

The Heavenly Man!

Pastor S. James

www.gracetabernaclehyd.org

Father, as we sang, we want to magnify You! Your Word says, O Lord, "I have magnified My Word above all My Name," and I pray, in our hearts and in our minds, we will come with that meekness ready to lift Your Word up for in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, the Word, was, is, forever will be God. And when You come back, O Lord, the world will know the name which they do not know that Your name is the Word of God – the Word that can cleanse us, the Word that saved us, the Word that sanctifies us, the Word that heals us. O Lord, even now as we hear every single word, it has the power to heal, because Your Word says, "I sent forth My Word and healed you of your infirmities." The Word that delivers, the Word that prospers, I pray Father, we will receive with meekness that Word. Help us! Help us! Not to turn to the left or to the right from the Word because ultimately, we can come through the Word, with the Word, then on that day when we stand before You, there will be nothing to judge because we allowed the Word to judge us when we were living in this body because You said, "On that day, the Word you heard will judge you." Help us, Lord, prepare our hearts, our minds for the Word and later for Your table. We commit ourselves, all Your people listening online now and, in the days, to come. For in Jesus' name we pray, Amen!

Last Sunday you heard about new creation, the week before that you heard about the divine exchange. Whenever you hear the Word, you have to believe—not what I say, you should test it with the Word of God, and if it's proved true, you have to believe. Remember, Thessalonians were noble, they received the word of God with great joy in the midst of great affliction; Bereans were nobler than Thessalonians, why? Because they eagerly, joyfully received what Paul preached, then went and check with scriptures if it was true. Just because I say? No! You have to test what I say, that's your job. If any pastor says, "You cannot test my word!" then don't listen to him because the Word of God says you need to test everything that you hear, especially from behind the pulpit more than what you hear outside, why? Deception happens within the church, blindness happens outside, because you are responsible for your soul. I am responsible for your souls in a different way—the Bible says we who teach would be judged very severely for what we preach. I wish every preacher in the world took heed to James chapter 3 verse 1, they would be careful about their study and about their teaching because people are saved or lost by what they hear.

So, there was a divine exchange that took place on the Cross, you have to believe. Jesus was punished so that I might be forgiven—don't put 'we,' okay. When we put 'we,' it loses its effect; you always have to personalize it. That's how you read your Bible, put 'I.' He was wounded so that I might be healed; He was made sin so that I might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus; He became cursed, so that I could become a blessing. Blessing is the Holy Spirit—you are saved, you have Holy Spirit; if the Spirit of God is in you, it doesn't matter, you are a blessing, only thing you don't know. Sometimes you are the only believer in the company, your company is not shut down because you are there and they don't know; an entire ship of passengers won't perish in the Mediterranean ocean because one man with the Spirit of God is there; therefore, they don't know their lives have been preserved because of him.

You are a blessing! How did we become a blessing? Because He was cursed so that we would receive the blessing, that is the Spirit of God in us. He tasted death on my behalf so that I might receive eternal life; He became poor so that we could have His abundance—I don't want to use the word 'riches' because my spiritual mentor refuses to use that word, he says it's been misused. Abundance means you always have more than enough to give, and you all have something in you to give, the thing is, you are not realizing it, you are looking at somebody else and wishing: "I wish I could become like that!" No, God doesn't want identical twins, He is not in the business of cloning, He is in the business of new birth. Everybody has something which is from God, which is not of yourselves but you are the vessel and allow God to bend you so He can pour it out. That is humility, bending yourself before God. The humblest man after Christ was Paul, so he says, "My entire life has been poured out as a drink offering before God." So you are a blessing. He became poor so that we could have abundance; He was rejected so that I could be accepted in Him unto God; He endured shame so that I would receive His virtue and His glory. Keep that in your mind!

So there was a divine exchange on the Cross, and everything you receive by faith, you have to believe you receive it by faith. But all that has no meaning unless you hear it, how will they believe unless they have heard? So, blessed are the feet of those who go on and preach the Gospel. The Gospel is not "Jesus died for you, believe in Him and be

saved,” that word ‘salvation’ – I mean, I don’t know Greek, so I refer to people who know Greek, you look at that word salvation in the Bible, it is mind-boggling! You take anything in your life where there is a need; the word salvation applies in Greek. Complete salvation in Christ. That’s why the Bible says: “We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.” That is Paul, Peter says, “God has given us everything for life and godliness in Christ through the knowledge of Him.” The salvation we are talking about is not incomplete, it is absolutely complete, it’s perfect, and it’s a great salvation!

Hebrew 2:3

³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him...

You know why we miss out so many things which God has for us? Because we neglect, we don’t realize the greatness of the salvation, and the pictures are there in the Old Testament:

Psalms 78:19-22

¹⁹ Yes, they spoke against God: They said, “Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? ²⁰ Behold, He struck the rock, So that the waters gushed out, And the streams overflowed. Can He give bread also? Can He provide meat for His people?” ²¹ Therefore the Lord heard this and was furious; So a fire was kindled against Jacob, And anger also came up against Israel, ²² Because they did not believe in God, And did not trust in His salvation.

Why was God upset? It is because they did not trust in His salvation. That’s why I said, to believe is so important that when we read the Word, we hear the Word, we need to believe. And God was upset that they did not trust in His salvation. In the New Covenant, the writer of Hebrews says: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...” And if you see *Psalm 78*, these are types of what happened to them, what happened to them is a type of what happens to us. They were redeemed from slavery in Egypt by the blood of the lamb, did they do anything? Nothing. Could they do anything? Nothing. It was entirely the work of God. All they had to do was believe – take the blood, put it, the destroyer will pass. In one night they were free.

And that’s what, one night I was saved 11 in the night in 1983 and after that the work of salvation continued. Yesterday when John and I were talking, I had forgotten because his sister who is in London, she was also part of my Bible study, so we talked and then she said, “Pastor, don’t you remember my pastor from Ernakulum, Cochin?” I said, “Do I know your pastor?” because I had forgotten, so she said, “Yes Pastor, this is the church...” I said, oh yes, because the pastor of the church where she used to go, two pastors there was Jacob Ninen and Jacob Ninen’s brother is Vergis Ninen, the young man who came to my hostel room at 11 in the night and gave me the Gospel and finally he was kind of tired with my arguments and he said, “James, would you kneel down with me? Would you ask Jesus to come into your heart?” and it changed my life. She went to the church whose pastor was the brother of the young man who brought me to the Lord.

It is just like that God saves! You can’t do anything about that. You cannot save yourself; you cannot redeem yourself; you cannot free yourself, there is nothing you can do, you simply believe in the work of God and you are saved. Four hundred and fifty years of slavery and one day they were out! 20 years of slavery in your case, 18 years of slavery, 30 years of slavery, 40 years of slavery, it doesn’t matter, one instant! That is why the word for healing is the same word for salvation in Greek. “How long?” “38 years.” “Do you want to get well? Do you want to be made whole?” Salvation – “Pick up your mat and walk.” In an instant a man who was infirmed for 38 years got up, walked and went away. That’s the power of salvation! You can’t do anything about it, God does everything about it, but God says, “Do you believe?” One day they were out of Egypt, slavery is over, it’s history, it is gone, it’s finished, it’s done. That’s what God is talking about: do you see the pictures? “Protection from the destroyer” meaning: the devil can never destroy your soul again, you are free, he has no power over your soul—he has power over your body through people, but he has no power over your soul unless you give it to him but the blood has saved you, now God is in the process of saving your soul completely but he cannot kill your soul anymore because you believed.

Their enemies pursued them – the Pharaoh, the wrath of the enemy, he couldn’t do anything, God destroyed their enemies. The wilderness journey, everyday their need was met, it was met every day, and Jesus says, “Do you believe?” “Give us this day our daily bread” let me ask you this question, anybody here because of your severe situation, is there anybody who missed one day without eating in 11 months and five days? No! Honestly, He has

met what He promised; He has given us for each day. After that Bible study there was always biryani, we all used to eat biryani and this is only when you hear feedback after 15 years you realize, oh this also used to take place! And I was reminded about our pastors' conference and he told me, "Pastor, some of the people came only for biryani because they were really poor," and I didn't know that, and then I realized some of our pastors come because they are really poor and they come to eat that meal, that's their best meal of the month, that's their Christmas lunch. He has met us at our point of need. Every day He met their need; they had food, they had water—I don't think mankind ever drank after the Garden of Eden any water like that, from the rock. Desert nights are very cold, temperature can drop drastically in the desert, they had heating, before we could ever discover about heating, they had a pillar of fire; desert days are very hot and they had the cloud covered; their clothes never wore off, their sandal never wore off, there was none ill or feeble, healing and health was their provision. Do you see salvation pictures over there?! Yet, they didn't believe in His great salvation and God was upset. He would have done so much more for them if only they had believed. Look at verse 40-42.

Psalms 78:40-42

⁴⁰How often they provoked Him in the wilderness, And grieved Him in the desert!

Not pleased Him with their faith but provoked Him with their unbelief. There are two things we do to God: either we please Him with our faith or we provoke Him with our unbelief—I am not talking about the world, I am talking about His children.

⁴¹Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

What did they do? They limited the Holy One of Israel. Here is a God who wants to stretch forth and bless His people, but they limited His hands because of their unbelief. Don't limit the hands of Jesus.

⁴²They did not remember His power: The day when He redeemed them from the enemy,

That's the main reason – you forgot the day of your salvation, that's the main reason. Remember the first indictment to the church of Ephesus in the book of revelation? ***"You have forgotten your first love."*** When was that? It was when you got saved. You have forgotten that day when you received a pardon, you were on the executioner's chair, everything has been connected, they were about to pull the pluck and then the letter came, 'presidential pardon,' last minute. There are a lot of people who have got the pardon at the last hour and they had a new life. And we suddenly realize that this is true! We were on the way to hell and we got a pardon and the joy, the relief... God says, "Have you forgotten?" Are you complaining? You don't believe, you are upset, do you remember? He says, "When I saved you on that day, I saved you from all the power of Pharaoh and I was taking you to a perfect salvation, complete salvation, I would have taken you to a land flowing with milk and honey, given you houses which you did not build, wells which you did not dig, I was taking you to that." That's their picture; our picture is in Christ Jesus. Look at Hebrews chapter 10, verse 12 to 14.

Hebrews 10:12-14

¹²But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever...

"One sacrifice for sins forever..." that's not how it happened in the Old Testament, every year one sacrifice, day of atonement, just temporary reprieve for a year, then again and again... but this Man, one sacrifice forever. Whatever He do, He sat down; the priest in the temple never sits down, they are forever busy, morning till evening.

...sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

Who makes His enemies His footstool? We do through the Spirit. Who are the enemies? The flesh, the world, the powers of darkness, all these, we make His footstool. He has redeemed you, gave you His Spirit, now reign. Pastor Vijay was talking about reigning, reigning in righteousness through grace – "Make My enemies My footstool." Do you see salvation?

¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

If you are born again, there is no imperfect people here, you are being sanctified, you are being saved but inside whatever state if you make it to Heaven, you will be perfect; there will be perfect children, there will be perfect young man, there will be perfect fathers; there will be no imperfect children, and imperfect young man and imperfect fathers, everybody will be perfect there because with one sacrifice He has perfected forever. There will be no imperfections in Heaven, you have to look what He has done. That's what He is talking about – if we neglect this perfect salvation, this great salvation. That's why He said, "It is finished," that's why He sat down. Now, He says, "If you come to Me, I will stand up, make intercession so that I can save you to the uttermost." That's the only work He does, the work of intercession. That's a new birth, you have to believe.

In **1 Peter 1:23** says:

²³ ***having been born again***, it is not reforming the old man; it's absolutely new person, new birth, new creation, of what? ***not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the Word of God which lives and abides forever...***

Every seed in it has the nature of the tree that will come. The nature, the DNA of the tree is in the seed. So, if you have been born of the Word of God, your nature is perfection because it is incorruptible seed. You know what your nature is inside? It's incorruptible, it's perfect because every tree takes the nature of its seed and how did He birth us? Through the incorruptible seed, the Word of God; birthed by the Word, birthed by the Spirit, what is its nature? It's perfect. So He saved us, we have been saved, we are being saved.

Titus 3:5

⁵ ***not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...***

"He saved us..." it's an event in the past. There was a particular day in your life when you believed, you repented, you put your trust in Jesus Christ, an event took place, that's your history, that's when your life began in Christ.

Ephesians 2:8

⁸***For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God...***

1 Corinthians 1:18

¹⁸ ***For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.***

You have been saved, you are being saved, all right, all true, we are saved one time and still being saved. My work of salvation will only finish at the moment of my death. If you look at verse 18, what separates those who are being saved and those who are perishing? The message of the Cross, how do you receive it? – is it foolishness or is it wisdom? It's a perfect salvation. The best picture of salvation is in the book of Genesis 6, 7, 8, Noah and the ark. The ark is the type of Christ, Noah, and the family, are the ones who are saved; keep that in your mind. There are eight people who got into the ark; the question is, are they perfect? No, but the ark is perfect. If they stay in the ark, they will come through the judgments, everyone who was outside perished, not because they were imperfect, but because they refuse to enter the ark.

Understand perfect salvation? You entered into Christ and Christ entered into you. In the ark there were three decks, nobody is stopping anybody from picking your location, you can stay down, go to the middle deck, you can go up, it's your choice. In the Kingdom, the three kinds of people; the children, the youth, fathers; every child that is saved is a perfect child, every young man who has grown up and become a spiritual young man is a perfect young man and every father when he reaches over there will be a perfect father but it's your choice. But why is the child saved? Why is the young man saved? Why is the father saved? It is because of the ark. If the father steps out of the ark, he will be destroyed; if the child steps out of the ark, he will be destroyed; if the young man steps out of the ark, he will also be destroyed. Getting the picture? So choose where you want to go.

Last time we saw about the exchange, we heard all those wonderful truths and people were tickle pinged around the world and so many got baptized in the Holy Spirit, they received the gifts, and all kind of things were happening. You know why it happens so easy? It is because they are not familiar with me. You know why you struggle? Because you are familiar with the preacher, therefore you connect the preacher and the Word as one, we are not one, we are two; I am the preacher, the Word is He. You have to learn to detach the preacher from the Word and listen to the Word, it always has its power. Learn always to detach the preacher from the Word and listen to the Word because the Word has the power to save us.

So we heard, now I need to appropriate what I heard, I understand something happened on the Cross and it is powerful.

1 Corinthians 15:45

⁴⁵ ***And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.***

The difference between the first man Adam and the last Adam. One was the living being, the other was a life-giving Spirit. Do you know what Jesus exactly did with His apostles on the evening of resurrection Sunday with each one of them? He breathed His resurrection life into them and said, "Receive the Spirit." What is that Spirit? The Spirit that

raised Him up from the dead; that is the resurrection life that can never be defeated again, "Receive the resurrection life." That's the last Adam; life-giving Spirit. Do you know when we were saved, what was breathed into us? Do we know what we received when we got saved?

Verse 47:

⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

Do you know who you were before you got saved? A man of dust. Do you know who you are when you got saved? A man from heaven. I remember the Chinese pastor who escaped from the underground church, when the secret police came—his nick-name was heavenly man, he took it from 1 Corinthians 15:47—so when they came and asked, "Is there anybody here who is a Christian?" They said, "No, there is just a heavenly man." Do you know that's our identity before God? Either we are Adam of dust or you are the last Adam; heavenly men, heavenly women, heavenly children, not earthly, not sensual but heavenly. That's what the Bible says, "*Indeed if you are raised with Christ, keep your mind on things that are above,*" because you are heavenly, you are not earthly, you are heavenly. Made of dust or heavenly.

⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Before we were saved, we bore the image of the man of dust, now that we are saved, we have been recreated in the image of the man from above – the heavenly Man. Whose image do you bear is the question God is asking. That's what the Bible says in 1 Peter 1 and verse 3.

1 Peter 1:3

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...

Everything is based on His resurrection; we were begotten again. Once we were born in flesh, now we are born again from heaven. You are not earthly men and women sitting here. You see that, that's what you are, you are heavenly men and women sitting over here. If you see that, that is what you are. That's what I said, you need to believe.

John 1:12

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

Let me tell you, if you don't have power, you can do nothing. Why do people run after money? It is because it has power. God says, "I gave you the power to become the children of God, keep changing in the image of the heavenly man, I gave you authority, I gave you power. You are born again, begotten again with the image of the heavenly Man, now keep on growing, I gave you authority, I gave you power. You are not born again by the will of man, but you are born now by the will of God. Without authority there is no point, that's why we are born by the Spirit and the Spirit is the power of God. That's why God says, "My answer to all your prayers is (ask and you shall receive) the Spirit of God." Why? Because it gives you the power, it gives you the authority to become the heavenly man or the heavenly woman.

So the question is, now from what happened on the Cross, you have to go to the second part, it is identification. From the first man or the last Man; first Adam or the last Adam, it's our choice who do we identify with.

Romans 6:6

⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

The question is - do we know this? If we don't know something, it is useless, doesn't matter how great it is. In 2014, a particular church in US lost lots and lots of money and they filed a police case, the money was never found. Then, day before yesterday, a plumber in the toilet when he was trying to fix a tile came off and he found a hollow place and found the money and cheques there, almost 400 thousand dollars. Where was it sitting all these years? In the church. Does it make any difference if you don't know about it? No.

"knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him..." when did that take place? 2000 years ago. How can that be true? Let me give you an example: next year, August 15 we will be free as a nation for 75 years. When did India become free? August 15, 1947. Let me tell you the truth, in this church only my mother was alive when India became

free. Were you there? Was I there? Was anybody else there? No. So I wasn't there, therefore I am not free; I am still under British rule. Is that true because she is the only one who has experienced it? See, the fact British left India in 1947 is a historical fact, it happened before we were all born but the freedom still continues because it's a reality for us. The fact that Jesus died for my sins was 2000 years ago but it is a historical fact and it's a spiritual truth because He died for me though I was born 2000 years later after He was born and raised again. If you don't believe, then every time you meet a white man, "Hujur, Sahab, Hujur, what do you want me to do?" Buddu, he left, he is looking at you and saying, "What is wrong with you?" He is saying, "You are free and I am free from you." Understand reality – we were crucified with Him. Verse 7:

⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Getting the picture? Do you know you died with Him 2000 years ago? If you know, then you are dead to sin. It's a good thing, from tomorrow morning you wake up and have a funeral service; dust unto dust, ashes unto ashes, I am dead. The old man can never be reformed, he is incorrigible, born of the devil, born in sin and shaped in iniquity, the only solution to the old man is execution and He was executed 2000 years ago for everyone who believes in Jesus. When Christ died, you died with Him, the thing is that, only when you believe, it becomes real.

Romans 6:11

¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now let me ask all of you sitting over here? When did India become free? August 15, 1947. If it was December 1st 1947, does it make any difference to us? These people are so obsessed about dates as if that makes difference in their lives. I don't know when Japan surrendered to General MacArthur—world war is over, Japan has surrendered, but there were so many Islands in Pacific where Japanese soldiers were there; they don't know Japan has surrendered and they are still waiting to fight the Americans, they have no clue Japan has surrendered and they are sitting, they are still fighting for months if I am right, until the news reached them, stop fighting and losing your life.

Christ died and I died with Him; devil surrendered, and it's a reality. Our old man died, what did he die to? He died to sin. One of the beautiful illustrations, let me embellish it in my own ways – there is this man, he is absolutely a rogue, you can add to his qualities with this word, your own embellishments you can put: drunkard, alcoholic, drug addict, beats up his wife and children, violent and all the things he does. And he is married with two children. The mother and the children get saved and he is mad at them. Every time they go to church, they have a fantastic time and then come with fear and trembling because of the way he is. One day they come and he is sitting as usual in the front room and he is sitting on his chair; liquor bottle is there, the cigarette is there, everything is there; they are waiting and looking at him, when they look at him, he is dead. Now you know what happened, he is dead, is he going to smoke? Is he going to drink? See, when he is dead, he is dead to sin. It's not about you, it's about the other man; when he is dead, he is dead to sin.

What does the Bible say? "Reckon yourself dead." When you are dead, you are dead to sin. Dead man doesn't sin. Do you know that? Heavy police security outside the morgue so people will not come out and steal, have you ever heard anything like that? One place usually you don't need security is the morgue, nobody goes there except Shraavan in the old days. Do you see, if you are dead, sin has no power over you. First identification every day – I died with Christ; Christ died for me, thank You, Lord; now, I die with Christ. That's why have your funeral service every morning, get some flowers. I was big on burials when I was young; I had all kinds of pets – sparrows, minas, dogs, hens and even had a monkey for a few months. And when they died, as a little boy (unsaved catholic boy) I was heart-broken. I gave them all a good funeral and placed a cross on their graves. I was big on funerals.

Every morning rise up and do your own funeral: I am dead, not Christ died for me, I am died in Christ. If you are dead, sin is dead. See, you can't escape the old man, people try all kinds of things to escape the old man. The old man is tormenting them, they go to the bar, the old man goes with them; they go on a vacation, he goes with them; you cannot run away from old man, only one solution – kill him. You cannot do anything with the old man except you kill him and it happened on the cross 2000 years ago. You just have to accept the fact that on August 15, 1947, the British left and I am a free man, and it's the truth, the historical truth. The fact Jesus died on the cross for you and me is a truth!

Colossians 3:3

³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

2 Timothy 2:11

¹¹ This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

See, if you don't die, there is no resurrection; resurrection is only for dead people. The problem is all the people who are alive are going to God and saying: "God, resurrect me." God says, "Die first." Jesus says, "Even in My ministry I never raised a living person, I raised dead people." Are you getting it? You know what our struggles are! We refuse to die and say, resurrection power, God says, "Resurrection power is for dead people."

If we don't die, He cannot live, He won't live with us, He cannot live through us though we are saved.

Romans 6:4

⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Let me tell you, it doesn't matter how much you love that person, what do you do when he or she dies? Keep them in the fridge? Do you see when people die, when people who you love so much die, the hurry in getting them buried, how quickly you can bury? Why? It starts stinking, the body starts stinking. What do you do with the dead body? You bury them. What's your burial? Your baptism. That's why you always have to live in the light of your baptism. I not only died, I was buried, on that day I was buried and the person that came out was not an old man, it was a new man. The new man has to learn a lot of stuff but the old man died and he was buried. That's why your salvation has to be really authentic, powerful. When you got saved and you understood this truth, when you died with Christ, it is an inward reality but your baptism is your outward reality. The person died—let's say in a home; the father, mother, wife, one or two children are there and the father died, only the family knows. When will everybody know? It is at the burial time; everybody comes and knows he is dead – "Yes! For sure he is dead." They lay him in a box and write R.I.P on it – Rise If Possible. What a contradiction; they write 'Rise If Possible' and they nail the box securely.

If you have died, be buried. Like I said, baptism is the most powerful institution in the New Covenant. That's why the Bible says: "Repent, believe and be baptized." The Old Testament is different, New Testament we have very few ordinances and one of the ordinances is baptism. Jesus tells us in *Mark 16*, "If you believe and you are baptized, you shall be saved." Saved from what? Saved from whom? The old man – kill him and bury him. Are you understanding the issue? Our issue is that. Baptism is the cutoff point – in every culture including our culture, when you say you are going to get baptized, trouble begins. A Muslim can say "I believe in Isa (Jesus)," "Ah, hum bhi Isa (Jesus) pe viswaskartehai"; but when you say, "I am getting baptized," they will cut your head off. If you are a Hindu in North India or something, and say "I believe in Jesus," "Ha, ekbhagwan, wo bhiek avatar hai," but say "I am going to get baptized," they will kill you because they understand what baptism means; you have lost the old man. They know, even if you don't know, they know what baptism means. You know what the Chinese Communist Part says? "One Chinese Christian; one less Chinese." They know what happens when you actually, truly, believe and get baptized it is the cutoff point because not only you died, that was an inward reality, outward reality to the world is, 'I am buried with Christ.' I no longer exist, burial is over. These are realities. You identify with His death; you identify with His burial.

Ephesians 2:4-6

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

Remember God is rich in mercy that's why we can go to Him, and He is great in love. Think about a person in the church who is rich in mercy, great in love or let us put it in ideas we understand: rich in money and great in love. Everybody will go to him when they are in trouble. Why? Because he is rich in money, great in love; not that he is rich in money and kanjoos (Stingy) in love, nobody will go to him. God is rich in mercy, great in love. Show your right hand – "Died with Him; buried with Him; made alive together with Him; raised up with Him; seated with Him," it's complete salvation! Died with Him; buried with Him; made alive together with Him; raised up with Him; enthroned with Him. Where does He sit? On a throne – enthroned with Him over every power, every ruler, every principality that harasses you; complete salvation – "Behold I give you power over all the power of the enemy, they shall not harm you. You shall trample upon snakes and scorpions." In a very short while the God of peace shall crush satan

under your feet, why? Enthroned with Him. Five things of salvation – how you identify with what Christ did for you; you are identifying with Him; I died with Him, you have to make it personal every day; I died with Him; I was buried with Him; I was made alive with Him; I was raised with Him; and I was enthroned with Him. That's what salvation is, and that is to what God is taking us. God sees it already that way. Why? Because it was a perfect salvation; with one sacrifice He made perfect all those who are being saved, sanctified. That's why you have to see it the way God sees it, that's where faith comes in, don't bring your intellect over there—remember, I gave you yesterday from my old diary? Intellect wants a reason, faith doesn't want a reason; faith says God said, that's enough for me. The problem is our intellect comes into being, the old man's brain and he has been very well educated in college and you have been missing church, so the new man's brains are like fried eggs; not whole but scrambled all over, while the old man's brain is whole because you have spent so much time over there and after finishing the education you are educating the old man through FaceBook, you tube, every tube. So he wants a reason, but faith doesn't need a reason – God said, that's enough for me.

Remember the rich man in the book of John? He came and said, "Lord, my son is ill," Jesus said, "Go, your son is healed." What does the Bible say? He took Him at His Word and went. He doesn't need a reason. Faith doesn't need a reason – God said and that's enough for me. "I don't understand, I am a virgin, how can I give birth?" Gabriel said something she never understood, I think after she died and raised up, she understood, but much before that she said, "Let it be unto me according to your Word. That's enough for me." That's faith. So, in all these things, don't bring your intellect over there, by faith receive it. Why did all this happen? Because He is rich in mercy, great in His love, and there is a staggering thought—I am using exact words of Derek Prince: mindboggling, staggering thought—for a man who studied in Eton and King's college and was a fellow in Cambridge, if it was staggering for his level of intellect, I don't have words because if he is at the level of 10, I am 2. Staggering, which is true.

Look at that verse 2, 7:

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

His thought is this way; until man sinned, God had exemplified all His character qualities; righteousness, holiness, all these things through creation and to the Creator, and then man failed. In the plan of redemption, He says, "For eternity I will show to the rest of creation the riches of My grace through these people who are being redeemed." God boasts about His grace through us. You want to see the riches of My grace? Look at My people who are being redeemed. So, He is rich in mercy, rich in grace, that's why we are saved because you cannot earn mercy, you cannot earn grace, it's free, you have to receive it by faith. We are the display of His grace in eternity, He didn't show mercy or grace to satan and the one-third of the angels, He only showed it to us and they can't still figure it out why, even I can't figure it out, why. That's why I am not God, if I was God, I would have saved Lucifer looking at his beauty, wisdom and said: this fellow should not be lost, let us save him, that's a carnal man; look at this powerful man, O he should be saved; look at a beautiful girl, she should be saved; but not God, He says "Let them go to hell." "I will save the poor, the wretched, the ignoble, the weak," that is God's wisdom. We have to re-orient our mind because the devil was perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom, he was strong and he was rich and he went down as a rebel. Christ is humble, He is meek, He is lowly, He humbled Himself all the way to death, even death on the Cross and God exalted Him. So, when God does His second creation, the new creation, us, do you know where He went? He went to the scrap heap, to the junkyard, broken men and women, sinners. He doesn't save one righteous person, understand this, and He made it very clear, "I have not come for the righteous, I have come for the sinners." He goes to the garbage bin and takes it and makes His greatest creation; that is man.

Look at 2:10

10 For we are His workmanship, you have heard it twice or thrice or fourth time, which means poem, the highest form of literature, the greatest creative effort of God is the new man. If the old man when God created in the first seven days, He said, "Good, good, very good" about the new man He says, "Perfect because of My Son's one sacrifice. This is not just good, this is not just very good, this is perfect." The greatest act of God came after creation. Where did He go to make the perfect thing? To the junkyard. So if you are a sinner, you have hope; if you think you are good, you are in trouble.

So how do we appropriate this? We saw what He did, so keep that in your mind, your right hand, five fingers: died, buried, made alive, raised, seated, enthroned – complete salvation. That was what pastor Vijay was talking about, the first two things: you serve and you sacrifice, kings and priests. What does God do? He is serving us. If He doesn't

have to serve us, He has no work to do. Jesus says, "My Father and I are at work..." What does the Creator do? Till today He is serving His creation. So what do His sons and daughters do? They serve, they serve the King and they sacrifice as priests to the King. Why? It is because of His great mercy and great grace.

So the simple thing is that, how do you and I appropriate this? How do we receive it? We looked at five things which He did, four simple steps: first, you need to repent. That's our problem, first is repentance, you can't bypass repentance and reach the Kingdom of God. There was one fellow in the wedding party who made it without the clothes, remember? That's without repentance – picked him by the scruff of his neck, "How did he get in over here?" One fellow tried to sneak in there also. The first thing is, repentance; second thing is, believe; the third thing is, confess; the fourth thing is, act out what you believe and confess. That's how salvation is worked out. You repent, you believe what God has said, you confess and you act out, work out, that's what the Bible says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." You cannot work out what He hasn't worked in, that's where faith comes in, belief comes in.

So, repentance, please remember, in simplest form is changing your mind. You came with one mindset, heard the Word of God, you changed your mind, simple as that. And every time we hear the Word of God, we repent because God is telling us something we need to change—you believed this, it's false, that's the old man, change. So repentance is constantly changing. The problem is that people don't repent. You will hear about YouTube, you will hear about Facebook and all that and say, "Oh yeah, it is a bondage," and go straight back to it. So you haven't changed. You just intellectually received an idea and because you haven't changed, you have no faith, you are not able to believe. Anything you hear, nobody has to know this, it's between you and God because it's the benefit of your soul and that's how it works, and don't mix: "Sometimes I will walk with the old man, sometimes with the new man" God says, "It doesn't work that way, son. I know you struggle but get up in the morning and kill him, bury him and trust Me to live the other way and I will take you." Don't mix, lot of people try to mix law and grace, it won't work, God will not accept it.

Remember, last week I said Leviticus gives us three rules – one; "Don't wear mix clothing with two different kinds of yarn." Why was it told to them? It's for us, they have no clue – poor fellows were looking for one single cloth and yarn is so difficult, clothes are so difficult and they have to go through for 1000 years without even knowing what it was for, it was for us. That's why the Bible says: the Old Testament is a shadow, the substance if for us. They were told, "In a field don't sow two kinds of seeds." Why do these poor people have to sow beans here, cucumbers there? Why? It is because God said so. Why did God say so? It was for us. Don't mate two different kinds of animals. He said don't do it, why? Because He is saying – law came through Moses and grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, don't mix law and grace. If you mate a horse with a donkey, you get a mule. I told you, 62, 63 and 64, the problem with the chromosome count of mule is 63, it cannot reproduce.

Everybody who mixes law and grace, spiritually will become sterile, they will produce nothing in eternity; your works when it goes through the fire will be burnt up because you cannot mix law and grace. There are works of law and there are works of grace and when it comes to grace, it has to be entirely the works of grace and grace alone. So we have to constantly repent, "O Lord, sorry, I did that, it was law. Help me to walk under grace. I received that teaching, I realized, O Lord, that was the teaching of the law but there is another teaching, the grace of God." Grace of God has appeared to all men and teaches. That teaching is different; the other teaching of law is always outward and if you only receive a teaching outward, do you know what you become? A hypocrite. But grace will not make you hypocrite; grace makes you an authentic person inside and out. That's what grace does.

So you have to repent, you have to believe; you have to repent, you have to believe. It's lifelong we will be doing it but it is very exciting because your mind is being renewed. You are not confirming to the pattern of the world from which you came out of, but your mind is being renewed little by little, sometimes in big leaps, you receive and you change drastically, something you were struggling for years and years, you hear from God and you put it away, it's gone! You are repenting, you are changing and your life is changed. And then comes the third one:

Romans 10:8-10

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

If you look here—I think I said it yesterday—the first two, mouth is put first and heart is put second. The third time, the heart is put first and the mouth is put second. What does it say? ***“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”***

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Mouth is first, heart is second. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Here, heart is put first, mouth is put second. It's always the same, they go together. Do you know, what you speak is what you believe. You know why you talk about songs and movies all the time? Because that's what you believe. See, the mouth cannot speak something which is not in the heart, it is not making oxygen out of air, no, it is bringing it from inside, it doesn't do stuff like that. Our problem is this – the mouth speaks what is in the heart. So God says your confession matters! Repent, believe and confess. What are you confessing when you repent and believe? You are believing and saying: “I am confessing what You have said in Your Word.” You said so and therefore I believe. *“If any man says he is without sin, he makes God a liar,”* I am a sinner. Why did you say that? Because God said that. *“My children I write to you that you do not sin, but if you sin, you have an Advocate,”* – ‘Lord, I come to You.’ Why are you saying all these things? Because it's written and that's what you do; you are starting with basics. That's what you do. And if you confess, the blood of Jesus cleanses you of all unrighteousness. “I don't feel clean.” You don't have to – it is written, you believe. And the more you say it, the more you believe. Like I keep saying, what are the things which you haven't forgotten from your childhood? Nursery rhymes, tables. I can't say that about nursery rhymes, but for Math tables it is true; when you repeated them, you did not know, later when you went to church, you realized it is true. First you confessed, you didn't believe in your heart, but you confessed, then one day when the change was wrong, you believed.

See, let me tell you the truth about confession: most of the main line churches we talk about; Anglican church, CSI, Jacobi, Catholic... most of their confessions are right but they don't believe. Even in the Catholic church, what do you say? “God have mercy, Christ have mercy,” is it wrong? Absolutely scripturally, on the dot your confession is, but when you go out, did you believe? Did you change? Did you become a new person? No, you never did but your confession was right, your belief was wrong. You never believed. So you can have the absolutely right confession and never believe but you can have the right belief and do not know the importance of confession.

I will show you why it is so important to confess.

Hebrews 3:1

³ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus...

consider the Apostle – who is an apostle? An Apostle is the one who is sent out by God. So Christ is the first Apostle, sent by the Father with a message – ‘Repent and be saved!’

“...High Priest of our confession” – what we don't confess, as a High Priest He can't intercede. Most of our confessions He will keep quiet because it doesn't agree with His word; most of our confessions are from the world, from the flesh, it is negative, it has no meaning in the Kingdom of God. So, you know what, so we silence His mouth in the presence of His Father with our confessions because – did we repent? Yes. Did we believe? Yes. Did we confess? No, we did not confess. You see, this is the way to complete salvation; there are stages. First is repentance; second is belief; third is confession. Go to Hebrews chapter 4:

Hebrews 4:14

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

What does it mean? Keep confessing what does the Word of God say? “Hold fast.” That's what it means to hold fast – your confession. Don't change your confession when trouble comes, don't change your confession when trails come, don't change your confession when testing comes, hold fast to your confession. Why? Because you have repented, you have believed, stick to your confession. Don't change your confession, hold fast.

Let's go to Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:21-23

²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...

Because, out of the heart comes issues of your life. In your heart what should you have? Full assurance of faith, absolute assurance that God is who He says He is – rich in mercy, rich in grace, great in love. Jonah knew that, that's why he said: "I knew that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness," his confession was right, his belief was right, but he was mad because Nineveh got saved. David, when everybody turned against him and he had no hope; Ziklag gone, family gone, soldiers all picking up stones, he encouraged himself in the Lord because he says, "I know who You are; rich in mercy, rich in grace," and he encouraged himself in the Lord and he said, "Let's hear from God."

You need to understand it matters. Verse 22,

... having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

That's the work of the word: word comes, you are convicted, you repent and you believe. You have to believe in your cleansing too. You don't have to feel you are clean; when the Word of God says that you are clean, you are clean. That's the thing.

Verse 23:

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Now faith has become hope! I am saved, I am saved, I am saved – what is that? That's faith. If you keep on confessing, your faith becomes hope, what is that? I will receive glory. That becomes the hope of your glory because you are saved, because you believed in your salvation, now what you have is the hope of glory. Now faith has become hope because faith is the substance of things hoped for.

Remember the prosperity preachers teaches lot of things which are right but only thing is they take it and put it on the flesh. That's the problem. You need to know how to dissect it very carefully otherwise you will take the truths of God and run into the world. What does the Word of God say? "*Hold fast,*" and second, "*Without wavering.*" What does hold fast means? Expect turbulence, your faith is going to be tested, trials are going to come, tests are going to come, everything that can be shaken will be shaken – hold fast to your confession! When things change, don't change your confession; hold fast because turbulence is promised, why? Because your faith being more precious than gold and silver has to be tested so that you know it's true; God knows whether it is true or not, but I don't know, you don't know. So expect turbulence, hold fast.

And second – without wavering. What does it mean? Expect opposition. Turbulence is one thing; opposition is another thing; suddenly enemy arise from your household against what you believe – among your friends, among your colleagues – suddenly enemy arise, the enemy tries to pour cold water over your faith. That's what happened to David – all the 600 soldiers who were with him, the mighty men picked stones. Where is the opposition coming from? This time it is not from the Philistines, it is not from the Amalekites, this time it is from the Israelites. What did he do? Without wavering, he encouraged himself in the Lord and said, "Abiathar, bring the ephod, what does the Lord say." Expect opposition, hold fast, because turbulence is promised; without wavering you will face opposition. And like we say: if you are the last man standing, keep standing. You look back, everybody has fallen away from faith, you know what? I will not fall away from faith because I am not standing because they stood with me, I am standing because I know He is true. That's how we have a book of Revelation because one man stood alone in the Island of Patmos – "On the Lord's Day I was in the spirit." Who is with you? Nobody. That's what one man saved an entire ship full of people, one man! he said, "The Lord whom I serve sent an angel and said to me, 'For your sake I have given all their lives. So brethren, don't fear.'" He knows, so he breaks the bread and he starts eating and they all were encouraged and ate.

You know what, in the midst of natural opposition, human opposition, because they were planning to kill the slaves and the prisoners, he said, "Don't do it, there is no need to do it, nobody will die." Unwavering! God needs people in the last days who will stand there steadfast and unwavering in their confession and the good works that He has begun in me; He is faithful to complete it. I am not dependent on my works; I am dependent on His mercy and His grace to complete what He has begun. I will finish my race! If I have to finish alone, I will finish alone but I will finish! You have to believe and your confession matters. That's the confession of Job: "Even if He slays me, yet I will serve Him." Confession matters. When trial comes, when testing comes, do not change your confessions because your

faith will be tested. Nobody will go buy gold without testing it and God says your faith is more precious than gold because on the day of the revelation of Christ, your faith should bring glory to Christ. That's only authentic faith.

How do you know your faith is authentic? Through turbulence; through testing; through opposition; you will know what you believe and whom you believe is true. It's not an airy-fairy faith, it's real – the solid rock on which I stand! Think these things because the enemy will bring every pressure – unbelieving family, believing family, nominal Christian family, educational system. Think, two of us sitting over here – can you go through the best institutions in the country and come out untouched by their teaching? Come out stronger in your faith than the way you went in? Can you? You know what happens to this high-profiled universities? They destroy your faith! We didn't allow our faith to be destroyed by the mercy and grace of God, we came out stronger, you know why? There is one thing we did, in those days we clung to our Bibles like Eleazer's hand cleaved to his sword we clung to our Bible; we refused to budge from the Word of God. You can say whatever you want, you may have all these letters and degrees behind your name, but we know in whom we have believed and He is faithful to keep what we have trusted into His hands. Unwavering, steadfast.

It's not going to get better; it's going to get worse. When you have a tree and it is a ripe season, you go shake that tree, everything will fall off except for few—everything that can be shaken will be shaken and people will fall away from faith following the doctrines of the demons left and right but there will be still something left in the tree of life because they refuse to quit. That's why the shaking! You cannot escape these things for they are prophesied and Scripture cannot be broken. So what do you do? Jude says: "Brethren, build yourself in most holy faith and in the Spirit of God build yourself, stand steadfast, unwavering." Put your nose in the Word of God and not in anything else. Yes, we will fall, the old man hasn't died, though we thought he was dead, he didn't die but when you fall, rise up! When you go out on a sweaty humid day, you come back feeling dirty, what do you do? Take a shower, you feel clean. When you feel dirty because you have fallen, you allow the Word of God to cleanse you. That's what we do, that's what I do and I listen and I listen... because I believe Jesus said to His disciples, "*You are clean because of the Word,*" and I believe the Word of God has the power to cleanse a fallen man and a fallen woman, it has the power to cleanse me. Baptism is one time but on the last day Jesus wrapped a towel around disciples' feet and He was washing the feet of His disciples, Peter said, "No," Jesus said, "If I don't wash your feet, you will have no part in Me." It is because feet is the part of your body that touches the world. It's a spiritual lesson. The part of my mind that goes into the world, receives the ideas of the world, has to be cleansed constantly by the Word of God. It has power (the Word of God).

Let me ask you this question – if we, as your pastors believe we need so much cleansing, how much do you who are in the world require?! We don't go out into the world; we don't go anywhere. I don't know what a shopping mall looks like, I have forgotten. My supermarket where I go once in three months is around ten minutes because I know exactly what I want, I know exactly where it is because I go to the same supermarket every time, unless it is closed. The last place I will waste time is in a shop. What do you do? How do you want to be cleansed? The Word of God! So you repent, you believe and you confess. You confess what God says about you. If God says, "You are a sinner," I am a sinner; God says, "The blood of Jesus cleanses you," you believe the blood of Jesus cleanses you; "If you sin you have an advocate," you believe Christ is speaking for you, not against you. You believe and you confess. That's where faith comes from, from hearing and hearing from the Word of God.

And you know what! In a flight where there is such terrible turbulence, you are stable. Like my trip from Kathmandu; all flights were being diverted and I landed up in Dehradun when I was going to Kolkata because there was a storm and a lady next to me was howling, "Aiyooo, merabachaa! Will I ever see my husband, my babies..." I held her hand, "Don't worry I am there." Not Hindi movie "Main Hu Na," but faith. You are not going to die, this plane is not going to crash. How can you say? "I am there." I know my purpose is not done, I know my race is not finished, I know God has to do work in me and through me, it's not over, no plane is going to take me down. You need to believe. That's what Paul says: you are not going to die; you may have no purpose in your life, but I am a man of purpose, called, set apart by God, I know where I am going, I will not die. How do you know, Paul? Because the Lord told me, "You shall stand before Caesar," and I haven't reached Caesar yet. Peter to be released next day, his head to be cut off, he is fast asleep – man, dude, how can you sleep like that? "I am not going to die." How do you know? "Because the Lord told me, 'You will die in your old age,' I am still young." Scripture cannot be broken. Didn't He tell him, "Now you are young, you are walking on your own strength, another day will come when you will be led by others, that day you are old." "I will not die young because the Lord told me before He ascended. My time

has not come yet.” Confidence of the Word of God! God who speaks to His people! So, when all these things happen, be unshakable! Immovable! Steadfast in faith!

Now let’s go to communion. When you come to this Table; you have to believe. If you are right with God, right with man—God says, “If you eat wrongly, you receive weakness, you receive sickness, you receive sleep or death,” so if you partake in it the right way, you receive strength, you receive healing, spiritual refreshing and awakening. You have to believe. And getting right with God is very easy; it’s more difficult to get right with people, that’s why He says, “... *as far as possible*.” With God He doesn’t say that because He is rich in mercy, rich in grace; people are poor in mercy and poor in grace, that’s why you struggle with them. So to put your life right with God is very easy. You just have to go to God and say, “Lord, forgive me. I am really sorry, forgive me. I believe, I confess.” Walk away free, partake of this and you need to believe according to the Word, I am partaking these elements of His death will bring strength, healing and awakening in my spirit. That’s partaking by faith and that becomes your confession.

So please remember—If your right hand is free, can we once again have –

I died with Him
I’m buried with Him
I’m made alive with Him
I am raised together with Him and
I am enthroned with Him.

That’s the identification. And then you repent, you believe—repent is the most beautiful word in the Bible, but we made it the most bad word. It’s the most beautiful word because we are always changing our mind. I told you we are all changing our mind, that’s why I don’t see anybody in sarees, why? Because we changed our mind. So easy to change our mind about the things of the world, God says same thing—except my mother, of course. Change your mind when you hear the Word and it doesn’t agree with what you have heard, change your mind and then believe what God has said. But every time you repent, there is mercy because of Christ. And then third thing is your confession; make your confession right. Confess what God says about you, keep saying it, keep saying it... and you will suddenly realize you believe what God says. Don’t look at the mirror and say, “I don’t like myself,” you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Most people when they look at the mirror, they don’t like themselves, change your confession.

God says that I am good, I am good. I will go with God’s report. That’s what He says about me, I am okay: “You didn’t make me tall enough,” No! Right height. He didn’t make me one inch short or one inch tall, absolutely right. Why? Because everything He does is perfect, there is no imperfect work in the Kingdom of God. You need to be satisfied and confess what God says. And all those who are not married, you are not late, your right time hasn’t come yet because there is something about it – He makes all things beautiful in His time. If you get married before your time, you are ugly; there is something called ugly time and beautiful time. Don’t let that pressure – Oh you are getting older... no, I am not getting older, I am just waiting for my right time. There is a time for everything. God doesn’t go wrong with His children; we make mistakes, He never makes mistakes. So, trust Him, believe in Him, confess. And the fourth thing He says is, work out what you believe. First work, and I will go from there to prayer.

Mark 6:16, this is your first work:

⁶He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

That is your first work as a believer – your baptism. You have believed, you have repented and turn to God with all your heart, and you say “I want to get baptized.”

Acts 8:36

³⁶Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

You know how intense his conviction is! He realizes this is who I am, I change and I believe, he says, “Baptize me. I want to be identified with His death, His burial and His resurrection, baptize me.” Next verse,

Acts 16:14-15

¹⁴ Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household were baptized...

They didn't wait, their convictions were so strong. And next verse, the same chapter...

This is the jailor who had put them in the prison.

Acts 16:30-31

³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

So the first work is that you obey God in the waters of baptism because you have repented, you have believed and the work of God begins. What's your first work? You get baptized. And after that the Bible says in *Romans 8:14*, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God shall be the sons of God." What does it mean? God doesn't have a single plan for everybody, He has different plans. We have five children, all five are doing five different things; five different professions, five different streams of education. We didn't make them into clones and say "You will all do this," no. If as an earthly father has five different plans for five different children so has the heavenly Father. God has the same general will for all but you all need to specifically, personally hear from God like Saul, "What do you want me to do?" God said, "It will be told to you."

The little children who are studying here, ask, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" He will say, "It will be told to you, finish your studies. Study well, equip yourself well, it will be told to you." That's how it works. And then, when that happens, all those are the works of faith, these are not works of sights, those are works of faith. So you repent, you believe, you confess, you do what God wants you to do. *Ephesians 2:10* says, "The works He had prepared for me even before the foundation of the world," those are the works.

Imagine, at the end of the day, remember, all of eternity, the ages to come, we are God's poetry. Riches of God's grace will be exemplified, the Cherubims and seraphims will be still scratching their angelic hair, "My God! Look at the grace God shows to this people!" See, they won't change, but I think even in eternity we will be changing from glory to glory as we get to know God better and better, we will be changing from glory to glory. They will look and say, "Wow! Look at God's mercy! Look at God's grace." And the angels know history, and say, "You know, He picked them up from the dustbin. These all came from the garbage bag!" and look at what God has done with us – sinners!

Closing prayer!

Father, we just thank You, thank You, thank You, Father! How can we not but thank You, Father, because this only You could have done; only a God full of grace, full of mercy could have ever thought of salvation like this! It's a great salvation! It's a perfect salvation! We cannot add anything to it, and we should not subtract anything from it, Lord. I pray Father, starting today help all of us to identify ourselves fully with the work of Christ. Starting today, not tomorrow, we will know we died with Christ; we were buried with Christ; we were made alive together with Christ; we were raised up together with Christ and we will know we are seated, enthroned with Christ and we will walk in that reality. So it doesn't matter where we are, in a city or lying in a prison like Paul; he knows he is with Christ for he says, "He is near," and he acts and lives like a king because that's what we are. That's what we are, seated enthroned with Him. May the hand of God rest upon everyone, Lord. Take us through this week, through this month. All those who missed God's work, the eleven months, I pray Lord, You are able to complete it; You are more than able to complete it, Lord. There will be no incomplete work in Your house, complete the work you began this year in us, that You may have the glory the honor and power, praise; everything belongs to You that even we ourselves will look back and say, "This is what the Lord has done!" Truly able to sing from our heart – "Look what the Lord has done!" Thank You, Thank You, Father! Bless Your people in Your name; protect them, preserve them, empower us and be with us through our journey through life, through this month. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each one of us. Amen!

