

Saved by Grace Alone

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[0 : 0 0] I would like you to turn your Bible this morning, not to Ephesians chapter 2, where we are! going to end up eventually, but I would like you to turn, if you would, over to Romans chapter 12, 1 and 2. We're going to take just a moment to frame things there in Romans chapter 12, and then we are going to move into our text in Ephesians chapter 2. Romans chapter 12, by the way, is that changeover point in the book where the apostle moves from Romans chapter 12, actually, the changeover point where he moves from that matter of practical discussion of the theology of salvation then to the application of salvation. And one of the things that the Scriptures do over and over again that I think it's important to remind ourselves of is that before it comes to the responsibilities we have, the Scriptures always lay the foundation upon the character, nature, blessings, goodness of God, so that our behavior is not something that earns us a relationship, but is something that is the outcome of our relationship. Our faith then rests upon His goodness, and our relationship with Him rests upon His grace. Romans chapter 12,

I have appealed to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual duty. Do not be conformed to the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. I want you to have that fixed in your mind just for a moment, and now turn in your Bible over to the passage that we're going to be looking at there in Ephesians chapter 2, and go to Ephesians chapter 2. We're going to look at verse 8 and 9. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8. It says, for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. I want you to recognize this morning as we think about the matter of salvation that every world system and every theological state that people have at least has some system of proposal about how you get from here to there. I mean, most everybody recognizes that the world is a mess. You don't have to go very far, whether you're listening to the news or you're reading a newspaper or you're on the web or you're talking with your friends. You're around people that would confess things aren't the way they'd like them to be. And so whether you're talking about being a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Christian or you're talking about being a capitalist or a socialist, whatever you are, you have a system that proposes there is a way to move from point A to point B. The thing that sets Christianity entirely apart from every other world system is the fact that the Scriptures make it undeniably clear that God is the one who is the principal agent in the process of salvation. We don't save ourselves by working harder, by being better people, by deciding that we're going to do a certain sequence of religious exercises over a period of time, and those religious exercises will in time bring us to a state where we're in a good place. Now, the world proposes that, yes, there's a problem, and it doesn't take very much intelligence to figure out the world's a mess. But the question is, how do you go about solving that problem? What is the remedy? How are things turned from where they are to where you would like them to be, and more importantly, where God wants them to be? Well, we look here in Ephesians chapter 2, and here's what it says, for by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God. It is not a result of work so that no one may boast. You could probably say that this passage, Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 and 9, is one of those central statements in Scripture.

[4 : 3 1] I'm wondering, how many of you have actually taken the time to memorize this at one point or another? Get your hand up high so I can kind of track. Ephesians chapter 2, how many of you think you'd be ready to say it right now and more or less recite it on spot? This is a wanting you get extra shares. Is that what Mike said, Mike Murphy? Where are you, Mike? Okay. Okay, he went out to work in junior church or something. We've all memorized that along. It's probably almost as

familiar to most of us as something like John chapter 3, verse 16. Wouldn't you agree with that? It's one of those foundational passages that reminds us of really what salvation is, and I got to tell you, it is a very important and a very appropriate one. And so I want you to look with me this morning as we study this passage together and let me see if I can get this thing to work properly. Ah, why did I decide to use this? It was working. There we go. I got it. Okay. Thank you. And so I'm going to tell a story on myself. I had backup notes in here, and I thought in my infinite wisdom I wouldn't need them, and so we're stuck. We will make it. I want you to look this morning, though, as we study this passage.

I want you to understand that the Scripture makes it undeniably clear that salvation is exclusively the work of God. Salvation is something that God alone does, and the Scriptures don't leave any wiggle room on that point. I want you to take just a moment to go back earlier, if you would, to the beginning of Ephesians chapter 2 and kind of consider the state in which mankind finds themselves. All of mankind is equally cursed by the fall and sin. And as you look at Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1 through 5, we find a couple different points that really stand out. It says, for one, we were dead in our sins. How do dead people respond to various stimuli? Have you ever leaned over the coffin and said, would you come back? Or would you probably just rise up?

And don't be playing this game. We'd like you home. That doesn't work. Dead people have no response. It goes on and says this, we were slaves to Satan and slaves to our passion. And if you think back to what it was like to be an unbeliever prior to your conversion, there was this unhappy state in which you existed where you did things and you enjoyed doing them, but the consequences was that you always endured the outcome of what sin produces in your life. I like to refer to it as the unintended consequences of sin. You don't always stop and do the math and figure out how it's going to end up, but you get rolling into a behavior and a pattern of thinking. And the next thing you know, you're dealing with the baggage that sin creates and you're sorry for it. Now, mark this, listen carefully.

There's a difference between the kind of sorrow that the world has for sin and the sorrow that God produces in the heart. What's the difference? The world is only sorry about the consequences.

[7 : 38] The world is not sorry for what sin does to God and what it does to compromise the glory and the testimony of God, not an interest in the God part of the equation. It also reminds us in that passage in Ephesians chapter 2 that we were doomed, as it says there, that we were doomed to eternal judgment.

And I think that's one of the reasons why the unbeliever, when they consider the prospect of their own death, they never come about thinking, whoa, that's a great thing. I'm going to die and someday it's going to be wonderful. Last week, I had the privilege of doing a funeral, actually the week before. And while I was doing that funeral, one of the things that I noticed, majority of people who were listening to me, it's always a mistake when you call an evangelical pastor to do a sermon for a funeral because guess what you're going to get? You're going to get a couple different things. One is you're going to get the gospel. And the gospel always begins, surprise, it begins with bad news. What's the bad news? The bad news is that we are sinners justly condemned before a holy God.

And so when people invite an evangelical pastor to come and preach the message at a funeral, one of the things they're going to hear is the simplicity of the gospel. And one of the things that I read when I'm paying attention, speaking, I read faces and I can tell those who are kind of fired up by the thought of, man, here we go. I like that part. He's going to talk about Jesus and he's going to talk about the gospel. There are people sometimes are going, whoo, whoo, go pastor.

And there are others who said, who, who invited him? Were we thinking right when we called him? You know, and so I was watching these faces. I would like to use the word dour.

[9 : 26] I was looking out across a large group of people that had dour faces. And the further I went, I started out pretty chipper, I thought, you know. I mean, pastors should smile when they're talking about Jesus. I started that way. I ended that way. But I kind of watched a cloud come over the room as I talked about the fact that, you know, there is none righteous, no, not one. There's not one that seeks after God. And I went on and explained. I said, you know, and the idea that most everybody, I said, there are a couple very common misconceptions that I hear at funerals. One is, doesn't that person look good lying there in the casket? I said, that's an extension of truth.

I've never seen a dead person looks better than a living person. I said, the other thing that I always get blown away by is when a person says something like this, well, they're in a better place. And I

had the gall to tell people that that's not always true because not everyone goes to a better place. You see, as we look at the state of the unbeliever, as we find in the first five verses of Ephesians chapter 2, we see here, it says that we, prior to our conversion, were dead, slaves, and doomed to eternity in hell. But then it comes about and it makes this wonderful statement there in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8, where it says, for by grace you're saved. How is it that you got saved? Salvation is exclusively the work of God. That's what we see here. And Paul wraps up his declaration in that argument in the first five verses by making a statement there in verse 5, mark it, by grace you've been saved. And kind of making that statement, guess what he does?

He kind of has this, I wouldn't call it knee-jerk, but it's almost an instinctive response. When he thinks about grace, he can't help himself but talk about the Lord Jesus. And so that's what we find in verse 6 and 7. It's kind of this little outburst of thanksgiving for the Lord Jesus.

Then he comes back around to his theme, and he picks up and explains very carefully in verse 8 and 9 that it is salvation comes about by the grace of God alone. Now, when the Bible says that we are saved by grace, it is announcing that our salvation is the result of the unmerited, now mark this, it is the unmerited kindness of God. Grace means that you're getting something that you didn't earn or deserve. So why were you saved? Well, you know, God knew I was a pretty good person, and he just thought maybe I needed a couple little extra bonus points. I remember in school, it never seemed fair to me, but the ones who got the extra bonus points weren't the ones who needed them the worst.

I was one who always was kind of hoping that there'd be a little bit of mercy shown, and I never seemed to get it. Of course, I did kind of earn some of the heart that I had. But, you know, people think about grace, and they miss the point that grace means the unmerited kindness in favor of God. And the Bible clearly states that we are saved not because of who we are or even because of what God knew we would eventually become.

[12:38] I think about how one of the keys, I was watching Indiana basketball last night, I have to confess that. I grew up partly in Indiana when I was in college, and so I've been interested in IU basketball for a long time, and now they're doing finally well again. They're doing well finally again. So watching them last night, and one of the things that a coach always hopes is they're going to find somebody in the sixth grade who is in that profoundly gangly state, and the coach begins to invest in the kid. And then he ends up being one of these seven-foot Cody Zellers, you know, that can put the basket in behind his back with his eyes closed. You know, everything works out perfectly, and he wins all the games. And so you want to pick somebody good, and that's not why God picked me. It's not why God picked you. He picked us because of His grace. Grace frees us, by the way, from boasting in what isn't your own. Do you realize that? It includes taking away from you the privilege of describing that, well, I repented, or that I came about to believe in this because of my own sound judgment and my intellect. I figured it all out, and well, it worked out for me. Even our faith is a work of grace.

The reason we have faith is because of His grace in the sense that faith is the transmission or the channel that applies the grace of God in our lives. We are not saved because we have faith, because of our own initiative or our own ability, but because of the grace of God that works in us to give us faith. Now, I want to explain that a little bit further by helping you understand that faith really is due to the work of the Spirit of God. And there are several different passages I want you to track with me to make this undeniably clear. Turn back in your Bible, if you will, to John chapter 6. We're dealing with the fact that faith is something that comes about by the grace of God, and mark what it says in John chapter 6. Now, remember the context of what had happened.

In John chapter 6, we find Jesus preaching a very lengthy sermon, and the outcome is that the majority of people do what? They all come forward on the third verse of just as I am. Is that what happens? No, they all leave. And Jesus explains that departure in John chapter 6, verse 63. He says this, it is the Spirit who gives life. You might want to underline that. How is it that a person comes to Christ? It is the work of the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I've spoken to you are Spirit and life. Then in verse 65, and he said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father. I want you to look ahead to another passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 3, and we're paying attention here to different passages that make it clear to us that our faith is really the work of the Spirit of God that brings us to the point of responding appropriately to the things that God has told us.

Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 3. Therefore, I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says Jesus is accursed, and no one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit.

Now, how is it that a person comes to faith? What do they have to say? They have to confess what? That Jesus Christ is what? Lord. And 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 3 makes it clear. Let me read that little portion to you again. No one can say Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. Now, can an unbeliever sitting here this morning just mouth the words? What's the answer? Yeah, you can.

[16:32] That's not what it's talking about. It's talking about having conviction in your heart that that is indeed true. And by the prompting of the Spirit of God, your heart responds and you say, you know what? Jesus is Lord. He's Lord. Let me have you look at another passage just for a moment. Turn over, if you would, to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, or chapter 1, verse 4 through 6. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 4 through 6.

For we know, brothers, beloved of God, that He has chosen you because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. Very interesting, isn't it?

Here's Paul saying, look, I just want you to know that I am so blessed that God loved you and He's chosen you. And the way I know that is because the gospel which we preached came to you with power and with the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. He is saying that as I saw what happened as a result of the preaching of the Word of God, the things that took place in your life were undeniable evidence of your genuine conversion. And that was the work of the Spirit of God. The Spirit was the one who produced in you the sensibility or the sensitivity to the truth of God and you responded in faith.

A salvation is exclusively, if you go back there in Ephesians and turn back, if you will, to chapter 2, salvation is exclusively the gift of God. There at the end of verse 8, it says this, it said, it is the gift of God. Now, the difference between a gift and something you earn is what?

How many of you get paid on a regular basis? How many of you, when you get your paycheck, say to your boss, thank you so much for this wonderful gift? Do you do that? Now, you may thank your boss for a job because there are people that don't have jobs. But for the most part, you get that check because you've done what? Well, what is it that you do?

[18:40] You showed up. You've done the tasks that were assigned to you. You've had a reasonable spirit. You've taken on the challenges that your work requires. And in everything, you've kind of done what has been expected at the end of the week or every two weeks or once a month. Your boss gives you that check and he says, hey, appreciate what you've done. Here's your pay. And is it a gift?

The answer is no. You earned it. When we talk about a gift, we talk about something that we have not done anything to receive. And when it says there in that passage, it is the gift of God. It is talking about the fact that salvation is not something we earn or deserve. And so when you bump into a person, when you ask them that question, so why do you believe you will get to heaven? And they say, well, I've been a pretty good person. What are they telling you? They're announcing fundamentally that they believe that salvation is something they work for. They did something to receive the benefit of God's smile. Now they'll kind of say tongue in cheek, well, I'm hoping my good outweighs the bad. And that's kind of a humble way of saying, you know, I'm doing the best I can. I'm not as bad as the guy down the street that I know, that kind of thing. But at the end of the day, a works righteousness proposes that the reason we can get salvation is we've done our part.

And the scripture says, salvation is a gift. Well, then actually we see that the scriptures go even further. And coming back around on this passage, we'll notice that first of all, Paul has said some positive things. Salvation is a matter of grace. Salvation is a gift. But now notice the negatives.

He's put those as well in the picture for us. And he makes the point two different times here in the passage. He says, it is not your own doing. And then in verse 9, it is not a result of works.

Having made the point from the positive, he now turns around and he speaks about it in a negative. It's a little bit like, how many of you have ever had a nail that just won't get down? And what you do is you pick up the hammer and you give it one more what? You whop it again and you sink it nicely.

[20:54] And that's what Paul does with this not, not phrase. He is driving the point home. Now, salvation is not something that man have an independent part in. And when I mean independent, it means that they just kind of do it on their own. The statement's hard to accept, though, when we stop and realize of what it says in scripture. Let me give you a couple of recitations on that. It says

that we must confess with our mouth and we must believe in our heart in order to be saved. Now, how is it that we get to that point? And that's what we're dealing with. I want you to recognize that what Paul is saying is that salvation is not something that we do on our own. It is not a work so that no one may boast.

And look at the passage there, if you will, again. It says, so that no one, no one may boast. How is it that you got to heaven? Well, you know what? I heard it explained. It made a lot of sense to me. I figured it out and I decided here was what I was going to do. No. I want you to recognize that God is passionate about reserving His glory to Himself and also at the same time protecting His children from the self-harm of overreaching pride. I want you to consider what it's saying.

God protects us. And it's not only in the matter of salvation. We see this over and over again at different places in the Scriptures. Let me give you a couple different illustrations so you can see it. Turn back, if you will, to Judges chapter 7. Way back in the Old Testament, Judges. Any of you familiar with the passage, you'll remember that this is the story of Gideon.

[22 : 35] Gideon. And Gideon, by the way, was not what you would call the typical hero of the Old Testament that was kind of just sitting around waiting for an opportunity to show his stuff and make God look good. What was he? He was the typical, unassuming, insecure, uncertain individual. And God came along and said, hey, by the way, Gideon, I have something I want you to do. And then Gideon went ahead and followed, obeyed God, chopped down the idolatrous images, and everybody was all upset with him.

And what happened as a result of that is the Philistines were going to come and have a battle with Israel. Now mark what it says in Judges chapter 7 verse 2. The Lord said to Gideon, the people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israelite boast over me, saying my own hand to save me. Now I want you to understand that.

At this point, okay, there were about 32,000 of the Israelites against this unbelievable army of the Midianites. Numbers being a small thing, 32,000 to whatever else the other number was, it was quite a lot larger than this. But God says, you know what, I'm a little concerned because there are too many people for me to accomplish my purposes. Because if I pull this off, which I'm going to do, the natural heart of man is going to say, hey, I did it. Look what we did.

Brilliant strategy. We used a little trumpet and we used a little lantern or whatever else, and we just absolutely terrified the enemy into killing themselves. Great, great idea.

And so as you know, God whittles down the 32,000 to about how many? How many of you remember how many? Just a paltry little 300. That's quite a little bit of reduction, isn't it?

[24 : 34] Now, aren't you glad that God told Gideon ahead of time why he was going to take this strategy? Because there in verse 2, God says to Gideon, you know what, this is too big of a crowd because if things work out or when they work out, there are going to be people around kind of bumping their chests and saying, look what we did. You know, last year, Tebow was doing that T-bowing in the end zone.

Now we have a guy kissing his bicep. Do you see that on TV? What is he celebrating? You know, try that again. What's he celebrating? He's kind of all about himself, isn't he?

Can I tell you something? This is a prophetic utterance. He won't be around doing that very long. Trust me. There's something in Scripture that says this, God helps the humble. He what? He resists the proud. Just kind of mark it time calendar somewhere and say, I wonder how long this guy is going to keep on kissing his bicep before he's not kissing his bicep anymore. You see, God is all about protecting his own glory, whether it is dealing with believers or unbelievers. The only thing about believers is that he's really steroidal about not letting us get away with it, even for a minute. He'll let the unbeliever get away with it a little longer, but the believer, he is right on it quick. Do you understand that? Because whom the Lord loves, what? He chastens. Well, let's look at another passage where we see God at work to preserve his glory. In turn, if you will, you were in Ephesians, then you went to Judges, but we'll go to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul is defending, can you imagine that? The apostle defending his gospel ministry. And he had critics that were going around saying, you know, Paul would have a greater impact if he would kind of get with the times. I mean, the Greeks and the Romans loved a lot of philosophical, esoteric conversations and debates. And Paul was just out there doing this real, real simple gospel message. And people were critical.

And he explains that the power of the gospel is in the truth of the gospel, not in his eloquence or the philosophic arguments that he was giving. And then he goes on and explains, he says, by the way,

look around at the kind of people that God has saved. Look at verse 27. For God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being may boast in the presence of God. I want to come back to Ephesians chapter 2. Go back that passage, if you would, and mark what the apostle has to say regarding the matter of salvation. He says, listen, not of works, lest no man may boast. And that brings me to the final little part that I want us to think together about this morning and just mark the fact of how does the gospel affect us?

[27 : 52] I mean, for you as a believer this morning, how does the truth of the gospel really end up affecting you? I would ask you whether or not this morning or in this last week, there have been some times where your heart has been affected by self-doubt or insecurity or disappointment, or you're wondering whether other people like you or how things are going to work out in your life. There are all kinds of little rabbit trails that our minds can run on. I want you to come back and think with me about this fact. Salvation is profoundly real. It is unbelievable, and it's overwhelming. When we think about what salvation is to us, it is something that just blows our mind away, and I trust that is true of you today, that when you stop and consider the reality of salvation and your heart connects with that truth, that it makes a difference in the view you have of the life you live, the view of what other people think of you, and the view of how things are going to work out in your life.

Salvation, for one thing, takes a rebel and turns them into a worshiper. Do you understand that? Salvation takes a rebel and turns them into a worshiper. And I want you to stop and think with me just for a moment about how that happened. In every one of our cases, in every one of our cases, we did not move from being a rebel and idolater to becoming a worshiper just by a matter of simple, mere intellectual comprehension. We moved from that state because, first of all, the grace of God profoundly convicted us of our own sin and wickedness. Many of you here this morning are parents, and one of the things that you have had the joy of watching take place in your life is the Spirit of God beginning to convict your children about what sin is. Do you remember those days, some of you?

Where did it come from? It didn't come from a Sunday school lesson. It didn't come from the Bible verses that you were having them memorize or study as you were having devotions as a family. It came about because the Spirit of God was working in their heart to convict them of the misery of their soul and helped them realize that they were condemned before a holy God. Salvation is something that happens because of God's grace, and it brings life to a dead person. It brings freedom to a person that was in bonds. I want you to recognize, secondly, that salvation leaves the genuine convert with a new and abounding amazement and awe in what salvation is. And I would suggest that we ought never get over that. In fact, that's probably one of the things that should genuinely characterize the true believer.

Let me say it again, slowly. The true believer is one who never gets over the absolute amazement of their conversion. Never gets over the absolute amazement of their conversion. I want you to look at another passage with me this morning as we consider this, and I actually recited it earlier today. But I want you to turn your Bible to 1 John chapter 3. Incidentally, the book of 1 John is a book for self-diagnosis, right? It is a book that deals with the matter of how can you tell that you have the real thing. That's important because Satan is what's one of the titles for Satan? He's the deceiver. And you know what?

[31 : 38] He would like nothing better than to deceive individuals with the idea that they have genuine conversion when they don't. Because when they discover at the end of their life, when they slip from this life into eternity, that's too late to think about whether you have salvation or not. And so 1 John is written as a diagnostic. It's written as a self-diagnosis. How do I know that I have salvation? One of the things that's a giveaway for the genuine believer is that there is this abounding sense of awe and just amazement that God saved you. Look at verse 1 in chapter 3. 1 John chapter 3 verse 1.

See what manner of love the Father has given unto us that we should be called the children of God. John is just ecstatic when he stops and says, wow. The text does not do an adequate job of explaining the force of the argument that John is making when he says, I like it in the King James, it says what?

Behold. It's like, oh man, look at this. Look at what kind of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. And when we, convicted by the Spirit of God, realize the

absolute bankruptcy of our personal soul, we then are in a state ready to be amplified or in a state where we kind of see the benefit and blessing of our salvation. Wow. I can't believe that God loves me like He does. And recognize several of the things that His salvation does for us. His grace moves us from idolatry to worship. From idolatry to worship. And by the way, even today, on occasion, we who are believers still get caught up in idolatry, don't we? Everybody look at me and smile. How many of you find that sometimes you're caught up in anxiety? Don't wave your hand at me. But anxiety is really the unintended consequences of self-idolatry. How many of you understand that statement? If you're worshiping the God who you think is in control and the God who you think is in control, you, is not doing a very good job, it's reasonable to be anxious. It's intelligent. And when we start worrying about, well, wonder if people like me. Really? Well, I know one person who really does like you. I mean, and that person actually knows all of your bumps and warts. And it even knows things that you haven't told anybody else. Jesus loves you. And He hasn't changed His mind about you. Nor will

He ever change His mind about you. I want you to remember that His grace moves us from idolatry to becoming worshipers. It delivers us from the fear of judgment. Do you know what it says? There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. The story is done. We are delivered. We're freed. We no longer sit with uncertainty and anxiety. I remember several years ago being down at Franklin County Courthouse, and I was sitting outside with a...I wasn't there. I was there to bear witness for somebody else. At least you wonder if I was down there as a future felon. I was sitting there to be a witness, character witness. And I am a people watcher. I pay attention to people's faces, and some of you are a dower this morning, you know. And I was watching, and there...I just...bench upon bench of people with these really kind of scowly looking...and there were also individuals who, on top of having the scowl of life because things weren't going very well, they had those little furtive guilty glances that, well, I know I've been caught for this, but I sure hope I...you know what I'm saying? Parents, talk to me. When your kids come up and they can't look you in the eye, what are you thinking? Good heart, good kid, nothing I need to press any further on, right? Well, I'm going back to the Franklin County and the bench out there outside the judge's chambers, and you see just a bunch of people that are rather insecure and uncertain. They're afraid of judgment. I'm not afraid of judgment.

Not because of me, but because of the finished work of Christ. I want you to understand that His grace removes our shame. His grace takes away all of our shame. I am thinking just for a moment about the woman at the well. Do you remember that woman? She came...or actually, Jesus came into the town and ended up at the well, and down comes this woman, and Jesus said, would you give me a drink? And she says, hey, what are you doing hitting on me? That's what she said. And He asked her a question. It's a real interesting question. What was it? Go call your husband. And she, thinking to dodge the moment, she says, what? Well, I don't have a husband. She says, you're right. He said, you're right. You've had how many? Five. And to top it off, the one you're with right now is not your husband. She was engaged in what? Serial adultery. And Jesus then proceeds to bring the grace of God into her life, and when the story ends, she is scampered back into town, and what's she doing? She's saying, hey, now listen to what she says. Come, see the man who told me all I've ever done. What have you done? Oh, I was a miserable, hopeless sinner, and Jesus has given me complete forgiveness. One other thing that salvation does, it removes the terror of what other people think about us and leads us to think about Him. Do you hear me what I said? It removes the terror of what we think other people think about us and leads us to think about what He is and what He thinks. Now, let me give you an illustration of that. Remember the demoniac? The guy who spent a lot of his time in the tombs naked? Rather miserable individual.

[37 : 51] When he walked into town, do you think people said, hey, hey, hey, here he comes, you know? And after he was converted, what did Jesus say? He wanted to leave town and follow Jesus, and Jesus said, no, no, no, I want you to go back into town so you can tell the people in town all the great things I've done for you. And he went back into town, and he bore witness to the power of the grace of God that turned a demoniac into a believer, into a worshiper, into an individual who was clothed in his right mind, and Christ received glory. And when Jesus came back into that area, all the people were waiting for him. Do you know why they're waiting for him? If you can mess with a demoniac and do something good out of that, then I have some hope. I think about the songwriters and how often they revel in the grace of God. And beloved, I would encourage you this morning as you sit here and you think about the reality of your own life, I encourage you to say this, I am a believer, if that is true, and I rejoice in the complete forgiveness I have in the Lord Jesus Christ and

the glory of his grace, and I want my life to be an unending testament of thanksgiving and praise that he has saved me. There's nothing left to do but that until he takes us home. And we are to do that so other people are drawn to the cross. Isn't that right? And if you're here today and you do not know Christ, I would plead with you this morning, today is the day of salvation. Christ Jesus opens wide his heart to you and says, come unto me, all you who are heavy laden, burdened, and I will give you rest. And what does it say in the scripture?

Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Let's close in prayer as John comes to lead us as we close in song.