

Those Who Are Given Will Come

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[0 : 0 0] John chapter 6, where we've been for some time.

Today's sermon is going to cover verses 36 and 37.! But I'm going to jump up to verse 35 and begin reading there.

! Remember, this is Jesus meeting with the Christ. He had been with the Christ who He had been with recently when He performed the miracle of feeding 5,000. Again, when we take into consideration that that says 5,000 men, that doesn't include their spouses and their children, so it's more like 20,000.

And so we remember Jesus after that moment, He departs and He prays up on the mountain. He comes back and He walks on the water, gets to the boat with His disciples. And so these are the events that take place that next day.

John chapter 6, verse 35. That's where I'll begin to read and we'll read through verse 37. If you'd please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life.

[1 : 1 3] Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me.

And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? I'll begin by saying that these verses that we've just read, as long as the verses that follow them in chapter 6 are difficult verses.

They're not difficult verses because Jesus is unclear in what He has to say. They are difficult because they express a truth that I believe our sinful nature wants to reject.

They are verses that take us deep into the mind of God. They teach about man's sin and inability. God's electing an irresistible grace.

The free offer of the Gospel. And God's ability to keep His people preserving their salvation forever. And I'll confess to you that there is a little part of me that is concerned about preaching through these verses for concern that some of you may have the same reaction towards Jesus that many in that crowd had towards Him when He first uttered these words in their hearing.

[2 : 4 9] And so as we go through this chapter, we encounter again a crowd that was once really excited for Jesus. Very excited about Him and about His potential.

And how they thought they could use Him to accomplish their own agendas. But as Jesus goes through this message, this sermon, this discourse that He gives to them, we see that they become increasingly hostile towards Him and what He says to them.

And at the end, many of them are not excited about Jesus anymore. We see in John 6, verse 41-42, again, this is a continuation of where we're at and where we'll continue to go.

The same message that Jesus is giving. So the Jews grumbled about Him. Grumbled about what He was saying. Because He said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. They said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know?

How does He now say, I came down from heaven? So we see the hostility is starting. It's brewing. And then in John 6, verse 60, again, same message. Same crowd. It said, when many of His disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying.

[4 : 1 1] Who can listen to it? And then sadly, when we get to verses 65 and 66, we see there, Jesus said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.

After this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. So these verses will challenge you. They'll challenge you.

Perhaps you, like me, have already been challenged by these verses in the past. So my hope for you is that you will listen. That you will do so intently.

That you would think deeply. That you would reflect honestly over what Jesus says here in these verses.

That we wouldn't seek to twist His language. That we wouldn't grumble under our breath about what He said.

[5 : 17] And that, most importantly, we wouldn't turn our back to Him. As many did on that day. I realize that such reactions, though, are out of my control.

You're out of any of our control. I also understand as your pastor who preaches God's Word to you, that my job, according to His Word, is not to please you, but to feed you from God's Word.

And so each week, that is my prayer. Honestly, each week, every Monday when I begin the process of preparing the sermon, that is my prayer, is that you would be fed. That's my second request.

It's after my first prayer is, God, please first convict me of what Your Word has to say. And so, I pray, and I'm sure many of you do too, that God's Word would be heard.

That God's people will respond. And that whatever results from God's Word being heard, and God's people responding, would be pleasing to Him. The results are ultimately up to Him.

[6 : 31] This passage is one that every believer should cherish. Because it was these verses, among others, that rescued the Gospel during the Protestant Reformation.

Martin Luther. Many of you probably have heard of him before. He was the main person associated with the Reformation, and understandably so. But there were many others, even before Luther, who began what God was using to begin, what would ultimately be accomplished through Him, and then those who were with Him and came after Him.

At the heart of the Reformation were four basic questions. How is a person saved?

Who has authority in the church? Or where does religious authority lie? Third, what is the church?

And fourth, what is the essence of Christian living?

What does it mean to be a Christian according to God's Word? And so in answering those questions, the Protestant Reformers developed what has become known, or is the five sola.

[7 : 42] Sola is a Latin word meaning alone. The five alone statements. These five essential points of biblical doctrine separated the Protestant church from the Roman Catholic church.

And we, today, as Southern Baptists, are part of that, or as a result, are a result of that Protestant Reformation. And so they should, these points that separated them then, I believe should continue to distinguish us to this very day.

As those who continue, in this day, to carry the torch of biblical truth. And so the five essential doctrines of the Protestant Reformation, those five solas, are this.

One sola scriptura, which means Scripture alone. Scripture alone. The Bible alone, we believe, is the sole authority for matters of faith and practice and in living.

Scripture alone is the standard by which all teachings and traditions of the church should be measured. Right? If what we're doing doesn't match Scripture, then what we're doing needs to go. We need to make sure that what we're doing is in line with God's Word.

[8 : 59] Martin Luther, when he was pressed to recant his position on this, he said, unless I am convinced by Scripture in plain reason, I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have each contradicted each other.

My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.

The second sola statement or the second principle is salvation by grace alone. Salvation is proof of God's undeserved favor.

We are rescued from His wrath by His grace alone, not by any work that we do or because we deserve it. Salvation is from God, by God, for God.

He is the one who releases us from our bondage to sin and brings us from spiritual death to spiritual life. Third is salvation by faith alone.

[10 : 02] We are justified by faith alone in Christ alone, not by works of the law. It is by faith in Christ in His righteousness that is then imputed to us as the only possible way of satisfaction that we can meet God's perfect standard.

He does it for us. We have faith in Him. Not in our works, but in the finished work of Jesus Christ. That's what saves us. Fourth, in Christ alone.

In Christ alone. Salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone. That's why we preach Jesus as the Savior of the world. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father but through me. So we will always preach Christ as the way because that's what Jesus said about Himself. And it's because of only His life, His death, His resurrection, that we can be saved.

Those are essential. And then fifthly, to the glory of God alone. Because it is God who has saved us, and because He is God, all the glory belongs and goes to Him.

[11 : 11] We don't take credit for what He's done in us and what He's done through us. We don't deserve the salvation that we have received.

I know I don't. I still don't. I understand that God saved me. And so God gets the glory in all things. And so as Christians, we should seek to magnify God with the lives that He has given us to live with the salvation that we've received from Him to worship Him and to honor Him because He is worthy. These five statements, these convictions, were the reason, again, for the Protestant Reformation of which we are here because of what happened then. They were at the heart of the Reformers' call for the church to return back to the Bible, return back to biblical teaching, return back to the Word of God, to feed once again upon the bread of life.

And they are just as important for us today as they were back then. These statements are rooted in Scripture. They state what the Bible says. These doctrines were embraced by Luther, as mentioned, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Wycliffe, Whitefield, Bunyan, Spurgeon, and many, many others. But more importantly than that, these are doctrines, these are principles that find their origin and their source in Jesus Christ.

[12 : 40] These were Jesus' doctrines. This is what Jesus taught. This is what Jesus instructed. This is what Jesus believed. And they're embedded here in His words written in John 6.

And they're important for us. And so we'll take our time to unpack them beginning again in verses 36 and 37. So here's the main idea for this morning's message.

The offer of the Gospel is free, but no one on his own initiative will take it. The offer of the Gospel is free, but no one on his own initiative will take it.

Man does not have the ability in himself to come to Christ. God must do something first. Now before I continue, I want to pray again.

Let's pray. Lord God, we've read Your Word. And it is Your Word. You've been gracious to give it to us. You've called us to read it, to pray through it, to understand it, to meditate upon it.

[13 : 53] Lord, we want to get it right. We want to be right according to what Your Word has said. And so God, we pray that You would help us to get it right. That is our hope.

That is my hope. That we get it right. Because we know that one day, Lord, we will stand before You. And we will give an account for the lives that we live. And we want to get it right.

We want to get it right. And so Lord, we pray that You would speak to us today through Your Word. God, we pray that You would help us to focus upon what You've said.

give us eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to accept what Your Word says. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. And so when I first read John chapter 6, well, when I first read it and I felt like I truly began to understand or I actually looked at what Jesus said there for the very first time.

[14 : 53] I'd heard it before. I'd read it before. But when I started to really examine these statements and what they meant, these statements that initially perplexed me or otherwise that I just kind of skipped over to get to the next part.

When I first understand them, my reaction was to weep. To weep. I'd never taken credit for my salvation before, but in understanding these verses, I realized how unworthy I was of the salvation that I had.

I was brought face to face with the reality of my own inability, the reality of my sinful condition and Christ's willingness then to save me, to call me, to endure my punishment for my sins.

I realized that Jesus didn't merely make salvation possible. He saved me. When I was drowning in an ocean of sin, He didn't reach out His hand and give me the option to take hold of it or else drown. No, He dove head first into the water, immersing Himself in my sinful mess, my vast mess of sins.

[16 : 15] He pulled my lifeless body from the bottom and He breathed new life into my dead lungs. He saved me.

And if you know Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, I hope you understand that too. You were dead. He's given you life. And so my question is, if that's not the case for you, I hope that it will be, certainly.

These words contained here in these verses, I pray and I hope will bring you to a similar place if they haven't already as they did for me.

That you would worship Jesus Christ, your Savior, who's called you, who's saved you, who's redeemed you, who's plunged head first into the ocean of your sin to give you life and who in doing so will sustain you both now and forever more.

And that in understanding that you would live your life sold out for Jesus Christ, the One who has saved you. If not, I hope that you still will listen.

[17 : 38] I hope that you again would be likewise rescued from the burden of your debt to sin and receive that same life-giving breath that only comes through Jesus Christ, our only hope.

In these verses, Jesus then presents us with two realities about salvation. Two realities about salvation. The first is the reality of mankind's inability.

Mankind's inability. Verse 36. Again, Jesus says, but I said to you that you have seen Me and yet you do not believe.

The first reality about salvation is man's total spiritual inability. And here Jesus first introduces it in this sermon in verse 36.

In His opening remarks to this crowd that again has followed Him from the other side of the Sea of Galilee after they had participated in His miracle in which He fed them with a sack lunch of a little boy.

[18 : 45] And He fed upwards of 20,000 people with that. And so here, for the first time in this message, He introduces the truth of man's inability regarding their salvation, which is a constant theme that runs throughout the rest of this message that He gives.

We see it again in John 6.44. There Jesus speaking says, no one can come to Me. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day.

Again in John 6.65. And He said, before many of them turned on Him, this is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted by My Father.

In other words, what Jesus is saying here, look at His words, what is He saying here? I think what He's saying here is that they don't believe despite the incredible witness that they have received.

That He is someone pretty special, pretty important. Look at the miracle that He had just performed in their seeing, but they would not believe. Why? Because Jesus says that they could not believe.

[20 : 08] And Jesus knowing this then is revealing that despite the evidence presented to them of His miraculous power that He's not surprised by their unbelief.

He's not surprised by this because He's aware of their inability. Now in speaking of our inability, it is important to point out that Jesus is referring to a spiritual inability.

The inability of man to believe on His own initiative and inclination because man is born with a sinful nature.

Romans 3, 10-18 says there, as it is written, none is righteous. No, not one.

No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one. Their throat is an open grave.

[21 : 16] They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. And their paths are ruined in misery.

And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. I want to read another Scripture that came to my mind last night about this very thing too.

1 Corinthians 2, 14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to Him.

And He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Why not? Or another question to ask would be how do we find ourselves in this position?

Well, in Romans 5, 12 the Apostle Paul, again inspired by the Holy Spirit there, amongst many other places explains to us why that is. Therefore, it says just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin so death spread to all men because all have sinned.

[22 : 31] It continues on verse 18 and 19. Therefore, as one trespass led to the condemnation for all men so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

For as the one man's disobedience the many were sinners by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. So these verses to me clearly teach the true nature of every person other than Jesus Christ who has ever lived.

It isn't that we sin and that therefore makes us sinful. It's that we're born sinful and therefore we sin. The Bible says that we aren't born in some kind of a neutral position.

Right? Is this going to be a good egg or a rotten egg? I guess we'll just have to wait and find out. And we understand that we're born I think in this way as I've mentioned many times before by observing children.

If you've been a parent or a grandparent or you've had any kind of interaction with children you know that you spend a lot of your time correcting bad behavior. You know that it comes instinctively to them.

[23 : 50] Does it not? We don't have to sit down our kids and say let me listen you're so good I just want you to know I've got to explain what bad is to you because I don't think that you understand what it means to be bad what it means to misbehave and not only that but we also see in children again this is what I've noticed is that they seem to be thrilled with disobedience with rebellion and I you know I love my children they're not listening right now I see their heads down so but I speak from my own example right I loved to rebel just there was something about it there was something thrilled that in my just warmed my sinful little heart right we don't get as much joy out of obedience and here's the thing we do the same as adults we just are better at hiding it we've learned how to hide it better we still do the same so what what the Bible is saying here is that when Adam sinned as our representative in the garden of Eden in paradise when he sinned he plunged all of the human race under sin's curse now you might think that's not fair that's not fair for me

I wasn't there if I had the option I think I would have done better and what I would say to you is no you wouldn't have no you wouldn't have if it would have been you if it would have been me guess what we'd be in the same place that we are in today regarding sinfulness in fact I believe that you and I were there in a sense he being father we all have in common Eve his wife our mother and so when they sinned in a sense we were there and when they sinned the Bible says their eyes were open and they were aware of their nakedness they tried to cover it up with fig leaves if you recall and then when God entered the garden where they at once enjoyed fellowship with him and walking with him this time when he shows up what do they do they hide they hide from him they hide from his presence they don't run to him notice they don't run to him and beg for forgiveness oh I can't believe what we've done we've sinned God we've disobeyed you

Lord please forgive us what can you do to save us that's not their reaction what they tried to do again they tried to cover it up they tried to hide and then when God comes what do they do it's her fault Adam says Eve points to Satan and says no it's his fault right each one trying to deflect the blame towards another from themselves there we see the sin nature in effect and again we do the same today hiding from God by either denying his existence it's popular today we just pretend like God doesn't exist or we create God in an image that we're more comfortable with and you know you're doing that when you say well that doesn't sound like God to me when you hear the word that doesn't sound like God to me or you hear somebody say well God to me is this what they're doing if they just created an idol an image of God in their own mind and that's a way in which we hide from him still today and then again as we've seen becoming more prevalent in our culture is passing the blame on to other people you know

I can't help the way that I am it's a result of my parents it's a result of my upbringing it's because I didn't get that thing when I should have gotten it or whatever because I was cut from my sports team or whatever the case may be and so I'm messed up because of everybody else we do the same today because we're sinful the people who sought Jesus out that day wanted their stomachs filled again by him but this time Jesus was offering them something different something greater spiritual sustenance eternal life forgiveness righteousness peace with God but they didn't believe because it wasn't in their nature to so here an illustration may help us for understanding in the animal kingdom there are different kinds of animals right amen good job usually they're split into one of two categories you have the animals who eat nothing but plants herbivores and then you have the animals that eat nothing but meat carnivores of which the carnivore at the top of the food chain is the lion right now say and I hope this never happens but you encounter a hungry lion okay and I hope that doesn't happen because you might be his meal but say whatever the case there's a hungry lion and you get a delicious plate of salad one you get from like McAllister's

I like or other places this big piling high salad it doesn't just have the greens it has all the other stuff on it that makes it unhealthy right and you put that plate of salad in front of that lion and you back away what's his response going to be he might sniff at it he's not going to want to eat it and I don't think he will why not it's not in his nature to he has the ability to eat it he's got a mouth with teeth with tongue with a throat with a stomach to digest it all he could eat it but he won't eat it it's not in his nature to do that it doesn't appeal to its natural appetites the tragedy of man's situation apart from God's grace is that they will not admit their need and will not come to the Lord the God of the Bible Jesus Christ to have that need met because of their sinful nature that they are born with a nature that only

[30 : 28] God can overcome now at this point many will raise objections and I know that I have been there before and I have raised my objections and primarily that objection centers around free will at this point emotions get the better of us people walk out of the sermon or relationships can be messed up as a result of that because if we're not careful we allow our emotions to cloud out our ability to think that's what we've seen from God's word now let's look how it applies to our will first what is the will what is the will free will is the ability to make choices without any prior prejudice inclination or disposition for the will to be free truly free then it must act from a neutral posture or position but if that's the case if we do in fact make choices with no prior inclination then we be making choices for no reason you understand we be making choices for no reason at all everything that we did would just be spontaneous and if we make choices for no reasons then we really couldn't say or determine morality based on what is right and wrong we couldn't say well that was bad for you to do because there was no motivation for the choice that they made there would be no reason for the choice that was made so we couldn't measure it by a moral standard in fact a choice couldn't be made at all if that was the case but whatever we choose to do we choose to do it for a reason we make choices for a reason there is a motivation behind every choice that we make and that motivation is what

God ultimately evaluates if it doesn't make sense to you that's good because it shouldn't because we don't make choices like that whatever choice we make we make it for a reason think you are sitting where you're at right now for a reason what was the reason I'll give you a couple seconds to think about it amen amen not many joined you Wes!

but it could be you know I want to sit in the back as many back row Baptists do because I want to get to the exit as soon as I can you maybe won't confess that to other people but you think I got to beat the Methodist to the restaurant or whatever the case may be or some of you sit closer because of your eyesight is not very good or some of you there's friends that sit in that area that you are buddies with and you want to be close to them or if we're honest there might be somebody here that you're trying to avoid and so you sit on the other side of the sanctuary and if that's the case let me know because we want to resolve that issue but for a lot of different reasons and it could be !! sit here well when you first sat in that spot there was a reason behind it because there's a reason for everything that we do to better help us understand this we'll turn to a child's story the story of Alice in Wonderland Alice if you remember in that story she comes to a fork in the road and she's not sure which way to turn so she's facing this dilemma the Cheshire cat grinning up in a tree looks down and asks her or actually she sees him and she asks him would you please tell me where I ought to go cat replies well that depends a good deal on where you want to get and Alice replies well I don't care where then the cat says it doesn't matter which way you go so we understand Alice's dilemma is is is that truthfully she has four options to choose from she could go left she could go right she could return the way from which she came or she could stay where she's at forever until she can't stand anymore right and so whatever step she takes in whatever direction she must take it for a reason a prior inclination if not if there's no motive if there's no reason behind that choice then what she's going to do is stay put and go nowhere

Jonathan Edwards was a great pastor and theologian of the 18th century he died while serving as the president of what would become Princeton University during his life he wrote a book called the freedom of the will according to Edwards a human being is not only free to choose what he desires but must choose what he desires in order to choose at all he said the will always chooses according to its strongest inclination and desire in the moment and so he concludes then that every choice is free yet simultaneously every choice is determined now this is where it gets tricky if it wasn't already tricky before because that sounds like a contradiction doesn't it but by determined

[36 : 48] Edwards is not referring to determinism determinism means that we are forced or coerced to do things by external factors what Edwards is referring to is the desire and internal motivations that determine the choices that we make Edwards insisted that as a result of the fall in the fall man lost his original desire for God and so with that his ability to choose Christ so now my question for you is that not in line with what scripture says is that not the message of Christ in these verses look again at John 6 65 he says again no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my father now let's break down that statement and see if it matches what Edwards said about the will the first element of what

Jesus says there in John 65 is that no one right he says no one that's a universal all inclusive statement no one means no one and so that includes you and me because we are both someone but Jesus says no one no one is what he says first next he says can no one can and can is a very important word because can deals with our ability to do something not asking for permission so again we've already talked about Alice in Wonderland I'm going to put you back in elementary school and you asked your teacher can I go to the bathroom to which your teacher especially if she had a love for the English language would say something like well I have no doubt that you can but yes you may go to the bathroom because can refers to ability the word may refers to permission Jesus isn't saying no one is allowed to come he is saying that no one can come because it's not our desire to do so being born with a sinful nature now the next part of that verse in 65 is even more important this is really I think what we need to focus on most Jesus says no one can come but then the next part he says unless unless and so here Jesus introduces a necessary condition we can't come on our own unless he says unless something happens that enables us to come that something is according to our Lord the Father's granting for them to come the granting is a gift and it refers to the gift of the new birth and so again just as you took no part in your physical birth so you've taken no part in your spiritual birth is this not what

Jesus said when he was meeting with Nicodemus let's look at John 3 5 through 8 Jesus answered truly truly I say to you unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God again speaking of ability that which is born of the flesh is flesh that which is born of the spirit is spirit do not marvel that I said to you you must be born again the wind blows where it wishes you hear it sound but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes so it is with everyone who is born of the spirit not a result of flesh a result of God's working through his!

Then John 1 11! 13 there John the apostle bears witness of Christ he came to his own his own people did not receive him but to all who did receive him who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God how did they get that right why were they able to become children of God he answers it in the next verse!

[41 : 34] verse 13 who were born! speaking of the! not of the blood meaning that two Christians can come together and have a child and that does not mean that that child is therefore Christian it doesn't pass in the genetic code through their bloodstream not born of blood not born of the will as we've just examined not born of the will of the flesh I could want somebody else to be saved with all my heart but only it's God who saves them and then he says nor of the will of man the will of that person will of man but of God when I wept over this passage it was again because I began to see for the first time just how utterly hopeless I was how absolutely necessary it was for

Christ to come and to save me by his grace I'm telling you I wept because at the same time I saw how unworthy I was but the great worth that I had that he would save a sinner like me you cannot but God can and if he has rejoice rejoice that your once blind eyes now see that your once deflated lungs have been filled with the breath of Christ by the indwelling of his spirit which has saved you which will forever keep you which will usher you forever into his eternal presence now having said that there is a flip side here that I know is essential for us to understand what Jesus has to say the second reality of salvation

Jesus mentions here is the free offer of God's grace the free offer of God's grace verse 37 again Jesus says all that the father gives me will come and whoever comes to me I will! cast out and so this is what I fully understand Christians are called to go Christians are called to share the gospel it is our God given mission to go to the ends of the world and to share the good news of Jesus Christ to implore unbelievers that they would be saved to pray that they will be saved and this is what I understand my job is to share the gospel but ultimately it is God who saves some will come some won't I know I could not have come without God sending someone to me to share the good news of Jesus Christ with me with the free offer of God's grace to me and so today the

gospel is proclaimed to you it's an offer for you today despite your lack of knowledge of the scriptures despite your list of sins no matter how long that list is despite whatever age you are despite your ethnicity!

this is an invitation for everybody and we go and we give it to everybody this is what matters most that you come that you come we can debate the how and the why but what matters most to me and I believe to our Lord is that we declare and give testimony of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done I can't force anyone to be saved there's some people I wish I could force to be saved I've gone and I've shared the gospel with them and I will continue to do so and I will continue to pray for their salvation but I know ultimately it's up to God many of you have heard my testimony before a boy going to church and a lot of times

[46 : 35] I didn't want to go to church and so when we're talking about our motivations right on Sunday morning my motivation was not to go to church but I had a deeper motivation which was I don't want to have to answer to my angry father for not going to church so therefore I'll get my rear end up and go to church thankfully by God's grace I was saved at a young age I was called to the ministry when I was 16 years old no doubt about that that's what God wanted me to do I went to college thinking that I would pursue that call realizing that or you know it's not fair that God should tell me what to do I think I can do a better job I don't want to be in ministry I don't want to pastor I don't want to preach I want to do something else so I ran hard and I ran fast I won't get into the details of that but to say

I remember some nights some mornings after some nights I couldn't bear to look at myself in the mirror because I knew the mess that I had made of my life I was saved I had made a mess I remember being in church God's grace he brought my wife into my life that really helped get me on track I remember soon after being in church praying singing I remember what was preached that night or what was read but I knew that God was taking that wandering sheep leaving the 99 gently grabbing him and putting him on his shoulder bringing him back it was a hard way back it was not because of

Jesus but because of other people I remember first wanting to help out with the youth group and there was some skepticism should we let somebody like that help out here we heard rumors we know some things God was always gentle forgiving gracious merciful and loving so if you haven't come to him whatever the case may be you're saved and you've drifted you're not saved whatever the case may be he's calling you today and he's presenting you with that free offer of his grace Jesus Christ has come God became man he exchanged the crown of heaven for a crown of thorns God is holy is perfect standard is perfection and because of our sin nature as we've talked about we could never measure up to that perfection so

Jesus came he lived the sinless life that we are incapable of living he willingly went to the cross and laid down his life enduring God's wrath for our sins enduring hell in our place suffering dying three days later he came back to life resurrecting from the grave as proof that his sacrifice was sufficient that he is the son of God he lives today and he reigns forever there's nothing you can do to put God in your debt there's no amount of good deeds that you can do to ever put God in a place like that for you to be saved you must believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you must put your faith in him again it's not about cleaning ourselves up beforehand say

I've never been to church before it's been a long time you just come you just come and he will embrace you and those who come to him as he said he will never cast away never so won't you please come won't you please come two questions for application as we close first is this who or what are you trusting in for your salvation today if you were to stand before God today what reason would you give him that you should enter heaven what reason would you give we know from scripture the only reason that you can give that grants you that entrance is genuine saving faith in [51 : 59] Jesus Christ I don't deserve it Lord I know I should not be here but Christ has saved me and he's covered me with his righteousness if you're trusting in anything else for salvation besides Jesus Christ I mean this lovingly you're wrong you're wrong only Jesus can save what are you trusting in for your salvation today second how much of the credit do you give to God for the salvation that you have received even if you disagree with anything that I've said today how much of the credit do you give for God for what you've received from him your salvation you say you know I'll give God 99% but there's that one little percent I gotta leave out left for me if you see what Jesus says in his word salvation is from

God by God! for God and he gets the credit and when you get into heaven I have a feeling and I know most if not all of you you are not going to get there and say boy I did it I did it I'm so glad I'm here I deserve this I did it no despite what you believe here about this I believe that you like me we are going to rejoice we're going to give all the glory to God so let's do that now let's do that now let's pray heavenly father we are thankful for Jesus Christ Lord we know that without his coming without his living without his dying without his rising again we would be without hope in this world but Christ has come he's died in our place he's risen from the dead your word says Lord that when we believe in faith in Christ that our sin is taken away from us it's been placed on him on the cross and in its place we have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ and so now when you look at us sometimes we can't bear to look at ourselves in the mirror you see your son Jesus a righteous person whom you've chosen to call and to save likewise Lord we know that you have commanded us clearly that it is our job to go it is our job to bear witness it is our job to give testimony it is our job to extend that free offer of your grace and God I pray that we would do that boldly and courageously knowing that whatever results from that they are yours but we will be pleasing to you and fulfilling what you've called us to do and so

God we allow ourselves to get distracted by so many different things that we fail to see or take part in the great commission that you've given to us we know right now what the world needs is not Christians turned inward bickering about different things but turning outwards and going out into the world and telling them about Christ that they would have experience the hope that we have in Christ so help us to do that as a church to stand upon your word to be uncompromising in what it has to say to be obedient to it but to be looking outwards to go to make disciples declaring the good news of Jesus Christ that they may be saved Lord thank you for how gracious and merciful you are to sinners who don't deserve it may you be glorified in our lives and we ask these things in Jesus name

Amen Amen!

[56 : 24]