

The Results of God's Love, Mercy, and Grace: Salvation

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Date: 17 March 2019

Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] Please have a seat. Welcome to Squamish Baptist Church. I have the pleasure of being one of the pastors here.

Today we are in Ephesians chapter 2, so please take out your Bibles and turn to Ephesians 2. Before I get into this incredible text, in your flyers, bulletins, I don't know if you have this special sheet.

So this is letting us know of several conferences that are coming. There's one that's a women's conference and we also have a family conference, which is called Foundations for a Godly Family. If you are thinking or intending to go, can you please sign up at the back welcome center. There's a list. You can list your name out.

One of the reasons, so we can plan some travel together, we've also rented out a house. So some of the families can be together. If there's more than, I believe, five families, we can get another house for us to stay together.

[1 : 09] But I would encourage you to make this effort. The speaker who is speaking is Dr. John Street. He actually speaks all over the world. He, like our Pastor Dave here, has a foundation in biblical counseling.

And I believe the time will be most profitable, not only for you, but for us. My wife and I are intending to go as well. And we look forward to, there is child care, which is free.

If you're willing to care for the kids on one of the sessions. So please consider that prayerfully. And just let us know that way we can plan accordingly.

How are you guys doing this morning? Good, good. How are we doing this morning? Great, right? It's sunny, summer here, right? Is it here already? All right.

I feel I'm going to get fooled by Squamish weather. But that's besides the point. This morning, we're coming to one of the most well-known biblical passages in all of Scripture.

[2 : 17] It is verse 8 of our text in chapter 2, which simply states, For by grace have you been saved through faith.

And this is not of your own doing. It is the gift of God. Not a result of work, so that no one may boast. If you've ever been a part of a children's program or any type of memory, Scripture memory system, this is one of the first passages that you learn.

I believe it would follow after John 3.16 and Psalm 23 as the most quoted passages in all of Scripture. This verse contains for us the answer to one of man's oldest questions.

How do I make myself right with God? Any anthropologist will tell you this question has always existed in every civilization that has ever existed.

There is no civilization that has ever existed that has not struggled with this question. How do I make myself right with God?

[3 : 43] Paul, in Acts 17, as he's on his missionary journey, comes across this group of men around this altar, which is entitled to an unknown God.

Even men who did not know the name of God or anything about God knew there was a God. In fact, even as Carl was referring to, some people tried to deny God.

Some people tried to kill God. But it is only to their folly and ruin. Every man, woman, and child who has walked the face of the earth has seen evidence of God and knows that there is God.

Romans 1, 19-22, Paul writes the following, For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived. Ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.

[5 : 03] For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Sadly, claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal men and birds and animals and creeping things.

How crazy we are, isn't it? That we think we can create an idol, carve him out of wood or stone, and claim that this is in fact God.

That is man's folly on clear display. Today, if you've been with us for the last several weeks, we're going to be closing off Paul's teaching on salvation, which forms the absolute foundation for understanding the rest of the book of Ephesians.

If you don't get salvation, you will not get what Paul's talking about throughout the rest of this book. It's imperative that we understand this.

[6 : 22] So, in chapter 2, we are looking at salvation from man's point of view. If you remember, Paul has this hymn, and he's expressing to us salvation from God's eternal point of view.

But chapter 2 brings this to us. It makes it real to us in a way that we understand. So, just turn with me at Ephesians chapter 2, beginning in verse 1, and we're going to read this entire section.

Verse 1, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

Pretty sobering, isn't it? We were dead. What's interesting is we're not dead just by the things we do.

We're actually dead because of the things we don't do. Not only that, we're stuck in this flesh that is programmed to fulfill its own lusts and desires.

[7 : 53] And not only do people have this flesh that's programmed for its lusts and desires, it lives in a world system that is programmed to give us the flesh and desires that we long to be fulfilled.

Not only that, there is this other power that exists that runs the whole thing that is against us as well. And not only that, Paul tops it off by saying, Oh yeah, you were children of wrath too. What hope is there? I believe there's two responses that we can have from understanding these first three verses.

One response is that you are offended by this characterization of you in your situation. And if it were true, you will lean on your own resources to get you through it all.

Or you feel hopeless and devastated. But, remember that word, but?

[9 : 14] Chapter 4. Verse 4, sorry. If you remember a couple of weeks ago, I took the liberty of rewriting this section so we would understand the significance of the power about what Paul is preaching.

Verse 4. But God, even though we are children of wrath, Paul writes, But God, when we were dead in our trespasses, God, being rich in mercy, compassion, because of the great love which he loved us, made us who were dead people alive in Christ Jesus.

Amen? Amen. But God, when we were dead in our trespasses, being rich in mercy and compassion, because of the great love which he loved us, raised us up with Christ Jesus.

Come on, you're Baptists. Amen. But God, when we were dead in our trespasses, being rich in mercy, compassion, because of the great love which he loved us, seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

By grace you have been saved. Right? That's what it's all about. Why were we saved? Verse 7. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

[10 : 40] Which brings us to today's text, verse 8. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing, for it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no man may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

We do live in a system that desires to corrupt truth. When we talk about Satan, a lot of people will ask me, well, has Satan tempted me?

And we talked about this a couple of weeks ago. Satan doesn't even have to go there a lot of times because our own flesh is leading us to sin. But one of the things that Satan does is he is known as the great deceiver, the liar.

And one of the things that he wants to do is mess up our understanding of salvation. So today I want to look at three aspects of salvation that Paul talks to us, grace, faith, and works.

[12:05] And not only do I want us to understand these terms in a better way, my prayer, my desire, my hope is that this sermon will lead you to a deeper and more fuller understanding of the great salvation you have.

Let's pray. Father, I pray that as we get into this aspect of salvation, about how we are made right with you, how we, our relationship, are brought into harmony with you, God, is fulfilled.

Father, I pray that you would instruct us, teach us, confront us, break us of old thoughts, old habits. May you correct wrong truths and return us to old paths.

Father, I ask these things that my voice would be clear, ears would hear, and minds understand this incredible truth in your name.

Amen. First word is grace. It is my contention that we don't really understand grace. Don't get me wrong.

[13:15] If I asked you for a definition of grace, some of you would give me a fairly accurate understanding. Usually, we would say unmerited favor or receiving something that we do not deserve.

We may even understand the experience of grace, but in the end, we still struggle with it. Why do I believe this is true? Because I believe Paul believes this is true.

If you notice, verse 8 has a qualifying statement in the second half of the verse. For by grace are you saved through faith.

And then he says, not of works, right? Because the natural inclination of man is to corrupt this understanding of faith, of grace.

Because Paul knows this, that there is one thing that Satan wants to mess up is this aspect of salvation.

[14:25] This is the one area that our flesh is drawn to. We want to believe there's something in us, something we can do, that somehow earns some type of merit with God, which he owes us back.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. This is not of your own doing. This is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

There is a debate among scholars about this section. When Paul says, not of your own doing, people ask, is he talking about faith itself or salvation?

I believe he's talking about all aspects of salvation, which include grace and faith. But through the years, there have been some who have argued that faith is a work, that somehow you and I can create faith in ourselves.

And if we can create faith, we will somehow be credited to us as some form of righteousness. We're going to talk a little bit about this more later.

[15:45] But there's this word grace. And I'm actually going to give you guys a test today. I'm going to give you guys a test to see if you really get and understand grace.

I'm going to read you a story. And I want to see if you see yourself in any part of this story.

This story was first told by this man named Jesus Christ. It's found in Matthew. For the kingdom of God is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into the vineyard. And a denarius is a day's pay. It's what we would assume.

So say it's \$100 a day for a day's pay. In going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace. And to them he said, You go into the vineyard too.

[16:50] And whatever is right, I will give you. So they went, going out again. About the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same.

And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing. He said to them, Why do you stand here idle all day? They said to him, Because no one has hired us, he said. So you go into the vineyard too.

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last up to the first.

And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now, when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, for each of them had received a denarius.

And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day in the scorching heat.

[18 : 03] But he replied to one of them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give this last worker as I give to you. Do you think he was fair? What does your flesh tell you?

Did the worker have an argument? That the last guys who worked just an hour of the day get the same amount that the guys who worked the whole day in the scorching heat would deserve.

So let me ask you this other question. In order for you to be saved, do you think you need a lot of grace?

Or a little grace? Do you need a lot of grace? Or a little grace?

[19 : 13] See, it all depends if you think you're one of the early workers or you're one of the later workers. Now let me share with this story.

This is a story told by a pastor at a church. He is at a prayer meeting and he notices two men in the prayer meeting sitting next to one another. In this prayer meeting, he noticed that one of the men who's at the prayer meeting has been coming out to his church for three years.

He was a man who, prior to coming to his church, spent seven years in prison for an act of robbery. The man sitting next to him is a judge.

This judge, in fact, was the same judge who handed down the sentence to this man who is now in prison. So he's looking at them and he's thinking to himself, what a picture of grace this is, that these two men are now able to sit next to one another in a prayer meeting.

So after the prayer meeting, the pastor kind of notes this and goes to the judge and kind of says, isn't that a wonderful picture of grace that we see? That we have this judge who was the man who laid out the sentence to this prisoner.

[20 : 27] And we hear, in fact, later on that this judge was actually involved in prison ministries who shared the gospel at some point and was actually played a part in this former robber coming to salvation in Jesus Christ.

So he simply says to the judge, isn't it great how grace is? Isn't it an incredible thing?

The judge turned to him and said, it is true. Grace is an incredible thing. You see, I simply, it is more incredible.

In fact, I think it's the most incredible thing in the world. And the pastor thought he was talking about the robber, but the judge was actually speaking about himself. So he made the response to him.

The pastor responded, but you're a judge. How could that be? The judge simply replied, in fact, I grew up in a God-fearing family where I heard about God my whole life.

[21 : 37] I knew the difference between right and wrong. I learned to study hard. My parents loved me, cared for me. I learned to apply myself at school, which has led me to becoming a judge.

I knew right and wrong from the very start of my life. This young man, who was a robber, did not know anything about right and wrong. So when he was faced with the gospel, he quickly knew that he needed God.

For me, when I first heard the gospel, I already thought I earned the gospel. And he says, I give thanks every day that God gave me more grace to understand the truth of the gospel.

So let me ask you this question again. Are you an early worker? Or are you one of the late workers? Are you the one that looks over at the other ones and say, hey, how come they get the same amount as me?

You see, if there was anything, and I mean anything, that we think we merited, even a small part of our salvation, either good enough, smart enough, we worked hard enough, we would be right to sing in heaven how great I am.

[23 : 04] Right? It's true. If there was any merit I had in myself, I would have full rights to be in heaven before God to sing how great I am.

My wife is laughing very deeply at that. You see, this is how Satan attacks truth and he attacks us as well.

The Bible teaches us that the sovereign grace of God is so great toward his creation that there will be a multitude in heaven which no man can number.

Amen? from every man, woman, kindred, tongue, and tribe. The fact of the matter is, grace is truly amazing.

When God tells us that he is going to manifest his grace, we have no right to complain or expect him to act in any other way.

[24 : 00] The reality is, God has no obligation to offer us any salvation. If God had done exactly what he did, the fall took place from the time of Adam and Eve, man had fallen, and through the years, no person was ever saved, God would be completely just.

Amen? God doesn't have any obligation to save you. God doesn't have any obligation to save me. But he does save us. In fact, salvation means to resurrect us from the dead, to liberate us from slavery, and he does rescue us from condemnation.

If salvation exhibits grace, salvation has to be free. Are you still struggling with this idea of grace? And you can be honest, you actually have a person in your corner who's very well known. His name is the apostle Peter. Peter struggled mightily with this idea of grace.

[25 : 17] What's interesting, God, we see, pounded Peter over and over and over till he could understand it. Do you remember Acts? Do you remember the story of the Samaritans when the Samaritans saved in Acts 8?

Samaritans who were enemy of the Jews are now confessing to be Christians. So the apostles are like, what's going on? God's even saving these people? What is up with that?

So he sends Peter and John to investigate and we read this in Acts 8. 14. It says, now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them to Peter and John who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

For he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Our Pentecostal brothers and friends will tell us that this verse is actually talking about how we're supposed to have an experience.

I don't believe that's the point of this passage at all. Why? Because the same thing is replicated in Acts chapter 10. Again, this guy, Cornelius, a Roman, right?

[26 : 27] Peter's got to go to him again, pray over him, he receives the Holy Spirit. Then later on there's a group of Gentiles. Peter goes over there again, prays for them to receive the Holy Spirit.

You have to understand, Peter is the Jew of the Jews and this is absolutely blowing his mind that Samaritans, Romans, and Gentiles are being saved too.

So God is pounding this point into Peter. So we move up to Acts 15. It's called the Jerusalem Council. And what it's, there's a discussion going on if Gentiles could be saved if they weren't circumcised and practiced the law of Moses, right?

So all the apostles are coming together to have this discussion. So Peter, who God has been pounding into this point again, again, and again speaks up verse 8 of Acts 15.

And he said, And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us. And he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their heart by faith.

[27 : 47] Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

What he's saying, why are you putting the law on the Gentiles, the Romans, and Samaritans, when we were so miserable with it? Then he speaks, but we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, get this, just as we will. What he's saying is we're going to be saved just like them. Do you get that?

Our Samaritans, our Romans, and our Gentile friends were all saved by grace. Guess what? So are we. That's an incredible humility that Peter is demonstrating there.

Just, we will be saved just like them through grace. That is an understanding of what grace is.

[29 : 05] Second word I want us to understand is faith. Faith. Faith is the means by which we receive salvation.

As I said earlier, there's been much discussion on whether faith is something we create or God gives us. Are you and I free to believe and thus free to reject God of our own will?

I believe that God teaches that without God's interceding, we will never believe. faith. Why? As I read earlier, we were dead in our trespasses.

We were known as children of wrath. There's only one thing we wanted and we wanted our will. And our will is towards dead things.

Now why are we gummed up in this? Why don't we understand faith? faith. I'm going to give you three false understandings of faith which have permeated Christian thinking.

[30 : 08] All right? And if you find yourself understanding faith in this way, it's really easy. Repent. Ask God for forgiveness. It's done. One, subjective feelings.

We believe faith is some feeling that has been created in us. I have a friend who perfectly fits this description. description. You ask him if he's a Christian?

Yes. Are you going to heaven? Yes. Do you believe in Jesus? Yes. Do you believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven? No. Do you believe that Jesus is the son of God?

No. Do you believe that the Bible is God's true and errant word? No. But I still believe I'm a Christian and I feel it really deep inside and let me tell you about how great Jesus is.

Why? Because he feels it. I have Mormon friends that are under the same spell. They believe if I can create some form of feeling, some subjective feeling, that is the assurance that I have that I have faith.

[31 : 09] Two, faith is seen as believing the impossible. Don't you hate that if you ever watch a movie or TV show? We're characterized as Christians who are just kind of blind to reality and we're believing in the impossible.

That is not what biblical faith is. It's almost like it's some form of conspiracy that we've been given all this information to the contrary, but we don't believe it.

And they'll say, do you really believe those miracles? Yeah, we do. Why? Because we believe the people who testified to those miracles. Amen? They told us about them.

There's no reason for us not to believe. A miracle isn't something that is reoccurring over and over and over. It's a special event at a special time. And we believe.

My friends, biblical Christianity is not believing the impossible or something that is so outlandish, we just think we can create some type of belief. I really believe it.

[32 : 05] Then the third view of faith that has permeated the Christian faith is optimistic faith. That's the whole positive mental attitude or power of positive thinking.

That if we believe in Jesus enough, he can move mountains. That is not what the Bible teaches. We take, they misuse those verses, all things are possible for one who believes.

If you've ever heard of Joel Osteen, that is the type of garbage he preaches. The power of positive thinking will save you. That is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is faith? What is biblical faith? One, biblical faith is based on knowledge. It's based on knowledge. We must know what to believe. The beginning of Luke, the gospel of Luke, Luke actually tells us at the very start, I write these things to you, my friend Theopolis, so you will know and believe.

You need to have knowledge of something. You need to have knowledge that we were dead in our trespasses. You need to have knowledge that we were enemies of God. That God has a great love for us.

[33 : 21] that we are saved by his grace. That Jesus is the Son of God. He lived a perfect life. He died on a cross to take away our sins.

Three days later he rose again and now sits at the right hand of God. These are the things a Christian needs to know.

the second aspect of biblical faith is we must respond with our heart. These truths that we know and understand take hold in our heart.

This causes us to grow. I talk about our heart not in this emotional Valentine looking thing but I'm talking about the seat of who I am. My computer CPU.

Then it starts to affect all my life's programming. This knowledge which I accept affects my heart and then the third aspect it affects our will.

[34 : 25] It changes how I act right? If I live if I understand that I've been saved I live according to these truths. I understand that I've been bought with a price and I owe my life to God.

This is our commitment to lean in on Jesus and his promises. This is what our faith is. Christian faith is believing something that is true and real.

We believe the gospel writers. We trust their testimonies and we say my Lord and my God. That is a gift of God my friends.

That we can see through the garbage of the world that Satan gives us and reveals this truth to us. grace. So we have this thing called grace.

We have the second aspect of faith. The third aspect I want to talk about is works. Is works.

[35 : 30] Take a look at verse 10. for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

the reason we understand this passage now is because on October 31st 1517 a German monk named Martin Luther finally got through his head that faith equals salvation plus works not faith plus works equals salvation.

If you understand what I'm talking about this is the division between Catholic and Protestant faith. Roman Catholic believes that our faith with our works grants us salvation.

But Luther finally got his head around the point which Paul was teaching this whole time is that we are justified about our faith. So faith equals salvation.

What Paul's telling us is works proceed from our faith. Works flow from salvation. Works are the end unto themselves.

[36 : 52] What I mean by that our works don't mean anything except that they're good works. Which by the way is a really great thing. Doesn't earn us points.

It doesn't earn us salvation. It doesn't earn us greater standing. This whole idea has been at the forefront of my mind for most of my life.

And I believe Satan has corrupted this understanding of works so much. One of the things that always worried me.

I grew up in a church that we had a great church camp that we sponsored with a couple of our brother and sister churches and we'd go and every if you guys have been to camp right? Every good camp has a campfire right?

We'd go to the campfire and they'd bring in a testimony. Inevitably there would be an older teen talking about how I made a commitment to Jesus Christ when I was younger but now I'm making a recommitment to Jesus Christ.

[37 : 55] I would argue that that recommitment was actually salvation. That that's when they truly understood the gospel and that faith took root.

And this struggle, I struggled with this because I would hear this over and over. And often I would see friends, some of them grow up in my church and then I would know that they were really no different than my friends in high school.

Right? I would have heard their testimonies and their lives and it got me thinking about this issue of salvation and what it means to be saved. One author writes on the subject, it is the idea, where did we ever come from, that one can be a Christian without being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, it reduces the gospel to the mere fact of Christ having died for sinners, which is true. But it says, it requires of sinners only that they acknowledge this by the barest intellectual assent and then assures them of their eternal security when they may very well not be born again.

This view bends faith beyond recognition, at least for those who know what the Bible says about faith, and promises a false peace to thousands who have given verbal assent to this reductionist Christianity but are not truly in God's family.

[39 : 28] I was amazed, man, this guy's thinking the same thing I'm thinking as a 17-year-old kid. And I believe this verse tells us, solves the riddle for us.

Take a look at verse 10. Notice what it says, for we are his workmanship. Another word for workmanship is we are his creation.

At that point of salvation, through grace, through faith, we become a new creation. Remember I talked about new CPU? You now have a new DNA. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We are no longer who we once were. Do you understand that point? You've been remade. Something has to change.

The question always gets asked, can Christians still sin? No, they can't. You guys should be throwing tomatoes at me or something for that, right?

[40 : 32] We all know. Well, what happens? We still sin. Well, first of all, a lot of people, if you've heard that whole idea, what is a carnal Christian? That word carnal comes from the King James version interpretation of 1 Corinthians 3, 1 to 3.

The other word that carnal is live in the flesh. Can Christians live in the flesh? Yes, they can. They can, but it hurts them. They hate it. You're in there, and I'm sure some of you guys can share that testimony with us, right?

There was a time you heard the truth, you accepted the grace and faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you went back to the world. You went back to how you were living, but you can attest it was not fun.

See, somewhere there has to be fruit. Why? Because Ephesians 1.13 tells us that we've already learned, in him you also when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation and promised in him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

For someone to say that they can be a Christian and not bear fruit is actually an attack on the work of the Holy Spirit. Do you know that? It's you're saying that the Holy Spirit can't bear fruit.

[41 : 43] It has to bear fruit. And if it's a believer who's living in sin, they are not happy. Now, why do we still sin? Do you guys know anything about muscle memory?

If you do things often enough, you really learn something. And I've got a perfect example. When I was 46, I was asked to play on a softball team. 46 years old, what do I know?

Most of you guys don't know that I actually played college baseball. I was actually on the Ontario Provincial team. When I was 20 years old, I was something special. So, you know, yeah, I can sub in. So, I went and played for him, right?

And sure enough, I was moved over to shortstop. I'm still making some of the plays and people are like, man, you haven't lost it. Well, as we went through the playoffs, I couldn't play in the final game. Why? My body broke down. I was in so much pain. I pulled my hamstring. My shoulder was gone. My mind knew how to do all those things, but my body couldn't do it.

[42 : 44] It's kind of like that with our sin. We know how to do it. We go in, but in our truth, our spirit's rejecting it, right? We feel like garbage, crap, and we try to deny it. We try to hide it, but we can't.

Those are good things because that's the spirit telling you, you are God's, you're not your own. You've been bought with a price, and I love you so much, I'm going to drive you to absolute misery in your sin till you repent.

it. Praise God for that. Lest we be so happy and experience no hurt in that. Now, I know some of you, that hurt is tremendous.

It's life-changing. But the most important place to have right is with God. Amen? See, the fact of the matter works flow from who you are.

If you're in the spirit, Galatians 5.22, but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things, there is no law.

[43 : 47] So when we're thinking about this whole idea of salvation, we're understanding works. Works don't earn our salvation. Works are a product of our salvation.

So some of you might be asking, how do I live for Jesus? What does it mean to follow Jesus? I want to do something. I want my works to count. Please turn with me to Colossians 3.12.

And I'm going to tell you, our muscle memory is always going to want to pull us to the flesh. It all depends. If you've been living a life that was destructive for 20 years, it's hard to cast off.

Your muscles are so used to it. But if we look at Colossians 3.12, Paul is using this really instructive word. He says, put on then.

And what it literally means is putting on clothes. He's actually saying, when you get up in the morning, you need to make a conscious effort to put on these clothes. Because that flesh, those muscle memories are really strong.

[44 : 49] They want to pull you somewhere. But you want to put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you, richly teaching and admonishing one another in all

wisdom, singing songs and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father through him. This needs to be underlined. This needs to be highlighted. This needs to be written down and put on your fridge.

If you're struggling with the old self, write this up because God is telling us, one, here we are. We are chosen, holy, and beloved.

[46 : 02] It's beautiful. But we do. We have to work on compassionate hearts. You need to be mindful of kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, loving one another.

Those aren't all easy just because you're a Christian, right? You got to work at it. Best marriages I know are the ones that people work at it. To seek peace, read God's word, teach others, be thankful.

All for God the Father. My friend, if you are here and you have no spiritual appetite for these things, yet you call yourself a Christian, I'm here to tell you the bad news that you could still be a child of wrath.

God does not know you. And because your sin hasn't been paid for, you will experience eternal death.

And not only that, you deserve it. Your works don't mean anything. Your public standing doesn't mean anything.

[47 : 22] Your church attendance doesn't mean anything. Your parents don't mean anything. But that can change right here, right now.

You can pray for God's grace and God's faith to change your heart. Prophet Isaiah talks about without him we have like a heart of stone.

And God comes in and turns it into a heart of flesh. That heart of flesh is real. It's alive. It's living. And it lives for God.

So this morning my prayer for you as we will pray is for you to have a faith that truly believes. A faith that understands that grace is free.

And a faith that understands that God is the one who paid the price for your sin. That you would ultimately become a child of God.

[48 : 34] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father,