

# Saved by Grace Through Faith

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're going to read together from the New Testament from Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 to 10 and Douglas is going to come and read for us.

Ephesians 2 verses 1 through 10. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world, following the prince of the 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 the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

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 by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. 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.

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

[ 1 : 5 0 ] We are in a series on the letter that Paul the Apostle wrote to the Ephesians. He wrote this letter sometime between 60 and 62 in the first century, 2000 years ago, and he wrote it to a church that he had planted, but a lot of people had come to faith from a pagan, polytheistic background since he had planted the church, and so he's writing to these believers that he has not met yet and saying, I've heard about your faith, and really it's a letter that he writes to the church, to Christians, to followers of Jesus. If you're a Christian today, Paul, by God's authorship has written this letter for you, to you, and he's saying, I want you to know what happened to you when you became a Christian. If you're a Christian today, Paul says, I want you to understand everything that's taken place in your life to bring you here. And so we looked for the first few weeks at what he says about how God, from God's perspective, how God has brought us into faith, and he said, you can go all the way back into eternity and know that God shows you, loved you, redeemed you before you were ever a twinkle in your parents' eye, before you were ever born, you're blessed from eternity all the way into the future. And then in chapter two, he turns to say, now let's look at it from your perspective. What happened in your life? How did you become a

Christian? And last week, we can't, last week was very important to get to this week, but we can't review it too much because we'll take, I'll just preach the same sermon over again. But last week we said that Paul said, if you're a Christian today, you need to remember, you need to know, you can never forget that you were dead in your sin, that you had wandered away from God, you were born and very actively, from very early in your life, you wandered off the road of love that God made you for, the love for him, love for your neighbor. He talks about that in terms of trespasses and sins, both things that we actively do and things we fail to do. And we've wandered away from God and he says, every single human person, no matter how much money you make, no matter what segment of society you're from, no matter what race or ethnicity you are, you, you are dead in sin.

And so in verses one to three, it's all about who you are before Christianity outside of Jesus, verses four to ten is all about who you can become, who God makes you when you find Jesus, really verses four to ten is all about how to become a Christian. So this is, this is the heartbeat of Christianity. Ephesians two eight nine is very famous for by grace you have been saved through faith, it's not your works. Very famous, very important, the essence of Christianity right here, Ephesians two four to ten. And let's think about it together, how do you become a Christian?

And if you're a Christian today, do you know how you became a Christian? Do you remember? And that's what these verses are about. And it's all about the dashes. It's all about the conjunctions. It's all about the prepositions, the grammar, you know, the more and more you become a Christian, you read the Bible more and more you realize more and more how important the grammar is. And I looked at six to seven translations of Paul's letter here this week, and just tried to look in verse four or five, sorry, for how people set this little section apart.

And then in verse five, and you see there's dashes, by grace you have been saved, dashes. Why? Because Paul is interrupting himself. And he's saying everything I'm trying to tell you, I can put in these parenthetical comment, by grace you have been saved. And then if you jump down to verse eight, he adds two words for by grace you have been saved through faith. And so these two little lines, by grace you have been saved, by grace you have been saved through faith, they're parentheses, they're inside of dashes. And it's Paul saying, let me take a moment to interrupt myself and tell you the heartbeat of my argument, exactly what I'm trying to say.

[ 6 : 00 ] And if you look through verses four to 10, there's all sorts of conjunctions and prepositions, some of the best in all the Bible. You were dead, verse four, but God, rich in mercy, that great conjunction, you were dying, you were condemned, you were enslaved, but God.

Very next verse, even when you were dead, even these great moments, these prepositions. And then by grace you have been saved, the prepositions are everything, by grace through faith.

And if you flip them around, if you get them backwards, if you misunderstand the prepositions, you've lost Christianity. And if you don't yet see what they mean, you don't yet understand Christianity. And so we've got to look at that. And there's this apocryphal story that gets passed around. We don't really know if it's true, maybe apocryphal, I hope it's true, about the great author C.S. Lewis, that there was a conference in Oxford, University of Oxford. And the question of the conference was, all the scholars were saying, is there anything about Christianity that's different that you can't find in the other religions and the other philosophies, in the other worldviews? And all these great religious scholars were standing up and saying, well, okay, well, what about the incarnation that God became a human? And some religious scholars stood up and said, well, no, we know from other myths and legends and places that there are stories where a God takes on a human form. And they said, well, what about the resurrection?

Resurrection is unique to Christianity. And they said, well, no, we know in other stories, in Hinduism, there are stories where somebody dies, a demi-God dies and comes back to life again. And the story is that C.S. Lewis walked into the room late, and he said, what is all this argument about? What is the ruckus going on here? And they told him, we're trying to, we're wondering, is there anything about Christianity that is unique that you can't find anywhere else? In any worldview, any philosophy, any religion, and C.S. Lewis said, that's easy. It's grace. That God would love people exactly at the point when they don't deserve it. But God, you were dead, but God, he said, it's grace. You can't find that anywhere else. It's what makes Christianity different.

Now, let's see it. Let's consider it through faith by grace, you're saved. We're going to take it in reverse, all right? Through faith. How do you become a Christian? How did you become a Christian?

[ 8 : 32 ] Through faith, Paul tells us. Now, it's very important, remember, the prepositions, it is not by faith, not by faith, but through faith. And what this means is that basically what Paul's telling us is that your faith, your believing, your trusting is not what saves you. Your faith does not save you. Now, this is the best way I can think to illustrate it. I've heard this before from other people in a different variation. If your car is broken down on the motorway, you're in a pretty dangerous situation. And you need to be saved. Your car needs to be saved. And so you pull out, I don't know what we call this in Scotland, but I would call it a tow strap, a tow strap, a rope, you know, and you would attach it to the front of your car and you would hook it to another car.

And that, you get pulled, your car and you would get pulled to safety. Now, if I ask you, what is it that saved you? And where's the power of that salvation? Would you say it's the tow strap?

Right? And here's how you can answer it. Take, if your car breaks down on the motorway, take a tow strap, hook it up to the front of your car and just lay the tow strap out on the ground and then see if you become saved. See if you end up at the garage, if you end up back at your home, right? Where will you, you will stay right there. If you hook a tow strap up, but you don't put an engine on the front of that thing, you're not going anywhere. And this is exactly what Paul's saying. It's not your faith that saves you. The tow strap, your faith is the instrument of your salvation, not your salvation. Faith is the thing by which you receive the power, the engine of salvation. But it's not the power itself. And so Paul goes out of his way to say, right after he says, for by grace you have been saved, through faith, it's not by your works. It's not by your merit. It's not by anything you do. And that includes faith. Faith is not a work, a merit, something you do. Your great faith by which God says, okay, because you believe, I will give you salvation. Not at all. Because if it was the case, then you would be saved by your faith.

No, faith is the instrument, but the material cause, the real power of your salvation is something else. It's grace. You see the prepositions? By grace. Grace is the power through faith.

Faith is the tow strap. Faith is the instrument by which you receive it. And that means that faith is a, even faith is a gift. You know, what can you do today if you want to become a Christian?

[ 11 : 07 ] God says over and over again, Paul says, cry out in faith and say, I believe. Look at Jesus and say, I believe. And there really is something active about that. You do have to take a step of faith and believe. You have to do that. You have to own that. But what happens when that happens in your life, eventually what happens is you'll look up and you'll realize, wow, the only reason I ever said, I believe, is because God gave me the faith to believe. That even the faith by which I received was a gift itself. You see, it's God all the way down from top to bottom. It's nothing you do.

You don't participate. What do you bring to your salvation? Not your, not the quality of your faith. You bring nothing but your sin. You bring your deadness. And even faith is a gift all the way from top to bottom. Now, this is what Lewis was talking about. This is what makes Christianity different. In Buddhism, you follow the eightfold path and hope for salvation. In Islam, you follow the law of God. And you hope for salvation if you can maintain the five pillars very carefully.

And every other religion, Hinduism, every religion that's ever existed, you are saved and you hope to be saved by your performance, by your merit. And Christianity is different. Christianity is the only worldview, the only religion, the only hope for being saved despite your performance.

And it's not even your faith that saves you. No, no, not the quality of your faith, but something completely different. Faith is saying, Augustus, top lady is great, him, we're going to sing it in a minute. Nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross. I claim naked, I come to thee for dress.

Helpless, I look to thee for help. You bring nothing. It's all God from top to bottom. So the question then becomes, okay, well, how exactly then does God save you?

[ 13 : 09 ] What is the power? Where is the power of salvation? Where's the engine that pulls you by way of the tow strap? And the word that he gives us here is by grace. Grace is the answer to that. And the word, the word grace really in some sense just means gift when Paul uses it. Buy a gift by giving something away to you. It's totally a gift from top to bottom. Okay, so sometimes people can approach the idea of grace and they can think about grace as a substance, as a thing. They can talk about the grace that they receive in taking the Lord's Supper, the grace of lighting a candle in a church, the grace that some people will talk about that they're looking for when they walk down the Camino de Santiago in Spain, the pilgrimage, looking for a religious experience, laying flowers down before some statue. People are looking for grace as a thing all around them. And what Paul teaches is something very different. Grace is not a thing. Grace, these words he gives us in verse four and five is God's love, God's mercy, God's kindness. Grace is God's disposition. Grace is the fact that God wants to give people gifts who do not deserve it. It's his love. Mercy is a word that means when you give, you give help to the helpless. When you give something to the poor in a way that they don't have it, they could never get it. That's God's grace. It's all synonyms.

Grace is the language of gift. It's undeserved favor. It's entirely a gift from top to bottom. Now, I talked about the toe strap with faith. The best way I can think to talk about grace then is not as fun of an illustration at all. But there's a guy by the name of John Barclay.

He's down at Durham University, not too far from here. He wrote a really important book about grace a few years back. And one of the things he says about it is that when you read the apostle Paul all throughout his letters, he's talking about grace or gift, gift giving in a culture where in the Roman, Greco-Roman Empire, especially in Rome or in other cities, gift giving was very different than maybe the way we think about it or maybe not. It was more of a mafia type mindset, if you will.

Somebody might come and give you a gift that show up at your door. I want to bless you. Here's a gift. But in their hearts, the whole culture was kind of built around, I really expect you to give something back to me. And there's going to come a day where I show up at your door and I say, remember that time I gave you that gift? And you're going to say, now here's what I need you to do. So there's a real culture of reciprocity. And Paul uses this word grace, because he explodes this idea of gift giving in the ancient world by coming and saying, we in our culture don't really have true gift giving. And he says, but let me show you what a real gift is. It is when God, the absolute God loves you at exactly the point you don't deserve it in such a way that you could never possibly repay that.

That's a real gift. You know, he enters this word gift, grace, into the ancient, the Greco-Roman world and says, you've never seen real gifts. And the real gift is that God loves you and you don't deserve it. That's his grace. That's where the power of salvation is. Now, one of the things that the theologians will talk about when they talk about this is the another, here's another way to think about it. This is a more helpful illustration, maybe. When you were born, when you were born, what did you contribute? You know, when you were first born, literally, physically, from your mother's womb, what is it that you brought to the table that day? You know, I've been around for birth, and I can tell you, the baby doesn't do a lot. They don't do much. You know, they're receiving entirely. And the theologians will say, you know what, you look at that and you realize there's a gratuity, a graciousness, even in being created from the very beginning. When you think about who you are, all you have, your existence, what do you have that you've not been given? You can't exist without somebody else doing the work. And you see, just like in creation, also in new creation, what do you contribute to your birth, your new birth? You don't contribute anything to this physical life. What do you contribute to the spiritual life, to the new birth? Nothing. You know, there's a gratuity, a graciousness in creation and new creation. It flows through all of who we are. And that's God's grace. And so, before we move to the last thing, we have to think about the gift precisely. What is this gift precisely? Just in a couple minutes. What is the engine? What is the power itself? What is the gift God gives in grace?

[18:06] And you can see it there in verse five. And now you've got to look at this fairly carefully to see what Paul's doing. He says, even when we were dead, and then there's a threefold movement, God did what?

He made us alive together with Christ. And then remember, the by grace you have been saved, that's parentheses. So you can cover that up with your hand for just a moment. He made you alive together with Christ. He raised you up with Christ, and he seeded you with Christ in the heavenly places.

So he says three things. The real gift. What is it? Now, he's talking about something that happened in the Gospels. Jesus came back from the dead. He was raised up. Jesus ascended into heaven. That's the second thing he's talking about. Jesus sat down at God's right hand. That's the third thing he's talking about. All of that happened in the Gospels in the Book of Acts in the middle of human history.

But here's the surprise part of it. He doesn't just say Jesus came back to life. Jesus ascended. Jesus sat down. He says, no, God made you alive together with Jesus. He says, God raised you up into heaven with Jesus. God set you down at the right hand of the Father with Jesus. The gift, the surprise, the thing that no human being could have ever expected is that Paul is saying that whatever happened to Jesus in the middle of human history is now true for you already. Before you were ever born, before you ever twinkle in your parents' eye, before you ever did anything good or bad, God already did it, and he included you in it. And so we call this union with Christ. Another way to say it is that we are so virtually connected. Now, virtually, that doesn't make sense to us in 2024. But the old word, virtual, in old English is a word that we used to use to talk about salvation. And virtual means something that is effective for you, something that's true of you, even though you weren't there for it. Virtual, virtual reality, something that feels real to you, even though you're not really in it, it's not real. Well, the old word, something that's actually become true of you and effective for you, even though you never participated in it, really. The Gospel says this, you are so virtually connected to Jesus. You're so covenantally connected to Jesus that when Jesus went to death, he carried your sins, your real sins. When he died, it's as if you paid the justice of your sins right at that moment. But also the positive side, when he came back to life, it's as if you did too.

When he ascended into heaven to be with the Father, you're there with him. When he sat down on the throne, God said, and you too are now a son or daughter of the King enthroned with Jesus. That's the gift. That's grace. That God loved you in the midst of your trespasses and sins all the way to the point to look at you and say, I see you in the exact same way I see Jesus Christ, my son.

[ 21 : 21 ] Sinless, forgiven forever for you, seated, enthroned, adopted, son, daughter, it's union with Christ. It is the gift. It is grace. Grace is that while you are not lovable, you are not lovable based on your qualities or performance. God loved you so much that he identified you with Jesus every step of the way, that everything that's true of him is now true of you. Now, faith just simply says, wow, I see it, I believe it. That's faith. Let's close. Let's do the third thing. Let's apply this pretty personally.

And it's to ask, how can you become a Christian today? Or if you are a Christian, do you remember, do you see how you became a Christian? And are you living out of that? Are you living in that power and through that power?

Do you get it? Do you understand the gospel? Do you see that you are saved by grace as a gift through the instrument of your faith and all of it is not by your performance, something that's been given to you?

Martin Lloyd-Jones, the great preacher in London in the middle of the 20th century, in his really helpful book on spiritual depression. Everybody struggles sometimes with spiritual depression. He wrote a book about it.

But he writes in the beginning of it that when he's explaining the gospel to people, he'll often do this, often say, are you ready to say, are you ready to say you're a Christian? This is what he says.

[ 22 : 55 ] To make it quite practical, I have a very simple test. After I've explained the way of Christ to somebody, I say, now, are you ready to say that you're a Christian? And they hesitate. And then I say, what's the matter?

Why are you hesitating? And so often people will say, I just don't feel like I'm good enough yet. I don't think I'm ready yet to say I'm a Christian. And at once, I know, and he's quite extreme here, he says, I know that I've wasted my breath. That's what he says. Because they are still thinking in terms of themselves.

They think they have to do it. It sounds very modest, very humble to say, well, you know, I just don't think I'm good enough. But it's a very denial of the faith. The very essence of the Christian faith is to say, he is good enough.

I'm not good enough, but I am in him. That's what Paul is saying. Now, if you're a Christian today, or you're not a Christian today, and you want to become a Christian, or do you want to know how you became a Christian?

One of the struggles that all of us will feel is the language Paul uses here of the lavishness of this message, the treasure, the gift, how much God wants to give you His wealth, the wealth of His love.

[ 24 : 12 ] And we struggle with it. If you're a Christian, you forget about it. If you're not a Christian, you don't know that you want to come and receive it. And one of the reasons for that is because you really do want to earn it. You want to perform.

And one of the reasons I think that's so true of us is because we are driven, we are in a culture of performance all the time. And so when it comes to Christianity, we also want to perform for that. We want to earn it. We want to get it by merit.

This couldn't be more obvious than the workplace, the university. You can't get a promotion at your work without performing well. You can't get a good job in 2024 in our commercial markets without having marketable skills.

You've got to prove yourself. You've got to perform. And you've got to show that you are better than the next person. You're competing against all sorts of people in all your life. But there's nowhere that I think can undermine in the heart our ability to receive the message of the gospel than dating culture.

It's, you know, dating culture. There's nothing more performative, nothing more merit-based than dating. Right? So when you go out on dates, you know, you've got to be some of you are in this world right now. Some of you have been in this world.

[ 25 : 28 ] Some of you were in this world so long ago, you can't remember it. But remember dating. Dating is when you put on your best clothes, you smell the best you possibly can.

You create a facade, an image of yourself that's not actually real. You put pictures online of yourself that are, you know, a few years old, that haven't quite been updated yet.

You create, you're performing. It's a performance narrative and in some sense it's necessary. And it's not only that you're performing hoping that this other person will like you, maybe even love you.

You're also competing against all the other people that are vying for that person's attention. You're performing in every direction and it's so difficult. And that's why when the Bible talks about marriage, it says, you want to understand the gospel, look at true love in marriage.

Very different than dating. Very different than the type of love that we create through the performance of dating. Right? And why? One of the ways you can get at this, I'm doing premarital counseling for a few folks right now.

[ 26 : 34 ] I'm about to give them the answers. This is what they need to say in premarital. When you're premarital counselor, if you're engaged, ask you, why do you want to marry this person?

Give me five reasons, five reasons, which is one of the questions I do ask. Why do you love them? What's the right answer? Now, it's something to say because they make me laugh, because they're beautiful, because I love being with them.

And those are all very good things, very good qualities. But the only right answer to this question, why do you love them? The only right answer is, I love them because I love them. That's the only right answer.

And you see, what is true love? True love, real unconditional love, is not based on conditions. And that's why marriage, when you reach that point in marriage, it's such an helpful illustration of you have been saved by grace through faith.

Because being saved by grace through faith is saying to you, God loves you despite the conditions, despite your qualities, despite your performance. And so, Blaise Pascal, the great philosopher and mathematician, he said it like this, there's someone who says they love somebody else because of their beauty, really love them.

[ 27 : 52 ] And this is his answer. He's writing this in the 18th century. He says, no, because smallpox is going to take that beauty away, but the person will still be there.

You see, when you base your love, when you ground your romantic love on conditions, you've got to know in qualities, that's going to go away. But the person is still there. And the same thing happens in the Gospel, the marriage of all of history, that God, Jesus Christ, the great groom, came for his bride.

And what did he see? He saw a bride that was not beautiful. He saw a bride that did not meet the qualities and conditions of merit. He saw filth, he saw sin, he saw the heart, he sees you, he sees me, he sees our deadness, and he says, and I'm going to come and love her unto beauty.

He went to the cross, not because you were beautiful, but to make you beautiful. For by grace you have been saved, and you receive that by faith. Why does God love you? Because he loves you.

No other reason than that. Now, let me close with this. Some possible objections. Are you ready today to say, I'm a Christian?

[ 29 : 04 ] I'm saved by grace through faith. Are you ready to see that again? Are you ready to live out of that? Why not, if not? And let me just close with a couple possible objections and we'll pray.

One might be, I hear what you're saying, but I just don't know that that's true yet. I'm a person of science, and I don't yet know that Jesus really did die and rise from the dead.

That might be something you say, okay, let me say, if you're thinking that, I don't yet know if it's true. You are on the right path. That is the right question. Is this true? That is exactly the question you need to be asking.

And you really, what I would say is, I would invite you to say, really dig deep and investigate your own beliefs and look for what's real. Sometimes people I've talked to in our city will say, I want to believe this, but I'm not a person of faith like you are.

There are some people that are just people of faith that are other people that just aren't people of faith. And let me say, oh boy, will you please investigate the assumptions, the real beliefs that are going on in the core of your heart when you say something like that?

[ 30 : 15 ] There is no person out there that is not a person of faith. Every single person is religious. You wake up every morning and you trust all sorts of authorities that are speaking into your life, but you never did the empirical investigation.

That's faith. You wake up in the morning and you believe that your mind is actually projecting reality as it appears to you. You and I both talk about the color red and we believe we're seeing the same thing, but you don't know.

There's a thousand ways this is true. You don't know that you're not living in the matrix right now. It's true. Everybody begins with faith. Faith is the ground of all possible existence.

Everybody's a person of faith. Everybody's a religious person. And if you're saying, I don't yet know if it's true, investigate. You're on the right path. You're asking the right question.

He really did rise from the dead. Now that leads me to the second. Maybe you say today, I don't yet know I'm ready to say I'm a Christian or I want to become a Christian. And it's because you think, you know, I'd really have to change too much.

[ 31 : 20 ] I'd have to subscribe fully to the moral code of Christianity. I don't know that I can yet say I believe in the exclusivity of the sexual ethic of Christianity.

I've heard many people say that. I don't yet know that I can change my views on the moral side of the Christian faith. And look, there's something to talk about in that. But let me say, when it comes to the gospel, the question is not, can I subscribe?

You know, it's not a podcast. It's not a list of propositions. It's not a set of philosophical determinations. Not at all. What is being offered to you is not a list of rules. It is a person.

The gospel is a person. It's Jesus Christ. It's faith that God really did become a human and die and rise again for you. And the ethics is important, but that's not the gospel.

The first thing to simply ask is, did Jesus rise from the dead or not? And if he did, the question is not, can I subscribe? It's, do you see the truth?

[ 32 : 25 ] God's not asking you to subscribe. He's asking you to say, is this real? What is? You don't have a choice. What choice do you have? If a man died and came back to life in the middle of human history, is there a choice?

It's just real. It's just you acknowledging it, saying, yes, I believe. That's all. The third thing maybe today you're saying is, I'm not yet ready to say I'm a Christian because, like Lloyd-Jones pointed out, I'm not good enough.

If you only knew my past, if you only knew what's going on in my life right now, the hidden and secret sins, and I just, let me say you're Rika. That's exactly.

And let me finish Lloyd-Jones quote that I mentioned earlier. You know, Lloyd-Jones says, the person who says, oh, I'm not good enough, if that's you today, you are denying the gospel.

You're denying God. You're denying the very essence of the faith and you will never be happy. You think that you're better at times and then again, you'll find at a different time, you're not as good.

[ 33 : 29 ] And you will be up and down forever. Am I good enough? Am I not good enough? How can I put it plainly? He says, it doesn't matter if you've almost entered into the depths of hell. It does not matter if you are guilty of murder as well as every other vile sin.

It does not matter from the standpoint of being justified before God at all. You are no more helpless than the most moral and respectable person in the world. You know, you are not saved because you're a moral respectable person and you're not kept out of the kingdom because you're not a moral respectable person. You're saved by grace through faith alone.

Lastly, today, most of the people in this room, I know you and I know that most of the people's room are Christians. You're a believer. You're saved by grace through faith and you know that.

But maybe today you come and you don't feel like it. You might come today saying, I've lost my passion for this gospel. I've lost my zeal and hunger for this.

I think one of the things I've seen is that there's this pretty common sociological experience within Christianity. Early Christians enter into the doldrums six months to one year in.

[ 34 : 42 ] If you become a Christian, you're really passionate and zealous for the gospel. And then about six months to one year in, you start to, that passion starts to go down and diminish. And then you start to wonder, is it me? Am I really a Christian?

Or is it the people around me that they're not really Christians? Or is it the church I'm a part of? There's not just enough passion and hunger in the people. What is it? What's causing this? It's something that tends to happen to everybody that comes to faith at some point.

And those are important questions to ask, but let me say, as we conclude, here's the trap that we're all as Christians prone to falling into. That the quality of our faith, the quality of the way we feel about the gospel, is the measure of the gospel itself.

In other words, Paul says, you are not saved by your faith, but through your faith. And your faith is not the merit that gets you to Jesus.

In other words, you might be questioning your salvation today. You might be questioning the salvation of other people around you, because you think there's not enough emotion there. There's not enough zeal. There's not enough passion.

[ 35 : 52 ] And the trap is, are you simply having faith, trusting in your faith? Trusting in the emotions of faith. It's not your emotions that save you. It's not your zeal that saves you.

It's not your faith that saves you. Don't put your faith in your faith. Put your faith in Jesus Christ. And then you may find that your passion reignites when every single day you're saying, my faith is not about how I feel right now.

It's about Jesus. And then your heart will swell back up again with joy. We've got nothing to boast about. Augustus Toplady, let's sing it together. Rock of Ages, nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross I cling.

The prayer you can have as we sing is the only merit that can set me to rights with God is the merit of Jesus. Let us pray. Father, nothing in our hands we bring simply to the cross we cling.

Naked we come to thee for dress. We bring before you our sin and our guilt and our condemnation. And we receive this morning from you the grace of Jesus Christ.

[ 37 : 04 ] Thank you, Lord. I pray for somebody here today that maybe is not yet been ready to say, I'm a Christian. That they would be able today to say, I'm a Christian.

And that they would see all they need to do is trust. All they need to do is believe in something that's already been done. And I pray that you would reignite the faith of many, many in this room as we struggle to maintain our zeal and passion for the gospel.

And that you would do it by refocusing our hearts on the gospel itself. And we pray for this in Jesus' name. Amen.