

# Reformed Theology 2—The Order of Salvation

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, we're going to go ahead and get started with session two of Amazing Grace.! Thank you all so much for coming this morning and making the time to do this and sit and think on these things.

I was saying a second ago, my plan is first, just don't be intimidated by the outline. I'm going to try to get through the first three. Those are probably the most important three headers for what we're going to talk about this morning.

But if we don't make it to justification and adoption, there are other resources. Now, I'll reference those in a little bit. But just by way of introduction, I want to say thanks again for coming.

I'm going to try to beat Walt today and keeping this short. So pray for me. But I do want to, in all transparency, all honesty, I want to pray for our time together. This will be fruitful, be helpful for you. I know we're coming from a lot of different places on this topic. Perhaps all of this is very new to you and you're wrestling through it and thinking through it for the first time very intentionally. That's my story. I came from more of an Arminian background.

[ 1 : 11 ] Grew up in the Southern Baptist Convention. And, you know, there were basically three cuss words. There was predestination, Holy Spirit, and alcohol. Those are the big three you had to keep your eye out for.

So so this was this is a wrestling process for me, for sure. Trying to understand how how are we saved? And this isn't just an academic exercise.

The goal is to bring glory to God and to see ourselves rightly in relationship to him. That's what the Christian life is really ultimately about. And so foundationally, fundamentally in the in the act of salvation, we want to understand rightly what the Bible teaches about this.

And so if you're if you're wrestling through this in the first time, you are in good company. I have had years of wrestling with this still questions I have trying to untangle.

But I remember distinctly sophomore year of college. So a newer Christian. And these things were coming to the forefront of my mind, my heart and just asking all sorts of questions related to this topic.

[ 2 : 17 ] And I had insomnia because of these things. I was sleeping about three hours a night for my entire sophomore year. I take naps intermittently and throughout the day.

But it was basically three to four hours a night. And my mind just would not turn off because of these things. So if that's you and you're in that that kind of seeking and searching mode, I just want to welcome you wholeheartedly.

And thank you for taking the time to think on this and wrestle through it. And I want to get our faces down into the into the Bible and to ask questions along the way. If you're already acquainted with these doctrines and I'm more there now, these are a real comfort for us.

It's a it's an encouragement to our hearts and fortifies our faith. It doesn't it doesn't threaten it. And so I just know that there are different people along that spectrum in here.

And I want to greet and welcome all of you and pray for the Lord's help as we give our attention to this. So let's pray together. Oh, Lord, we do call out to you.

[ 3 : 26 ] Ask for help. Ask for mercy. Ask for grace. These are weighty questions. We're waiting into the deep end of the pool in some ways. But all of it's intended to stir our hearts to greater affection for you, that you are a wonderful, good, merciful and kind God that saves sinners.

So if anyone counts themselves among those who are saved by grace, Lord, let our hearts rejoice, even in this prayer that you are so kind as to pursue us.

So, Lord, we cast ourselves at your feet now. Ask for help. Ask you give us a gift of illumination.

Open our hearts. Open our minds to be able to consider the things in your word, understand them

and respond appropriately.

So we entrust these few minutes to you now in Jesus name. Amen. So as I just mentioned, I grew up in a Bible believing home, Bible preaching home.

I was a son of a minister. My dad was a pastor for a season in the Southern Baptist Convention. I was basically immersed in church life in utero. Even before I was born, I was at church all the time serving and involved, going on mission trips and leading in worship bands and things like that.

[ 4 : 44 ] I was in church life all the time. Now, in 1 Corinthians, we've considered this text before. But in 1 Corinthians, it says that Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

Right? Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. And so what we see in that text is that people sow the seeds and people watered the seeds.

And they did that in my life as a church kid growing up in the church context. I can remember my, obviously my parents, they were giving me ample opportunity to hear the gospel, to see different things in scripture.

I had a coach, an eighth grade basketball coach named Tate Souls, Coach Souls. And he was just a cool guy. He'd sit in the hallway and play guitar. And he taught biology.

And he spent most of the time just asking metaphysical questions about the universe rather than actually teaching. I thought he was just the coolest guy. He was also the club leader for the surf club.

[ 5 : 46 ] This was at Florida at the time. So he was just a really cool guy, but he had a real vivacious faith, which was very attractive to me. And so he would consistently preach the gospel, share with kids in his classroom, me being one of those kids.

I had a youth pastor named Todd. He was a killer racquetball player. And he had just an amazing mind. But he loved people. And he loved the youth of our church.

And so I remember him just consistently sowing the gospel and watering the gospel in my life. I had a pastor named Dale Faircloth, a pastor down in Florida.

And I vividly remember him talking about saving Private Ryan. And there's the scene where he's walking through the graveyard.

And he's looking back at all the people that gave their lives for him. And he's wondering, have I done enough to earn this? Have I done enough? And he wants to know if he's a good enough man.

[ 6 : 46 ] And so Pastor Dale, I remember him using clips from that movie to talk about what real grace was. It's an undeserved favor. It's nothing that you can earn.

So that stuck with me, even as I think I was in ninth grade at the time. So I had all of these installments, all of these folks in my life, my parents, Coach Souls.

I had my youth pastor Todd, Pastor Dale, all of these different people and many more sowing the seeds and watering the seeds in my life, middle school, early high school.

But it came to a point in my life, even with all of that information, that I began a downward spiral of faith, a crisis of faith, if you will.

And I remember just struggling, 11th and 12th grade particularly, just feeling lost, feeling disoriented. Like, is this real? Is this actually true?

[ 7 : 40 ] Is this who I really am? Or is this just something I got from my parents? It was a confusing time. I felt jaded. Eventually, I just felt kind of numb.

Like I couldn't know the truth. And so that's where I came to, even with all of the information, all of the sowing, all of the watering. And by God's grace, summer after my senior year of high school, God saved me.

He saved me. I can't explain it any other way. How in the world did that happen? How did I hear all this stuff and be unresponsive and then later on have a dramatic change in my heart, in my life, in my affections, in the things that captured my attention?

How did that happen? Other friends, even family, received the same information inputs that I did. I had an older brother, younger sister. One is currently walking with the Lord.

The other one is not. So the question is, why me? What's the difference? Why me? Is it because I'm wiser than anybody else that heard the same information?

[ 8 : 54 ] Or is it because I'm smarter and put the pieces together in a different way? What caused my salvation? Did God look down the corridors of time and see that I would choose him?

Or did God empower me to respond because he chose me? How did I get saved?

That's the question we're considering. How did I get saved? How do you get saved? Well, when I look back, I think about 1 Corinthians because God used a lot of people to sow and to water. But God gave the growth. Ultimately, God gave the growth. So I'm going to argue from Scripture that God sovereignly accomplishes his ordained goals of bringing people to salvation. But he also sovereignly ordains the means, the people, the process of getting to salvation. So in other words, in Matthew 28, you remember the Great Commission.

[10:02] And Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, move over because I'm sovereign and I've got this.

So what he says? No, that's not what he says. It's absolutely not what he says. He said he does say all authority in heaven and on earth are given to me. But then he says, therefore, you go and make disciples.

Isn't that fascinating? Those things fit together that God and his sovereignty, his power, he's going to affect his purposes. But he's using real people and real choices.

And that's what Walt was getting to last time we were together is this idea of compatibilism. That God in his sovereignty is truly sovereign over all things. But we are making actual real choices, real desires being manifested.

He's using real action. He's using real choices. He's using real desire, real responses to accomplish his sovereign purposes and saving sinners.

[11:07] But what steps take place in the salvation of a Christian? I mean, if we kind of summed it up from the Bible, we might say that the necessary steps in salvation are basically repent and believe in Jesus.

Right. And that we see that over and over again in Scripture. But is there anything that happens before a person can repent? Is there anything that must happen after a person believes?

So salvation is this just beautiful, sprawling process. If you look at Scripture, it spans not only the person's life, but it even extends outward beyond history before time began and beyond time itself into time and eternity future.

Romans 8, it's on your on your paper there. It gives us this kind of compressed glimpse of what theologians often call the order of salvation, the order of salvation.

So some have described this text kind of like a time lapse of the Christian life, like the entire thing from from the beginning to the end. So let's look at this text just briefly.

[12:15] Romans 8:30. It says, And those whom he predestined, he also called and those whom he called, he also justified and those whom he justified, he also glorified.

So from this verse alone, we begin to have these like theological progression categories. We have predestination. We have calling. We have justification. We have glorification.

So sometimes predestination and election, that word election, sometimes those are used interchangeably, theologically. Kevin DeYoung helped me out and just trying to articulate the difference between those.

So predestination is the general term for God's sovereign ordaining. While election is the specific term for God choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world. All right.

So in terms of salvation, theologians often refer to this first step in the order of salvation as election. Election. So we see it in Romans 8 as predestination.

[13:18] But that category is election. Now, if we zoom out from Romans 8 and we just include all that's revealed about our salvation, we begin to see God's initiative to save before time began.

Election. Election. Election. All the way to the culmination of our salvation. When we receive new resurrection bodies at the return of Christ, which is way down the road.

Hopefully come Lord Jesus come soon, but it's down the road and that's glorification. So that's at the culmination of salvation. We're not completely saved in one sense until we're at the very end.

We receive these new resurrection bodies that are unending, unobscured by the detrimental effects of sin on our lives.

Won't that be glorious? That's why it's called glorification. So that's at the at the tail end of the fullness of what the Bible describes as salvation. Well, additionally, we when we look at the broader range of scripture, we see that we are justified by faith.

[14:20] Justified. Justified. Justified. Justified. That words in Romans 8:30 there justified. But apparently there's something prior to that about being justified by faith, by faith.

So Galatians 2:16, we know that a person is not justified by works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. So we can insert faith between calling and justification.

And then there's this category of being born again. Perhaps you if you grew up in another tradition, talk about being born again. Have you been born again? And what that's talking about is this idea of regeneration being regenerated.

It's discussed by Jesus with Nicodemus and John chapter three. So so theologians kind of land in different places where this fits in in the order of salvation. But we would contend that God's inward call preaching the gospel produces regeneration in God's chosen people.

We don't know who the chosen people are, but when they respond, then we see like regeneration. They become new creations causes us to cry out in repentance and faith so that we can be justified.

[15:32] So I've used Wayne Grudem's progression. He's a theologian and he has some quick summaries I think are pretty helpful that are on your sheet there to give an overview of what the Bible teaches about the order of salvation.

So you can kind of see that progression from beginning to end. The fullness of salvation is taught in Scripture. Okay, so if you're looking at a list of 10 things that are that are on there, these things happen at kind of different intervals.

It's not like here's stage one election and then 10 seconds later here's stage two calling and then 10 seconds later. So don't think of it in terms like of even spaced intervals.

Does that make sense? Okay, so some of these concepts, some of these steps occur seemingly at the same time. Kind of like when a child is born, it's like, hey, that baby's lungs are working, brain activity is going, heart is beating.

All these essential things are happening simultaneously to keep them alive, to make them alive, right? So in some ways, some of these things are more like logical ordering, but in reality, it could happen all at the same time, seemingly at the same time.

[16:46] So if you're thinking of it like that, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, and adoption are all involved in real time of becoming a Christian.

That make sense? Elections before time began, right? Sanctification and perseverance, they basically work themselves out in this life.

And then death concludes this life. And then glorification occurs when Christ returns. So you have these extreme ends of election and glorification.

And these unknown categories of time and eternity past and future. But then you have like us right now in the real world happening in time and space. When someone becomes a Christian, you have these, the subset in here that seemingly happens all at the same time.

So Walt is going to give an entire class to the doctrine of election next week. This idea of, you know, chosen and eternity past.

[17:54] All right. So stay tuned for that one. And we recently did a Sunday course in four classes on the remaining doctrines under the title Completely Done.

And so those are on our website. If you want to go check those out, you can check into those if you want a slower pace of the order of salvation. Particularly, we covered calling, justification, adoption, and glorification in that class.

So if you're interested in any of those more deeply and slowly, that's the place to find it on the website under sermons. You'll see the Sunday classes. Okay. But for today, what we're going to do is we're going to zoom in on the steps of becoming a Christian in real time and real space.

What happened? So I know many of you, like myself, grew up in an Arminian perspective on this topic. So I want to hold up kind of a general overview of how both Calvinism and Arminianism articulate the order of salvation.

So you can see the points of similarity and difference. On your papers, if you flip to the back, there's an appendix there. And you can kind of see like a side-by-side of the flow of the order traditionally represented by these kind of two frameworks and interpretations of Scripture.

[19:16] So I wanted you to be able to kind of see those side-by-side so you can track how these ideas are drawn from Scripture. But I also want you to be able to draw biblically informed views for yourself.

That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to put our noses down in the Bible and ask, like, how does this stuff work together? It's all God's Word, and there's no contradiction. How do these things

relate to one another and mesh with one another?

So we want you to be able to draw those views. Okay, so just by looking at those two things side-by-side, are there any similarities that you see?

And this is the interactive part. So any similarities that you see in these two flows categories? Yes. Okay, tell me.

What are the things consistent that you see, EJ? A lot of the same things. Maybe it's the different borders. Yeah. But it all has to do with calling, purge, and justification, and sanctification.

[ 20 : 23 ] Excellent. Yes. Yeah. I really think it's important that we see that. Like, the things that are similar here, essentially everything's there. They're all the same categories, essentially there.

And that's wonderful. We're talking about God saves sinners. That's good news. That's good news. So I want to just start with that, that this is not a form of being combative against each other, or just arguing for the sake of arguing.

We want to see that we have a commonality, a great commonality in the faith. I have so many friends that I resonate with on so many levels, and most importantly, that we're gospel men and women.

And that's the most important thing, foundationally. But we're going to talk about some of the differences, too. Because we do think that there are some implications for how we understand who God is, what sin is, how to understand the Bible, and how it relates.

The scriptures relate to one another, and how it informs our lives today, and what it means for us in giving glory to God. And also evangelism. So there's a lot of other subcategories that relate to what we're talking about that are bound up in the ordering.

[ 21 : 34 ] So what do you see that are some of the differences? What's that? Yeah, convenient grace in the Arminian view.

And so convenient grace is this idea that God does open up the human heart in order to be able to have the capacity with free will to decide yes or no to the call of the gospel.

So in a sense, they do believe, Arminians do believe, that God removes the depravity in such a way where there is an ability to respond by faith.

Does that make sense what I'm saying? Which would be different than election in eternity past, which is a doctrine that we see like in Ephesians 1. We'll take a closer look at that next week, like I said.

But there would be a different understanding of calling as well. You'll see there on calling, there's this idea of external calling that is resistible with the Arminian side.

[ 22 : 37 ] And then there's this idea of actually two different kinds of calling in the Calvinistic understanding. You see an external and an internal call. And so we'll get into that in just a moment. And all of these things hopefully will make sense as we draw from from Scripture.

So there are some differences in the categories themselves, like calling. And there are some differences in the order, like regeneration and conversion. And so we're going to walk through some of these distinctives.

So first, we just want to look at calling. And with Wayne Grudem's kind of header, he uses this idea of proclaiming the message of the gospel. That's what we mean by that.

So in the Arminian understanding, the category of election mentioned in Romans 8, that one at the top of your paper. However, in the Arminian understanding, Romans 8, the election can be summarized that God foresaw who, by the help of his grace, who would trust in Christ, choose to trust in Christ.

So while Arminians believe in the sinfulness of man, they also believe that God extends convenient grace to all people, which is what Lewis was pointing out. And this grace enables a person to hear and choose to either receive or reject the gospel.

[ 23 : 54 ] That's the position. So this can explain how some people can hear the same sermon and one person becomes a Christian while another remains unconverted. Right.

That can make sense. In this view, it sees converting call as generally given to all. But the response rests solely in the decision of the individual to receive or to reject the call.

Right. So this may sound possible at first, but I don't think it seems to do justice to how the Bible speaks about calling. And I'll show you what I mean. Let's just look at Romans 8:30 for just a second.

And it says those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. Right. That's the progression that it goes through.

So Arminianism claims that the calling in the New Testament generally refers to the call of the gospel and understands this. This text, Romans 8:30, this way, seeing for ordination as God's foreknowledge of our faith.

[ 24 : 58 ] They are going to believe they're looking down the corridors of time. God's looking down the corridors of time, knowing who's going to believe. However, in this passage, those whom he called cannot be a larger group than those covered by the following terms.

If you look at that, that progression, those who are justified and those who are glorified. So in a sense, it's not a fork in the road of belief and unbelief. The calling is not a fork in the road as presented in this text of belief or unbelief.

Otherwise, we would expect it to say something like this to those whom he predestined. He also called. And to some of those he called, he also justified.

Do you see what I'm saying? That creates a fork right there. If that calling is more of a general calling and you have a choice to decide yes or no. It's not presented that way.

And this in this text specifically here, the calling is objectively tied in a progression of God's work in salvation for sinners. So this call creates the response, not merely invites it.

[ 26 : 07 ] That would be the distinction. Do you understand what I'm saying? It creates the response, not merely invites it. It appears that the calling must have more nuance to it whenever we talk about that word calling.

And so many theologians distinguish between an external and internal call or a general and effectual call. So those categories like general and effectual.

At one level, a general call is given to all. Like if you think about in the context of a group, you know, Jesus says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden.

It's a general call. He's saying it to a mass, to a group of people. And I will give you rest. That's the invitation. Or what about this in Acts 17?

The times of ignorance God overlooked. But now he commands. He commands all people everywhere to repent. Right.

[ 27 : 07 ] So there is a command going out generally, a call going out generally. And yet we know that not everyone will heed this call. Right.

And that presents a problem. Some respond. Some don't. So what's the problem then? Is it an issue with the message or the one delivering the message potentially?

Is it messed up in the marketing of it? The Bible actually teaches that the fundamental problem is actually us. Specifically that we are dead in our sins.

We're unable to hear this message. It doesn't go into a dead person has ears, but it doesn't go into their their minds and their hearts to be processed. You can scream at a dead person in a coffin all you want.

Doesn't do anything if they're dead. So the problem ultimately is sin. We're born into sin and all of us, regardless of our upbringing, are spiritually dead and unable to respond to the gospel call apart from God's intervention.

[ 28 : 14 ] In other words, the gospel can be clearly and persuasively proclaimed. I've heard some wonderful preachers, pastors, apologetics guys, you know, all these different people who are extremely persuasive.

And one person can fall asleep in it and the other person could be arrested by it. So it's not necessarily just the persuasiveness of it. In other words, the gospel can be clearly and persuasively proclaimed.

But but that's not all that's that's necessary for someone to come to a response. That is a general external call. That's what that is. But there's another aspect of calling that the Bible talks about.

This is what we call the effectual call. The effectual call evokes the response of some people to faith and repentance through the hearing of the gospel. This is an internal response to a call.

It affects something. Calls these people to new life in Christ. So the same words land on different ears, but all are equally dead in sin. But because of God's sovereign will, some receive the words.

[ 29 : 28 ] It could be the same words falling on the same ears. The general call, but the effectual call goes in to those that God knows are chosen and arrests their hearts.

So look at Matthew 22. I think it's on your paper. This is why we see things like for many are called. It's a general call. But few are chosen.

Few are chosen. Captures both aspects of general call and effectual call right there. So what is that's what it's referring to. I wrote about First Corinthians one nine.

God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his son. It's specifically talking, not generally to all people, but specifically to those who have responded to the gospel.

They were the called ones. Called effectually. So the effectual calling is attributed in that text to God. He's the one doing the effectual calling.

[ 30 : 28 ] Call is going out through mere ordinary people, persuasive and unpersuasive. But God brings the growth. He's the one calling dead men to life.

He's the one shouting into the tomb of Lazarus. Lazarus, come out. So when you look at Acts 13, another example of this.

When the Gentiles heard this, they heard the general call, the proclamation of the gospel. They began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

You see, it's just laced. I'm just grabbing a handful. It's laced everywhere. So behind the response is God calling specific individuals.

Some reject the general call while others respond to the effectual call. The decisive factor of belief is ultimately attributed not to human decision, but to God's appointing to eternal life.

[ 31 : 32 ] So the effectual call is the means by which God summons those whom he has chosen to repentance and faith in real time. Now, notice it doesn't show those that are preaching the gospel trying to discriminate and figure it out.

You notice that throughout scripture in Acts and that text I just read, Acts 13, they're they're proclaiming the gospel indiscriminately. They don't know who is going to respond.

That's not our prerogative as Christians. God brings life where he wants to bring forth life. Oh, we want to entrust that to him. That's not our prerogative.

We're not trying to be the marketers and the most persuasive people. We want it to be captivating, compelling because it is captivating and compelling. But it doesn't rest on our proclamation purely. God delights to use his people to proclaim the gospel indiscriminately to any and all who would hear it. And then by his miraculous grace, he calls people to new life.

[ 32 : 38 ] He calls effectually people to new life with the same words. We see it over and over and over again. So let me just be clear on that. We're not to discriminate on who receives the call.

It's not our job. Our job is to be obedient and faithful and have the joy of proclaiming the gospel to any and all who would hear it. John 10. I told you and you do not believe this is Jesus arguing with really religious people, by the way.

Right. Religious leaders. Notice it says you do not believe because you are not among my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. It's fascinating. When you look at that text, note the difference between these two things.

All right. You do not believe because you are not among my sheep or you are not among my sheep because you do not believe.

[ 33 : 47 ] See the difference of those two progressions. It's linking belief to them already being sheep. Chosen in eternity past.

What creates the response to the call? Chosen in eternity past. They are already a sheep and he's calling them out.

The ones who know respond to his voice. They're drawn to him. Oh, there's my shepherd. That's what's happening. That's what they're describing. That's what Jesus is describing here.

I think that order is very important and it's very intentional. Kevin DeYoung is trying to make sense of this for us. Pretty helpful thinking on 2 Corinthians 2 and this aroma of Christ.

It's the stench of death to some and is the aroma of salvation to others. He says almost everywhere Paul went, large crowds rejected him and rejected his message. The gospel will be an aroma of life to some and a fragrance of death to others.

[ 34 : 54 ] Same gospel perfume, different noses. I think that's a helpful way. He's capturing some of the same idea of the sheep, the ones that respond and those who don't respond.

So this word calling, it alerts us to the reality of a caller. And it is the purpose of God to graciously call specific people through the gospel.

So that's calling. Okay, so that would be our first header. I wanted to make sure we get to the second one. One is regeneration, being born again, being born again.

How does God enable those dead in sin to respond to the gospel with faith? Through the secret inward work of regeneration.

It's not something you can see outwardly. Something that happens inwardly. If effectual call is when God uses the gospel proclamation to call us to himself, then regeneration is when he imparts this new spiritual life to us.

[ 35 : 55 ] That word regeneration, it comes from the word Genesis. You probably have that in your mind or beginning. It is a re-beginning. It is a renewal.

It is a rebirth, the gift of new life. Jesus, when he's talking to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, we have this text for you. Jesus answers Nicodemus, Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. So we're seeing this concept of you have to have a different kind of heart, a spiritually alive heart that can only be made alive by the spirit.

And then Ezekiel 36, this is a reference, actually. His conversation with Nicodemus is a reference to what was intended in the Old Testament when Ezekiel prophesied this.

Notice who's taking the initiative here in all of this.

[ 37 : 25 ] I'm going to sprinkle the clean water. I'm going to give you the new heart. I'm going to cleanse you. I'm going to put it within you. I'm going to remove the heart of stone. The father is the one taking initiative towards the child.

That's what this is. This is showing us bringing, bringing forth new life. So this is a work accomplished by God alone. No one chooses when or where to be born.

I didn't choose that for myself physically. No one chooses when or where to be born again in the same way. You remember when you were born again?

Did you choose that situation? Choose that context? God's providential in breaking into your life. Amazing. It's a work of God.

John 1, 13 says, We were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. The indication is it was God's will that you be born again.

[ 38 : 28 ] He willed you into new birth. New birth is not a matter of the will of man, but of the will of God. This is an interesting quote I found from Sam Storms, a pastor over in Oklahoma. He says, To suggest that human faith precedes and causes divine begetting, human faith being the thing that brings about new birth, it destroys the point of the analogy.

The point of describing salvation in terms of divine begetting is to highlight the initiative of God in making alive or giving birth to that which was either dead or non-existent.

To suggest that a person can act spiritually before he exists spiritually, that he can behave before he is born, is not only ridiculous, but also undermines the force of the analogy between physical begetting and spiritual begetting.

You might have to sit on that and untangle that later in your devotions, but it's worth kind of thinking through and praying through and processing through. He's making a pretty astute point, I think, that really draws out the power of the analogy itself.

So it is a work in which God produces new life in us, causing us to keep his commandments, to love others, to hate sin, and so many other things.

[ 39 : 43 ] He changes us from the inside out. Titus 3. And so the contention we'd have with the Arminian perspective is that, in a sense, faith becomes the first work in salvation.

If he's just saying, here's free will, here's the choice, choose or don't choose, and then makes it dependent on your faith, but doesn't mobilize you to make the decision, then ultimately it comes back to the power of man and your faith to make that decision.

So it can actually be in the category of a work that precedes God's work. And this is saying the opposite. Titus 3 is saying he saved us not because of works, not even our own faith.

Where does faith come from? Does it precede our conversion? We would argue from this that faith and repentance are actually gifts from God as well.

They're actually gifts from God as well. And that's why you see conversion as the next step in what we would describe as the order of salvation. Conversion, which includes faith and repentance. So once we are effectually called and born again by the will of God through the Spirit, we can convert

through faith and repentance.

[ 41 : 19 ] Wayne Grudem said it this way, Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.

So faith and repentance hang together. You can think of it as two sides of the same coin. Neither one, faith nor repentance comes first. They come together as a joint package. Because it's like you're turning from something, but in the act of turning from something, you are turning towards something else.

That's what faith and repentance are a picture of. So we don't just turn away from sin only. We turn toward Christ in the same act. John Murray speaks of penitent faith or believing repentance.

And I think that's right. Having those words joined together, those concepts joined together. In Ephesians 2, we see the dead are made alive by grace. Dead people, right?

So Ephesians 2, let's look at this text for a second. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

[ 42 : 34 ] By grace, you have been saved. 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.

No one may boast. So in verse 8, that we're looking at Ephesians 2, it further explains that we're made alive by grace through faith. That's that believing repentance.

By grace through faith. But this verse goes on to say that it is the gift of God. What's the gift of God? What's the it? We don't have time to look at all the Greek.

I have a bunch of notes on it, but think of it this way. The whole package of salvation, including the faith to believe. The instrument of faith.

All of that package is the gift of God. Faith is the instrument given for the belief. The whole thing from start to finish is the gift.

[ 43 : 40 ] Does that make sense what I'm saying? Faith is a gift. We see this also in Philippians 1 29. If you look at that text with me. Look at this language for it has been granted to you.

That for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. What's being granted and who's doing the granting?

Belief is being granted. Belief. I don't have this verse in here, but if you remember Acts 16, you can look at this one, too. Paul goes down to the water.

He preaches to a bunch of ladies. And it says that Lydia was there. And God opened up her heart to believe what he was saying, to receive what he was saying.

It's that language. He's granting belief. He's giving it as a gift. Faith as a gift. It's in a lot of places.

[ 44 : 44 ] I encourage you to go and search these things out. So in the Arminian view, faith is the condition of regeneration. Faith is what causes the regeneration.

But in the Calvinist view, faith is the result of regeneration. You are born again in such a way. God grants the faith so that you can believe and repent.

And it's amazing. He changes us. He changes us from the outside, from the inside out. Our wills are changed to love the things that we once hated.

It's amazing. I was just thinking of all the things I used to love so much and used to chase after so hard. And it's like, man, this thing just stopped mattering to me.

I was like, why? Why do I care about this so much? I just think, man, he's just, he's changing us from the inside out. We now love what is good. We have a desire to please God and not just ourselves. We want to turn away from the desires that are broken and jacked up.

[ 45 : 46 ] And our evil hearts removed and it's replaced with a new soft heart by a wonderful, gracious God. So to sum it up, if you look at our statement of faith here, I think this is helpful.

God commands the gospel to be proclaimed to all people everywhere. But all people are spiritually dead and unable to respond to this saving news. Therefore, God graciously and effectually calls to himself those who he chose to save in Christ through the proclamation of the gospel.

There's the means right going through people. The proclamation of the gospel. The Holy Spirit regenerates the elect and brings them into a living union with Christ, bestowing new spiritual life, opening their eyes to see God's glory in Christ.

And enabling them to respond to the gospel in faith and repentance with a renewed heart and mind. We receive Christ and fully rely on him for salvation, turning from our sinful, self-seeking way of life to love and follow Christ and joyful obedience.

Only those who respond to the gospel in this way will be saved. Yet, even this response is a gift of God's merciful grace, ensuring that he alone receives the glory of our salvation.

[ 47 : 14 ] So that's a compact way to summarize the teaching we just saw. And I'd invite you, if you want to look further into this, you can actually find that sovereign grace statement of faith.

And there's footnotes of scriptures that you can dive into. It's wonderful. Just Google it and they will pop up. OK. We're going to skip to the end.

You're starting to sweat. I know you're starting to sweat. You're like, how many more pages are we going to do? But I do want to end this way. So we've looked briefly at the steps in the order of salvation.

Specifically, we looked at general and effectual calling, regeneration, conversion with the gift of faith and repentance. I wish we had time to do justification and adoption.

You can study that later and ask me questions later if you'd like. But ultimately, as I said at the beginning, this is not an academic exercise. I never wanted to come across as we're just talking about orders of words because words have meaning.

[ 48 : 15 ] Words and order has meaning. Proportions have meaning. Jeff Perswell is the dean of the pastor's college, and he always said that right theology should lead us to right worship, right affection, to delight in the things that are delightful.

That's what we're trying to do here. So we care about digging into these things because it helps us see ourselves rightly in need of a savior and then to be amazed by his amazing grace.

So who told you? How did you become a Christian? What caused you to be born again? I'll end with this quote from Charles Spurgeon.

He said, One night when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the preacher's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, how did you come to be a Christian?

I sought the Lord. But how did you come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across my mind in a moment. I should not have sought him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek him.

[ 49 : 17 ] I prayed, I thought. But then I asked myself, how did I come to pray? I was induced to pray by reading the scriptures. Well, how did I come to read the scriptures?

I did read them. But what led me to do it? Then in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all and that he was the author of my faith.

And so the whole doctrine of grace opened up to me. And from that doctrine, I have not departed to this day. I desire to make this my constant confession.

I ascribe my change wholly to God. Let me pray for us. Lord, we want to see these things rightly, not to just win arguments or make others feel bad or something like that.

Our delight is to give you honor, to give you praise, to see you rightly and to respond to you rightly. So, Lord, help us have humility and to dig into the scriptures, your revealed word.

[ 50 : 14 ] You love us so much that you gave us this word so that we would have answers, that we would be able to think and to call out to you. Lord, we thank you for the gift of salvation.

Thank you that you call us. Even when we don't deserve it, you call us. Thank you for saving us.

Lord, we pray that if there's any that aren't saved, that they would hear this good news and they would respond by your grace and for the glory of your name.

Pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.