

[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

Thank you so much, it's Thanksgiving week. I'm all excited about Thanksgiving this year because my 27th wedding anniversary lands on Thanksgiving Day [CHEERS/APPLAUSE] and we're all pumped up about that. And Thanksgiving's one of those holidays I think is fun, it's lower pressure because they can't market to you for it, you know, marketing is always based on some dissatisfaction upon something. And for Thanksgiving, like, this isn't about dissatisfaction, this is about saying, "Thank You, God, You've been so good to me," and remembering all these things. And thanksgiving, being thankful, is like this antidote to like everything that's wrong. So whatever you're struggling with, if you're having some issues with disappointment or fear or materialism or you're struggling with hope right now, just stop and just bring all sorts of thanksgiving to God. This is going to clean up a whole lot of that other stuff and get it out of the way. So take this week, enjoy it, focus on it, and just have a wonderful week.



We want to spend a lot of time saying thank you to Jesus. I'm going to say thank you to Jesus this morning for His salvation. We are in a series called DOCTRINE. That word doctrine is sort of this complicated word to say teaching – what every Christian should believe – and today, in my opinion, is my favorite message of all of them, it's on salvation. It's the crux of everything. It's so crucial. It's the thing that we want to understand, the thing that we need to understand. Because

we were separated from God and through salvation Jesus comes and rescues us, saves us from our sins and brings us back into relationship once again with God; something that we're desiring for, something that's inside of us, that hurt, that pain, that's all the sin mess that's behind us, and God wants to come in and change us and radically transform us and make us new again. It's something that all of us are longing for and trying to figure out.

Really, the fact of the matter is most of the world that's very dour and sour and miserable and all this kind of stuff because they're looking for the answers to this meaning of life, they're trying to understand this piece of life and they're not getting that. And so they're filling it with all sorts of other things and those other things aren't meeting those needs and so they're finding themselves just crashing. We have the answer—it's Jesus. We want to talk about that a whole bunch in here this morning.

When I was four years old—people say this isn't possible, this is 100% possible, I promise you—I knew, I'd been taught by my family, my parents, that I was a sinner. I knew I did bad things and there was no doubt about that, and I knew that sin separated me from God. My parents just taught me and I was taught that if I would not put my trust in Jesus, if I died I would spend eternity separated from God in Hell. You're like, *You can't tell a four-year-old that.* Well, they told me and I got it, made sense to me, and I'm like I don't want that, I don't want to be in that situation. And I remember one night I said I want to ask Jesus into my life tonight, I want to put my trust in Jesus tonight. And I remember kneeling down next to my bed in my bedroom and asking Jesus into my life, and I remember that moment like it was yesterday. I can picture it clearly. I could tell you what the temperature was, I can tell you everything about that, I have no idea what the date was, I don't know what time of the year it was, I just can tell you I can remember that moment.

A couple years ago we were walking through that community and the people that owned that house now were standing out front, and my wife walks up to him and says, "Hey, my husband grew up in this house," I'm like, *Oh, don't say that.* But the cool thing that happened next they're like, "Well, do you want to see the house?" I'm like, yeah, I did, you know. So I get to walk through the house that I grew up in and, we left when we were like 11 or something like that, and when we came into my bedroom I blurted out, "Right there [HE POINTS] is where I knelt on my knees and got saved!" And people were looking at me like [FIGURE 1] [LAUGHTER] and my wife's like, "Get down on your knees right now and I'll take a picture of you." You know, I'm getting on my knees and she's taking a picture of me and the people are looking at me like, *Okay, this little tour is about over now.* [LAUGHTER] But I remember that moment.



FIGURE 1

By the way, I tell you that moment for a whole lot of reasons. One, because I think we ought to all just tell our story. You need to tell your story, tell someone. Tell someone on their way home today, maybe they've never heard it, maybe you've never talked about it. This ought to be something we talk about often. And some of you say, "I don't remember that exact moment. I don't remember that exact day." Well, what do you remember? You remember when all of a sudden it came together and it made sense to you and you're like, "I know Jesus." You say, "I still don't know. I don't remember ever having that conversation. I just remember going to church all my life." Well, let's be careful, we'll talk about that here in a moment and we'll get there. I want you to leave here today knowing, knowing, knowing that you know Jesus as your Savior.

I also want you to know, and I don't care if it's a 4-year-old or a 12-year-old or a 20-year-old or a 95-year-old, the Gospel is clear, it is simple; it is God moving through it so that any person can understand it and respond to it. And so God calls for a response, listen to these words, John Chapter 20, verse 31, Jesus' best friend John said these words:

³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

– JOHN 20:31 (ESV)

This stuff's written so you can believe, and if you believe you'll have life, you will not have eternal death like I was afraid of when I was a kid. Someone says, "Wow, I'm a little worried that that was about being kept out of Hell. I'm a little worried that maybe you didn't have a full understanding." I just told you a moment ago I'm celebrating my 27th wedding anniversary this year. You know what? I love my wife way, way, way, way, way more today 27 years later than I did 27 years ago. I had no idea what marriage was when I entered into it. I didn't know a fraction of what I know about my wife when I married her 27 years ago. And that's the case with our salvation. Hey, there's a lot of things you may not understand on day one, but you understand that God loves you and that He gave His Son to take your place in death, and that you can have salvation through Jesus. That's what we're here to proclaim. And a child can understand that and someone who is 99 can understand that, and I've had the privilege to see both children and people in-between and elderly people put their faith and trust in Jesus and to me it's the most exciting thing.

Now here's my biggest fear as a pastor. I've had the privilege of leading churches like this one that are really great places to come to, it just feels good when you come here. People are nice, you walk in the door and they're smiling at you, they're giving you hugs, they're giving you high fives. If you're not the huggy type—anyone in here not the huggy type? Yup, I see that hand—and they're giving you free

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coffee and free bagels and they got these fun things for your kids and all this kind of stuff and you just walk in, "I love it!" We've got stuff coming up in December that's just over the top. We do all these things for the community. When floods came we were out there doing it. Pastor John at the end of the service today is going to tell you where we're at as far as all the boxes that are coming in for the Operation Christmas Child and you're giving to that and it's making this huge difference. And we're even building a church over in Senegal right now; in fact, I think it's almost finished, you all have been a part of that. [APPLAUSE] These are the kinds of things going on and it's very easy to get a part of that and be a part of something where you go, "Man, that's good," and "Boy, that's what's getting me to eternal life. I'm connecting with something cool and good and something I enjoy." And it could be very easy to be won to this really awesome organization that does awesome things that makes a difference and never meet Jesus.

In fact, the thing that we're doing with all of the things that I just mentioned our goal is to help people meet Jesus. And so here at Calvary we're always going to be telling you this our goal is to help people find Jesus and help people follow Jesus. That's what we're doing constantly and we're just working real hard to help you fulfill your mission in being a part of helping people find Jesus and help people follow Jesus. And so we're going to talk about that all the time. And finding Jesus is not just showing up in this room, it's not just filling a seat here, it's not just going and working at a soup kitchen or helping tutor kids. Finding Jesus is something that you personally need to understand and believe in and follow in your own heart, and then once you do that you're gonna be so excited you're gonna be telling people about your story. When you tell people about your story, ultimately you're gonna be telling people, "You need to have that in your life," because that is the thing if we do not tell people about that and they pass away, they go into an eternity without Jesus, separated from God. That's not loving. That's not what we want for them.

So today we're talking about salvation and salvation is all about how our relationship with God is restored, how God rescues us. You may have read the first chapter of the Bible. God creates the earth and then ultimately mankind and He has this awesome relationship in the first couple chapters of the Bible with mankind. They're walking and talking in the garden, they have perfect communion, perfect relationship—and then mankind decides to sin. And as a result of that sin, sin is passed on to all of us, and because of this decision that we make we are born into sin, we're born with a sin nature. We talked about that at length last week. That's the bad news, that's the unfortunate news, that because of being born with sin, this separation from God, missing the mark, I am very, very, very, very lost.



walking and talking together
in the garden
in the cool of the day

Again, as we mentioned a moment ago, that's why there is so much pain and hurt and emptiness, Satan loves to bring death and destruction and separation and that's the world that we live in but what salvation's all about that I'm excited to proclaim this week is God never wanted it to be that way. We made a choice but God wanted to reach out to us and bring us back to Himself and make everything right again. So we had rebelled, we had sinned against God, and on our own it wasn't going to be possible to find our way back to God. We fell into judgment, we were separated, and sin has distorted everything. It just... even this physical world is distorted from what it once was. We are distorted from what we once were and what we were created to be, who we were originally meant to be.

But here's the good news, here's the Gospel, that we were meant to be restored, brought back again, we would be made whole, and God sends His son Jesus on a rescue mission to save us from our sins. **I want**

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to make it very, very clear—this is always a work of God. We're going to keep talking about this for a few minutes here. Our temptation is it's a work of mine, I'm going to have to do something. I'm going to have to get a little bit better. I'm going to have to spend a little bit more money. I'm gonna have to do a few more things, read a few more things, go a few more places. And God's gonna say no, this is all of Me and none of you, but I'm calling you to myself. Listen to Matthew Chapter 1, verse 21, this is the beginning of the Christmas season, this is the beginning of the Christmas message:

²¹ "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

– MATTHEW 1:21 (ESV)

And that is the good news. I started with the bad news—we're sinners, we're separated from God. The good news—Jesus invades our world, God sends His Son on a rescue mission to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. That is the Gospel. The word *gospel* simply means "good news." There's a passage of Scripture, 1st Corinthians Chapter 15 that I want to read to you, that to me is the core of the good news that just shouts out the good news to each one of us. Listen to these words:

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

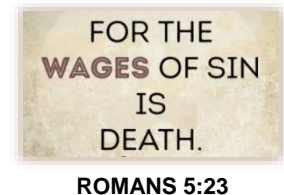
– I CORINTHIANS 15:3-4 (ESV)

That's the good news. He died, He was buried, and He rose. Why? Why is that the good news? The Scriptures bring to us several themes that I might wrap up into three words—penalty, substitute, atonement. You might be like, *Okay, I don't know*. Okay, the penalty is there's a penalty for our sin, when we sinned we were separated from God and that penalty is eternal separation from God, eternal damnation in Hell. But God didn't want it that way, He didn't make Hell for you, He wants to have a relationship with you, so what He did is He sent a substitute.

Each of us sinners we were supposed to die, we were supposed to pay that price for our sins, but God sends His Son Jesus to hang on the cross as our substitute.

Our penalty, He takes our penalty on Himself and He suffers and He dies and He is buried to take on the penalty that was due us. But the great news of 1st Corinthians Chapter 15 is He does not stay dead. He overcomes death. He comes out of the grave victorious over death alive so as to put this stamp of approval on it saying, "It is finished,"¹ it is done, it's been accomplished. That is good news. That is the Gospel.

Now what I want to tell you here, I'm just going to tell you this and, like, tell it to you over and over and over a couple times here, but I'm just going to keep coming at you from a different angle. So I shared with you my personal story. I shared with you just a little bit about what salvation is and what the Gospel, the good news is, I want to share the same thing but I want to share it from the angle of a verse that you ought to know, Ephesians 2:8 & 9. If you haven't memorized it, write it down, know these verses, really simple verses, but it has three really important words in these verses that I want you to remember. The word *grace*, the word *faith*, and the word *Jesus Christ*. Okay, I'm gonna read the verse and then I'm gonna break down those three words before us for a few moments.



¹ John 19:30 (ESV): When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

– EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (ESV)

Grace

Grace. Grace is God's unmerited favor, something He *gives* to you. Remember what it said? It's a gift, you didn't earn it, you didn't deserve it, there was nothing you could do to muster it up. There wasn't... you couldn't like somehow become good enough to get this, you were totally lost—that's what we were talking about a moment ago—and God offers you something – grace – not because of anything you are but because of everything He is. Nothing good in us, everything good in Him. No way to work our way to God, He comes to us, and what happens next is 100% dependent on God. Me separated from Him, me incapable, next thing God says I'm gonna do something. I'm gonna come to this in a moment, I'm gonna repeat, and I'm gonna say **God loves you.**

When you hear about this grace, when you hear there is nothing in and of myself to save myself now. By the way, there's a lot of people trying to save themselves right now, trying to be good enough, trying to buy their way in, trying to go through all sorts of rituals and behaviors to try to get themselves to God. You try and try and try, that's why you see so many people finally throw up their hands, "I can't do it! Enough. I give up." And a lot of people it drives them to just craziness because they've gone down every path possible. Until you come to a place that I would say today where you give up and you say, "Uh, God, You would come to me?" I mean, that's a gift. It says here it's a gift of God, that every one of us in here ought to go, "I want that!" And yet so many because we're living in a world where we have to earn our way most of the time we go, "I got this." It's like no, God's got this because you can't get this. So it's by grace through faith.

Faith

Let's talk about faith for a moment. The book of Hebrews, the 11th chapter, is sort of like a review of all these heroes of the Bible who when God told them to do something [SNAPS HIS FINGERS] they did it and that's defined as faith. And he's giving all these illustrations of people that when God said do it, they did it, and times when it made zero cents. Abraham, you know, *Get up, start walking, I'm gonna make a great nation out of you*, and you know, you're... *What? All right, here we go. I'm in.* And we're gonna talk about faith in terms of there are things that we're told by God that we can't see, we can't see where they end up, and even, like in the case of Abraham, even as long as he lived on this earth some of the things that he was promised didn't even make sense. Hebrews 11:1 says:

¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

– HEBREWS 11:1 (ESV)

So hope is the present certainty of a future reality. So we are going to come to Jesus because of God's grace through faith where we trust God said do this – all right, I'm good, I don't fully grasp it all, it doesn't make sense, but something's pulling inside of me saying this is right.

By the way, I say this often here, you probably heard me say it before, if you're sitting in this room right now and you're thinking to yourself, *I know where he's going with this, I've heard this before, but every time He talks about this I can't quite get there, I just can't figure it out. I find myself – there's some blockade here on this message.* I get that. Here's what I'd love to ask you to do, just quietly in your head right now go, "God, if this is true, would You, like, somehow let this all make sense for me right now?" When we make steps of faith it is God's Spirit moving in our heart helping us to make that, where God's revealing it to us, where God's opening up our minds.

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There's a reason you come to this place, there's a reason you came in here today, there are very few people in this room today that just walked in here because someone really guilted them into coming. I don't meet many people that are willing to be guilted into this. I don't find many people that are willing to just get up early and come in here and go through this just so their kids can have a good experience upstairs. You'll find some way out. You'll find a phone call coming in that you can go walk around the parking lot, this kind of thing, you're in here for a reason. The fact that you even have even any interest at all, I would just say, "God, would You speak to me?" If you come from a religious background but you've never felt a heart change where this has never really gone beyond the fact that, "Well, we ought to go to church," I would just say to you, "Jesus, would You somehow show yourself to me this morning?" Because you're going to have to before you leave here today take some sort of a step of faith. And God stepped into your world because He loved you so much, and He offers you what He's offering to you by grace and He's asking you to take a step and a response by faith in Him.

Now faith always has an object. You had faith, you didn't give it much thought today, when you sat in that seat, it's an object. You sat down on it, looks like it went well for most of you. [LAUGHTER] I sat on a seat earlier this week when I was doing the Thursday night study on this subject, and I think this is one of those wooden folding chairs, I think the thing's like 70 or 80 years old, and right when I said, you know, "Faith has an object," I heard this chair under me go *cr-r-reak* and I'm like that was hilarious because I often will say that about the chair and I'm sitting on this 80-year-old chair that could very well give in.

I just want to say when we put our faith in Jesus we are putting our faith in God Himself. That's why we started out weeks ago talking about The Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—three equal yet distinct persons *all* God. And He came to this earth as God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Our faith needs to be put in Jesus Christ and Jesus alone. **Jesus Christ** When we talk about putting our faith in Jesus, our response to the Gospel message, the good news, is that God loved us so much that He would send His Son to take on Himself the punishment that was due to me and be my substitute so I wouldn't have to go there, so that I could be one with God.

So of all that we say here today ultimately there's only one thing you have to get deep into your mind and that is we have to put our faith in Jesus alone for our salvation. If you are depending on your religious heritage or on your great-grandma's faith, or some bead that you rub, or some mantra that you read, or some work that you do every 4 o'clock on Tuesdays, I just want you to know that will never, ever get you to God. You must trust in Jesus alone for your salvation. [APPLAUSE]

YOU MUST TRUST IN JESUS ALONE FOR YOUR SALVATION

All right. I'm gonna come at this one more way. Okay, I told you my story, I told you the problem we have with sin and the good news of the Gospel, I now have quoted to you Ephesians Chapter 2:8 & 9, by grace, through faith in Jesus alone, not as a result of works unless anyone would boast, so no works that are going to get you to God.

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

– EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (ESV)

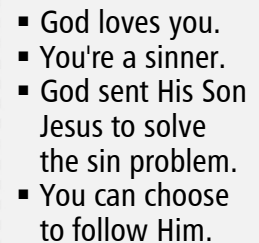
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So I'm going to come at it one more way and it's the way our church talks about it, this church, this local body of believers. One of the things that we realize is there's a lot of people do come into this place every week because they like Calvary, it's a great place, great people, at least most of you [JESTING] – no, great, happy, nice people. If you went and got coffee and bagels today you know these are great, nice happy people. If you've been up to pick up your kids yet—nice happy people. If you go up there to get the prizes, you know, a lot of our kids are bringing their friends now because they just... they can't help themselves, they're telling their friends and they're like, "How do I get prizes like that? It's like you didn't buy anything for them at their home, they want to come here for, you know, a dollar prize. But hey, that's fine, if we can tell them about Jesus, we're going to tell them about Jesus. And neat things and fun things are happening here.

But oftentimes there is this mistaken mentality that if you're in this place, well, then, you must have met Jesus. If you've sang a song in here, you must have met Jesus. If your identity is connected with CF Downingtown, you must have met Jesus. Our goal is to help you find Jesus. Our goal is to help you follow Jesus. And so we need to keep on presenting to you who Jesus is so that you know Him. And boy, it's tough because not everyone that walks into this building knows Jesus, but everyone that walks in here has this longing for it, and we're just working really hard to help you understand that.

So here's the question that we ask, and you'll find a lot of you are asking this question of each other because it's really taken off in this church: If a friend were to ask you how to become a Christian, what are some of like, in the most simple way, what would be some of the things you'd say to them? Okay, let me just throw out what we've already said. Someone said, like, "What's it all about becoming a Christian?" In the most simple way let me just throw out a few big categories: God loves you. You're a sinner. God loved you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to solve this problem of sin. And you can make a choice to follow Him. That's very simple.

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- God loves you.
 - You're a sinner.
 - God sent His Son Jesus to solve the sin problem.
 - You can choose to follow Him.

Now I'm going to do this with you, I'm going to give you the same answer but I'm going to add some Scriptures to it and all the Scriptures are found in the book of Romans. There are a lot of Scriptures to the Bible that you can use to share your faith and feel free to use any or all of them. Each one of us should have our plan, it needs to be simple, it needs to be memorable, because most times I find when I'm sharing the Gospel most people don't... they're not ready to just open up and turn into the Bible with me so I need to be able to share with them the Scripture. You'll remember the Word of God will not return void² so we want to use the Word of God and we want to share the Word of God, and God is working through His Book and God's Spirit is working. As you start to share with someone just say a little prayer real quick and say, "God, just help them get this," because, again, something's gonna have to change. God's Spirit is gonna have to move in their life at a moment to make that change.

So the first thing I like to do as I talk to a person and you say, "Hey, a friend came to you and asked what it would be like to become a Christian," oftentimes they'll say, "I don't know, like, be good? Or, um, like, I don't know, be..." and you can tell they're struggling a little bit. You say, "Hey, can I just share with you a couple things that I know to be true from my study of the Bible?" And very oftentimes they're like, "Yeah, yeah, I'd love to hear that?" Here's the things that you'd want to share with them, we're going to pop them up on the screen and we're gonna pop them up there with the verses from the book of

² Isaiah 55:11 (ESV): "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Romans. You may, I know some of you are downloading the notes from the internet, that'd be great, but you may want to just take a picture of the slides as they pop up.

1. IT IS A RELATIONSHIP NOT A RELIGION – GOD LOVES YOU.

So the first thing is we want you to be in a relationship with God, He wants to have a relationship with you, God loves you. Starting to get that? God loves you. I think a lot of people have a really wrong view of God and they don't know that, and they don't feel that love of God. So tell them that God loves them . . . but then you need to tell them there's a problem.

2. WE SEPARATED OURSELVES FROM HIM BECAUSE OF OUR SIN

And that problem is that we've separated ourselves from God because of sin. We are born with sin. Now, most people don't think their sin's very bad, you know, because they'll say, "Well, I didn't kill anyone," or "I haven't done anything just horrendous, I've just done what everyone else has done. You're bad, I'm bad, so, like, we're all cool." Like, somehow that evens it all out. But to a holy God we are separated from Him and that's the problem. Listen to Romans 3, and by the way, I always take them to Romans 3:10-11 and you may want, again, take a picture of this or write down these verses. I underlined these in my Bible because when I do take someone through I just bring up these major categories, there's a problem:

¹⁰ as it is written:

¹¹ "None is righteous, no, not one;
no one understands;
no one seeks for God."

– ROMANS 3:10-11 (ESV)

Then Romans 3:23:

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

– ROMANS 3:23 (ESV)

And in Romans 5:12:

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

– ROMANS 5:12 (ESV)

Who's that one man that death came into the world through? Adam. So you can explain that to them. And it says here that "**death through sin**" – what's death? Death is separation, so it's because of sin that came to all men—it was just imputed to all of us, we are born into that, death comes to us—that's what separates us from each other, that's what separates us from God, and ultimately when we die if we don't put our trust in Jesus that's what sends us to Hell.

The next thing very simple God solved this problem through Jesus. Romans Chapter 5, verse 8, underline it in your Bible:

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

– ROMANS 5:8 (ESV)

3. GOD SOLVED THE PROBLEM WITH JESUS

That's that substitution. I should have died, I was the guilty one, I was the guilty party, I had to pay my own price and be separated from God through death for all of eternity. But instead, God sends His Son Jesus to do that, Romans 6:23:

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

– ROMANS 6:23 (ESV)

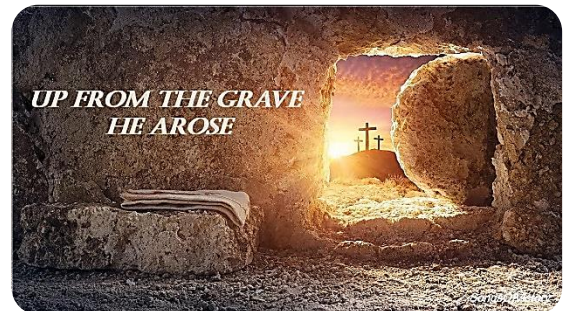
The price of my sin, that separation, is death, it's eternal death, it's eternal separation from God, but the *free* gift—that's that grace thing, again, nothing I can earn or deserve—that free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Wrap it up with this. Every last one of us has a choice to make. A lot of people say, "I just can't imagine it to be a free gift." "I can't imagine He can forgive me." "I can't imagine that He can love me." "I think I'm pretty good, I don't need God to love me." You've heard all of them. The eternal truth of God's Word says that at some point I have to make a choice. Romans 10:9-10, listen to these words:

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

– ROMANS 10:9-10 (ESV)

Read them that verse. I read that verse to you, "**confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord**" – He's in charge, He is God, He is right. God, You are right. What's He right about? I'm a sinner. I need Him. "**And believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.**" When He came off that cross and He was placed in the tomb, He didn't stay dead. He came out of that grave victorious and as a result of that I can trust in Him that He has forgiven me. When God raised Him from the dead that was God putting His stamp of approval on what has just happened, that because Jesus died and rose I now know that I can have eternal life through Him. It says, "**For with the heart one believes and is justified,**" by the way, that word *justification* is a legal declaration where God says you are forgiven and you are part of the family—with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth you confess and you are saved. Pause there for a second, and then I'm going to wrap up. And I want to say worship team to come up right now.



Have you been to that spot in your own life? Have you ever made the choice to follow Jesus? Have you ever put your faith and trust in Him alone for your salvation? Maybe this is new today and you're going, "Wow. No, I've been a church member and I've gone through all the right classes and lit all the right candles, and walked up and down the aisles at the right time, prayed the right prayers, said sorry at the right times, but I've never put my trust in Jesus alone for my salvation. Took communion, was baptized, but I've never trusted Jesus alone for my salvation." When you do that He will declare you righteous, right with God, the atoning work, "at-one-ment" of the cross will make you one with God. It is by grace through faith in Jesus alone, not as a result of any works. That's the Gospel, that's the good news, and it's yours if you'll just say, "Jesus, forgive me of my sin. I turn from it, I repent of it, and I put my faith and trust in You alone." That's something you can do right now. And the Scripture says and with his mouth

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he confesses and is saved. I've met a lot of people who ask, "Well, okay, how do I do that?" Here's how you're going to do it right now, you're going to speak in your heart and say, "Jesus, I trust in You, I believe in You." I want to read to you 1st John 5:13, it says this:

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

– 1 JOHN 5:13 (ESV)

You can know that you have salvation, you can know you have eternal life, you can put your trust in Him alone right now for your salvation. So I'm going to give you a moment to just bow your head. I'm going to pray for you.

Jesus,



I want to pray for those who are right now going, "I need to know." I pray for each person in this room that wants to put their trust in You right now. I pray that You'll move in their life in a really powerful way. So Lord, we just say, "Lord, forgive us of our sins, come into our lives, we believe in You, that You are Jesus who died in my place, who took my punishment, paid my penalty. Forgive me of my sin right now and come into my life. I believe in You."

And I believe the Scriptures are clear the angels heavens start rejoicing³ at this point because your justification has been made. There's been a legal declaration that you have moved from darkness into light. You are no longer a child of Satan, but you're a child of God, you're part of the family of God. And I just encourage you just tell others about that. It is the greatest news you could ever tell. Remember this moment, this is an important moment, tell your kids about it, tell your parents about it, tell your co-workers about it.

Lord God,



For those who have put their trust in You today, I pray that this will be a powerful moment that they'll never ever forget. And I pray that You'll begin a good work and that You'll do what your Scripture says, that You'll complete it, You'll complete it in their lives. We ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.



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³ Luke 5:10 (ESV) [Jesus speaking]: **"Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."**