

Conversion

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 August 2026

Preacher: Jeff Kliewer

[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Lord, we thank you for everything that goes into salvation.

I was going to start praying through it, but there's too many pieces that we've been talking about this summer. Lord, as we talk about conversion tonight, Lord, it's a topic that's very personal to each one of us.

And some may say it's even basic, but it's critical. And Lord, please give me the words to say tonight. Help me to accurately represent your word most of all.

In Jesus' name, amen. So, as I was praying a minute ago, and I was thinking about it and talking with Tyler on the way in, and he said, you know, he said, conversion, he said it's, he made some comment where he was kind of joking about how, you know, we could cover it quickly.

But he was clearly joking about that because it made me think, walking in, that this is a truly personal topic for each one of us.

[1:34] Because each one of us either has been or has not been converted. Everybody in the world throughout history either has been or has not been converted.

And as we think about family members, as we think about friends, as we think about people that we see on social media or in the world who would claim, I'm a Christian, I believe in God, and maybe have a Bible verse, you know, penned in a black marker on the side of their sneaker on the basketball floor.

Are they a believer? Are they not? I'm glad that I'm not to judge, not the one to judge. But scripture certainly clearly lays out what is required to be converted as a Christian.

And if there's missing pieces, then not only logic, but scripture would say there's not a conversion that's taken place.

So let's dig in carefully into what God's word says. So if you've got your Wayne Grudem systematic theology, we're looking at chapter 35.

[2:51] Again, conversion, faith, and repentance. Familiar Christian words, sometimes easy to misunderstand as they're used and thrown out there frequently.

Let's start with a couple of definitions. Grudem begins by defining conversion. Conversion, he says, is our willing response to the gospel call in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.

Then he tells us that the word conversion means a turning, a spiritual turning from sin to Christ. The turning from sin is called repentance, and the turning to Christ is called faith.

Think of it like a coin, which is an analogy that's often given for conversion. Two sides to a coin.

There's a heads, there's a tails. That's what conversion is. There's the faith, there's the repentance.

You can't have that coin if you don't have both sides. If you only have one side, you don't have a coin. You need both sides of that coin. And in order for conversion to take place, we have to have repentance and we have to have faith.

[3:57] Two sides of the same coin. And more specifically, as we think about what this conversion is and what this turning is, it's a turning from sin and turning to Christ, again, in one kind of quick motion, almost concurrently, if you will.

Grudem also makes the point, he says, neither one can occur without the other. They must occur together. So that's kind of the overview of where we're headed. Now let's get into some more specifics.

He says that true saving faith includes knowledge, approval, and a personal trust. Now, this is, I like to try and put pieces together in my own mind.

And I like to put pieces together from things that I've learned on other subjects, other parts of the Bible, and try and connect dots. So as I think about this, and as I read through this chapter, and we get to, we're going to start with faith, as I get to repentance as well.

And as I think about other resources that I've looked at over the years, specifically, like Louis Burkhoﬀ mentions how these aspects of saving faith, knowledge, approval, and personal trust really hit on different parts of our human being.

[5:28] When you think of knowledge, you think of the head, right? When you think about approval, there's emotion that's involved. When you think about trust, there's an aspect of the will that's involved.

So there's knowledge, there's head, mind, emotion, and trust, or will, I should say. And that's, we're going to see that as we go along.

And I think those are really important. If you can kind of think through that framework, maybe I'll just write it out really quick, because we're going to say head or mind, emotion, and will.

And we're going to see how both repentance and faith attach to those three elements. So, and that's a good word for it, elements of saving faith.

These aren't steps. These are so closely tied, they're almost, again, concurrent, that it would be hard to separate it if you weren't really kind of parsing it out. But I think it is important to parse it out, as we'll see.

[6:32] All right, I need to go faster. Knowledge alone, we see from the Bible, is not enough. Now, that may seem like a bold statement to say, but we can see that from Scripture.

It's certainly necessary that we have some knowledge, but it's not enough in and of itself. Romans 10, verse 14. How then will they call on Him whom they have not believed?

So certainly there is a knowledge that's required. And how are they to believe in Him in whom they have never heard? So, again, it's very clear. We hear the gospel. We learn who Christ is.

We learn what He's done, the person and work of Jesus Christ. We learn that He lived. He died for sinners. He rose from the dead. But that's not enough, according to the Bible.

It's a part, but it's not enough. Romans 1.32 says, So it says, Here's the key part.

[7:42] They know God's righteous decree. But they're still practicing their sin. And they deserve to die, as that verse says. So the knowledge is not enough. James 2.19.

You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons believe and shudder. So, again, we know, to put it in a cliché version, Satan and the devil and the demons, they're not atheists.

They believe that God exists, right? We understand that. But certainly they're not on their way to heaven. They have not been converted. Grudem goes further.

He says knowledge and approval are not enough. Though important, it's not enough. Let's think about Nicodemus.

In John chapter 3. He says, Rabbi, speaking to Jesus, We know that you are a teacher come from God. For no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with them.

[8:41] He evaluated the evidence. He saw or heard about some miracles. He reached accurate conclusions about Jesus, even. Not only that he exists, but accurate conclusions about him.

But that alone did not mean that Nicodemus had saving faith. He still had to put his faith in Christ for salvation. He still had to trust him, to believe him. We can think about Agrippa in the book of Acts, chapter 26, verses 27 and 28.

Agrippa knew the Jewish scriptures. He apparently even believed what the prophets said. It says, King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe, as Paul is speaking to him.

And Agrippa said to Paul, In a short time, would you persuade me to be a Christian? So Paul says, Agrippa, you know, you know, you believe these things, but yet he was not converted.

So knowledge plus agreement does not necessarily equal saving faith as well. So the third element of saving faith, as Grudem says, accurately reflecting scripture, he says, I must decide to trust Jesus to save me personally.

[10:05] If you have Grudem's book, I think it's a really good couple paragraphs where he talks about what word is the right word to use here.

Because some people, again, we kind of tend to use the word faith, trust, belief interchangeably. He says, today's day and age belief is a word that has different maybe connotations.

I believe that, you know, Sydney is the capital of Australia, but I have no emotional attachment to that. That doesn't mean much. I believe that seven times six equals 42 doesn't mean much.

We also have faith. Some may say, I've got faith that the Kansas Jayhawks are going to have a good football team this year. Well, that's lofty expectations and not built on much, you know, substance.

So that's probably not, I mean, it's biblical, but I really think it's interesting. A really good word to use in 2026 is trust.

[11:05] Because we all know what that means. If you trust somebody, you are relying upon them. You're putting yourself in their hands to some degree, either physically or emotionally, something like that.

So I think trust is a really good word here. Grudem says, in addition to the knowledge of the facts of the gospel and approval of those facts, in order to be saved, have to trust.

I move from being an interested observer of the facts of salvation and the teachings of the Bible to someone who enters into a new relationship with Christ as a person who is alive.

And he gives this definition for saving faith. He says, saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.

Okay. Again, I like to connect dots. I also like analogies. Because even though we all know they break down at some point, to me it's helpful if I can start to put these things in terms that I understand.

[12:11] So, imagine you've been diagnosed with a serious disease. If left untreated, it's eventually going to kill you. You hear about a surgeon who specializes in this condition.

You do some research. You look up some Google reviews. He or she has amazing reviews. Maybe you had a friend that went to that surgeon who had the same, who required surgery, who was ultimately healed.

The success rate is outstanding. The friend says, he saved my life. I would trust him completely.

Now, what do you have at this point? You have head knowledge, right?

This seems to be a good surgeon that exists. But that's as far as you've gotten so far, right? Okay.

You think about it a little bit further.

And you eventually say, you know what? I'm going to go to him. I'm going to do it. He's going to be my surgeon.

[13:16] And you have made up your mind. Maybe mind is the wrong word here. You have the knowledge. You've decided that he's the one. If you're going to have to require this surgery, he's the one you're going to go to.

Are you healed yet? No. You haven't done anything yet. Because it's not enough to just have the knowledge and the emotion, the desire. You've got to take that next step.

You've got to make the call, right? To the office. You've got to get set up with an appointment.

You've got to, when surgery day comes, you've got to show up.

You've got to put on the gown. You've got to get on the bed. And at what point have you really trusted him to perform that surgery? It's when you start counting back from 10 and they say, all right, we're going to put you under.

Right? At that point, that's when you've trusted and you've said, he's going to do this. My life is in his hands. Until then, you haven't truly put your faith in that surgeon because you could back out at any point.

[14:19] Does that make sense? Again, it probably breaks down. We'll come back to that. Grudem goes on to say that this trust, it's in a person and it's in Jesus Christ.

And he's a living person. Let's kind of dig in on what this word trust is. What does that mean? It's a reliance. John 1.12 says, But to all who did receive him, that's us receiving Jesus, receiving him into our life, bringing him in.

Who believed in his name. Not just believed his name, but believed in his name. He gave the right to become children of God. Matthew 11.28-30.

Come to me, Jesus speaking. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. There's words here, again, kind of used interchangeably, such as receiving Jesus into our life, making him a part of our life, believing in him, coming unto him.

[15 : 33] But the definition, as Grudem says, emphasizes a personal trust, not just, again, beliefs about Christ. Trust is personal.

If we think about going back to the surgery analogy, that's a very critical, personal decision. Who you would go to for a life-saving procedure.

Trusting in a person who is trustworthy is absolutely critical. And again, it's very personal, right? Grudem, again, he says, Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. John 1.12, again, I already read it.

But to all who did receive him. So, this word carries with it the idea, if you think about, if you were receiving a guest into your house, there's a personal nature of that.

[16 : 33] John 3.16 says, For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him, again, not just believes him. And I'm not trying to parse words just for the sake of parsing it.

But I think this is critical because it's not just believing Jesus in what he said. It's believing in. And even in the Greek, there's a couple words that it literally is.

Pastuo es, which is believing in or believing into someone. Which is, again, different from just saying, yeah, I believe that about them. There's an intimate nature of that.

But Leon Morris, who's a commentator, I can't, this, I think, sums it up really well. He says, Faith for John, again, in John 3.16 or throughout the book.

Faith for John is an activity which takes men right out of themselves and makes them one with Christ. Again, so as we believe in him, that union with Christ, which is a whole other subject that we could talk about in systematic theology, is it begins at that moment when we're believing in him.

[17 : 48] John 6.37. There we are. John 6.37 says, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. John 7.37, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

The object of our faith is not merely a doctrine, it's Jesus Christ himself. So, after we've been converted, our faith should continue to increase as we learn more about God.

Our faith should continue to increase as our knowledge increases about Christ. That makes a lot of logical sense, right? The more that I know my wife, the more that I trust my wife.

It's also biblical. Romans 10.17. So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of God. Faith comes from hearing about God.

As we learn about him, we grow in our faith. Is it Romans 12, verses 1 and 2? We are transformed by the renewing of our mind, right?

[19 : 03] And I think that's a great verse that I go back to when I think about, you know, systematic theology and a book like this. And somebody could say, well, that's a lot of words, and that's really dry.

But how are we transformed by the Word of God? It's through the renewing of our mind. What's one of the way that happens? It's knowledge, right? It's reading God's Word. It's understanding, and it's picking it apart.

That's how we're transformed. That's how we grow through that knowledge. So, as our faith increases, as our knowledge increases as well. Again, very logical.

Okay. Let's look at the other side of the coin. Let's start talking about that. And, as we said, it's a coin. They must come together.

Faith and repentance must. Grudem defines repentance this way. It says, repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

[20 : 11] Again, we've kind of got the four bullet points there of what it includes. It's broken out into four, but it really is going to follow these three things pretty closely. In Acts 20, verse 21, we have a good example of both of these words put together in the same context, in the same verse.

It says, testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Those are two aspects. I don't have the scripture in front of me, but I believe it's in Mark 1 or 2.

John the Baptist gives a very straightforward gospel call. And he uses basically three words. He says, repent and believe.

Repent and believe. And those things are just tied interconnectedly throughout scripture as we think about conversion. So this is the way Grudem defines, defines repentance.

But then in the very next sentence, I think next paragraph for sure, he really starts to put them back in the context of these three elements. He says, repentance, like faith, is an intellectual understanding that sin is wrong.

[21 : 33] An emotional approval of the teachings of scripture regarding sin. A sorrow for sin. A hatred of sin. And a personal decision to turn from it.

Renouncing sin. A decision of the will to forsake it and lead a life of obedience in Christ instead. So all three, again, there's a parallelism that I think is, it's beautiful, it's helpful, it's biblical, most importantly.

But I think it's also helpful if you can think about those things and how every aspect is important. Let's go back to the surgeon illustration here.

So we think about the disease. Earlier we focused on the surgeon. Let's think about the disease. At the level of the mind, the patient, when he or she hears about the diagnosis, that's a knowledge, that I have X disease, right?

That's knowledge. That's knowing that you have it is not going to get you healed, right? That doesn't do it. I'm really, but it's necessary.

[22 : 46] You've got to start there, right? There's an admission of, I'm sick. This is my new reality. This is real. If left untreated, it will kill me.

Analogous to Grudem's, again, intellectual understanding that sin is wrong. Then comes the heart. The patient doesn't merely understand the disease clinically. He or she says, I hate this disease. I hate what it's doing to me. This is going to kill me if it's left unchecked. That is the emotion saying, I understand the consequences, and this scares me, and something must be done. Again, there's a sorrow for sin, a hatred of that sin. There's emotions that are involved. Then comes the will.

I've decided that I'm no longer going to live with this disease. I'm going to do something about it. I'm going to see a surgeon to have it removed.

[23 : 49] And that's the decision of, okay, now let's make that call. Let's put our trust, our faith in Jesus, in the surgeon in this case.

It's a renouncing of sin, a decision of the will to forsake it, and to lead a life of obedience of Christ instead. So the whole person is involved in this turning from something towards someone, specifically Christ.

Grudem is very careful to say that repentance is not simply feeling bad. And that's critical. Mere sorrow for one's sins, he said, or even a deep remorse over one's actions does not constitute genuine repentance unless it's accompanied by a sincere decision to forsake sin that is being committed against God.

You know, in fact, it can be very common for people to have remorse over sin. But the question is, what aspect of that sin? Is it remorse over the fact that they're grieving God?

Or is it a remorse over the consequences or maybe even just the guilt that they feel? And so it's, well, I feel horrible about this. Or that didn't turn out the way that I wanted it to.

[25 : 07] And so, again, today's day and age, we can say, well, I feel guilty. I feel bad. About what? About its effect on you. That's not even true repentance of saying, I grieved a holy God is very different than guilt or remorse that you feel for something.

2 Corinthians 7.10. Not speaking about just that bad feeling and that guilt, but actually about godly grief. It even says that in this verse. 2 Corinthians 7.10.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death, it says.

You can be devastated by the consequences of sin. Again, that's remorse. Biblical repentance goes further. Hebrews 12.17.

For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the, this, sorry, this is talking about Esau as an example of sorrow, that was not genuine repentance. Y'all remember Esau?

[26 : 14] He sold his birthright to Jacob, you know, in haste. When he realized the full ramifications of what he did and it kind of settled in later, there was grief, right?

But that wasn't repentance. Hebrews 12.17 talks about it. For you know that afterward, when he, being Esau, desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

Let's talk more about, next, faith and repentance. Again, we keep saying it, but they must come and occur together.

Grudem says, when we turn to Christ for salvation from our sins, we're simultaneously turning away from the sins that we are asking Christ to save us from.

Isaiah 55.17. Isaiah 55.6 and 7. Again, same couple verses, same context. Really pairs these closely back to back.

[27 : 16] It says, Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, repentance, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.

Let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Amen to that. Again, let's go back to the surgeon analogy for a minute.

The patient is saying the same thing. Very, again, if we weren't picking it apart, some of these things would happen almost concurrently. Saying a couple things. I want to be rid of the disease. I cannot cure myself. I'm putting myself into the surgeon's hands. Again, do you really think about that if you're going to the doctor? At this point, you know, I realize I have the disease.

And then at this point, I don't want it anymore. And then at this point, I do that. No, because this all does happen oftentimes very, very quickly and almost simultaneously. But again, it's important, I think, to pick it apart here.

[28 : 20] Because without, I think they happen in a context like the surgeon. It happens almost unconsciously. But it's so critical that we understand these parts for salvation.

If we've got time, we'll get to it later. Where if we start leaving out parts of this or reinterpreting it, then we get into some very unfortunate and unhelpful views about the gospel and conversion.

Imagine for a minute a patient. Okay? Maybe this is you. Imagine the patient who says, I completely trust this surgeon to save me from the disease.

But under absolutely no circumstances do I want this disease removed. Would that make any sense? No.

It wouldn't. Why do I say that? How does this translate into conversion? Imagine somebody saying, I believe. I believe in Jesus.

[29 : 26] I believe that God exists. I believe that he's done amazing miracles. I believe that he died on the cross for my sins. But I am not interested in giving up my sin.

Because that's something that I hold closely to. Does that make any sense? No.

How common do you think that is? Only God knows. I would anticipate in my lifetime and in your lifetime, I bet you've seen people who would make amazing claims about their belief in Jesus and their relationship with him.

But yet, you see them live their life. And while nobody's perfect, I'm not, my family can attest to that. Nobody's perfect.

But you see somebody who also outrageously lives a lifestyle that you would say, if I just looked at you and I didn't hear these things that you were saying about Jesus, it would appear as though, based off the fruit in your life, that you have not been converted.

[30 : 47] Because even though you say you went to the, even though you say you went to the surgeon, your disease is still there and we all see it.

You didn't, I don't think you went to the surgeon. Because the disease exists. Here's where it starts to break down a bit.

We're all still humans and our sinful nature still exists, right? So it starts to break down. And I've thought through this a lot and I could kind of flesh out my thought process on it, but we don't have time to dig down the analogy rabbit hole.

But there's, again, don't say you've gone to the surgeon. Don't say you've believed in, you've trusted in Christ.

And think that if you're holding onto your sin consciously and willingly, the Bible does not give you assurance of your salvation in that case.

[31 : 54] You need to search your heart. As we all should. Imagine, likewise, the patient saying, I hate the disease, I want to be free from it, so I'm going to go home and perform surgery on myself.

Or I'm going to go to Wes, and he's going to do that surgery on me. He's an amazing guy, but he's a poor surgeon. That would be foolish, right?

We've got to go to a surgeon. We have to go to the surgeon. We have to go to the great physician who's Jesus Christ. He's the only one who can save. Now, how does this play?

How does this go along with other things that we know about Scripture? Because I'm using a lot of words that sound like actions and things that I'm doing, right?

But the Bible says, For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. So these are not works that we're doing to be saved.

[33 : 12] And these going to the surgeon, entrusting myself to the surgeon, trusting Christ, not works, not biblical works, as the Bible would define them.

Because let's think about it this way. If I go to the surgeon, who saved me? If I go to the surgeon, who saved me?

The surgeon. Did I save myself? No. The surgeon saved me. Who saves us when we put our faith in Christ?

Christ does. Yeah, but we put our faith. That's accurate. That's the will. That's the heart, mind, emotion, and the will. Those are not, as the Bible would define them, works and good things that we're trying to do.

Because if we're trying to do works, if we're trying to do actions that we think will gain us favor with God in any way, it's impossible. It's impossible. It's impossible.

[34 : 21] I am not good enough to meet God's holy standard. God's holy standard. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, fully God, fully man, died in my place, took the penalty on the cross for my sins.

And only by belief in Him, not anything that I'm doing, only by that, by Jesus Christ, am I saved. genuine repentance, Grudem says, will result in a changed life.

In fact, a truly repentant person will begin, they will begin at once, after conversion, to live a changed life.

We call that changed life the fruit of repentance. That's what comes as a result. Now again, let's be clear on the order.

Those works do not earn salvation. They come as a result of the salvation. Very important distinction throughout Scripture. Romans 3.28, For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

[35 : 36] So repentance is not, let me clean myself up before I get to God. Repentance is not the surgeon saying, okay, you can come in for surgery, but first of all, give it six months while you try your best to get better.

The surgeon doesn't require me to get better at all before I go see him. The surgeon says, come as you are.

I will take care of all of it. Repentance, again, as we kind of work our way through, involves more than a change of the mind.

Repentance is more than a change of the mind. Grudem spends, if you've got the book, he spends considerable time kind of speaking through repentance, the definition of it, kind of looking at Greek lexicons and whatnot, but we're going to jump to Acts 3.19.

We are in the right spot. Acts 3.19 says, repent therefore and turn back that your sins may be blotted out. Biblical repentance certainly involves the mind, doesn't stop with the mind, it's mind, heart, and will.

[36 : 54] Okay. It is critical that when we teach, when we present the gospel to other people, when we witness, when we evangelize, that we present both faith and repentance in our gospel presentation.

There's verses, again, we've already seen a couple, that intertwine these very closely together. They put them side by side. Acts 20.21. Testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6. Hebrews 6.1. Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying down, again, a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God.

Both mentioned in the same verse. Now, there's verses in the New Testament that simply mention faith. John 3.16.

We talked about it. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. No mention of repentance. Acts 16.31.

[38:01] Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. Again, no mention of repentance. Does that mean that these verses are teaching something contradictory to other verses in the New Testament?

Absolutely not. the assumption is that they're so closely tied together that in this case there's a point of emphasis being made in that verse.

Faith in these verses is the point of emphasis. But again, we've already seen you can't have the one without the other. So there's other verses that do talk exclusively about repentance. Luke 24.46-47.

Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

At Pentecost, Peter says in Acts 2.38, repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. No mention of faith. Again, but there's the assumption they're so interconnected.

[39:01] You wouldn't repent without also having faith. It's illogical. It's unbiblical. They go together. Two sides of the same coin. Let me say this.

Free grace theology is a belief that some people have that emphasizes that eternal life is received by faith alone and Christ alone apart from works.

So far, so good. Agree. Right? Agree. There's an emphasis there where they neglect, they tend to, and I'm painting with a very broad brush, but they tend to neglect other aspects of true faith.

They also tend, broad brush, tend to resist sorrow for sin, tend to resist turning from sin, or a commitment to obey as part of the saving response.

So it's free grace because it's kind of like, well, if all I have to do, and Pastor Mike alluded to it in different words this morning, well, if all I have to do is pray a prayer, then I can have this, and I can get to heaven, and I can have my fire insurance, as they say.

[40:15] That's not saving faith. That is, that is missing pieces, we won't go into which pieces, but it's missing pieces of this head emotion will on either the faith or the repentance side.

And they're focusing on one or two of those things, and they're neglecting other parts of it. And that's where this tends to come from. And then they, again, broad brush, they would look at somebody like Grudem, and they would say, well, but if you're saying that you've got to turn to Jesus and trust Him and make Him Lord of your life, and He's your master, then you're actually saying that works are required for salvation.

And they call that, well, that's Lordship salvation. And you don't actually believe in, you know, belief in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Again, it's an inaccurate, you've kind of got different people in some circumstances inaccurately representing other positions in some cases.

But again, just know that those things are out there. Ultimately, I think, in my study, and again, you don't have to take my word for it, read Grudem.

Ultimately, it comes down to a missing piece of these three elements on the faith and or the repentance side. When you've got those three elements on the faith and repentance side, you've got it.

[41:48] Okay? You've got it. So again, let's be clear. Faith alone in Jesus Christ, not works, is the way to be saved.

we're not suggesting that there's any works required here, no merit, nothing like that. This is all very consistent. What I'm saying here is very consistent with our church's doctrinal statement.

I looked at it to make sure that I'm, you know, even looking at the specific words that I'm not outside of any guardrails. I looked at the Baptist faith and message. We're within the guardrails here. And I've got them listed here.

Highland Park's statement of belief, salvation says, salvation is by grace alone, not human merit or works, and that only those who turn from sin, repentance, into Jesus through faith in his person and work will be saved.

Our fuller, what we believe about, salvation says, that God's sovereignty does not negate man's responsibility to repent and trust Christ as our Savior and Lord.

[42:50] And immediately adds that even the ability to repent and trust Christ is granted by God's grace. The Baptist faith and message says that the sinner responds to when we're regenerated, we're made alive, we respond.

Again, this is not action. We're responding in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and says repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. We already touched on this.

Good works follow conversion. And let's be, again, really clear on that. on the order and also the importance that this is. Genuine repentance, as Grudem says, will result in a changed life.

He says a truly repentant person will begin at once to live a changed life. We talked about that. The change of life that will result from genuine conversion does not save us, but it will certainly result in our faith if our faith is genuine.

James 2.17, classic verse to go back to on this subject. So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, it's dead.

[43:58] Now, again, some people would look at that and say, well, that means you've got to have works to be saved. No. It's saying, if you claim to have faith and the works don't flow from it, then inspect your life.

Inspect your heart. Because as Matthew 7 talks about, a good tree brings forth good fruit and a bad tree brings forth bad fruit. It's not the fruit that grows the tree.

It's the fruit that we see in our own lives and the lives of others that reveals what type of tree that must have come from. That's the self-reflection.

Here's the fruit in my life. Is this fruit that would come from a believer? Or is this fruit that would come from an unbeliever? In line with our doctrinal statement, what we believe about salvation, Highland Park, good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration.

Baptist Faith and Message says, sanctification begins in regeneration and that the believer progresses towards moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

[45:09] Growth and grace should continue throughout the believer's life. Okay, Grudem has a small paragraph here.

He just says, well, should we pray to ask Christ to save us? And the ultimate answer is, yes, that's helpful.

Is it, is it, man, is there a, is there a script that we should pray? No? There's not. Is it, is it mandated that we say certain things in a certain prayer?

No. I mean, we just, that's not in Scripture. The Bible does talk about confessing the name of Jesus, who he is, what he's done, right?

So, so I think praying is helpful and Grudem, Grudem goes into that as well. He says it can appropriately express that repentance and faith. It doesn't save itself.

[46:13] The issue is genuine trust in Christ. Okay, back to the surgeon maybe one last time.

You're standing out the door, outside of the, the, the door before you go into surgery and you stand there and say, I'm trusting the surgeon, I'm trusting the surgeon, I'm trusting the surgeon, I'm trusting the surgeon, I'm trusting, you go up to him, I'm trusting you, I'm trusting you, I'm trusting you.

I know you're going to do a good job. I have full confidence in you. Is that necessary? No. What is the ultimate demonstration of that faith? Again, putting on the gown, getting on the table and going under, right?

Whether you've told him that you've, you're trusting him, whether you've said it out loud and said the right things, that's not the point. The point is entrusting yourself to him and trusting yourself to Christ.

Grudem says it's, it's often very helpful to express that decision in spoken words and it could very naturally take the form of a prayer in Christ. So again, nowhere is he discouraging it.

I think that, you know, some people just ask the question, well, is it, is it necessary? And he's saying, it's helpful. It's helpful. It's a logical next step. But the prayer itself does not save us.

[47:20] And he says that. The words aren't magic. It's Jesus who does the saving, not me saying, I trust him that saves me. Both faith, okay, both faith and repentance should follow, should continue throughout life.

The initial faith and repentance are necessary for conversion. that point in time when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, when we trust in him.

But, as we go on throughout our lives, again, we already said, as our knowledge of Christ increases, our faith in Christ increases. As we sin, 1 John 1, 9, if you confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So we're told to continue to confess those sins. Why? To be saved again and again and again or to make sure that we're saved? No.

It's because we have a sin nature. We have the remaining ramifications, the sin nature that's still here that we're still tempted by.

[48:40] we're not in bondage by it anymore because Jesus has given us the power over it now. But there's still the remnant of it and we still struggle. And so we have to continue to repent of our sin.

Jesus, in the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6, 12, and forgive us our debts, our sins, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Forgive us our, you know, depending on your translation, forgive us our trespasses, right, our sins. Revelation 3, 19, those whom I love, this is Jesus speaking, those whom I love I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent, he says.

So again, even children of God, those who have been converted, are told to still repent. These are attitudes, Grudem says, attitudes of the heart that continue throughout our lives.

come let us return to the Lord. That song speaks of this regular repentance that we should have because we all sin, we all fall short.

[49:51] This is a lengthy quote that Grudem included in his book, and it comes from a man named John Owen years ago, and it's long, so bear with me, but it's so good.

So I want you to hear it, okay, and I'm going to try not to tear up when I read it. This is somewhat of the word which he, being Jesus, now speaks unto you.

Again, let me rephrase that. I want to kind of set the tone. John Owen, he says, and I quote, this is somewhat of the word which he, being Jesus, now speaks unto you.

Internalize this. Why will ye die? Why will ye perish? Why will ye not have compassion on your own souls?

Can your hearts endure? Or can your hands be strong in the day of wrath that is approaching?

Look unto me and be saved. Come unto me and I will ease you of all sins, sorrows, fears, burdens, and give rest to your souls.

[51:03] Come, I entreat you. Lay aside all procrastinations, all delays. Put me off no more. Eternity lies at the door.

Do not so hate me so that you will rather perish than accept of deliverance by me. Again, still John Owen. He says, these and the like things doth the Lord Christ continually declare, proclaim, plead, and urge upon the souls of sinners.

He doth it in the preaching of the word as if he were present with you, as if he stood amongst you and spoke personally to every one of you. He hath appointed the ministers of the gospel to appear before you and to deal with you in his stead, avowing as his own the invitations which are given you in his name.

Isaiah 55, 6-7 says, we read it before, we'll close with these. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

[52:21] In Matthew 11, 28, come to me. All you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest from Jesus himself.

And if you're here tonight and you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior, the Bible says now is the day of salvation. And if you have accepted him as salvation, then I pray that this gives you and me a renewed sense of urgency, a renewed understanding and renewed clarity on how we explain this very personal truth to the people that we come into contact with on a daily basis.

I want to pray and I do want to leave it open for questions for just a couple more minutes, but I want to pray and ask God's blessing on that before we get to the questions.

Father in heaven, we thank you again for the call that you have given to all of us to come when we are heavy laden and you will give us rest.

Rest and salvation. Salvation from the ultimate penalty of sin. Salvation from the power of sin as we are no longer enslaved to sin.

[54:00] We serve you and you sanctify us and you give us power over that sin. And ultimately, Lord, we look forward to the day when you will save us from the presence of sin for all eternity.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Yes. may this No, I...

[55:23] You know, what does repentance look like in that situation? And all of those... I mean, that's a great question. And honestly, we could talk for a while about it. So I'll give you my gut answers would be that sin is sin is sin, first of all, right?

And so whether that's big or small, no matter what it is, that's enough. I mean, we could just tick through the Ten Commandments and say, well, have you lied?

No. Can you be all of the, you know, the head, the emotion, the will, and the repentance with all the elements and the faith with all the elements? No. Did I, when I got saved, understand that?

Jesus said, no. Let him come. Let the little children come unto me. And I think, I mean, that was very physical in that moment, but I think very applicable spiritually as well that he's calling children as well.

And let's be clear too, when we talk about faith, we're not talking about the amount of faith that's required. We're talking about who our faith is in. It really doesn't matter when you go into the surgeon whether you are a hundred percent convinced that you're going to get better or if you think, well, he, he's the guy.

[58:08] That's a small amount of faith, but our faith is in the right person. And the object of our faith is the important thing, not the extent of it. And then, again, this is more just kind of analogous or an analogy I've heard where somebody said, you know, that the truths of the Bible and specifically truths about salvation, this person said that they're bottom shelf truths.

You've got to be grown. But a child can go and they can grab the thing at the bottom, right?

You don't have to be fully grown and having to be grasping and reaching for something. Another way I would say it is, you know, these are the call to the gospel, the call to repent and believe, even like, you know, John the Baptist did and Mark.

[59:29] You just need the bones in order to be saved. You don't need the flesh. The flesh helps inform, it helps fill it out. It gives color to the picture. To learn more, visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net.

Downloaded from <https://vetanothersermon.host> - 2026-08-26 02:01:18

[illegible]