

Jesus Confirms the Apostles' Gospel

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[0 : 00] Well, as I mentioned a few moments ago, we'll be in Mark. So if I could invite you to turn to the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark.

Where the title of my message is Jesus Confirms the Apostles Gospel. Jesus Confirms the Apostles Gospel. We understand that it's Jesus Gospel handed off to the Apostles.

That's what we'll be talking about this morning. This is allowing me one more opportunity again to speak to the issue of the main thing. And keeping the main thing, the main thing in Christian living, in the life of our church, our church family.

All that we do as we move about in our community. It also allows me to tie the truths of Mark's Gospel with what we're studying in the letter of 2 Peter.

So in Mark chapter 16, we'll pick it up in verse 9. Afterward, he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table.

[1 : 42] And he reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Because they had not believed those who had seen him after he had risen.

And he said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. But he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

These signs, these signs will accompany those who have believed. In my name they will cast out demons.

They will speak with new tongues. They will pick up serpents. And if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.

So then when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.

[2 : 49] Now in my previous message, last Sunday from Mark 16, I spent some time attempting to clarify the nature of the biblical gospel.

And I don't want us to overlook this or take it for granted. I know it's something that we hear talked about often, at least in our church in Byron's. You hear us talk about this often and refer to it often because it's the main thing.

It being the gospel, the good news of Jesus. It's been our experience, Suzanne and I, over the last 30 years of ministry. Learning and relearning.

Don't take for granted that people who profess Jesus truly have made a confession from their heart in Christ.

This is something that we do well to go over and over again. Not at an attempt to create doubt in your mind. But to help you do what I'll say later, to become certain about God calling and choosing you.

[3 : 53] There's nothing more important than what we're going over today. You can do a lot of things in the Christian life. You can read your Bible. If you do that on a regular basis, you can come to church.

You can even do service and acts in the name of Jesus. As you minister to other people, there are a host of things you can do and still find yourself on that day of accountability that we read about earlier from 2 Corinthians.

And find out that God looks at you and says, depart from me. I never knew you. Who are you? You're not one of mine. Well, under our shepherding watch care, Greg and I want to do everything that we can to help you be absolutely certain that you know Christ as your Lord and Savior.

That you have 100% certainty in your heart that he has forgiven you for your sins because it's been personal between you and Jesus. That's what we want to cover this morning.

The gospel then, again, not taking for granted that everybody knows this and has received this truth into their heart through faith. The gospel is God's good news that he sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to save his people from the penalty and the power of sin.

[5 : 14] Jesus, God the Son, was born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. He became a man.

He lived a sinless, perfect life. He willingly sacrificed himself on the cross. He was buried in a tomb for three days.

And then God, in the power of the Spirit, raised Jesus from the dead to new and everlasting life. And that means absolutely nothing to you if you do not embrace those realities in him by faith.

Those realities are true whether you embrace them or not. Our doubt and our unbelief don't erase the reality of Jesus and his sacrifice for us.

Not at all. But it only becomes personal to you. It being the good news that Jesus did that for you. It only becomes personal to you as you reach out in faith as God's gift, the gift of faith, and embrace and grip the truth of who Jesus is and what he's done.

[6 : 31] This is what we want to go over and over today. So what you must understand and embrace by faith is that Jesus did all this for you.

For you. The gospel is personal to you because your sins are personal to God.

Your sins are an affront to God because they violate his holy law. The Bible tells us the definition of sin in 1 John.

Sin is lawlessness. Sin makes us criminals in God's sight. And being criminals in his sight, we deserve death.

That's the penalty for being a criminal of sin in the sight of almighty God, a holy God. Jesus did. Please hear this carefully, friends.

[7 : 31] Jesus then didn't come to make things better in our world. Jesus did not come to make America great again.

Jesus did not come to make your marriage better. Or even to make you better. That is not why Jesus came.

None of those reasons. Your need runs much deeper. Much deeper than all that. Let me take you to a couple of places in scripture.

Where you can see why Jesus came and why he gave his life. The first is in Titus. Go past 1st and 2nd Timothy and you'll come to the book of Titus.

In chapter 2, beginning in verse 11. Paul writes, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age.

[8 : 49] Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Now notice verse 14.

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.

If you read verse 14 over and over again, you'll come to understand then the heart of the reasoning for Jesus coming and giving himself on the cross.

Jesus came and he did not give his life for any of the reasons that I recounted to you a few moments ago. As I mentioned, your need runs too much deeper than that.

Very much deeper than that. In 2 Corinthians 5.21 earlier. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on your behalf.

[9 : 54] It's personal. So that you might become the righteousness of God in him. Jesus died to redeem souls imprisoned in the iron grip of Satan.

Jesus came and died and rose again to transfer you from the kingdom of darkness into his kingdom of light.

Friends, Jesus came for you. Jesus saw you. Jesus saw you and sought you with the laser focus of an irresistible love.

He overwhelmed your heart of stone, turning it into a heart of flesh and making it beat in sync with his own. Beloved, Jesus did not die to make you better.

He died and rose again to rescue you from death and to make you alive forever more. That is the gospel of God, the father who is worthy of our worship.

[11 : 10] Amen. Amen. That's why Jesus came. Now we're looking into this passage in the gospel of Mark. We're gleaning vital elements of a biblical understanding of this good news.

So many places in the Bible we could go to do this. We're in Mark's gospel. The first element of this wonderful good news that I mentioned from last time was this.

It was the commission of the good news in verse 15. Let me get back to Mark with you. And Jesus said to them, go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

This was in a previous message. That's the commission that Christians have received. Preach the gospel to all creation. The second thing that I mentioned from last time was the condition of the good news in verse 16.

He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. But he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. Christians take the gospel to their world.

[12 : 26] And the people who hear this message will be saved or they will be condemned. And that's all based on what condition? It's based on the condition of how they respond to the gospel message brought to them.

So I want to be very clear. This is the condition. This response is the condition inherent in the message of the good news that Christians proclaim to their world.

To Williamsburg. And to places beyond Williamsburg. We carry this message within us. And is the message of a person. That person has commissioned us to do this.

Come to Christ and be saved by God or you will be condemned by God. You are personally responsible.

In other words, look, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[13 : 33] For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Jeff, are you sure? Yes, Romans 10, 9 and 13. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Whoever. I believe that with all my heart. If you come before God humble and broken and in a spirit of understanding your need, that's a gift from the Holy Spirit.

For you to see yourself that clearly. Any person in that spiritual condition who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. We believe that here at Grace.

Anyone who seeks God with a heart to confess Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Anyone who believes from their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead on their behalf.

Will be saved from their sins. The Apostle John wrote concerning salvation in Jesus Christ this way. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

[14 : 38] Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. And so in this verse, John connects believing with obeying.

And he's telling us that those who believe in Christ, who have a spiritual relationship with Jesus. Based on forgiveness for their sins.

Those people then from a heart of love and devotion and thanksgiving to God will obey. Their life will look like obedience based on what they believe.

Belief will give birth to obedience. That obedience will be out of love for Jesus. And they will walk in that wonderful grace. Either one of those elements missing in your life suggests to you that you need to take a very serious look.

At whether or not you're truly born again. Many, many people beloved make professions. They say things. They repeat a prayer. They go through the motions of walking an aisle or getting baptized or so many other things.

[15 : 44] But then their life never really reflects a love for God. They never really take on the appearance of someone who is truly devoted to God.

And so their religious ritual is just that. It's empty ritual. Please do not die in that state. Don't even go another day, another hour, another minute like that.

I'll stop the service right now if you want to rush up here and talk to me. And we'll kneel down together and cry out to Jesus. So that he'll change your heart and give you hope in his name.

So I'm begging you. Take a serious, hard, desperate look by faith into what you believe about Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God.

Consider the consequences for unbelief. Consider the consequences for uncertainty. It's a devil's hell. Preachers say that if they're preaching the gospel because it's real.

[16 : 51] Sin is real. Hell is real. Condemnation is real. God's wrath on sin is real. Thank God his grace is greater than our sins.

And that's why we call out to him in faith. We look to him in faith. Friends, there's no middle ground. There's no safe zone.

God will forgive you or God will condemn you based on your personal response to the message that Jesus Christ is your only hope of salvation from your sin against God.

Now, that puts an enormous emphasis on you being certain that what you are being told about having your sins forgiven.

And about you being made right with God are both true according to God, not according to Jeff or Greg or anybody else you might listen to.

[17 : 53] But according to God, have you come to the scriptures to hear from God himself about what it means for you to be forgiven for your sins? So now we're back.

I won't I won't do anything with it now. We're back in second Peter, where for those of you who are visiting, we're currently working through second Peter verse by verse. We just took a little bit of a break.

Second Peter one ten tells us that we are to make certain we are to go to great lengths. Be disciplined in making certain of God's calling and choosing you.

That's what we're doing today. So the question, where will you find and hear this true message of God's gospel? There are so many voices and opinions on salvation out there.

So many different faiths, religious beliefs, doctrines, ideas. And in today's technology, you could be just bombarded with this kind of thing.

[18 : 54] If you take a whole day and did nothing for 10 hours, but sit down and look over the Internet for all the different faiths, religions and ideas about what it means to be saved, what it means to be forgiven for your sins, what it means to go to heaven.

You'd be endless. You couldn't do it in 10 hours. How can you make certain that the message you hear is the true message from God on how you can be saved from your sins?

Well, the answer is this. God himself took extra care to give us proof. Proof that his message was the message of his prophets and apostles recorded in the Bible.

See, here's the thing, beloved. God wants us to be confident that his message to us in Scripture is the only authentic, authoritative message of his salvation offered through Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins.

There is only one authentic salvation from God given to mankind, and it's in the man Christ Jesus. Amen. And we go to Scripture to meet this man, this fully man, fully God person who is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

[20 : 21] Now, the question then comes, what did God do? What did God do to give Christians confidence in his one message of salvation?

What did God do to give evidence that the biblical message of his apostles and prophets and his authentic message of salvation for everyone who believes?

That it is his message. Well, God did this. He gave us eyewitness testimony of the context of his message as it was being written.

As it was being written. Now, I'm not going to go into this right now because this is God willing. You can pray for me. This is next week's sermon from 2 Peter 1, 19 through 21.

That's what we're going to talk about. That's what Peter deals with in that passage. We're going to talk about God giving us eyewitness testimony of the context of his message as it was being written.

[21 : 19] And what Peter has to say about that. The prophetic word made more sure for us. Let me hasten to this next point. It's the context of the good news.

The context. This is verses 17 and 18. These signs will accompany those who have believed. In my name, they will cast out demons.

They will speak with new tongues. They will pick up serpents. And if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick. And they will recover.

So the question is, are these conditions for salvation or proofs for salvation? We're going to get into a bunch more of those questions in a few moments. Put simply. These two verses mean that we have God's written record of how, when, where, and through whom he introduced his message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Believe it or not, it's right there. I'm going to show you. These final verses of Mark's gospel then are intended, are intended to give Mark's readers a heavenly confidence that the apostles preaching and teaching ministry is God's message of forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

[22 : 42] The message of Christ's apostles recorded for us in scripture is the message we are commissioned to proclaim to our world.

It's not okay if you and I add to this message. That's not all right. It's not okay if we take away or leave out. That's not all right. It's not all right for us to mess with the message.

We're commissioned. Now, I want to show you five signs are mentioned. Five signs are mentioned in this passage.

Do these five signs have anything to do with God's message and with the commission to proclaim the gospel that he gives to each and every one of you as a Christian?

Do these verses teach that we can expect and should expect that these signs are, hear me, are a necessary part of proclaiming the gospel today?

[23 : 43] So if you go out into Williamsburg after this and you're doing your thing and you have an opportunity to share the good news that Jesus saves and how that person can come to know Christ and be forgiven for their sins.

Do you then look at them and say, just a moment, and you run over to a store and grab a bunch of antifreeze and come back and say, watch this. And you drink down a whole can of antifreeze and nothing happens to you.

And you look at them and say, see, this is the real thing. Is that what it's going to take to help those people understand that this is the gospel message?

This is the truth. And on and on and on it goes. We could do this forever asking these questions. Now, look, collectively, verses 17 and 18 are referring to miracles, aren't they?

They're referring to miracles. Let me give you the definition of a miracle. According to Dr. MacArthur here, this is a great one, a great definition. A miracle is an extraordinary event wrought by God through human agency, an event that cannot be explained by natural forces.

[24 : 58] Miracles always are designed to authenticate the human instrument. God has chosen to declare a specific revelation to those who witness the miracle.

That's from his book, Charismatic Chaos. There are a couple more copies out here. If you haven't gotten one and you like one, they're out there for your taking. Now, look, the point here, the point here is that miracles authenticate the messenger and message as being from God.

Miracles in scripture are also called signs and wonders. And I want to take you to a couple of places and just show you real quickly in the Old Testament. Then we'll go to the New Testament.

And I want to show you several because of a certain concept I want to bring out here. So I'm saying here miracles in scripture are also called signs and wonders. What is that all about? What is it about in Mark 16?

Exodus 7.3. Exodus 7.3. I'll get there. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

[26 : 21] This is the Lord talking. I'm going to multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. So Moses and Aaron were speaking on behalf of God.

And these signs and wonders would attend what they say. That way that would give authority, authenticity to the fact that they were speaking on God's behalf as God's agents.

And then if you'll turn with me to the book of Daniel. Let's see what Daniel has to say. And this is very, very interesting.

Daniel, what is it? Daniel 6. Because. The Old Testament is giving us.

Not just the New Testament. The Old Testament is giving us this same theme, this same message that we're going to see runs throughout the New Testament. Daniel 6.26. I make a decree.

[27 : 22] That in all the dominion of my kingdom. Men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and enduring forever.

And his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. And his dominion will be forever. He delivers and rescues and performs. Signs and wonders in heaven and on earth.

Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this is Darius. The king of the Medes and Persians. He's writing here. Saying that.

Daniel's God is the true God. And one of the reasons he is. Able to espouse that testimony. Is because of the signs and wonders. God has done. These miracles.

That God has performed. In front of Darius. Through Daniel. Who is the agent. The spokesman. For almighty God. Daniel was authenticated as God's messenger.

[28 : 21] Because of the signs and wonders. Now I want to take you to several passages. In the New Testament as well. Instead of me turning to them. And taking the time. I'm going to move through them. They're going to be up here on the screen.

And I'm just going to read them with you. As we see them. The first. Is rather lengthy. But it's from John. Chapter four. Therefore he came again. To Cana of Galilee.

Where he had made the water. Wine. And there was a royal official. Whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus. Had come out of Judea into Galilee. He went into him.

And was imploring him. To come down. Heal his son. For he was at the point of death. So Jesus said to him. Unless you people see signs and wonders. You simply will not believe.

The royal official said to him. Sir. Come down before my child dies. Jesus said to him. Go. Your son lives. The man believed. The word that Jesus spoke to him.

[29 : 16] And started off. As he was now going down. His slaves met him. Saying that his son was living. So he inquired of them. The hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him.

Yesterday at the seventh hour. The fever left him. So the father knew. That it was at that hour. In which Jesus said to him. Your son lives. And he himself believed.

And his whole household. This is again. A second sign. That Jesus performed. When he had come out of Judea. Into Galilee. Don't let it escape you.

And he himself believed. And his whole household. That was part of the result. Of what happened in the way. Of Jesus performing this sign.

Look. Jesus isn't showing off here. This is Jesus. Attesting to the reality. I am who I say I am. I am. That man.

[30 : 12] And then in Acts 2. They were continually devoting themselves. That is the people who had become. Saved. The people who had become born again. Over 3,000 souls.

Added to the church. They were gathering all over the city. And they were continually devoting themselves. To the apostles teaching. And to fellowship. To the breaking of bread. And to prayer.

Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe. And many wonders. And signs were taking place. Through the apostles. Now the question is why?

Why all the need for the signs and wonders. Through the apostles. What's going on at this time. That there's a need for that kind of thing. Why isn't it going on today.

Or is it? Here's another one. The signs of a true apostle. Were performed among you. With all perseverance. By signs and wonders and miracles.

[31 : 09] Once again. God working through his agents. In this way. And then finally. For this reason. We must pay much closer attention. To what we have heard.

So that we do not drift away from it. Do you see the call there? To pay attention and remember. Reflect on. Be certain. For if the word spoken through angels.

Proved unalterable. And every transgression and disobedience. Received a just penalty. How will we escape? If we neglect. So great.

A salvation. After it was at the first spoken. Through the Lord. It was confirmed to us. By those who heard. God also. Testifying with them.

Now who's doing the testifying. God also testifying with them. Both by signs and wonders. And by various miracles. And by gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[32 : 06] According to his own. Will. Folks in each of these passages. That I've shared with you. Look here. In each of these passages.

That I've shared with you. The word for signs. Is Semeia. It's from the noun. Semeion. One definition that.

Is used for this particular word. Especially in these contexts. It's that by which a person. Or a thing. Is distinguished from others. And is known. That's very interesting.

The word here. The word here. The word here. The word here. The word here. Has the sense of a marvelous event. Manifesting a supernatural act. Of a divine agent. Often with an emphasis. On communicating a divine message.

That's exactly what we're seeing. Signs. Wonders and miracles. Point to spiritual truth. That's what they do. So Semeia speaks here.

[33 : 05] Of miracles. And wonders. By which God. Authenticates. The men sent by him. Or by which men prove.

That the cause they are pleading. Is God's. Now let me give you an illustration. About this. What I've been putting up here. From the life of the apostle Peter.

I wanted to choose Peter. Because I wanted to bring him into this. And again. Show you. How this is tied. To the gospel good news. That we're studying in Mark. So Mark and Peter.

It's Acts chapter 9. Would you go there with me? We'll look at verse 32.

This is an illustration from scripture. Of an account in Peter's life. Giving evidence. To what I've been telling you. About these signs and wonders. And miracles through the apostles.

[34 : 05] Helping to validate them. As God's messengers. Now as Peter was traveling. Through all those regions. He came down also. To the saints who lived at.

That's actually pronounced Luda. Luda. There he found a man. Named Aeneas. Who had been bedridden. Eight years. For he was paralyzed. Peter said to him.

Aeneas. Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed. Immediately. He got up. And all who lived at Luda. And Sharon.

Saw him. And they turned. To the Lord. Was this a miracle? Yes. All right. Now look at the next one. Now in Joppa.

There was a disciple. Named Tabitha. Which translated in Greek. Is called Dorcas. This woman. Was abounding. With deeds of kindness. And charity. Which she continually did.

[35 : 00] And it happened at that time. That she fell sick. And died. And when they had washed her body. They laid it in an upper room. Since Luda was near Joppa.

The disciples. Having heard that Peter was there. Sent two men to him. Imploring him. Do not delay in coming to us. So Peter arose.

And went with them. When he arrived. They brought him into the upper room. And all the widows. Stood beside him. They were weeping. And showing all the tunics. And garments. That Dorcas used to make.

While she was with them. But Peter sent them all out. And knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body. He said. Tabitha arise. Well she opened her eyes.

And when she saw Peter. She sat up. And he gave her his hand. And raised her up. And calling the saints and widows. He presented her.

[35 : 58] Alive. Notice verse 42. It became known. All over Joppa. And many believed. In the Lord. Many people believed.

In God. This is from the ministry. Of the apostle Peter. Friends. Miracles done by Jesus. And his apostles. Were called signs. And wonders.

And they accomplished. What Mark 16 20. Is telling us. Now that brings me. To my final point. I'm going to hit on this together. My final point.

It's the confirmation. Of the good news. Verses 19 and 20. The confirmation. Of the good news. So then. When the Lord Jesus. Had spoken to them. He was received.

Up into heaven. And sat down. At the right hand of God. And they went out. And preached. Everywhere. While the Lord. Worked with them. And confirmed the word.

[36 : 54] By the signs. That followed. All right. Notice in verse 20. Who's doing the work. And confirming. While the Lord. Worked with them. And confirmed.

The word. Confirm the word. That's what we're going. To hit on. There are two. Key phrases. Then. In these verses. From 17 to 20. And they help us.

Understand. How we're to frame. The signs and wonders. Within the context. Of that time. When they're actually. Ministering this. And writing this. It's in my name.

As you see up here. On the screen. In my name. And. Confirm the message. By accompanying signs. And what I. We want to zero in.

On those two phrases. To help us better. Understand this context. Now. In my name. Means that these signs. And wonders. Are evidences. Of God's power.

[37 : 49] At work. It's being done. In his name. By his authority. By his power. By his ability. Him working. In them.

That's what's going on. These miracles. Then. Are not. Designed. And done. For personal gain. Or for personal display. Idiot.

I'm going to try to be gracious. And judicious here. It is an absolute. Travesty. It is a disgusting display. Of personality.

When we tune in. To programs. That have people. Up on a stage. Taking their coats off. And waving their coats. At lines of people.

And having those people. Fall out. In a faint. As if he was waving. At a bull. In a bull ring. Or something like that. You cannot find. Any place.

[38 : 45] In scripture. Where there's anything. Even remotely. Close to that. Going on. When signs. And wonders. And miracles. Are being done. Because it's not about. Showboating.

Or showmanship. This was Jesus. And his apostles. Performing these signs. And wonders. And miracles. And the question. We're asking now. Is why?

We're going back up. Into the context of Mark. And trying to get a better grip. On what is any of this. Handling snakes. And drinking poison. And speaking in new tongues. Have to do with.

Sharing the gospel. And the mandate. That we have today. To do that. How does any of that. Come together for us? What are we supposed to do with that?

That's what we're dealing with. In all of this. The power and purpose. Are God's. The miracles. Can only be done.

[39 : 40] In God's power. By God's true. Representatives. God's grace. Made possible. This divine.

Human partnership. That we're seeing. In these gospel accounts. So God. Did through these men. What they could never. Ever do.

On their own. And the only true. True explanation. For this work. In their lives. Was that it. Was from God.

And for God. It wasn't for money. It wasn't for fame. Or recognition.

Or renown. Not in the sense. That so many people. Try to use this today. Here it is. In a nutshell. These signs. These signs. Were miracles.

[40 : 34] Being done. By the power. Of God. Through his apostles. To authenticate. The apostles. As God's. True messengers. Bearing God's.

Genuine message. Of salvation. And sanctification. For all. All who would trust. In Christ. For forgiveness. Of sins. And eternal life. You have to remember.

That the context. Of this time. This message. Is going out. And this message. Is new. It's radical. Believe in this man. Jesus Christ.

For the forgiveness. Of your sins. This is a big deal. Now look. There are so many questions. That begin to stack up. On top of each other.

As you and I. Contemplate this today. Because there are so many places. That you and I can go. Where we're told. That these kinds of signs. And wonders. Should and must. Attend.

[41 : 27] Gospel gatherings. Of God's people. So that if these kinds of things. Are not being evidenced. In our gatherings. We are missing the power. Of the Holy Spirit. In our gatherings.

And in our lives. There are so many questions. That stack up. Behind each other. About this issue. I just want to run through. Some of them with you.

To get you thinking with me. You're probably already thinking it. Or have thought it. And while I'm not going to answer. Everything as abundantly. As maybe you'd like. But we can direct you to resources.

That will help you do that. But let me take a shot at it. Let's go through some questions together. That people ask about this. And that we've encountered. All right. The first. Should every Christian.

Experience these signs. As they live. And share the gospel. Should you? Now then the question is.

[42 : 21] Well have you? If everyone. If the answer is yes. That these signs. And wonders. These signs will accompany. Those who've believed. In my name. They will cast out demons.

They will speak with new tongues. They will pick up serpents. If they drink any deadly poison. It won't hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick. And they will recover. If you haven't spoken in tongues.

When. Or since. You trusted in Jesus for salvation. Does that mean that your salvation isn't genuine? Does that mean that you've got some kind of half-baked salvation?

It's not quite what it ought to be? And so you need a second blessing? A second outpouring? Is that what that means? These are legitimate questions.

I'm not mocking or making fun of anybody. We need to deal with these things as realities. If you haven't cast out any demons. Or healed anyone from cancer.

[43 : 22] Or leprosy. Or the coronavirus. Does that mean you are a lower level Christian. Lacking in the real power of the Holy Spirit? Should you doubt your salvation?

If you haven't yet experienced God's supernatural protection. From deadly snakes. Or deadly poisons. Or if you're not yet raised.

At least one person from the dead. Come on. Are you a spiritual slacker? You haven't raised at least one person from the dead? What's wrong with you?

I remember when I was hunting. In the deep south. My wife became concerned for me. Because I hunted in swamps. That's just where we lived.

That's what I did. The Ichikani Swamp. And so I encountered a number of very venomous critters. Slythering around all over the place.

[44 : 23] And they're hard to see. And I remember the last account. I came home with a rattlesnake about six feet long. And as I was walking down a trail.

There was some light grass. Where the sun had filtered through the canopy. And it was only about maybe five to six inches high. Not very high at all.

And I'm walking along. And I know I'm looking. And I'm walking. And the next step I took. I hear. And I can't see him. But right in front of me.

Not four feet away. I can see the grass moving. But I can't. I can't see him. He can see me. He knows I'm there. So I was wearing a pistol. Because I also had a bow I was hunting with.

And the pistol was for the snakes. And so sure enough. I took another step. And his head raised up. Just enough. And he was. I thought he was back there.

[45 : 18] That's where his tail was. He was coiled up. And so he was about that much closer to me. Just a few feet away. Well he got dispatched. He was lead poisoned.

And that's just. I'm sorry if you're a herpa whatever. And you like snakes. That one didn't make it. That went to snake heaven. So I brought him home.

And the kids always like to see that kind of stuff. And I told her the story. And so guess what my wonderful wife did. She made a trek without me knowing it. Down to somewhere.

Some hunting place. And got me snake chaps. And I was directed. In no uncertain terms Andy. Straight into my eyeballs. You will wear these snake chaps.

Right Jeff? And I was like. Oh they're so hot. They make my legs sweat. They're so noisy. I'm trying to be. You will wear these snake chaps. Won't you Jeff? So I wore them.

[46 : 12] From that time on. Well now hold the phone. The illustration begs this. I believe I'm a Christian. I was a Christian at the time. I was in ministry at the time.

Serving in a church. The Lord Jesus living in my heart. What am I worried about venomous snakes for? According to Mark. I ought to be fine.

Let them bite me all they want. That's not going to kill me. Is that really the kind of. Do you not know that there are people. Who believe that kind of thing? And I don't know if there are still churches.

Around places in our country. That handle venomous snakes as proof. In their services and all that. I've never seen it happen. I don't even go on the internet and watch it.

I can't handle it. Sitting in a chair with a computer. Something's going to get shot. On the computer. Oh. So are we supposed to believe that kind of stuff.

[47 : 08] And not worry about it? Let me ask you this. Does the absence of these signs. Here's an important one. The absence of these signs. Suggest why. You are not experiencing.

What is known as the full gospel of God. In your life. And could it be. That this lack. Is why you still stumble in sin.

Why you struggle for joy. And why you suffer through the trials of life. Is that the explanation? Just because you're not showing these signs. You're not out there getting it done.

And should you pray. For the ability to speak. In new tongues. Should you seek. Any or all these signs. As part of your walk with God. So are we failing.

To serve our community. By not having healing services. Here at Grace. Are Greg and I failing. In our shepherding. By not visiting the hospitals.

[48 : 06] And laying our hands on people. And healing them. In the name of Jesus. Greg should we go down to the morgue. And say you know what. These people were loved by people.

And I'm sure it would thrill them to death. If we could raise these people from the dead. And return them to their families. And their loved ones. Why aren't we doing that? Please don't hit me.

With it's happening in the third world. I will never. Why always the third world. Where there's no cameras. There's no you know. I don't know. I don't have answers for that kind of stuff.

But I have answers for what I just said to you. I'm going to answer all this in the same way. I've been answering the issue of your salvation. In Jesus Christ. It's very straightforward friends.

Here it is. When God saves you from your sins. By grace alone. Through faith alone. In Jesus alone. He does not shortchange you. Anything you need.

[49 : 02] For life and godliness. In his name. Period. That's 2nd Peter 1. 3 through 11. Which you'll be seeing and hearing again next week. God willing. When you get Jesus.

As God's gift of salvation. God gives you all you need. For this life. And the next. Jesus is your treasure. He's your focus.

He's your wisdom. Your redemption. Your salvation. So that if anyone boasts. Let him boast in the Lord. God. Now friends. Here it is. These are the issues.

At stake here. The authority of God. And the sufficiency of his word. When the apostles. Were taking this new message. Of salvation to the world.

For the first time. In introducing this gospel. Of grace in Christ. That is. Jesus crucified. And raised to life. For the forgiveness of sins. God graciously confirmed.

[50 : 02] His message. As his authentic. Good news. By these. Attending signs and wonders. In his messengers. At that time.

Now let me clarify. The signs and wonders. Were confirmations. Now. Now we're back to Mark 1620. Where God is confirming his message.

And his messengers. Signs and wonders. Were God's confirmations. These men are bringing my message to you. The issue.

Was God giving undeniable proof. Of his message. Being proclaimed. And written. Through these men. Not just any men. Through these men.

God's own chosen representatives. Who were ministering only. What the Lord Jesus himself. Had given them to preach. And to teach. And to write. In his name.

[50 : 59] Oh. There were many. Many men. Who were writing. And teaching. And preaching. And they were not doing it. In the name of Jesus.

In other words. They were not true apostles. This is what 2nd Peter is going to teach us. And show us. They were there. But they were not. Truly ministering. They would have said to you.

I believe in Jesus. In many ways. They would have sounded. Just like you and I. But they were not heralding. The true message. Of Jesus Christ.

In some way. Form or shape. They were getting it wrong. And it was doing. No small amount of damage. To the New Testament churches. Scattered around the area. Peter's writing to. So he wrote.

2nd Peter. Right before he died. To call these. Christians. Back to the true. Gospel. So these signs. And wonders. And miracles. Are helping to.

[51 : 54] Prove. Who. The real guys are. Who the genuine apostles. Are. And. And helping to authenticate. And verify. The message that we're bringing to you.

It is indeed. God's message. And here's the proof. Here's the proof. Now can you imagine. What would have done for you. If you'd have been around.

In the city. When. Peter raised. Dorcas from the dead. And that gets around. Boy. That'll grab your attention. Won't it. That'll make you think. Why was that needed.

Why. Why at. This. Particular. Time. Well. Once again. I say to you. The proof. Has been established. The proof.

Has been established. Let me make sure. I have this one. Up there for you. See if it's the next one. Yep. That's what I want. You and I don't need.

[52 : 52] Any additional confirmation. Because God has already. Provided it. For us. In what he wrote down. In eyewitness testimonies. As this was happening.

Through his apostles. Friends. The proof. Has been established. Our commission. Is to proclaim. This message.

Already confirmed. For us. By God. And the call. To repent. And believe. Is a call. To faith. In Jesus Christ. According. To this message.

Delivered. To us. By Jesus. Apostles. And recorded. For us. In the Bible. Friends. The power. And authority. Is in. The word. Of God.

That is all. The authority. We need. To bear in mind. As we share. The gospel. That's it. Praise God. We do not need.

[53 : 49] Signs. And wonders. To attend. Our proclamation. Precisely. Because. God. Has already. Confirmed. Which message.

Is his. Through signs. And wonders. When did he do that? He did it. As it was being written. And recorded. For us. So that we could go back. And read it.

And see. Hey. Wait a minute. This is the real message. Because it's being written. By the men. Who are performing. The signs. And wonders. And miracles. As attestations.

Biblical. Godly. Proofs. That they're the real guys. They're the genuine article. And we can. We can look to this message. And trust. That God attended.

This message. With these miraculous proofs. And signs. And wonders. So that we could have. A supreme confidence. That this is God's message. For us.

[54 : 43] Today. That's why you don't need. Greg and I. When we do this. With you. To get up here. And make some showmanship. Out of preaching the gospel.

And telling you the truth. And preaching from God's word. We preach it. As dead men. Preaching to dying men. We are in desperate need. Of the same message.

We turn to the same God. For the same thing. That you are desperate for. Forgiveness in his name. Right? Amen. We are all on that. Playing court together.

So there is. There is nobody. That we need to look to. Up there. Making a big show. Of himself. As if they have got. Some deeper. Higher power. And ability.

And I am not going to ask you. If any of you have ever been. To one of those crusades. Where they do this kind of thing. I have not. But I. People in my family have. And I don't know how much they paid.

- [55 : 41] But here is the issue. They paid. They paid. We do not charge people. To give them Jesus Christ.
- And we never will. Our counseling ministry. Doesn't charge people. To come in. And get Jesus. To help them. Deal with the issues of life. We do not profit.
- Financially. By asking people. To come to our. Counseling center. And receive hope. And help. And compassion. In the name of Jesus Christ. And we never will.
- Charge people for that. We provide that. For them. As a body. We give. Financially. To this ministry. So that we can. Free ourselves up. To do that kind of work.
- In our community. And we tell people. It's not about us. We don't point people. To our expertise. We point people. To Jesus. We ask them.
- [56 : 36] To come to Christ. I don't know. If you guys. Realize this. Because I don't know. If Greg and I. Have said anything. About it. Since it happened. Last time. A couple Sundays.
- Two or three Sunday nights ago. We told you. That since January. We had two. People come to know Christ. Through our counseling. And ministry. As of now. You can make that three.
- God continues. To see people. Born again. Brought to Jesus. Saved. Because we're taking time. To sit down with them. And talk to them.
- About the things that matter. When I was praying. About this. I prayed. And asked the Lord. To hedge my words. In my heart. I pray that every Sunday.
- As I preach and teach. But I knew. Especially on this one. That I would need his help. Because I will tell you. And I hope it's righteous. It makes me angry. I get angry. When I think about.
- [57 : 31] The showmanship. And the falsehood. That I see. Happening. In the way Christians. Are being exploited. I'm talking about people. This gets me. People who are.
- Legitimately suffering. With diseases. And illnesses. And they're so desperate. In their pain. And in their desire. To help their loved ones. That they're willing. To go to these kind of places.
- To see if this really can. Be real. What I'm afraid of.
- Is that they miss Jesus. In the process. They're so focused. On the problem. That they miss the Savior. So friends.
- How does your part. In the Great Commission. Fit with what Jesus. Gave the Apostles. To proclaim. Where do you fit in? Listen.
- [58 : 30] When we faithfully. Proclaim the gospel. We are. Ambassadors. For Christ. God. Making his appeal. Through us.
- Do you remember that? We read that earlier. God making his appeal. Through us. Second Corinthians. Chapter five. I'm not going to read that passage to you.
- But for your notes. And for the tape. That we're making this morning. Second Corinthians five. Seventeen. Through chapter six. Verse two. Deals with this very issue. Paul tells us there.
- We are God's ambassadors. Of his authoritative message. Given for all to hear. And obey in faith. Those who hear.
- Believe. And obey. Will be saved from their sins. Those who hear. Disbelieve. And go on disobeying. Will remain unforgiven for their sins. They will be condemned to hell.
- [59 : 28] As a just punishment. For their unbelief. God help us. Now to tie it up. As I finish. Why did Jesus.

Do signs. Wonders. And miracles. Therefore. Many other signs. Attesting miracles. Jesus also performed. In the presence of the disciples. Which are not written.

In this book. But these have been written. So that you may believe. That Jesus is the Christ. The son of God. And that believing. You may have life. In his name. John 20.

30 and 31. The same. Went for. The apostles. And the purpose. Of signs and wonders. As they did them. They didn't. Go around. Doing all that.

I remember. There's a passage. In Timothy. Where Paul. Is telling Timothy. To take wine. For his. His stomach issue. Or some kind of. Digestive issue.

[60 : 22] In his life. Well. Why didn't Paul. Just heal him. Or why didn't. Timothy. Just heal himself. Or somebody else. Heal him. Throughout the script. These guys.

They didn't just go around. Doing these miracles. For everybody. And showing off. There were select times. That these miracles. And signs and wonders. Were performed. Next week.

Perhaps. God willing. We'll talk more. About. Where we stand. At Grace Church. In terms of these miracles. We're just saying. Simply here. That.

As a Christian. You don't have to have. These signs and wonders. And miracles. Attending. Your gospel. Presentation. Your sharing. Of the gospel. You being an ambassador. For Jesus.

As you go among. Our community. And bring. Jesus Christ. To them. And the love of the Lord. To them. Oh please. Do that. Please. Be a gentle soul. Graciously.

[61 : 18] Giving out. The best gift. These people. Could ever know. As a human being. It's the gift. Of Jesus. Isn't it? Please be ready. To do that. And I think you are. And I hear about you.

Doing this. We don't need. All the miracles. To attend. Because we already. Have the proof. That that message. Is the legitimate one. So be confident. Friends. Share the gospel.

Of Jesus. Based on what you know. Scripture says. About the gospel. And be confident. That's the message. That saves. And the power. Is in the word. It's not in you.

Or me. It's in the word. And God will work. Through us. Mark 16 20. Tells us. That Jesus. Worked. Through his apostles. To confirm.

The word. They preached. By signs. And wonders. Which followed. I. For me folks. That's all the confirmation. I need. So that I can believe.

[62 : 13] Obey. And live with joy. And I hope you'll stand there with me. Let's pray together. Dear father.

Dear father. We are. Humbled. And. Excited. And motivated. In.

The truth of your word. That you have given us this bible. And this gospel message. That we might take. The name of Jesus. To our community. And to our world.

And to the degree. That you are. Making opportunity. For us to do that. Help us to be prayerfully. Faithful. In carrying out.

This wonderful commission. And great privilege. And responsibility. To share the love of Jesus. And the name of Jesus. With our neighbors. Help us not to just be nice people.

[63 : 09] And leave it there. Help us to look for. And create opportunities. To walk across the yard. And tell our neighbor. That Jesus saves. And ask them.

Have you ever come to know Christ? Father. We. Loathe. The ridicule. That we receive for this. It's hard for us. To know that.

There are people. Who will alienate us. For doing that. But God. Help us to be found. Loving and faithful. That we would never. Deny people. The greatest gift.

That any. Person could ever know. Because. We're all caught up. In ourselves. And our embarrassment. Help us to push through. All of that.

Because we love you. And we've turned. To love our neighbor. Well. Thank you. For your gospel grace. At work in our heart. If there's. Anyone here.

[64 : 03] This morning. Father. Who isn't 100% certain. That Jesus. Has forgiven them. For their sins. And that they have. Secured their place. In heaven.

Through faith. In Jesus. Please put it on their heart. To come forward. At the end of our service. And allow us. To deal with them. In love. We want to help them.

Settle that. In their heart of hearts. And be 100% sure. That they are trusting. In Jesus. For their forgiveness. Of their sins. And looking to him alone. For an eternal home.

Thank you for these wonderful truths. And the confirmation. And the attestation. And authenticity. That we all share in. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.