's talking about knowing the things that you need to know so that they will impact your life as it needs to be.

[ 41 : 55 ] So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. That is living the Christian life first class, verse 10.

Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might. And the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

There is that inheritance again. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness. This is spiritual darkness, where we were with a spirit that was dead toward God.

And transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Well, how extensive is that forgiveness? Notice, if you will, in chapter 2, just across the page.



[ 43 : 10 ] Let's begin with, for time's sake, with verse 9.

For in Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete.

Complete. How complete is complete? What is complete lacking? Words mean things.

Complete means nothing is missing. Everything you need is provided. You don't have to worry about God snapping His fingers and saying, Oh, I forgot about...

No, He didn't forget about anything. Everything that we need is provided. In Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.

[ 44 : 16 ] And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. This is a fascinating study. Maybe we'll reserve time for it later for consideration of it by itself, because it certainly deserves it.

Circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him. That is, that human spirit.

Having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of degrees against us, which was hostile to us, He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to His cross.

Forgiven us all trespasses. I like to think of this as fully, freely, forgiven forever. You know, it is just amazing how many Christians simply do not believe that.

[ 45 : 34 ] They just don't believe it. Well, it says it right there in black and white. Yeah, I know. They read it and they say they believe it. But they don't believe it. They may believe it.

They may believe it intellectually because the Bible says it so. So they find it very difficult to deny it because it sounds very unkind and unchristian-like toward God to say that you don't believe it.

But let me put it this way. I am convinced that it is entirely possible to believe something intellectually and not believe it emotionally.

Problem is, you need both of those because you dwell in both spheres, the intellectual and the emotional.

They are part of what make us a whole person. No one is devoid of emotions or intellect.

[ 46 : 45 ] Intellect is what you think with. Emotions is what you feel with. They constitute our wholeness. You've got to be able to appropriate truth on both levels.

But let me explain. The intellectual provides the basis for the emotional. You cannot believe something emotionally if you cannot grasp it intellectually.

One is objective and the other is subjective. Christ died for the sins of the world. That is an objective fact.

It does not become subjective to you until you, as an act of the will, embrace the objective truth, take it to yourself, make it your own.

That is subjective. So you believe in the historical intellectual reality of Christ dying. But you appropriate it.

[ 47 : 48 ] You take it to yourself through not only your intellect, but your feelings, your emotions as well. We talk about it moving us, stirring us.

Well, what's moving? It's your feelings. It's your mind. Life would be incredibly, incredibly intolerable and boring without feelings and emotions.

Anger, love, excitement, perplexity. All of these things come out of our emotions as well as our mind.

And when you appropriate these things based upon a historical, objective fact, take it to yourself, personalize it, that's when it begins to make the difference.

Otherwise, it is just a dry, old, dusty, historical fact that you log away, but it does nothing for you. Now, we're almost out of time.

[ 48 : 58 ] I want to ask a question and I want you to think about this. How do we appropriate something with our feelings?

Because feelings are what you feel. Someone says, I can't help the way I feel.

You know there's a certain amount of truth to that. You do not have complete control over your feelings. You cannot command your feelings to feel a certain thing at a given time because your feelings are subject to the events that are transpiring around you and what you are experiencing at the moment.

If someone comes up to you and tells you that one of your best friends was just killed an hour ago in an automobile accident. How do you feel? Emotionally, how do you feel?

What you've done is you have processed that information intellectually. You thought about it, the ramifications, the implications of this friend's death, the terrible accident.

[ 50 : 13 ] All of that is of the intellect. That's all of the mind. And when you process that information, you reach a conclusion. And the conclusion causes you to feel the way you feel.

And you follow with the emotions. Sometimes tears, sometimes perplexity, or whatever it might be. Because these things work in tandem.

And in order to really be able to feel something, there has to be a significant and adequate intellectual comprehension of it.

How that gets from our mind to our heart, if you will, so that it affects the totality of our being is part and parcel of what we're talking about here. And it is part of the human psyche.

It is the way that we're put together. It is a marvelous thing. It is part, it is more and more of that being fearfully and wonderfully made. All of these things are designed to be inculcated into the human spirit so that you can derive the benefit and the enjoyment that comes from them.

[ 51 : 28 ] God has given us these as assets for our use. He's made them available to us. And we're going to explore what these things are. The first one is forgiveness.

We have no greater need than the need of forgiveness. And that word to forgive means *aphomia* in the Greek. It means to send away, to release, to dismiss, to put out of sight.

All of these things God has done with our sin. all of which is predicated upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.

What I am saying is what Christ accomplished on that cross in satisfying his Father's demand for justice and maintaining his holiness, what Jesus Christ accomplished on that cross was so significant, so deep, so broad, so all-encompassing that it made a more than sufficient payment for every wrongdoing of every human being who ever lived on the planet.

That's the basis for God being able to forgive us our sin. It is all predicated upon the scope of the efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ.

[ 52 : 58 ] Christ. And any time anyone thinks, well, God wouldn't forgive me or God couldn't forgive me, God wouldn't want, I'm too bad, I'm too this, I'm too that.

They are demeaning and depreciating what Jesus Christ accomplished on that cross. Whether they realize it or not, that is exactly what's happening.

And I think that if they did realize it, they would change their tune. when Jesus Christ died, he made every sin, every human being ever committed to be put aside.

That's Adam's transgression. Christ died for the sins of the world. To know, rather than suspect or think, to know that your sins were placed on Christ and that you are fully, freely forgiven forever is a liberating thing.

Now, I know the issue is going to come up and I might as well just broach this now because we'll have to talk about it in our next session. What about those sins that you commit after you became a Christian?

[ 54 : 16 ] sin? And we all know what some of those are, don't we? And we will talk about that on an ongoing basis. But the forgiveness of sin that is dealt with at the point of salvation is something that is past.

It is gone. What God has done with our sins is he has forgiven them. He has removed them as far as the east is from the west. They are sought for and not found. They are cleansed.

They are pardoned. They are cast behind his back. All of these things God has done with our sins. Do you know what that means to you? Do you know how that should free you?

Do you know how that should give you a sense of appreciation, enjoyment, relaxation? God doesn't look at you and say, jump through these hoops, do these things, avoid these things, and I will love you.

God's love is unconditional. God's forgiveness is full, free, forever. That's the position we have in Christ. Granted, there are some who are fearful of this because they think it constitutes a license to sin, and we'll be talking about that in our next session too.

[ 55 : 31 ] Why then should I care about how I live or what I do because heaven is my home, I'm eternally secure, and I can't be lost, so whoop-de-doo, let's go out and live it up.

And that too is a valid consideration, and we'll be talking about that. Let us pray. Father, we are grateful for truths that you have provided for us, even though this has been merely introductory.

We know that these are things that you have provided for our appreciation and for our inculcation. You want us to take these truths into ourselves so that they can have the desired effect in our lives and our actions and in our attitudes.

We are so grateful for these provisions that you've made for us and we want to gain from these as much understanding as lieth within us so that we can utilize them to the fullest possible extent.

We do not want to be guilty of squandering precious provisions that Christ has made for us. we want to utilize them in the fullest way possible.

[ 56 : 41 ] We are grateful for each person here this morning to hear these things and we simply ask that you will allow us to use these now as the basis for building more truth upon in the weeks ahead.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.