



NextStep 102: *Core Beliefs of the Christian Faith*



Week #5 – Salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.¹

Key Concepts:

Grace
The Gospel Call
Faith: Response to The Gospel Call
Perseverance / Eternal Security
Glorification

Grace

1) Common Grace

- a. Definition: "Common grace is the grace of God by which he gives people innumerable blessings that are not part of salvation."²
- b. Examples of common grace.
 - i. The physical realm (Matt. 5:44-45).
 - ii. The intellectual realm (John 1:9; Rom. 1:21).
 - iii. The moral realm (Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15; Luke 6:33).
 - iv. The creative realm.
 - v. The societal realm (Gen. 5:4; Rom. 13:1).
- c. Reasons for common grace.
 - i. To give people time to respond to the Gospel (2 Pet. 3:9-10).
 - ii. To demonstrate God's goodness and mercy (Ps. 145:9; Ezek. 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4).
 - iii. To demonstrate God's justice (Rom. 2:5; 3:19).
 - iv. To demonstrate God's glory.

¹ Much of the material in these notes is taken directly from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, 1994.

² Ibid. 657.

2) Special Grace

- a. Definition: "Special grace is the grace of God that brings people to salvation"³ (also known as "saving grace").
- b. Special grace is not a different kind of God's grace, but it manifests itself in a different way than common grace (that is, special grace results in the salvation of those to whom it is given).

The Gospel Call

1) The Gospel Call ("external calling")

- a. Definition: The general gospel invitation to all people that comes through human proclamation of the gospel.
- b. Explanation of facts concerning salvation; who is Christ and how does he meet our needs for salvation?
 - i. All people have sinned (Rom. 3:23)
 - ii. The penalty for our sin is death (Rom. 6:23)
 - iii. Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (Rom. 5:8)
- c. Invitation to respond to Christ personally (John 1:11-12; Matt. 11:28)
- d. Promise of forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:16, 6:37)

2) Effective calling ("internal calling")

- a. Definition: "Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith."⁴
- b. Unless God works in people's hearts to make the proclamation of the gospel effective, there will be no genuine saving response (Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:44; Acts 16:14).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 693.

- c. Effective calling of God comes through the human preaching of the **gospel** and brings about a willing response from the person who hears it; the effective calling of God is always effective.

3) Importance of the Gospel Call

- a. God does not save us automatically, but seeks our **response**.
- b. All elements of the Gospel Call must be communicated so that people have an opportunity to **respond** in faith to Christ for salvation.

Faith: Response to The Gospel Call

1) Saving faith includes knowledge, approval and personal trust.

- a. Knowledge of Christ's person and work is not enough (Rom. 1:32; Jam. 2:19).
- b. Knowledge and approval are not enough.
 - i. Nicodemus knew & approved of Christ, but he had to put his personal **trust** in Christ; he had to **believe** in him (John 3:1-15).
 - ii. King Agrippa knew & approved of the Old Testament, but he was not evidently a Christian (Acts 26:27-28).
- c. Saving faith requires personal trust.
 - i. Definition: "Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for **eternal life** with God."⁵
 - ii. "Personal trust" is "**belief**" with substance – more than just words (Illustration of tightrope walker pushing wheel barrow over Niagara Falls) (John 3:16, "believes *in* him").
 - iii. Saving faith includes an awareness that I need to trust in Christ for salvation and that he is the **only** way to God; the **only** means for my salvation.

⁵ Ibid. 710.

2) Repentance is a vital part of faith.

- a. Definition: "Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for **sin**, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ."⁶
- b. Repentance occurs in the heart and involves the whole person in a decision to **turn** from sin (Acts 20:21).
- c. Repentance is **not** a separate and independent condition of salvation; it is part of "personal trust" or "belief."
- d. Repentance and faith occur at the same time; we turn to Christ for salvation while turning **away** from the sins we are asking Christ to save us from.
- e. Repentance and faith also characterize the Christian life after a person initially responds in faith to the Gospel call (Rev. 3:19; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 2:20).
- f. DTS Doctrinal Statement: "We believe that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ and that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way, in itself, a separate and independent condition of salvation; nor are any other acts, such as confession, baptism, prayer, or faithful service, to be added to believing as a condition of salvation."

3) What must I do to be saved?

- a. **Believe** in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:30-31).
- b. **Believe** in the only begotten Son (John 3:16, 18, 36).
- c. **Believe** in the Son of God (John 6:29).
- d. **Believe** in Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:5; Gal. 3:22).

⁶ Ibid. 713. Note that some theologians, such as Lewis Sperry Chafer, define repentance as a "change of mind." They do not mention sorrow for sin or the actual turning from sin as is emphasized by Grudem. By mentioning repentance as a vital part of faith, we are not adding any work or requirement to the demand of simply believing in Christ. We are saying that when a person places their faith in Christ, their faith encompasses repentance.

Perseverance / Eternal Security⁷

- 1) **Definition:** “Perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be **kept** by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives...”⁸
- 2) **Everyone who is saved is eternally secure.**
 - a. Everyone who believes in Jesus has **eternal life** (John 6:38-40; 10:28; 1 John 5:13).
 - b. There is no **condemnation** for those who are “in Christ” (Rom. 8:1).
 - c. The Holy Spirit guarantees believer’s inheritance (Eph 1:13-14).
 - d. God will complete his good work in believers (Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5).
- 3) **Believers in Christ can have Assurance of their Salvation.**
 - a. Saved by grace.
 - i. We are saved by grace **alone** through Christ **alone** (Eph 2:8-9).
 - ii. Salvation is **not** of works (Titus 3:5).
 - iii. If we can lose our salvation by what we do or don’t do, then in the end we are saved by works; however, that is not true! Therefore, we can have assurance that God’s grace is sufficient to save us!
 - b. Believers in Christ are **positioned** in Christ.
 - i. Believers in Christ are alive in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:5-6).
 - ii. Believers in Christ are held secure by a faithful God (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

⁷ Some theologians use the term “eternal security” in lieu of “perseverance.”

⁸ Ibid., 788. Grudem continues, “...and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.”

- c. The ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. The Holy Spirit bears witness that believers in Christ are God's **children** (Rom. 8:15-16; 1 John 4:13).
 - ii. The Holy Spirit **seals** believers in Christ (Eph. 4:30, 2 Cor. 1:22; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - iii. The Holy Spirit produces character traits (Gal 5:22-23).
- d. If you have believed in Jesus Christ, you can know you have **eternal life** (1 John 5:13).

Glorification

1) Definition.

- a. "Glorification is the final step in the application of redemption. It will happen when Christ returns and raises from the dead the bodies of all believers for all time who have died, and reunites them with their souls, and changes the bodies of all believers who remain alive, thereby giving all believers at the same time perfect resurrection bodies like his own."⁹
- b. Glorification is the end process of conforming believers in Christ into the image of the Lord Jesus. Glorification is accomplished when Christ returns.

2) New Testament Support.

- a. Believers in Christ now wait for the redemption of our **bodies** (Rom. 8:23-24, 30).
- b. There is coming a day of **resurrection** (John 5:28-29; 6:39-40).
- c. The souls of dead believers will come back and join their **bodies** (1 Thess. 4:14).

⁹ Ibid. 828.

- d. Victory over **death** will be complete when believers' bodies are raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:54-55).
- i. The present body is perishable, subject to disease and death; the resurrection body is **incorruptible**, immune to disease and decay.
 - ii. The present body is sown in dishonor; the resurrection body will be **glorious**.
 - iii. The present body is weak; the resurrection body is **powerful**.¹⁰
- e. Glorification involves the resurrection of a real, physical body which is suitable for inhabiting the new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13).

Key Terms:

Common grace
Special grace

Effective calling
The gospel call

Faith
Repentance

Perseverance
Eternal Security
Assurance of Salvation

Glorification

¹⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, MI, 1998.

Key Verses:

Romans 3:23
Romans 6:23
Romans 5:8
1 Corinthians 15:3-4
John 3:16
Acts 16:30-31
Ephesians 2:8-9
Titus 3:5
1 John 5:13

Scripture Memory:

“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, so that no one may boast”
Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB).

Homework Assignment #5:

- 1) Know definitions for Key Terms on page 7.
- 2) Memorize Ephesians 2:8-9.
- 3) What is the “gospel?”
- 4) Answer, “What must I do to be saved?”
- 5) How does the doctrine of eternal security impact your life?
- 6) Review nextstep 102 notes from classes 1 through 4.

Next Week: Review class notes from nextStep102.

Article VII—SALVATION ONLY THROUGH CHRIST

We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are sons of God. We believe, also, that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our room and stead; and that no repentance, no feeling, no faith, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church, nor all the churches that have existed since the days of the Apostles can add in the very least degree to the value of the blood, or to the merit of the finished work wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper deity with perfect and sinless humanity (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 64:6; Matt. 26:28; John 3:7–18; Rom. 5:6–9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 6:15; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 3:4–9; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:18–19, 23).

We believe that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ and that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way, in itself, a separate and independent condition of salvation; nor are any other acts, such as confession, baptism, prayer, or faithful service, to be added to believing as a condition of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 1:16–17; 3:22, 26; 4:5; 10:4; Gal. 3:22).¹¹

¹¹ <http://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement/>

Topeka Bible Church, *What We Believe: Positional Papers*
TBC Elders 1/93

Topic: GOSPEL

Key Verses To Consider: 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; 1 Peter 3:18

What We Believe:

The word gospel means good news. We believe that the greatest good news is that God kept His promise to send the Messiah to His chosen people Israel, for as a result of Jesus¹ coming to earth to die and rise again, the way to God has been opened to all--Jew and Gentile, male and female, young and old, black and white.

To understand the good news, a person must understand that the death of Jesus Christ was substitutionary. That is to say, Jesus substituted for us when He died on the cross. He could do this because He was sinless. The point is important: Jesus, who did not sin at all, died in our place for our sins.

To believe in this Jesus who died in our place means to rely completely on His grace rather than my own effort for salvation. Anyone who believes receives eternal life at that instant, and is assured of going to Heaven. Anyone who rejects this good news rejects Christ and remains in a condemned state (John 3:36).

The gospel truth that God provided our salvation by the death and resurrection of Jesus is of supreme importance. This is what sets Christianity apart from all other world religions, which are merely human schemes whereby man tries to earn salvation. Jesus himself said, ³I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me² (John 14:6).

This is definitely good news!