Believing God and Walking with God

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] That is the hope of the human race. That is what's going to bring Arab and Jew together.

That's what's going to heal the people in the deep south where I'm from. Where the divide between people with darker colored skin and lighter colored skin is militant.
Where I come from, you can walk into any store and deal with it and you can feel it in the air. Only Jesus can heal that. Only Jesus gives us the hope that we need.
Men have come to the place in a very short time after the fall in Genesis 3. Where they are killing each other, murdering each other, raping each other and taking advantage of each other.
To such an extent that God is going to judge them catastrophically. And we're going to deal with that. We're going to look into that. And let the Bible teach us what was going on.
[1:03] Was it really that bad? Yeah, it was. And God gets to decide what to do about it. This contrast of lifestyles that I'm highlighting here for you is emphasized for us in a positive way.

Through the life of Noah. Through the life of Noah. And we see that in chapter 6 verses 8 and 9.
So I'm back in Genesis. And if you'll look at chapter 6. I read verse 8 where it says, But in contrast to all this evil going on in the world, there's one man, one man that found favor in the eyes of Almighty God.
Or my translation says Yahweh. The Hebrew name for God. And then in verse 9. These are the generations of Noah.
Noah was a righteous man. Blameless among those in his generations. And now notice, Noah walked with God.
[2:09] That is shorthand for saying Noah had a relationship. A saving relationship with God. Noah knew God as his Savior. And trusted God for who he said he was.

That's the truth of who this man is. And that's the emphasis that Scripture here is making about this contrast in a positive way between Noah and his line and the unbelieving world.
Which would be under Cain and his line of people. Now folks, I know for those of you who are visiting, we have spent weeks and weeks and weeks walking our way into what I just said.
So there's a lot of foundational work that we've done to clarify that. But I think that you can follow along as I give you these themes. Look at this with me up here. What we're going to deal with is faith, fear, and favor.
Those are the themes of God's saving grace, making the lifestyles of this godly line radically different from everyone else. These three theological themes, faith, fear, and favor, will act as what I hope spiritual handles for you to hold to as we think about what God is doing with his human race through the flood and its aftermath.
[3:35] We're going to be about, I don't know, six, seven, eight, nine, four chapters in the Bible devoted to Noah and the flood and its immediate aftermath.

And I want you to have this faith, fear, favor motif, these three major themes in your mind as we work through that together. I'll be referring back into them many times as we walk through this.
All right, so let's jump off and talk about faith. Faith, what are we talking about? Well, this is saving faith, not just faith like we say, yeah, I have faith that this chair is going to hold me up and I sit in it.
We're talking about faith that is aimed at Almighty God. So this is a saving faith. If you're taking notes, write that in. Saving faith. It is a gift from God.
It is not something that is of human merit or human effort. This is a gift from the Lord.
[4:38] I want to take you into the book of Ephesians just very quickly. Some of you are familiar with this. This is where the Bible helps define for us further the issue of saving faith.

It's in chapter two of Ephesians. Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus and he wants them to understand that it is by God's wonderful favor, His loving, undeserved favor on our lives that He

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imparts to us the gift of saving faith.
What is it? Verse four, chapter two. But God being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us. Now, folks, don't let's not blow past that as we think about the flood.
Let's go back and read verse four again. But God being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us. Even when we were dead, spiritually dead in our transgressions, our sins, God made us alive together with Christ.
By grace, you have been saved. We're going to define that in a moment. And raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come, He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
[6:14] Now, notice verse eight. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God.

This salvation that has come to you through the gift of faith is just that. It's a gift. It is not something you produced. It's something that God gifted you with.
In verse nine, it tells us, it is not of works. It is not of your labors so that no one may boast. It is the gift of God.
He goes on to say that we then are the workmanship of God. Saving faith brings us to the place to believe God at His word.
To trust that what God has said about Himself and His ways are true. Now, prior to that, we rebel against it. We want to be our own gods, etc.
[7:13] No one then has ever been saved, that is, forgiven for their sins. No one has ever been saved apart from God's gift of faith.

No one. Now, let's trace it in several of the characters that I think we've seen so far. I can't do all of them, but we'll do several of them that we've seen so far in our study in Genesis.
And we're going to use Hebrews 11 to help us bring all of this into focus in terms of the faith that I'm talking about. So, once again, back to Hebrews.
Please forgive the jumping back and forth, but this is important. Hebrews 11, 1 through 3. And I want you to notice, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Now, please, please notice, beloved, what I'm going to put up here for you under this. This saving faith is based in assurance. It is based in certainty.
[8:18] It is based in conviction. So, this is a hope of certain expectation. What do I mean? Our hope is assured or certain of the fulfillment of what God promised.

Folks, so this is not the kind of hope that we use sometimes when we say, Oh my goodness, we're going out to Duggan Terrace today and we're going to have baptisms. I hope it doesn't rain.
That's not this hope. That's not what we're talking about. We're not using it like that. Hope here is defined as confident expectation. We are certain of what God has said.
And so, we ground our hope in Him and in His Word. We are fixed on the truth of Almighty God and we will not be moved from it.
So, that we're blown around with all kinds of winds of different teachings coming at us. We are anchored in what God has said and we know it's true. And so, our hope is fixed in the promises that He's made and in His character.
[9:29] And so, that becomes the cement that we live our lives from. That's the hope we're talking about. It's very different from, well, I hope it doesn't rain today. Very different.

This is the heart of conviction. Solid belief. Rock solid belief. Grounded in the Lord.
So, this is our confessing. This is our believing in God as we trust in His promises to us. Now, remember, promises not seen with physical eyes, but with spiritual eyes.
This is looking to God to fulfill His Word to us and in us through faith. Through faith. With this faith in God and in His promise of a Savior, the text tells us that the men of old gained approval.
Do you see that in verse 2? It is this kind of faith by which the men of old gained approval. Gained approval from whom?
[10:30] The Lord. This is God's favor on them. Now, how did Old Testament believers obtain salvation? Have you ever heard anybody ask you that? How were people in the Old Testament saved?

That was different from the New Testament, right? Because in the New Testament, we have Jesus. But they didn't have Jesus in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, we have the cross. They didn't have the cross in the Old Testament.

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So, how did they get saved in the Old Testament? Here's the answer. By God's favor through faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.
Now, wait a minute. You just said they didn't have Jesus in the Old Testament. Really, they did. They are putting their faith in the one God promised in Genesis 3.15.
He would bring to remedy the sin problem among mankind. God promised that in Genesis 3.15. We've studied that together pretty proficiently, I think.
[11:34] So, we're rock solid in that. They are looking to God and His promise of that one who will come. And that one is Jesus. Did they know Him as Jesus? No, they knew Him as the Messiah, the promised one, the Savior, the Deliverer.

The New Testament would then flesh out for us in greater form who this person is. Folks, think about it. Even the world we know now was made from what we couldn't see or fully understand. We read Genesis and we can't fully understand how God made something out of nothing. But He did. It is by faith that we take God's Word and take God at His Word about creation and about all the matters of life and trust.
His Word is true. And what He's told us is true. Now, just a quick caveat. When it comes to these matters that we talk about from antiquity, ancient times, things like the flood, things like the way that God says He made the universe.
Folks, science cannot help us prove nor can it disprove what the Bible is telling us about these events. Why? Because for something to undergo the scientific method, it has to be repeatable.
[12:54] This is not repeatable. You're either taking God at His Word in faith or you're not. We don't use science in our defense of the faith and our defense of the Word of God to help us prove that God is true and that God is right.

Don't do that. Let the Word of God speak for itself. And if God is going to save somebody, He's going to give them the gift of faith to believe that God is true and that what He says is true.
That's how you were saved. That's how I'm saved. I didn't and have never convinced anyone to become a Christian. Never. And I've had many people that have come to know Christ as I've shared the Lord with them.
But I didn't convince them, did I? Boy, what power, Alonza. Look into my eyes. Woo! Woo! No. This is the power of God working through the truth.
I just share the truth with them. I tell them the truth about Jesus Christ. And I leave to God what He's going to do with that. You know how freeing that is? I'm just the messenger boy.
[14:02] I try to bring you the truth. And now you have to figure out what you're going to do with that truth. But I do bring it. Right? We need to open our mouths and speak it.

Amen? We need to tell people the truth about all of this. This is how Old Testament people were saved. Now let me give you a couple of these characters that I want to highlight for you.
The first is Abel. And here's what the text tells us about Abel. I've just put it up here so that we can move through it more quickly. By faith, the Bible says, That's Hebrews 11.4.
Now, what are we dealing with here? Well, compare this with what we know from Genesis 4, from prior study, God taught Cain and Abel how to worship him.
That's how they knew, from Genesis 4, how to bring offerings to God. They even brought the offerings to a certain place, and they made offerings in a certain way.
[15:23] Well, God taught them all that. God is the one who laid all of that out. So, both Cain and Abel knew what God expected and what God rejected.

They knew what was worship, and they knew what wasn't. And so what happened? Well, it's very straightforward in the Bible. Abel obeyed God from a humble heart of faith in God.
Cain disobeyed God from his prideful heart of rebellion against the Lord. So what happened? Cain, Abel pursued a relationship in faith with God.
Cain pursued a life of, now hear it, religion and hypocrisy. You say, Jeff, Cain was religious? Absolutely. The Bible tells us that Cain brought his offering, and he had been bringing his offering on a number of occasions.
They had been worshiping the Lord. Cain was a very religious man. He was also a hypocrite. And he did not worship God in the way that God prescribed. Abel did.
[16:27] And Abel worshiped God by faith. He took God at his word and sought to live his life according to what God said. God accepted Abel, and he rejected Cain.

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Now, hear me. Do you hear what I said? He didn't just accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's offering. He accepted Abel and rejected Cain.
Do you hear what's happening there? You have come today to bring an offering of worship to God. God will not receive that worship apart from what he has prescribed for you to worship.
And he has said, worship him in spirit and truth. You can't worship the Lord and it be received by the Lord apart from worshiping God according to his truth, which is Scripture.
We are trying to worship God according to the Bible. That's why we sing Scripture back to God. We sing truth back to God. We pray God's truth back to him.
[17:30] This is worship. Abel offered this kind of worship to God. Cain didn't. And yet Cain was very religious. Religion has never saved anyone from their sins.

Religion is one of the most dangerous things on the planet. Hebrews 11.4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain through which he was approved as being righteous, God approving his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.
Abel's sacrifice of worship was better. How was it better? Because it followed God's requirement and it was offered in faith. Dr. MacArthur paraphrases Abel's belief in God this way.
He's trying to paraphrase Abel to show you what was going on here, and I thought it was very good. God, this is what you said you wanted.
You said, if I brought this, you'd forgive my sin. I brought it, and I believe you, God. I acknowledge my sin, and I acknowledge the prescribed remedy.
[18:46] Now, folks, that is a confession of childlike faith, of saving faith. Say, Jeff, what does it take for a person to become a Christian? I just read it to you.

God, I believe you, because you said it. And because you said it, I brought it in this way, so that you would forgive my sin. And you said, if I bring it this way, and trust in this way, and so this is what he tells us.
If you will confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
That is childlike faith. That is simple faith. You don't have to know all the things about the Bible and be able to explain all the different issues in the Scriptures.
No, you have to come before God Almighty as your Creator, and you have to confess with your mouth and believe in your heart, believe with your whole person that God has made an offering of Jesus in your place, and that Jesus Christ went to the cross to bear your sins.
[19:58] Not His. He didn't have any. God put the full weight of our sins on Jesus. And now bearing those sins, God had to punish His Son for the sins that we committed.

And Jesus willingly said, Yes, God, punish me for their sins. I will stand in their place. And the wages of sin, beloved, is death.
And so Jesus had to die. So He did. He died for us, paying our debt for our sins. He was the once-for-all sacrifice for all time for the sins of all who would come to Him and believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that God has made Jesus Christ the once-for-all sacrifice for us, for our sins.
Isn't that glorious? And people stumble all over it. It's got to be more complicated than that. Well, folks, I don't know how to get more sophisticated than God coming in human form and offering a perfect life on the cross for imperfect people to purchase them out of hell and into heaven.
That's pretty sophisticated for me. That's about as far as I can go with it, Linda. That's about as deep as the understanding goes for me to figure out the mind of God and the heart of God to do something so miraculous for people like us.
[21:23] But He did it. Didn't He? And that's why we're here this morning. This is why we're here this morning. This is why you don't see an image on this cross.

He's not on it anymore, is He? Where is He? Seated at the right hand of God. Right? We have a risen Savior and we put our hope in Him.
Our certainty. Our fixed assurance in Almighty God who is the Lord Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father.
This is what this tells us. The Bible says that faith, saving faith, comes by hearing and hearing comes by the Word of God. So as people hear the Word, God brings saving faith to their heart.
And they know what to believe in and who to believe in and why to believe. Well, God said that Abel believed. That is God's remedy for sinful unbelief.

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[22:27] That is God's answer to our need for His forgiveness as we learn to trust in what God has told us about Jesus. So, through His obedience to God and by His faith in God, God approved or favored Abel as being righteous.

God counted Abel as being right with Him. You are now right with me. Abel still speaks because God has given Abel a voice in Scripture as a lasting, eternal testimony and example of saving faith. So we read about Abel and we say, that's the way to go. That's what belief is. That's what faith is. It's worshiping God according to what God has told us to worship Him in.
Why? How? Then we have Enoch. Enoch. The Bible says in Hebrews 4, verses 5 and 6, by faith, Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death and he was not found because God took him up.
In other words, Enoch didn't die. We covered this last time. Enoch didn't die. God took him up. For prior to being taken up, Enoch was approved as being what?
[23:56] Pleasing to God. And without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he who draws near to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

So, if you notice up here now, Enoch was pleasing to God by faith and Enoch walked with God by faith. Verse 6 tells us this in clear terms.
Enoch drew near to God. He believed God for who God says he is. He wasn't trying to remake God in his own image so that he'll worship a God of his own making, his own design and desire.
No, he worshipped God for who he was, who he is. Enoch drew near to God. He believed God for that and Enoch believed that God keeps his promise to reward those who draw near to him in faith. God, you said you would reward us if we draw near to you. Now, that reward doesn't mean that I'm going to go home today and find a brand new truck sitting in my driveway. No.
[25:09] It doesn't mean that tomorrow I'll open up my check register and I'll look in there and I'll find, oh my goodness, there's another 50 grand sitting in there. Thank you, Lord. He could do that if he wanted to and that's fine with me, Lord, if you want to do that.

I'm all good with that. But that's not what we're talking about here, is it? He is a rewarder of those who believe in him. What does he reward us with? Not what, beloved? Who? Who is our greatest treasure?
Jesus Christ. He rewards us with a person. He rewards us with the treasures of our Savior. What more do you want? Would you rather have 50 grand or the Savior of the universe for all eternity? Say the latter. Amen. Amen. All right. We got a church here who's marking it down. That's good. That's right. Now, let me go a little further and explain this to you.
As a consequence of this kind of faith in the Lord and this determination to follow Him, this love for Him as a consequence, Enoch's lifestyle clearly demonstrated a person whose heart was submitted to God and to God's will for his life.
[26:19] Lifestyle. Not just something that he said. Not just showing up to church on Sunday. Enoch's entire lifestyle reflected or demonstrated that he was a person following God.

Now, I don't want to skip over this, so I'm going to put it up here. To walk with God, as it says Enoch did, to walk with God is the same thing that the New Testament says when it says walk by the Spirit. That's a command we're given as Christians. Walk by the Spirit. If we live by the Spirit, the Bible says, let us also walk by the Spirit.
That's Galatians 5.25. Now, since God has given us spiritual life by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us also live out that life in constant fellowship with the Spirit.
So here's how I can shorten all that and say it for you. This is a walking with God way of life. I am a walking with God person.
[27:28] It means, what does that mean? It means to have a continual God consciousness about yourself and about how you approach life. So you are to walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Galatians 5.16. How do we fight sin? How do we fight the deceitful desires that sneak in and camouflage themselves and masquerade as something good?
How do we fight all of that? How do we deal with sinful anger? How do we deal with impatience and unkindness and a lack of gentleness? How do we deal with pride in our lives?
What does it say? Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. This is a God consciousness about your life. You are cultivating and disciplining yourself to think about all of life from the time you awake to the time you go to bed again at night.

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You are constantly thinking in terms of who God is and what God is doing and how God is working. You're looking for and you're listening for how God's working in the lives of other people.
[28:35] Your kids, your husband, your wife, your friends, your co-workers. You also begin to recognize when you're not hearing God in all of that.

That one's pretty easy, isn't it? For the most part. Maybe a little harder to discern when God is working in people. Now again, I'm not, this isn't mystical.
I'm not talking about something that's hovering up here in the ethereal world. No, listen. What are the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control.
When you see these kinds of things working in people who are naming the name of the Lord, you're seeing the work of the Holy Spirit in them. Boy, speak to that. Speak to that.
Give them a handshake. Give them a hug. Give them some fist bumps. Do something to say, Boy, I see the Lord working in you. I so value and appreciate your gentleness. Thank you.
[29:33] Thank you for your gentleness. I see the Lord cultivating gentleness in you. Thank you for being kind. The other day, I know that when we were out, that person said that to you and then did that to you and you were very patient and you were very kind.

I see the Lord working in that. See? How many people lined up last week to say something like that to you? Can you name? Give me a number.
Zero? One? People are not lining up to do that, are they? We should be lining up behind each other to do that as we gather. One of the main reasons you want to come on a Sunday is so that you can physically be here to encourage your brothers and sisters to spend next week following Jesus.
We have to move out of the mentality of I come to get. You're going to get if you come to worship, to give. You're going to get, aren't you?
But what we want to do is line up behind each other as we gather and put our arms around each other and speak this truth and love to one another and build each other up to go back out into a broken world and live for Christ.
[30:54] Well, this is what Enoch did. This is the kind of God consciousness this man had. I'll go on just a little bit further here with you. Therefore, here at the bottom of the screen, the Bible says, therefore, as you received Christ Jesus, the Lord, do what?

Walk in Him. Walk in Him. You know Jesus by faith and you walk with Jesus by faith.
This is an interesting verse right here at the bottom of the screen. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf. That's Jesus on the cross. So that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
That's what Jesus did for us. We are the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. Enoch was a righteous man. God approved him as a righteous man.
There is no way for a human being to be righteous apart from Jesus Christ. Enoch believed in Christ. He believed in the one God would promise.
[31:59] to take our sin away. And then finally, I'll just do this one real quickly. Noah, it says in the text that Noah, by faith Noah being warned about things not seen, God's warning him it's coming, the flood's coming, in reverence.

How did Noah respond to God? In reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
See, this is, the author of Hebrews is looking back on all these events and he's saying, folks, this is all about faith. The flood is all about faith. It's about the salvation of God for those who are looking to God to be their savior.
fear. It's beautiful. Now, I'm going to say a lot more about Noah in the sermons that are coming, God willing, as we move through chapters 6 through 9. So, for now, I just want to springboard on what Hebrews says about Noah building an ark in reverence to God.
What is this reverence? Well, I want to pick up on that and here it is, fear. It's fear. You say, whoa, reverence is fear? Yeah, look now. Noah's reverence is sanctified fear.
[33:18] Read that this way. Holy fear. It's holy. It's unto the Lord. It is fear for the Lord and it's holy. It's beautiful. Like saving faith, this sanctified fear is the work of the Lord in our hearts and our souls.

It also involves us in godly efforts to obey God by His work of grace in our lives. So Noah, Noah kept a very high and holy view of the Lord as his God and his Savior.

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Just like Enoch, just like Abel. So in summing up now, summing up the heart of sinful rebellion and unbelievers, the Apostle Paul declares this from the New Testament.
There is no fear of God before their eyes. Folks, that is the Bible's way of summing up what's most wrong with unbelievers. That's what was most wrong with Jeff Jackson before I came to Christ. There was no fear of God before my eyes. I had no fear of the Lord. Solomon teaches us to fear God and keep His commandments because this is the end of the matter for all mankind.
[34:32] This is another way of you and I saying this. Let's get it down to brass tacks here. Where does the rubber meet the road? Our kind of expressions. That's Solomon saying, let me tell you where the rubber meets the road.

It's to fear God and keep His commandments. That's how you sum up living on this planet. You're either doing that or you're not. Again, that's how God sees us. John Murray's definition is helpful when it comes to understanding what is the fear of the Lord.
So I'm going to put that up here. It's a little bit academic but I think we can wade through it together. The fear of God, John Murray says, in which godliness consists is the fear which constrains or compels adoration and love.
It is the fear which consists in awe, reverence, honor, and worship. And all of these on the highest level of exercise. Now this is good.
It is the reflex or response in our consciousness of the transcendent majesty and holiness of God. Amen. This is a God consciousness that we nurture and hold on to in our hearts so that everything about the life that we're living is through and by this awareness of God working in me, working in His world.
[35:58] Everything about the world I see as energized by Almighty God including me. And so I have this constant God consciousness that causes me to do this.

What's the Lord up to now? How's the Lord going to use this? What's this going to look like as God works this out? This is why I don't care what kind of counseling situation you put in front of me and how intimidated I might be attempted to be when these hard things of life come at me as a pastor and a counselor.
You know why? Because at the end of the day what am I thinking? I'm thinking I can't wait to see what God does with this one. I can't wait to see how God is going to work in this one. You see it's all off of me.
I don't have to convince these people. I don't have to change these people. All I have to do is be available to the Lord for God to use me to speak the truth in love. I just speak the truth in love. I show them right here in black and white verse by verse.
I try to unpack it and help them understand it. I do that in love and compassion and then I push it across the table to them and I say now that's your God and that's what your God says. What do you want to do? Now Fred, I just pray.
[37:10] I just pray. I believe. I trust the Lord because every time we do that it's not wasted. Every time God's word goes out in love like that the truth goes out in love it is never wasted and what does God say?

It will never ever come back to me empty. It will accomplish the purpose for which I sent it. In some cases that's going to be condemnation. People are going to feel the sting of that judgment.
The word is going to crush them in their sin and rebellion. In other cases that word is going to liberate them. And you can see it happening in front of you.
This is one of the beauties of being in this kind of work is you just never know what God is going to do. By faith, by believing God, and by believing in God, these men then disciplined themselves to have a very high view of the Lord so that they lived to honor and please God in every aspect of their lives.
Jeff, did they sin? They did. Jeff, did they stumble along the way as they tried to serve the Lord? Absolutely. We're going to see examples of that in the Bible. The Bible's not going to hide the fact that these men were sinners and they had warts and they failed at times in the Lord.
[38:24] But it's going to show God's compassion and mercy to restore them, to love them, to hold on to them as His kids. And that's going to be great. Finally, let me do this one quickly.

Favor. What are we talking about with favor? Well, we might call this Savior Favor. I try to say that six times fast. Savior Favor. The reason I say that is because like faith and fear, it's a heavenly favor.

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It's a heavenly favor. And it's based in a relationship with Jesus and only in Jesus. It's God's favor which we live in and pursue by God's grace.
So, let me show you what this is. This is the favor of God's grace. And we've used that word several times. Grace, what are we talking about? Grace. Grace is God's undeserved and unmerited favor which He credits to us.
Imputes is the fancy word. Imputes to us because of Christ's work on our behalf on the cross. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, God is then able to credit us with this favor, this undeserved, unmerited favor.
[39:42] So, this is a favor. Listen now. This is a favor that Jesus earned and secured for us by acting as our substitute on the cross and by making a perfect once for all offering of Himself to God in our place.

So, God accepted Jesus' perfect offering of Himself on our behalf. How do we know God accepted Jesus as an offering made on our behalf? How do we know God was pleased with that?
How do we know He accepted it? Because Jesus was then raised from the dead and taken to God the Father. God received Him. Isn't that great? And so, the resurrection is our absolute certainty that God the Father was satisfied fully with the offering Jesus made of Himself.
We might use the analogy of a two-sided coin. We've done that before. On one side is God's saving work to favor us in His Son Jesus.
And then, on the other side of the coin are the blessings and the benefits of this saving favor which we enjoy as we live trying to please the Lord.
[41:04] Salvation on one side flip it over the blessings and the benefits of that salvation as we live in the Lord. They go hand in glove, don't they? It has never been the case that a person has come to faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ and not received the blessings of that salvation.

God always blesses. In other words, this is the faith that says, I believe you are a rewarder of those who believe in you.
God's promise to save them. So, I'll sum it up here. By faith, Abel, Enoch, and Noah found favor, the unmerited, undeserved favor of God because, look, they believed God for who He is.
This is simple faith. They believed He is the God who saves. They turned to God because they knew He was the only one who could save them.
And then finally, they believed God's promise to save them by His Savior, by His coming one. So, Abel, Enoch, and Noah enjoyed the blessings of God's favor on those who formed their lives from a sense of awe and reverence.
[42:24] That is, holy worship, holy awe before the Lord which by their faith in God's grace the Lord began to grow in their hearts.

So, it's important for us to know that God didn't accept these men because these men were good in themselves or because these men were better than other men. No, that's a human thing.
That's how we tend to measure ourselves. We measure ourselves according to what I did today. Well, I did more good today than I did bad. I'm good. Or no, I did more good today or I did better things today than he or she or they did.
So, I'm good. Well, you can always find somebody worse off than you or worse than you. That's not the measure that God uses. No, listen, these three men were sinners just like Cain and his great, great, great, great, great grandson, Lamech.
Abel, Enoch, and Noah each came to God based on what God commanded from them in their worship. That's how they came to the Lord. Lord, we're going to do this your way. In other words, they worship God on his terms, not on their own.
[43:29] And so, this is what happened. God gave, God gave these men saving faith as his gift. That's God's work. They responded to God by believing God.

Because they believed God, they obeyed God. And that obedience flowing from faith, God counted to them as righteousness. So, on that basis, God approved or favored them.
Now, I want to show you where did all this right here come from? Go back up to where it says God gave. That's where it came from.
God is the source of this salvation, this approval. It's God who matters. You don't come to your pastors, Greg and Jeff, and tell us about something going on and then say, are you guys, are you guys approving of that?

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Or, do you guys approve of me? Like me, like me, you know. You don't have to do that with us. We love you. Warts and all. And that's what we hope you'll do with us.
[44:31] The approval that you're seeking and the approval that matters most is the approval of God. And Jeff and Greg as your pastors can point you to that approval in Jesus Christ and that's the best we can do.

We can't save you, can we? So, here's what I'm saying. God's approval was based on their faith in Jesus. to forgive them for their sins.
They went to Jesus. They went to the source, the only source. So, when we believe in Christ, God imputes or credits Christ's righteousness to us. His righteousness makes us righteous in God's sight.
Jesus gets my sin and dies for them. I get Jesus' perfect righteousness righteousness and live in it. He gets sin and dies.
I get righteousness and live. Where'd I get that? From him. God credited it to me. Wow.
[45:36] So, unlike all those who are going to die under God's judgment in the coming flood, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, they stand out as our examples of people who obeyed God from a desire to please him.

And that led them to good works which God counted as righteous. But that all started with saving faith. They were works done by faith in God and for his glory.
So, true good works are motivated by faith in Jesus. The works of righteousness done by these men were based in the righteousness of Christ.
Otherwise, their labors would have been as filthy rags to God. Now, I know I'm saying this fast, but this is the truth. This isn't about you. It's not about you being good in yourself.
It's about Jesus being good in you. And about you living in and displaying his goodness through your humble obedience in all things. This is the last thing I'll say.
[46:34] We'll let Paul have the last word. Paul said this, I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.

That's the Apostle Paul. Let's pray together. Well, Father, this has been more of a speed tour through these three themes that we're going to develop in greater detail as we move through your word.
But we're very grateful to you, God, that you have highlighted for us today that saving faith is a gift from your heart to sinners so that we will believe, so that we will put our faith in the object of saving faith who is Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.
We thank you for the fear, the fear, Almighty God, that you help cultivate in us that is a high and holy reverence for you so that we can live our life in a God consciousness and always God awareness of who you are and how you're working in this world.
And we thank you for the undeserved favor through Jesus that we enjoy from your hand as our God and our King and our Savior.
[48:03] Thank you for the beauties and the benefits and the blessings of knowing Jesus as our Lord. And we pray if there's anyone today here in our service or who will come to the baptisms hearing the testimonies of the three people being baptized who are not saved, they're not Christians, or they're religious people trusting in other things besides Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, I pray you would open their heart to see their need for Him and Him alone and that they will come to put their faith in Jesus Christ dying on the cross for them and being raised to new life in the power of the Holy Spirit that they might know not only the joys of living for you on this planet but the joys of an eternity with you in heaven.

Thank you for the glories of the cross and the gospel. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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