

By Grace Alone Through Faith Alone

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[0 : 00] I've been walking through the book of Ephesians. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul lays out the foundation of the Christian life. He knows what was our before and what is our after.

What are we saved from and what are we saved to? And how does God do that? How does God save us? What does that mean? What does that look like? He's very careful about this. He really wants us to grasp what our salvation is. Not just a trite, superficial understanding that I'm saved.

But saved from what kind of condition? And saved how specifically? And why? And then we will see next week, saved to what?

Saved to what? So we want to read the text first and then we'll pray and then we will dig into the text. So if you're able, please stand.

[1 : 24] And I'm going to read from Ephesians 2, 1 through 9. Chapter 2, 1 through 9, Ephesians. Paul writes to them, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working, and the sons of disobedience.

Among them, we too, all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

And were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive, together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And raised us up with him, and seated us with him, in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

In order that, in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace, in kindness toward us, in Christ Jesus.

[2 : 57] For, by grace, you have been saved, through faith. And that, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Not, as a result of works, that no one, should boast. So reads, God's word. Let us pray.

Father, open our eyes, to see truth, pierce our hearts, that we might grasp, what Paul is, writing about, with such enthusiasm, and such detail.

Give our minds to it today, Lord, help us to, to focus in, to grasp, why Paul is so, expressive about this. And may it deepen, our own understanding, of what, it means, that you, have made us alive, that you have, transformed our lives.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. In the book of Revelation, chapter 7, the apostle John, records a vision, that he had.

[4 : 29] And it's an extraordinary vision, it's the second half, of chapter 7, in Revelation. He sees a great multitude. It's composed of people, from every nation, every tribe, every people, every language.

People from all over. See, it's an innumerable, multitude. They're all, wearing white robes, and they're standing, before the throne of God.

Before the throne, of the Lamb. And they are, crying out, salvation, belongs, to the Lord, and to the Lamb.

And while John is, watching this, there is an elder, there, he says it's an elder, and he asks John, who are these people?

And John says, I don't know, you know. And he tells John, these are the ones, who wash their robes, in the blood of the Lamb.

[5 : 35] And therefore, they are before the throne of God, and they serve God, day and night. And the one, who is on the throne, shelters them, with his presence.

And he goes on, and says, these are the ones, who no longer hunger, or thirst. That no sun, will strike them. that no heat, will scorch them.

For the Lamb, is their shepherd. And he guides them, to living waters. And God himself, wipes away, every tear from their eyes.

This is the vision, that John, sees. A multitude, of those who have washed, their robes, in the blood of the Lamb.

And now they are praising God, saying, salvation, belongs, to our God, and to the Lamb. It's all of God. And in response to that, the angels, who are present, and the elders, and the four living creatures, remember those really strange creatures, that are there?

[6 : 46] The seraphim, right? They're there. And they bow. And the angels bow. And the elders bow. They all bow before the throne. And they give God praise.

It is a picture. Excuse me. This picture, that John records, in Revelation 7, is the picture, of what, Paul describes, here in Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 7.

It is the purpose, of God's, merciful salvation. Remember that, in Ephesians 2, 5 and 6, Paul describes the salvation, as three things.

Right? He makes them alive. Right? So there are, he rescues them from death. Secondly, he raises them up, together with Christ. Not in the future, that they, it's same as, when they are made alive, they're also raised up, with Christ, in a sense.

Which means, they're, they're, they're no longer, under the slavery, of Satan. And then, thirdly, he says, they're made alive, they're, they're, they're raised up, together with Christ, and they're, seated together, with Christ.

[8 : 04] Which means, they have victory, over sin. They now hold a place, of authority, because of Christ. In Christ, they have authority. And they can resist, the devil, and he will flee from them.

They don't have to fight, the devil, they can resist, the devil, and he will flee from them. And so, why is all, why has God, God done all of this?

What is the ultimate goal? What's the bigger picture? When he, that he saves us, that he raises us up, that he seats us, Christ. What is the purpose, of all of that? Verse seven, is the purpose. In order that, in order that, in the ages to come, he might show, the surpassing riches, of his grace, and kindness, toward us, in Christ Jesus.

It's to praise, the Lord. That's the big goal. That's the purpose, of God's merciful salvation, is to show, the magnificent, magnificent, grace, to display, his surpassing, riches, of grace.

Can you see it? Can you see the grace now? Because it's going to be, on big time display, in the ages to come. We tend to see salvation, only from our perspective.

[9 : 24] That's, that's natural, to us, to think of it, from our own perspective. We start with ourself. Well, this was me, and now this is me. We understand, what we've experienced.

We have a narrow view, we think about ourselves. So God saved me. That's wonderful. That's true. But that's not the chief end. The chief end, isn't about you.

The great catechism says, the chief end of man. What is the chief end of man? The chief end of man. Remember that? The chief, as the great scholars, and pastors, back in the 16th century, wrote it, chief end of man, is to glorify him, and enjoy him.

What a wise way, that they put it. These old, these old Puritans, right? And how did they write that? Oh, Puritans get a bad rap.

Most of the Puritans were pure folks. And they loved the Lord, and they enjoyed life. They were not, you know, to glorify God, and enjoy him.

[10 : 38] I like the way that John Piper kind of fits that together. To glorify God by enjoying him forever. See, if you really enjoy God, that will glorify him.

God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in him. It's one of the, one of the Piperisms. To vindicate, the chief end of, of, of, man, of history, is God's glory.

To vindicate his character. So even when Adam falls, when Adam falls, ultimately, that's about the glory of God. Why is there evil in the world?

Well, ultimately, that's about the glory of God. It shows God, God's character in a way we don't see otherwise. See, we don't know real mercy until we've seen our guilt.

We don't know real grace without sin. We don't know the good news without the bad news. See, it's a contrast. So Joseph, Joseph, at the end of Genesis, right, he says what?

[11:51] His brothers finally come before him. Joseph's up there. He's got all the power, right? For seven years plus, there's years of plenty. He had plenty of time to go back and see his father and his family.

He did not. Why? Because he had resentment toward how he was treated by them. And when they finally come to him begging, they don't know it's Joseph because now he looks like an Egyptian and he speaks a different language.

But when they come, right, he says to them finally, you intended all the things you did to me, you intended it for evil. You were bad guys.

You intended it for evil. But, here's Joseph's perspective. But God intended it for good. He intended all the bad stuff you did to me, all the stuff I suffered, everything I've gone through, for this moment, he intended it for this good.

And so we say the same thing, right? Romans 8, 28. God works all things together for good to those who love God, to those who he's conforming to the image of his son.

[13:12] So all the hardship we go through is intended for good. See, we see God's good out of the bad. We see God's good news come out of the bad news.

The bad news is we're under the wrath of God. The good news is God has made us alive. He has rescued us from that death. So, that leads us to verse 8.

So that's the purpose. I want to focus today on verse 8. 4. Right? So God's displaying the greatness of his grace. 4.

Verse 8. By grace you have been saved through faith. Now he's going to talk about grace some more. The proof of God's extravagant grace. How does Paul prove that our salvation is all about God's grace?

All about him and not about us. This is what Paul's going to prove. In fact, he repeats this. For by grace you have been saved. Remember, he said that back in verse 5.

[14:15] When he said when we were dead, when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

Now he says it again in verse 8. By grace you have been saved. Is Paul losing his mind? Does he forget that he already said that? No. He's repeating it.

He keeps talking about grace. Why? Because he really, really wants us to grasp it. I want you to see how great this grace is.

And that all the glory and all the honor and all the praise goes to God alone and no one else. None of us can boast. None of us can say, well, I'm saved because I figured it out and I turned to God. Well, that may have been the result, but that wasn't the cause. It's all of grace. So I want you to see what he's saying. he's going to give two proofs here in verse 8.

[15:19] We could actually do more than that. It's by grace alone through faith alone. So we have the banners up in here of the soulless.

You ever heard of the soulless before? When we bought these, we explained what they were. Well, I bought one, I bought that one, and then invited other people to buy, and after a little while, we had all five banners, all five soulless.

The soulless are an expression that came out of the Reformation, when Luther and Calvin and others recovered the gospel. And so in opposition to Rome, they said, soulless gratia.

I'm saved by grace alone. That's one thing we're getting here. So I'm saved by grace alone. sola fide through faith alone.

Not by faith, but through faith alone. Faith in what? Ah, solus Christus, in Christ alone.

[16:29] Grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, soli deo gloria, to the glory of God alone, which he just said in verse seven, to the glory of God alone.

And the chief one, the one they started with in the Reformation, the one that Luther got a hold of and it changed everything, sola scriptura, according to the scriptures alone, not according to traditions, not according to popes, not according to people's opinions, not according to, you know, cast a vote, let's see what you think, according to scripture alone.

That's what started it all. Which led us to grace, faith, Christ, God's glory alone, the solus.

And so we're getting a picture of them here. Grace alone, obviously, faith alone, obviously, in Christ alone, that's all through Ephesians. Chapter one, my gosh, how many times did he say, in Christ, in

Christ, in Christ, through Christ, because of Christ, by Christ, in Christ, in Christ, right?
 Go count them in chapter one, it's all over. Everything is through Christ. And then, obviously, to the glory of God, obviously, based on scripture alone. So let's look at these two things.

[17:54] What does grace alone mean? So, he says in verse eight, for by grace you have been saved. God's grace alone is the origin and the cause of our salvation.

Sola gratia. Grace alone is the origin and the cause of my salvation.
 My salvation is unmerited. My salvation is unearned. My salvation is without merit, without my merit. So, notice in verse eight, he says, by grace you have been saved. Look at that phrase, you have been saved. You have been saved. Again, I think I shared this last week.
 It's a perfect passive verb. It's so exciting. Can I see it stirring? No? You guys are not as excited as I am about the grammar.

[18:54] Perfect passive. Perfect passive. Perfect tense. It means it's done. It's done.
 The verb is perfected. It has been done. And it continues to have results. So it's not just done, but it continues to have results. That's the perfect tense.
 And then it's passive. Passive means what? It's done to me. I'm not doing the saving. It's done to me. I've been saved. I've received salvation.
 Perfect passive. I've been saved. I've been chosen. I've been called. I've been made alive. God accepts us solely by grace alone. That's solely gratia.
 God does not respond to anything good in us. Because there's not anything good in us. It is not a response to a decision I make, to an act I make, to some way that I cooperate.

[19:53] I am saved. We are saved solely by grace. So in the context, remember, we are what? Chapter 2, verses 1 and 2. We're dead. Right? We were dead to God. We had no life toward God. We had no life in reference to God.
 Dead means you're not responsive. It means you cannot, there's no heartbeat. Right? There's no sight. There's no hearing. There's no touch. So I do not hear God's words.
 I might hear them outwardly, but I don't really hear them. I don't really see Jesus. I can see Jesus, but I don't really see Him. I can't walk. I'm lame.
 All the things that Jesus healed in the Gospels, right, are signs of that salvation. The blind see, the deaf hear, the, the, the, the, no, yeah, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed.

[20:52] Those are all pictures, the Gospel of John says, of our salvation. And so we're dead. We're also, what, we're, we're walking according to the course of the world and walking according to the prince of the power of the air.
 We are under, we are, our lives are dominated by the world and, and by the devil. Romans 3, quoting Psalm 14 says, there are none righteous.
 None righteous. Not even one. There are none who seek God. Oh, really?
 Don't we have seeker services for people seeking God? We must not believe that text. Don't people seek God?
 Well, they seek a God. They seek a God of their own making. But they don't seek the true God for his true glory.

[21:58] There are none who does good, not even one. Not even one. Didn't, didn't Joseph do good? Didn't, didn't Moses do good? What about David? David did a lot of good, didn't he? Nothing good in us before Christ.

All. So, Jesus taught this same concept of grace alone. Of grace alone, that it's all God.
 Remember in John 3, Nick at night, remember he's having this discussion with Nicodemus, and he says to Nicodemus, what? You cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born from above. You can't do it. You can't enter unless you are born from above. Nicodemus didn't understand this. In John chapter 6, in that great sermon by the sea, right? Jesus said, he said, he calls them in John 6, 35, he says, come to me, all who are weary, not weary, all who are thirsty, and I will give you living water, right?

[23:11] Or bread, I'll give you bread, I think that's what it is. And then a little bit later he says, you can't come to me. In fact, nobody can come to me. Unless something else happens.
 Unless the Father draws you. Unless the Father teaches you. Wait a minute, he just told me to come to him. And then he says, oh, he can't come.

And then in John chapter 8, it's all through the Gospel of John, Jesus teaching this kind of, this confusing, this, this all grace of God and none of us. In John 8, he's talking to a crowd of Jews who believed him, quote unquote.

John uses the word they believed in him. And then by 844 or so, he says, oh, you don't believe me. You are of your father the devil. Well, you can't hear me.

you can't hear me. And the reason you can't hear me is you are of your father the devil. He's saying that to Jews who believed him in some way.

[24 : 24] So what does he mean? Why is Jesus putting all these limits on it? you can't enter the kingdom unless, you can't come to me unless, you can't hear me.

Of course they heard him. Didn't they just hear his voice? He means really hear. Really hear. Right? With understanding.

grace alone is what Jesus taught. The only cause and basis for salvation is the grace of God.

The father must draw you. You must be born again. You must be of the father of heaven before you can hear him. Our salvation is initiated by grace alone.

It's the only cause. It's the only beginning. It's the only origin of our salvation. It's a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit to awaken us, to transform us from start to finish.

[25 : 37] The author of your salvation is Christ. Right? He's the author and perfecter.

We don't like that doctrine. You know why? That kind of puts me in the, you know, I think I'm in charge. From my experience, I thought I'm the one praying and calling and doing all that.

Well, you know my testimony. Over 20 years, I prayed and called and walked the aisle and did all the stuff that my very well-meaning pastor and very well-meaning I love him.

Billy Graham said to me, come and cross this line and your life will be changed. I came all the way down from the, you know, you ever go to the Billy Graham crusade?

Way, way up in the top of the stadium. He said, the bus is away. Right? So you come all the way down, you cross the line and it wasn't true. I could not cause it.

[26 : 46] There was nothing that I could do. Is there anything wrong with me praying to receive Jesus into my heart? No, it's great. Keep doing that. Good. Good. That probably means God's drawing you.

He's working on you. I was certainly under conviction for years and years and years. before he transformed me. Gave me peace. I think there were other reasons he held off on me.

I think one is the desire and the other is you're going to pastor a congregation at some point. I don't want you to mislead them through certain methods. And I saw a lot of people misled through the decisionism and the call to come forward and the impression or specific promise that your life will be changed if you do this.

When scripture makes clear and Jesus makes clear, you come, but you can't really come until, unless, God works.

God's So in 1 Timothy 1, Paul exhibits himself as a great example of God's grace. Remember Paul? Paul was a believer in God, was he not?

[28 : 08] He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, righteous, he's pursuing the law, he's a persecutor of the church, right? His life is going this way. Remember in Acts chapter 9, his life, right?

He's going one way. He's going to go arrest these silly people, these evil people who are following this cult of Jesus, and he's going to arrest them and put them in prison, right?

Because he's a zealot for the true faith, and he's on the road, what happens to him? Was he seeking Jesus? Was he, you know, trying to just, you know, trying to figure out if Jesus is right?

No. Paul was anything but follower of Jesus. And in a moment, he's changed. He's changed.

Nothing of his doing had made that up. So here's what he describes later to Timothy. In Timothy 1.12, he says, I thank him who has given me strength, Jesus Christ our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service.

[29 : 17] Though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, an insolent or violent opponent, but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief or in rebellion.

And the grace of the Lord overflowed. The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

Paul is the foremost of sinners. Believe that? You might not believe that, but he believed that. In fact, I bet every one of us who are truly saved believes we're the worst.

of whom I am the foremost, but I receive mercy for this reason that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

See, if Paul can be saved, any sinner can be saved. If Paul's the foremost and the worst, and he believed he was the foremost and the worst, not just because he had got it wrong, but as he said, he was a blasphemer of God.

[30 : 52] Well, he blasphemed Jesus, so yes. A persecutor, yeah, a persecutor of the church, absolutely. Insolent or violent opponent. Was he violent?

He says he's violent. When he persecuted the church, did he gently take them? He dragged them by the hair. Got a little Nehemiah in him.

Now, he's violent. He says, I was a violent, he was a violent man. And that he could persecute the church under the name of Judaism allowed him to express that sinfulness in right righteous ways. So why was Paul saved? To display God's perfect patience. He was an example of God's mercy, of his grace to the foremost of sinners. But see, it's not about Paul, it's about the character of our great God who gives grace to the undeserving.

Paul did not deserve it. He was pursuing righteousness in the wrong way. He was pursuing God in the wrong way. He had his narrow focus.

[32 : 05] I got God figured out. And here comes this day where it's like, how did I get it wrong? Because I was a serious student of the scriptures. When Jesus came along, how did his disciples do with who he was?

They didn't get it. Even after he, right before he ascended into heaven, they're still like, now? Is it now you're not the kingdom? Is it now? Guys, the kingdom's not of this world.

So, how does he prove God's rich grace? Grace alone is the cause and the basis of salvation. It's all of God. But even how this salvation is received shows the proof that this salvation is all of God. So look at the second thing. So verse 4, by grace you have been saved through faith. Now we come to the faith part. Faith alone. Faith alone is the response and means of receiving salvation. Now here's the thing. People think, well, God's part is grace and my part is faith, right? I have my part, God has his part. Right?

[33 : 23] Those are equal. Right? faith. Now the Catholic Church says, yeah, it's grace, not grace alone, but it's grace. And it's through faith plus works.

That's what the Catholic Church, not the Roman Catholic Church says. So we still protest that. No, it's not faith plus works. It's not faith plus works. It is grace alone and through faith alone.

Notice we say it carefully, through faith. Faith is a response and the means of receiving salvation. So through faith, how do we obtain faith?

How do we obtain salvation? Through faith. We receive it through faith. Faith is the means, the channel for the pathway of salvation.

Faith does not cause it, my response. Faith does not cause my salvation. It is a response of one who has been made alive.

[34 : 22] One who has been awakened and now I'm able to believe because now I'm not dead, I'm awake. I'm enabled to respond. I'm enabled to believe.

I'm saved through faith. So think about this word through. It's called preposition. I'm doing grammar today. Were you ready for that? I didn't understand grammar until I took Greek.

I think I missed the grammar lessons probably the year I didn't go to school. Well, I went once in a while. Anyway. Preposition through.

It's the means. Faith is the means, the way, the channel, the conduit, the avenue. How do you want to say it? It's the way through which salvation comes.

I do not cause it, but I receive it. God gives it, and through faith, I receive salvation. I have a part, but it's a receiving part, not a causing part.

[35 : 31] So, Paul uses this preposition several times in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 5. He says, he predestined us to adoption as sons.

How? Through Jesus Christ to himself. He predestined us to adoption as sons through, through the means of Christ, through the channel of Christ. He was the way.

Again, in chapter 1, verse 7, we're redeemed. In him, we have redemption through his blood. Blood is the means by which we're redeemed.

It's not the cause of it. It's the means of it. And then again, in chapter 2, verse 16, he says he might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross.

How do Jew and Gentile become reconciled to God together through the cross? The cross is the means, the channel, the avenue, the pathway to reconciliation.

[36 : 33] God did it through the cross. The cross was instrumental. The cross is not the cause. The cross is the means.

God's grace is the cause. So, faith is how we receive salvation.

What do we mean by faith? What is faith? What is faith? We saw in John chapter 8, there was a kind of faith that wasn't a saving faith.

Scripture talks about kinds of faith. James, is it James? Yeah, James I think says, even demons believe. They have a faith.

They believe in God. In fact, their belief causes them to tremble. They're so believing in Jesus, they're trembling every time they see him. Every time Jesus walked on the scene in the Gospels, the demons are trembling.

[37 : 36] Are you sending us to the pit now? They knew who he was. faith. So what kind of faith? What do we mean by faith? Faith is the conviction, the assurance, right?

Hebrews 1? I didn't understand that. I didn't understand it either. Trying to explain it. Obviously not doing a very good job.

Conviction, insurance, faith. It's the same word for trust, you know, belief, trust, believing, relying. It's an act.

Get this now. It's an act in response to the word. Faith is an action in response to the word. I always talk about active faith, right? Not passive. We say this all the time.

Faith comes by hearing. Okay? It's a response to the word. Faith comes by hearing, hearing, the word of Christ.

[38 : 45] Specifically the word of Christ, Paul's words. Faith comes by hearing. Faith does not come by itself. Faith comes by hearing. It's a response to the word. The word empowers that, activates that faith, moves that faith, arouses that faith.

We don't just hear, but the word empowers it. In the book of Hebrews 11, remember the chapter of faith? By faith able, by faith Noah, by faith, you know, all these guys, by faith, right?

These things, all the acts that these people did, by faith. Well, it talks about by faith Noah. By faith Noah built an ark, right? Why did he build an ark?

How did that faith come to build an ark? What in the world was an ark? Right? What's rain? It's going to rain. It's never rain. What's that? Right? A flood never, you know, right?

So how did he have faith to build an ark for something he's never seen or experienced before? If you read Hebrews 11, 7, carefully, it says that the word of God came to Noah first, and that he built it, usually it's translated in fear.

[40 : 00] In fear he built it, or in reverence he built it. The word there, the verb there, actually means to be well taken hold of. So when God spoke, he was taken hold of by the word.

He was held by the word. That's what moved his faith. Does that make sense? I mean, how does Moses, Moses, same thing, how does Noah do something, like, never, do what?

Why? He just did it because he was moved by the word of God. Faith comes by hearing that word, the power of the word.

Which is why we continue to do this foolish thing of preaching. Because for some reason God works through preaching. It seems like an outdated, weird, unimaginative method.

Is it not? I mean, nowadays, wouldn't it make more sense to do PowerPoint and do not the PowerPoints, but to do, no, I'm thinking more of like drama.

[41 : 11] AI generation. AI generation. Oh, goodness, that would be great. Hey, I think, you know, AI, it does the work for you, right? I don't know.

Yeah, that's what they say. It does the work for you. It does the work for you, and pretty soon, it'll do your work for you. And then you will be out of the picture, because it'll do the work for you.

But anyway, maybe I could apply that to service. Maybe I could just say, hey, give me a sermon. Maybe it'll do that. You used to be able to call it 1-900-SERMONS. I heard.

I never done that. I wouldn't want that. That would be horrible. So two clarifications Paul makes at the end of verse 8.

So, by grace you've been saved through faith, and that, not of yourselves. What? What not of yourselves? Or if you have the ESV, you've been saved through faith, and this, not of yourselves. [42 : 13] What is this, or what does that refer to? It's a neuter singular, singular, so I'll tell you that. So it doesn't refer back to faith, because that's feminine, it doesn't refer to grace, that's feminine, right?

So when it's singular neuter, it means the whole thing. The whole thing, that by grace you have been saved through faith, the whole thing, that, is not of you.

It is God. Even the faith part is not of you, it is of God. Yeah. not out of you, not from you, it doesn't begin with you, it is a gift. And then in verse 9, he adds one more clarification, it's not as a result of works that no one should buzz.

So it's not of you, it's also not of works. It's nothing that you do, nothing that you perform, no effort that you give. You cannot in any way claim The credit!

There's no pride, there's no self reliance at all in this act. I've heard a lot of testimonies of baptisms, and a lot of the ones that I hear, not here, obviously we did it right, we're trying to do it correctly.

[43 : 40] I hear a lot of I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I, I figured it out, right, this tragedy happened to me, that changed my mind, I did it.

So work out when we baptize folks, we kind of help you through it, right, we help you know how to give testimony, not put words in your mouth, but help you to know how to make it honoring to God, what really happened, who was I before, what did God do, how am I different afterwards, it's all of God then, it's a testimony about God, gives him all the credit.

So Paul explains our salvation in the same way in the letter to Romans, he talks about this grace and this faith, in fact in Romans 3, 21 to 28, he uses the word faith, or belief six times, it's so wrapped up in it, listen to Paul's testimony, this is a great picture of salvation here in Romans, Romans 3, 21, Paul says, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested, has been made clear apart from the law, well that doesn't make sense, doesn't righteousness come through the law, no, it's been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, okay, the righteousness of God, how?

Through faith, through the channel of faith, through receiving faith, in Jesus Christ, for all who believe, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, so all don't have righteousness, right?

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be, here it is again, to be received by faith, received by faith.

[45 : 50] This was to show God's righteousness, because his divine forbearance has passed over former sins, it was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier.

He gets credit for the whole thing. Of the one who, what? Has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.

By what kind of law? By a law of works? No. By the law of faith. For we hold, we hold, that one is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

faith that receives, faith that is the channel, faith that does not cause. So Paul's clear, salvation is caused by grace alone, and it's received through faith alone, without any works, without any performance.

And we're not just saved in some moment in the past, that's where we come alive, but it's a continuing, he continues to save us, he continues to work in us, continues, we call it sanctification, it continues to set us more apart.

[47 : 11] And our acceptance with God is settled by grace. Do we believe that? Do you believe that your acceptance with God is settled by his grace, and not your performance?

God is good enough. When the evil one comes and throws that dart at you, you're not good enough. Oh, you failed again. Look, you're slipping again. In those moments, do you still believe your acceptance with God is not based on your performance, good or bad?

It's hard to then, isn't it? It's hard to then. Luther writes very explicitly about being tormented that way. You're not good enough, Marty.

You're not good enough. You're not good enough, Marty. So, bottom line, do you believe grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone?

Are you trusting your salvation is all accomplished by grace alone? Or do you feel that you need to perform better? You feel that you need to do more to be worthy.

[48 : 37] See, the wording's tricky, isn't it? To feel worthy. I will never, ever feel worthy. I have nothing to do with making myself worthy.

Only he does. So, that goes by faith, not by feeling. We're saints, not because we act like saints, but because we've been declared saints.

We are righteous because he declared us righteous, not because somehow I've measured up to whatever that is. And by the way, if you're about measuring up, you never can get that, especially if you're this high.

And you keep shrinking like that. let me close. God chose what is low and despised in the world. He chose even the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that as it is written, let the one who boasts, boasts in the Lord.

[50 : 14] Let's pray. Father, grant us to be believers, strengthen our faith in your grace. Help us, Father, to deny ourselves, to deny ourselves that we are anything that can measure up.

But you have already made us worthy because of what Christ has done. So strengthen our faith to believe what is said and to walk in peace with you.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.