

Doctrines of Grace - Part 7

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[0 : 00] Okay, team, why don't we go ahead and make a start of it. Who knows, maybe we'll be joined by others. So thank you for taking seats, stage right, or wherever that is.

Well, in our six preceding sessions, we have held up to a focused view, certain aspects of the saga of God's saving action toward his people.

We've examined its originating source, its fountainhead, and God's sovereign electing love, his ancient choice of a bride for the son who would become incarnate.

With the brief of a pathologist, we examine the condition in which we, the objects of his electing love, are found imprisoned, fast bound in sin and nature's night, not only incapable of lending a hand to our rescue, but actively opposing it.

We shined a spotlight upon that extraordinary declaration, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, unfolding the meaning of Christ's death as representative and substitutionary.

[1 : 18] He stood in the place of his people paying the price of their redemption. He acted atoning for each one and everyone united to him as their federal head.

His life for their life, their life in his life. We put the crosshairs of our attention upon how Christ's atoning rescue was applied individually to each elect beloved for whom it was paid.

How through the all-overcoming work of the Spirit, a divine heart transplant was effected, fashioning a new heart which freely and inexorably embraces the Savior in joyful faith and heartfelt repentance.

Each beloved receiving the particularized wooing of the divine bridegroom. Finally, we trace the scriptural testimony that this marriage between the elect beloved and the divine bridegroom is a union that lasts forever.

For whom God has purposed forever to join together, none can thrust asunder. Every blood-bought, Spirit-secured saint shall be impregnably preserved from every vile vicissitude, each satanic stratagem, and all our own fickle infidelities.

[2 : 50] For the Son shall lose none of those the Father gave him, nor can he. For the Son shall be up for you. For the Son shall be up for you. For the Son shall be up for you. For the Son shall be up for you.

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final session we want to look back from the summit we have ascended and take in the whole panorama. Or, changing the metaphor, bring what has been our searching focused analytic eye settling on certain isolated colors and lines on the canvas to step back and take in a complete picture and see how all comes together in a single harmonious balanced and united whole. We do so through seven observations concerning God's saving action toward sinners.

First notice the covenantal character of salvation. The covenantal character of salvation. One of the most remarkable things the scripture disclosed to us is that the almighty God, the creator, makes promises. And that these promises are vitally important to our relationship with him.

And while God is neither capricious nor irrational, his personality, his person is unfathomably mysterious and his purposes unimaginably deep. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. If we are going to depend on God's future behavior, it is only based upon his own declaration, his promises to us. And the wonderful reality is that he has made such promises. And the scripture calls them covenants.

[4 : 56] Covenants are at the center of God's saving purpose and execution. As Octavius Winslow writes, all that God gives to his people, he gives in Christ and he gives it by covenant.

Nothing is bestowed at random. Nothing in disregard of the eternal compact of grace. To reveal the significance of covenant, engage for a moment in a thought experiment with me.

Say the Logos, God's eternal son, takes on flesh, lays down his life and rises from the dead. What is the value of that for sinners? Do these divine acts have intrinsic salvific value?

I think we would answer, well, no, or how would we know? There's nothing seemingly intrinsic to them. No, their value and saving significance for sinful humanity would have to be determined by God.

This intra-Trinitarian determination, which laid the foundation for salvation, called the covenant of redemption, whereby the Father appointed the Son as the representative of an elect people for whom he would take on flesh and offer atonement for their sin by his own blood, so purchasing their redemption.

[6 : 26] The Son freely assented to this mediatorial role for which he would receive as reward a redeemed people as his bride forever.

It was this compact that determined the efficacy, the value, and the fruit of Christ's mediation. Quote, the covenant of redemption is the foundation of all of our comforts, writes Richard Sims.

For it is the eternal agreement in which God the Father and God the Son have provided for our salvation. The unfolding of this fountainhead covenant involved other covenantal arrangements.

The covenant of works was established with Adam, requiring perfect heartfelt obedience, with life promised as reward, but with death ensuing upon the least breach.

In this, Adam was constituted representative of all humanity, such that the reward of his success would be imputed to all of his posterity, as would the penalty of his failure.

[7 : 42] The covenant of works set the conditions for the covenant of grace, whereby for his elect, Christ fulfills the demands of the covenant of works.

Namely, a perfect obedience from the heart to God's law, imputing to his own the record and with it the reward for his obedience.

Christ also endures for his elect the deadly curse of the covenant of works, which rightly is their portion as sinners. That Christ meets the conditions of the covenant of works on behalf of his elect people makes the arrangement to them a covenant of grace.

For it rests not upon what we do or promise to do, but upon what Christ has done on our behalf. In the covenant of grace, writes Thomas Boston, God freely provides a Savior and salvation by him to poor sinners without respect to their works.

All these covenants God freely established, determining their stipulations and binding himself to fulfill those conditions to their purposed fruition.

[9 : 07] So covenant is the divine architecture of salvation. Well does Philip Dauteridge exult, tis mine, the covenant of his grace and every promise mine, all sprung from everlasting love and sealed by blood divine.

On my unworthy favored head, its blessings all unite, blessings more numerous than the stars, more lasting and more bright. Notice, secondly, the harmony, the harmony of divine action and objective in salvation.

We've traced our salvation to its fountainhead in the intra-Trinitarian covenant of redemption, whereby the united Godhead in its eternal counsel purposed to save a people and, to fulfill this purpose, assigned roles for its accomplishment.

The Father, in particularizing electing love, chose out of fallen humanity a people. These elect were given to the Son, who would redeem them by dying in their place, so rescuing them from the claims and curse of the broken law and imputing to them his own perfect obedience.

To these blood-bought elect, the Spirit would apply the redemption accomplished on the cross by the Son's substitutionary suffering, by regenerating them, sanctifying them, and finally and infallibly presenting them spotless and faultless to the Son as his glorified bride.

[10 : 53] Now, to recognize this compact within the Trinity is surely to recognize in this divine counsel the unity of purpose that it entails.

Each of the divine rules must work harmoniously to the same end of saving a people. Whom the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Spirit sanctifies.

All the persons of the Trinity do act, writes John Owen, with the same will, purpose, and counsel, and to the same end.

And notice also, as Owen observes, the objects of election, redemption, and sanctification are one and the same. The Father elects some, the Son redeems the same, and the Holy Spirit sanctifies those very persons and no other.

Of course, it must be so. How could it be conceivably otherwise? The persons of the Trinity would never work at cross purposes with one another.

[12 : 09] It could never be the case that notwithstanding who the Father elected and committed to the Son, the Son would direct His atonement to a different set of people of His own choosing.

Neither can we imagine the Spirit also going maverick and applying Christ's redeeming benefits to a differing number still on His own whim or independent selection.

This would be absurd to imagine. The subjects of election, redemption, and sanctification are not, as Thomas Goodwin writes, at random, each group unrelated to the other.

No. All the work of the Trinity is united and harmonious. The election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit, writes Stephen Chalmers, Arnach, are all but one entire work managed by distinct persons but designed for the same subjects.

Now, this may strike you as so obvious that the Trinity would act harmoniously that you wonder why my emphasis, and I grant you it, should be superfluous, but for the fact that a common construal of Christ's atonement disaligns the aims and actions of the Trinity.

[13 : 37] if we construe Christ's atonement as aimed at the salvation of all, in the sense of every single son of Adam and daughter of Eve, that puts its intention out of accord with the Father's discriminating election.

Do you see that? It has the Son laying down his life not for those the Father had given, rather for a wider set.

It also has the Son dying for those the Spirit does not draw and sanctify. The whole salvific work of the Trinity is mismatched and discombobulated.

Surely that is implausible for the unity of purpose always true of the Trinity. This construal of the Good Shepherd laying down his life for more than his sheep also involves the embarrassment of rendering Christ's atonement unavailing for the majority for whom it was intended supposedly.

If his was a universal saving intent, it failed of its purpose to the extent that hell is populated by those for whom Christ died atoningly.

[15 : 05] They somehow slipped through his saving hands. they were, alas, beyond the reach of his saving arm. Fumbling saving arm, we might add.

Which, to assert, states John Owen, seems to us blasphemously injurious to the wisdom, power, and perfection of God, as likewise derogatory to the worth and value of the death of Christ.

Well, might we ask an answer with Spurgeon, if Jesus died for all men alike, then why is not the Spirit given to all men alike? Shall the Father elect in vain?

Shall the Son bleed in vain? And shall the Spirit strive in vain? Impossible! So I, and I hope we, can scarcely disagree with Spurgeon when he affirms there is no discord in the works of God.

The Father's purpose, the Son's atonement, and the Spirit's work are one salvation, moving forward with one design, and crowned with one success.

[16 : 19] Amen. Notice, thirdly, salvation is from first to last a work of grace. God's saving action had its spring in his own unconstrained good pleasure.

No claim of right could have compelled God to relieve sinners from their self-inflicted ministry. He would have done humanity no wrong in leaving them in their damnation as eternal monuments to God's justice.

Every mouth would be stopped in the judgment for no appeal could have had any ground. And yet, it was God's good pleasure to show his mercy to a multitude of unworthy rebels and make them recipients of his saving favor.

All of grace in its inception, God's salvation is all of grace in its unfolding. It proceeds towards us not simply as the undeserving, but as the ill-deserving.

That telling word in Psalm 106 makes the point. Nevertheless, he saved them. What was true of us, the saved of God, which calls for this nevertheless?

[17 : 47] Moses raises the veil in the previous verse. We understood not implies we are uncomprehending. We remembered not the multitude of mercies, pegs us as thankless ingrates.

Provoked him, we provoked him, attests we continually provoke God to his face. There we are, sisters and brothers. Such is our profile.

Such are we whom free grace saves and who the God of all grace graciously condescends to make anew and to take into fellowship eternally.

When there was nothing to command us, but every reason for us to be cast away, nevertheless. Neither do we, as to our salvation, contribute a farthing of merit to add of our own.

Neither could we. For a mere hapenny of merit would alloy grace and mingle free gift with earned wage.

[18 : 59] As Richard Sims writes, we bring nothing to God but sin and misery. He brings mercy and salvation.

All is grace from first to last. Christ. So, it is not that our salvation is even especially by grace.

It is exclusively by grace. As Spurgeon pointedly puts it, if there be one stitch in the garment of our righteousness which we have put there ourselves, it is hopelessly rent from top to bottom.

Grace must be absolute or it is no grace at all. This vivid truth is portrayed by a reflection of Spurgeon upon God's ordinance concerning the stones of his altar in Exodus 20.

If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Spurgeon writes, God's altar was to be built of unhewn stones that no trace of human skill or labor might be seen upon it.

[20 : 13] The proud heart of man is very anxious to have a hand in the justification of the soul before God. Preparations for Christ are dreamed of, humblings and repents are trusted in, good works are cried up, natural ability is much vaunted, and by all means the attempt is made to lift up human tools upon the divine altar.

It were well, he continues, it were well if sinners would remember that so far from perfecting the Savior's work, their carnal confidences only pollute and dishonor it.

The Lord alone must be exalted in the work of atonement, and not a single mark of man's chisel or hammer will be endured. There is an inherent blasphemy in seeking to add to what Christ Jesus in his dying moments declared to be finished, or to improve that in which the Lord Jehovah finds perfect satisfaction.

Our salvation commenced by grace and continued by grace shall also be completed by grace. He who laid the foundation stone shall assuredly lay the final capstone.

As it was said of Zerubbabel, the architect of the temple, so it shall be with the true Zerubbabel, the Lord Christ, the builder and maker of the temple of his redeemed people.

[21 : 51] Zechariah 4, 7 says, and he shall bring forth the top stone amidst shouts of grace, grace to it.

God's salvation of his people from first to last, from foundation stone to capstone is all of grace.

And notice fourthly, salvation is as sure and secure as God's almighty purpose. That God is the author and architect of our salvation is its security.

And what God begins with purpose to complete, he invariably carries to completion. Faithful is he who has called you.

He shall bring it to pass. 1 Thessalonians 524. If salvation be in any sense a work of man, it is insecure, hopelessly so.

[22 : 58] For that which man does, man may undo. As Spurgeon puts it, he who converts himself one day may unconvert himself the next.

he that tie a knot with his own fingers can surely loosen that knot. But thankfully, as Jonah reminds us from the deep, salvation belongs to the Lord.

Jonah 2.9 How is this so? Well, salvation is parsed out within the Trinity in the covenant of redemption.

And let's consider the security of each part each one takes in hand. The Father's choice, his choice of his own, will stand as his calling is irrevocable.

Romans 11.29 As Thomas Watson writes, God's decree of election is unchangeable. He will not blot out the names written in the book of life.

[24 : 12] John Owen makes the point citing the apostle to the Romans. Whom God calls, he justifies. Whom he justifies, he glorifies. There is no such thing as a call that does not issue in glory.

As Thomas Goodwin pithily states it, the perseverance of the saints is nothing else but the immutability of God's decree taking effect in time.

We really need to go no further to establish the sure security of the elect, but let's move now from the Father and the immutability of the decree, which secures our salvation, to the Son, and the effectiveness of his atonement, which also secures salvation.

The Son, in his atonement, suffers the wrath imposed by the Father as judgment for the sins of his people, so satisfying the ransom to set them free.

His righteous record is imputed to the elect, such that they are accepted in him, the beloved. That verdict, spoken over the Son in his baptism, is thus ours.

[25 : 35] There remains, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8. The elect, for whom Christ bled as substitute, are by his atoning death, released and remitted from all their sin.

And in Christ's vicarious righteousness, imputed to their account, what possible charge could impugn their record or subvert their security.

Here, we cannot but lapse into Pauline language. Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is there to condemn?

Romans 8. 33. Where we tend to go wrong and skew the biblical witness is that seeking to magnify the saving grace of God and the saving power of Christ, we declare that God's redeeming love extends to every person and assert that Christ has died to save every last one.

We propose that this is the magnifying measure of God's saving grandeur. But then, to avoid universalism, that is, God saves all, well, then we have to dilute the efficacy of the cross and deprecate the effectiveness of God's saving purpose.

[27 : 14] For we must say that, after all, nothing God has purposed or nothing Christ has done can save us unless we add something ourselves.

The decisive factor, the ultimate pivot in the matter, is our self-generated repentance and faith. But, surely, this is to say that Christ saves us with our help.

Or, in fact, somewhat discordantly, but no less truly, we save ourselves with Christ's help. For, ultimately, the issue would hang upon us.

The irony is, in a misguided effort to magnify God's saving work, we've diminished it. It cannot finally and assuredly save.

The security of divine election and atonement is dissolved into human contingency with the frailty and fragility of a butterfly's wing and the evanescence of a red horizon at sundown.

[28 : 31] Ah, but thankfully, such is not our precarious position in God's saving hands. No, the Father has entrusted the elect to Christ to redeem by laying down his life in ransom for them.

And as Jesus assures us, in John 6, 37-39, all that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me, the Father. And this is the will of him who sent me, the Father, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

These are the hands our salvation is in. No one, no one, says Jesus, will snatch them out of my hand.

my Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. John 10, 28-29.

[29 : 51] This promise of Jesus is fulfilled by one final divine handoff for the closing play of salvation, where the Spirit closes us with Christ, as the Puritans love to put it, uniting us to the Savior, in whom are all the blood-bought benefits of his vicarious life and death.

That sweet exchange of our sinfulness for his righteousness. New spiritual life imparted and effectually nurtured till it is consummated in glory.

glory. As we have said, if God lays the first foundation stone, he shall assuredly lay the crowning capstone.

As William Cooper penned, dear dying lamb, thy precious blood shall never lose its power till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

Or as Francis Ridley Havergal reassures, if any doubt could conceivably remain, O sorrowing sinner, well he knew, ere time began what he would do.

[31 : 10] Then rest thy hope within the veil. His covenant mercies shall not fail. O doubting one, eternal three are pledged in faithfulness for thee.

Claim every promise sweet and sure by covenant oath of God secure. And notice fifthly, our salvation, in our salvation, all glory goes to God.

Who made us? God. Who remade us? God. Why? To what purpose did he make and remake us?

Well, the well catechized will rightly answer, for his own glory. Psalm 106 expresses the grand end of our salvation this way.

He saved them for his namesake. Psalm 106, 8. What does that mean? It means he saved us to show his name.

[32 : 21] That is, give a revelation of what he is like, his nature, and his attributes. He saves us to display his glory and excellency.

And while God shows us something of himself in his creation, the sun, moon, and stars, and scattered flowers over the green and laughing earth, he shows himself most excellently on the platform of salvation.

The phrase is Spurgeon's, who continues, it was, so to speak, the balcony on which God stepped to show himself.

The balcony of salvation. Here, he manifests himself by saving souls. Here it is seen in sparkling luminescence, his love, justice, power, faithfulness, in a word, glory.

As Burroughs, Jeremiah Burroughs observes, the Lord takes delight in no work like this work. This is the masterpiece of God and his glory.

[33 : 40] And the reason why salvation can not simply be an excellent display of his glory, but also an exclusive display of his glory, is because, as John Owen puts it, the whole work of our redemption in its contrivance, constitution, and accomplishment is of God and not of ourselves, and therefore all the glory of it belong solely unto him.

Stephen Charnock echoes this truth. God is the author of all the good in salvation, and man is only the subject of it.

He finds us dead and gives us life, finds us enemies and makes us friends. All is from God, nothing from ourselves. Tavius Winslow heartily resonates.

Christ is all in the great work of salvation. He began it, he carries it on, and he will complete it. Not a particle of the glory belongs to the sinner.

And how could it be otherwise? What possible rightful glory could be siphoned off to us sinners? As Watson rightly reminds us, we bring nothing to our salvation but the sin that made it necessary.

[35 : 18] No. We are on solid, and should we say hallowed ground, in affirming the crown of glory and salvation fits no other brow than God's alone.

He alone, to him alone, belongs all adoration and all acclaim. And does this not express the impulse of your redeemed heart to say with the psalmist, not to us, not to us, but to your name be glory.

Psalm 115. 1. And notice finally, or sixthly, God is all sovereign in salvation.

This is simply a specific application of God's sovereignty in all things. The amplified assertion of our first study. God works all things after the counsel of his will, Ephesians 1.

And our salvation is no exception. God is the source, the means, and the end of everything that is, both in nature and in grace.

[36 : 36] For from him and through him and to him are all things, affirms the apostle in Romans 11. 36. The sovereignty of God, writes Samuel Rutherford, layeth the key of salvation upon Christ's shoulder and leaves no share of it to the creature.

I should have read that softly because that's from his letters. And Samuel Rutherford's letters are so gentle. Winslow, Octavius Winslow, is of the same conviction.

The sovereign grace of God lies at the foundation of our salvation. From his own free and eternal love it sprang, and by that same love it is carried on.

Denial of God's sovereignty, apart from being a hopeless cross-current to the whole stream of Scripture, miscasts the Almighty in relation to the sinner and misconstrues Christ's gracious gospel invitations.

within this throng framework, Christ's appeals take on the character quote, not as expressions of the tender patience of a mighty sovereign, writes Packer, but as the pathetic pleadings of impotent desire.

[38 : 16] And so the enthroned Lord is suddenly metamorphosed into a weak, futile figure tapping forlornly at the door of the human heart, which he is powerless to open.

This is from the introduction to John Owens, the death of death and death of Christ. If you ever want to read anything that is unbelievably clarifying about salvation other than Scripture, that is the essay to read.

J.I. Packer's introduction to John Owens, the death of death and the death of Christ. Yeah. It's difficult to suppress the suspicion that this common denial of God's sovereignty has its inveterate appeal in part because it reinforces the supposition of our sinful hearts which are flattered to entertain and loathed to abandon.

The presupposition that we are the masters of our destiny, that in our own hand lies the scepter of our fate. Simply to state this boldly is, I trust, sufficient for its dismissal.

It is a conviction not seaworthy and wrecked on the Gibraltar of the Lord Christ as the author and completer of our faith.

[39 : 47] Hebrews 12. 2. In our sober moments of insight and self-knowledge, do we not resonate with the testimony of Spurgeon?

I believe the doctrine of election because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen him.

And I am sure he chose me before I was born, or else he would never have chosen me afterwards. And if this seems undeniably true to you, be of good cheer, for it is solid testimony that his sovereign grace has been savingly at work in you.

But let us conclude and with this epitome as to the doctrines of grace, I called it seven, finally.

Very simple summary, the whole time together. God saves sinners. And I want in conclusion to accent that middle term, saves, with the claim that God actually saves sinners, for he is, as Isaiah exalts, mighty to save.

[41:18] Isaiah 63, 1. God does not cast up some construction for the possibility of salvation. Christ carries each of his elect fully across the river of judgment, safely onto the shores of salvation.

He does not build a pontoon platform which stretches just far enough across the river that those of inclination motivation, skill and energy may just leap by some spiritual or moral athleticism the remaining distance or so and so with God's aid save themselves.

No. God saves sinners. God's election of particular sinners is an election to salvation.

election. Some would have us regard God's election as the election of no one in particular but rather an election of a duly qualified class of people that is those who will of their own accord believe in Jesus.

Who that in fact will be, well, God's foreknowledge can identify on the basis of their contingent choice for Christ then God's election of those self-identified simply acknowledges their own selection.

[42:54] Notice that on this construal God's election does not determine, in fact, it doesn't influence in the slightest who is chosen.

this election, if it be fair to even grant such a notion the name election, saves no one.

Such, we insist, is a far cry from the scriptural meaning of election which actually chooses the elect for salvation, ensuring that their salvation will be divinely accomplished.

Similarly flawed, is the thrown construal of the Son's redemptive work, which presents Christ's cross as removing an obstacle that stands in the way of God's offering forgiveness to sinners, the unsatisfied claims of justice.

Christ's atonement allows God to freely offer forgiveness to any and all who might accept it. death. But notice that such a redemption doesn't actually redeem anyone.

[44:12] It simply makes redemption a possibility. Any, all, or none may avail themselves of should they so choose.

Christ's death does not secure the salvation of anyone. It simply creates the opportunity. This contrasts starkly with seeing Christ's cross as his substitutionary endurance of the penalty for sin in the place of his own elect by which God is reconciled to those in whose place Christ stood.

Forever removing their liability to punishment by paying it for them. Here is a redemption that actually redeems.

A cross that actually saves. And similarly with the Spirit. It is proposed that we understand the Spirit's drawing of sinners simply to consist in a bare bestowal of an understanding of God's saving work and its summons.

Aha! I get it! So that's what God is up to in Christ. And that is what I'm invited to believe and put my trust in. A bare understanding.

[45:43] But again, such suasion, as it is called, does not. Neither is even permitted to itself ensure that anyone will ever make the response of faith.

It is a drawing that might not succeed in drawing at all. Its effect is up for grabs for its effectiveness pivots entirely upon how its subject is inclined to respond, if at all.

The Spirit's work here may well be utterly ineffectual and in vain to secure the divine purpose. But this vision is alien to the scriptural picture of the Spirit's working effectually upon the flint-hearted elect sinner, removing her brininess through a transplant of a pliant heart, which rejoices to embrace the Savior in faith and repentance.

Here, we have a drawing that actually draws with infallible all-overcoming efficacy, a drawing that actually, not potentially, saves.

As Packer writes, Christ did not win hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe, but a real salvation for his own chosen people.

[47 : 24] His precious blood really does save. Its saving power does not depend on faith being added to it. Its saving power is such that faith flows from it.

The cross secured the full salvation of all for whom Christ died. Oh, sisters and brothers, let us not dilute, or should I say dissolve, the gospel into some conception in which God elects nobody in particular.

Christ died for nobody in particular. The Spirit quickens nobody in particular. In short, that God the Trinity, in their saving purpose, in fact, cannot secure the salvation of anyone, but must make do with nothing more than fond wishes for the salvation of a people, and that for all the Trinity can do, the Son might have died, and none be saved at all.

Christ might have laid down his life, yet be jilted at the altar. No bride for him. If this be the case, well, perhaps we should regard Isaiah's title of God as mighty to save, as the inflation of fond hopefulness, or mere hyperbole.

Ah, no. Sisters and brothers, will we not affirm together, as for me and my house, we will cherish the name, the Lord mighty to save, and trust in its glorious truthfulness as the description of the divine protagonist at the heart of the doctrines of grace, so precious to the people of God across the ages, and indeed shall be worlds without end.

[49 : 26] So we conclude with the full-hearted affirmation, shall we not, God saves sinners and fittingly respond with the awe and wonder of the apostle, oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Amen and amen. Well, friends, miraculously, we have a little bit of time, and I'm happy to entertain any questions or comments or outbursts of praise and Thanksgiving.

Yes? So on a personal and kind of practical fleshing of hell, how... Oh, alas, I have to be practical. How in your life following Jesus, what have been some junctures and what have been some things that have helped you in living a seriously devoted life, like life towards holiness of living, but also one that walks in the fuel of grace?

Like, how, what has helped you receive God's grace and an effective salvation for you? Yeah, yeah. Yeah, a very helpful question, and I think maybe I'll elucidate that somewhat by contrast.

If, if indeed I feel like in any way my salvation is going to pivot upon my various contributions, my zeal, my diligence, am I waking up every single morning and making sure that I have my quiet time, these sorts of things, there's just an undertone of anxiety and insecurity about this.

[51 : 15] There's kind of a fear and an anxiousness that's going to accompany all of those very good things. But if instead, in contrast to that, I am overwhelmed with fresh visions of these truths that we have examined, that God has saved me, and that that is done and it is secure as his purpose, it is secure as his atoning death, it is secure as his infallible application by his spirit, then there rightly so, and I would say inevitably so, wells up a sense of gratitude that is so energizing that you enter into these same disciplines that you might do otherwise out of a bubbling joy and an alacrity in that security.

So I, just like that? And an hour later, gone. Yep, there we go. But then we need to read. So, you know, we just, if we know God's love to us is unconditional, that will really energize us.

When I was a little boy, I played soccer. My dad was a great soccer player. He would always, when we would play, he would always pick me first, even though I was a little tyke and couldn't really help him win the game, and he was really competitive, so that was a real loss to him, but he just picked me first.

I can still hear his words. I choose my son. He's my first choice. So I'd go out there and I'd play soccer, and I wasn't playing to gain his approval all along.

I was playing out of it. I knew I had it. And that made me, just, it gave me a joy that made me run and run as fast as my little legs could carry me.

[53 : 05] And I loved the game, and I knew that if I swung at the ball and missed and fell on my fanny, he accepted me still. I wasn't playing for his acceptance.

I was playing out of it. And that made me a good player, and it made me a joyful player. And I've known from other of my soccer mates that there are other dynamics.

I've seen guys playing for the hopeful, elusive favor of their father that pivoted upon each successive performance, and they were unhappy.

As joy-inducing as the game of soccer is, they were unhappy, and they became less skilled players in the anxiety that gnaws at you.

So that's just one way where it's a different dynamic. Not playing for God's approval, but from it. But from it.

[54 : 02] Yeah. Thanks for forcing me to get, at least wander into the suburbs of practicality. right? Yeah.

Any other questions or comments? Okay, team. Well, thank you so much for a fun session together, and thanks again to Tyler for running along with us.

And let me thank the Lord for us. Father, how wonderful it is that these things could be true. If we thought that somehow we had concocted them, we would be suspicious that surely that is just a vain hope.

But you have declared these things with such clarity and such vividness in your word, that then your spirit has taken and applied to our hearts such that we see their sparkling, gleaming truth and reality before us.

You have won our hearts. Lord, may we indeed embrace these things in our heart, and may they buoy us with a joy unspeakable like a gurgling stream.

[55 : 18] And may they affect as they surely will for this electing love unites us with Christ. In our union with Christ, we are born anew, and you have placed your spirit and you regenerated us in our person, so we will indeed respond with a dynamic that grows out of a renewed nature that will begin to reflect the image of Christ in us.

So you will have a beautiful, glorified bride. May it be so, Lord, for your glory and our great delight. Worlds without end.

Amen. Bluetooth Bluetooth Oh, yeah.