

Belief in an Utterly Sufficient Savior

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] Jesus Christ. Fellows, we're going to continue our look at the rescue of the gospel.

! Kind of a review from the human standpoint.

It takes two things. Working in concert with each other to be saved. And that is, you must repent of your sins and you must believe. And this truth is taught both in the Old and New Testament. It was taught by the Lord Jesus and it was taught by the apostles. And we looked at some length at the doctrine of repentance. And then last week we had our introductory lesson on believing. We're going to be moving deeper into that topic today. And you might describe these two essentials this way. Repentance is sort of the negative aspect of salvation.

[1 : 16] I say negative in the sense that it involves a turning away from sin. Faith we can describe as the positive aspect of turning to God and trusting in the finished work of Christ to provide to us forgiveness and righteousness, His righteousness, and eternal life.

When we are truly saved, we are brought out of darkness and brought into light. And then and only then are we able to look upon the glory of Christ and we find Him as the utterly sufficient Savior for us.

He is able and willing to cleanse us from sin and provide to us a perfect righteousness which He provides to all who are being saved.

That, of course, is most satisfying to the soul of the believer. As one of the great theologians wrote, beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ, the sinner embraces Jesus with all his heart entrusting and committing himself to all that Christ is and thus saving faith as a fundamental commitment of the whole person to the whole Christ.

With his mind, heart, and will, the believer embraces Jesus as Savior, advocate, provider, sustainer, counselor, and, of course, Lord God.

[3 : 00] But what do we mean when we say that we must believe? It means to have faith. So belief and faith are used interchangeably.

They actually come from the same Greek word and in almost every case in the New Testament can be interchanged. Believing or having faith touches every religion.

Muslims believe in Allah. Jews believe in the teaching of Moses. Mormon friends believe in Joseph Smith.

Reorganized Mormons believe in Brigham Young. Scientologists believe in the writings of L. Ron Hubbard. I understand they now have their own TV channel. And it goes.

Every cult, every occult, you can come up with who they believe in. But what do we believe in in order to be saved?

[4 : 06] We are required to believe and trust in what God the Father has done for us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As it pertains to a right standing before God, we are to forsake any other confidences we have in anything other than the finished work of Christ.

And we find ourselves trusting exclusively in the person and in the work of Christ Jesus. We trust exclusively in the death of Christ on the cross.

And we know that death was an atoning sacrifice for our sins. And we must also trust in His resurrection from the dead. I mean, if He's not been raised from the dead, we're pitiful.

We're pitiful people. But He has been raised from the dead. Faith then involves believing the work Christ has done. And we must believe that He did this specifically for us individually.

[5 : 21] It doesn't do any good. You know, people say, well, yeah, He died for the whole world or He died for the pygmies in Africa. Did He die for you? And did He die for me? Is it applied to us individually?

And we must believe that what Jesus has done reconciled us to a holy God. We must embrace the fact that the sacrifice of Christ has satisfied completely the wrath that God the Father has towards us because of our sin.

I remember when Paul Orsha was preaching at a church and it was going to be Sunday morning through Friday and he was going to teach on the topic of faith and the atonement and all that. And he got up there Sunday morning and he said the sacrifice of Christ on the cross did a whole lot, but primarily it appeased the wrath of God towards sin, towards sinners. those who are saved. God's wrath was appeased. And after lunch, the pastor said, don't come back.

[6 : 33] We don't believe that. God didn't have wrath. Satan has wrath. You know, Satan put Him on the cross. I mean, they're not at the first rung of Christianity.

Christianity. We believe that we've been reconciled to God because of the Son and the Father, having reconciled us through His Son, has granted us eternal life.

And this is the very thing we don't deserve and we can never earn. God commands all men to repent of their sins. Acts 17.30 In the times of ignorance, God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent.

And then in 1 John 3.23, He commands every man to believe in His Son. And this is His commandment that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as He has commanded us.

So there we have it. When the multitudes came to Jesus, they said, Lord, what kind of work can we do to do the works of God?

[7 : 55] And Jesus responded, they were talking about a plurality of works. Jesus responded, this is the work of God, singular, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.

Now there's an important point here and one that it would be easy to pass over. And we have to be careful. We are commanded to believe in Jesus.

And we can word that sentence this way and remain faithful to the original language. We are commanded to believe in Jesus. We are commanded to have faith in Jesus.

We are commanded to trust in Jesus. We are commanded to commit our lives to Jesus. It is not some game where, you know, like I did with some family members on Diane's side years ago and I went and I said, I'd like to talk to you about the Lord.

And they said, I took care of that when I was nine years old. Don't bother me with that stuff now. No, it's a continuing belief. Just like it's a continuing repentance.

[8 : 59] We continue to have faith. We continue to repent when it is necessary. So we are commanded all those things. But this is the important point.

We believe in Jesus to the exclusion of everyone and everything in the universe. There is no object of faith that we focus on apart from Christ that adds to our salvation.

It is Jesus plus nothing. And I've got to tell you, there's a lot of denominations that reject that. There's the evangelical denominations so-called that reject that.

The Roman Catholics, it's a combination of faith and you have to do certain works. We believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world to the utter exclusion of everyone else claiming to be Him or claiming the ability to save a soul.

And there are people out there that do that. We reject any additions to faith in Christ or anything that is put in His place. It is never Christ plus good works as so many denominations and every human devised religion embrace.

[10 : 26] Mark this thought down in your mental file. We do not trust in Jesus Christ as a Savior. We trust in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

Big difference. He is the Savior. And search the universe, there is no more. The Scripture says this in Acts 4.12, and there is salvation in no one else.

That's pretty plain, isn't it? For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And that's not rocket science, guys.

We can all understand that. The fact that Jesus is the exclusive Savior was not born in a Christian fundamentalist mind. It did not originate with Luther or Calvin or Zwingli.

This is the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles. And He's the one that taught the apostles.

And we should all remember how Paul was a mentor for his son in the faith, a young man named Timothy.

[11 : 41] And he gave Timothy much wise counsel, but maybe this is the most important in 1 Timothy 2.5, for there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

There's just one. We have a lot of ministers in the world today that deny that Jesus is the exclusive and only way to eternal life in heaven. Whole denominations have bought into this lie. And I'm being neither unfair nor hypocritical to say that anyone who would claim salvation in anyone or anything other than the Lord Jesus, Him solely, Him exclusively, has denied the faith. That is a denial of the faith. And they await a terrible fate in the bowels of hell. In fact, Christ issued this warning, saying, but whoever denies Me before men, Him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Dr. Criswell used to say there was a one scarlet thread that runs through the whole Bible from Genesis through Revelation. I think he put it Genesis to the beginning of maps in the back of the Bible.

[13 : 05] And that scarlet thread is Christ. He is the scarlet thread. Genuine faith is results oriented.

What is the outcome of genuine faith? The answer to that is faith that results in glory offered to God. When you have genuine faith, you offer glory to God.

And I'm speaking there of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Let me read this to you out of the book of Romans. I think this is a perfect description of faith. Romans 4.20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God.

And note two things. This is the faith of Abraham. First, his faith brought glory to God because it was accompanied by genuine worship, which brought faith.

But the faith itself, standing alone, also brought glory to God. And the very key to understanding why God views faith in this manner is found in the book of Hebrews.

[14 : 24] The writer of Hebrews, whoever he was, says this. Hebrews 11.6 But without faith, it is impossible to please him.

For he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Now, when we have faith, it is honoring to God because we are declaring that we trust in his character. this is pleasing to God.

We are at the same time declaring that we believe and trust in God's self-revelation concerning himself. When we trust him, and I am speaking of the Trinity here, we are making a declaration to every human and every angel that he is in fact God and his work is perfect, his ways are absolutely just, he is a keeper of his covenant and that it is impossible for him to lie.

That's what it means to have faith, to believe. We believe all those things. People who do not believe are an affront to their creator God.

[15 : 46] They're an affront to him. Unbelief attacks the very character of God. unbelief casts a cloud over all that God has done in the past, all that he is doing in the present, and all that he is going to do in the future for eternity.

It is a tragedy in our day and every day that we live in this world that the world denies the existence of God. They dispute his claims as creator.

They dispute his claims as sustainer of the universe. And those who deny him are really placing his claims under the microscope of human scrutiny. Now, as I was going through this lesson, I kept thinking of a person, the physicist Stephen Hawking.

And ironically, when I was preparing this lesson, Stephen Hawking died. He was the one that had ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. he was a staunch evolutionist and a more staunch denier of even the hint of the existence of God.

He was rabid atheist. He was way beyond agnosticism. He was out and out and out and he mocked religion in every form, but especially focused on Christianity.

[17 : 21] Now, the one radio station I never listened to, NPR, National Public Radio, which by the way, we pay for part of that with our tax money.

They had this to say, if I can now find my notes because they got buried in here. I came across this that they wrote as a tribute to the memory of Stephen Hawking.

And it was entitled, and they read this on the radio, it was entitled you want a physicist to speak at your funeral. You want the physicist to talk to your grieving family about the conservation of energy

so that they will understand that your energy has not died.

You want the physicist to remind your sobbing mother about the first law of thermodynamics, that no energy gets created in the universe and none is destroyed.

You want your mother to know that all your energy, every vibration, every BTU of heat, every wave of every particle that was in her beloved child remains with her in this world.

[18 : 42] You want the physicist to tell your weeping father that amid the energies of the cosmos, you gave as good as you got. And at one point you'd hope that the physicist would step down from the pulpit and walk to your broken hearted spouse there in the pew and tell him or her that all the photons that ever bounced off your face, all the particles whose paths were interrupted by your smile, by the touch of your hair, hundreds of trillions of particles have raced off like children, their ways forever changed by you, and as your widow rocks in the arms of a loving family, may the physicist let him or her know that all the photons that bounced from you were gathered in the particle detectors that are his or her eyes, that those photons created within her or him constellations of electromagnetically charged neurons whose energy will go on forever.

forever. And the physicist will remind the congregation of how much all our energy is given off as heat. There may be a few fanning themselves with the programs, and he will tell them that the warmth that flowed through you in life is still there, still part of all that we are, even as we who mourn continue the heat of our own lives.

I'll just cringe at this one. And you'll want the physicist to explain to those who loved you that they do not have to have faith. They don't need faith.

They should, and listen to this, they should not have faith. Let them know that they can measure, that scientists have measured precisely the conservation of energy and found it accurate, verifiable, and consistent across space and time.

You can hope your family will examine the evidence and satisfy themselves that the science is sound, that they'll be comforted to know your energy is still around. According to the law of the conservation of energy, not a bit of you is gone, you're just less orderly.

[20 : 58] Now, nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. Tonight, Stephen Hawking is crying out from a place of unspeakable horror.

with the message, please tell my family they need to repent and they need to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what he's calling him tonight.

But no one is listening to Stephen Hawking and no one can hear him. God has spoken to us in truth and set his seal upon his works in history and given to us the evidence of his existence.

The greatest testimony God has given us is found in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. the one who believes in the Son believes in God.

The one who does not believe in the Son does not believe in God. Unbelief makes God out to be a liar. This is what John said in his first epistle.

[22 : 16] If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. We had the testimony of men, didn't we? On NPR.

The testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God that he is born concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life and this life is in his Son.

Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son does not have life. Can you get any plainer than that?

John is writing the words of the Holy Spirit of God who cannot lie. An impossibility. He says that God has infinitely more credibility over any testimony of mere man.

[23 : 36] The Bible declares that all men are in fact liars and that God is not a man, that he would either lie and neither does God need to repent of anything. God has given testimony to all creatures as to truth.

And the testimony of God is found in his Son. It pertains to salvation, fellowship with God, and eternal life which is found in Christ alone.

Anyone who does not wholly and completely embrace Christ has no hope of eternal life. Apart from the Lord Jesus, people have no part of God the Father.

I can't tell you, I'm 70 now, I'm younger than Oscar, I'm younger than Jerry, but barely. But I can't tell you how many people tell me, well, I believe in God, but I don't believe in Jesus. Well, that's not even going to get you, you're not even going to strike the ball much less to get to first base. I like what my wife saw this on YouTube, a little four-year-old black girl wanted to preach. The black church, the priest said, well, come on up here and preach. [24 : 50] She was about 30 minutes. And at the end, she says, and you people out there think you're going to heaven without Jesus? You're going to heaven without Jesus? Good luck with that. Little four-year-old girl.

We need to bring her, Pastor. We'll get her and Jack up there. Hazel. Apart from the Lord Jesus, people have no part of God the Father. How can I verify that? 1 John 2 23. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. It's plain. God I dare imagine if we were going to raise our hands, we won't do that, that every person in this room wants to please God. I imagine everyone in this room wants to bring glory to God.

We can do that by believing, trusting, relying upon, and obeying that which God gives as His greatest testimony to this dying, dark, sin-filled world, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. [26 : 09] God is well-pleased in Jesus. He made that statement at the baptism. This is my Son in whom I'm well-pleased. He is making that statement today. This is so important to God that no one can even come to the Father except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said I'm the way, the truth, and the life. And if I knew anything about the Greek language, which I don't, except what I steal from other men, the word V there, it's exclusive. I am the exclusive way. Search the universe. There's no other way. I'm the exclusive life. There's no other life in the cosmos but mine. And I am true truth. Dr. Schaefer branded it. He is true truth. There's one other thing that a true call to faith dispenses with. It marks an end to boasting.

And we're not going to get very far into this. But it's very important. Let me give you just a little seed. There is no room in genuine Christianity for the slightest boasting when it comes to salvation. [27 : 24] salvation. And guys, I've heard men boast. Not in this room. Not even in this church. But I've heard men boast.

My best friend in high school, we played ball together. His dad's a great man. Church builder, church planter. But he was arguing with me. He was a Church of Christ guy. Except they had a piano. That wing. And he argued with me because he said, I better get more rewards than the guys that haven't done hardly anything. And I'm thinking, man, why would you even say that? You're going to be there by the grace of God. Why would you even say that? There is no room for any boasting. I had a guy, a good friend of mine, that was basically boasting in the Lord. In himself, rather. there's no room. If we mingle one minute work or one scintilla of our efforts to be saved, we are guilty of a heinous crime against God, against his son, and against the Holy Spirit. [28 : 40] If we do this and say, well, yeah, it was 90-10, or 60-40, or 99-1, or 99.9 and .1, then our Christianity has become a works religion.

And there's already enough of that. We don't need it. Justification then has to be earned and is not dispensed by grace. God becomes the debtor to men as they boast before him as to what they have accomplished to be placed into the body of Christ. Look what I've done. Look at the prayer I prayed. Look, I came forward in that church. I even went and got baptized and boy, it was embarrassing. I mean, this is what we're talking about. It was the great apostle Paul who worked diligently to show us the depravity of man and his inability to please God through any fleshly deed. It was Paul who wrote in Romans 3 19 that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. [30 : 02] Now, when we get our hands around that truth, we take our eyes off of ourselves and we put them on God and that's where they deserve to be.

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. We look to Him in faith. As Paul said to the Corinthians, He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.

The truth concerning boasting or not boasting is vitally important. I've just scratched the surface. Most people, and this is why it's important, most people in this world are trying to earn a place with God and are proud of it.

and they boast. The cults are really into this. I remember a little old lady was a Jehovah witness. She was in her mid-80s.

And in the middle of August in like Dallas, Texas, she's on a street corner trying to hand out Watchman whatever that magazine is.

[31 : 10] and a Baptist guy went up to her and said, can I show you a passage? He said, what are you doing? She said, I'm trying to work my way into heaven.

He said, can I show you a passage of Scripture? And he read her Ephesians 2, 8, 9. For by grace are you saved through faith on that not of yourselves. It is a gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

And she looked at him and she said, I'm almost 88 years old. What am I doing out here? It's 104 degrees. And I can't earn it? What am I doing out here?

I'll never forget that. I saw it on video. People boast.