

The Foundation of Growth in Christ: What Has God Done to Secure Your Growth in Christ?

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[0:00] We good? Okay. We'll go with what we have. Maybe a few other people will join us.! We'll see.

Thank you all for being here this evening.! Let me pray and make a few comments and I'll take you right to the passage that I want to deal with tonight. Let's pray together. Our dear Lord and Savior, thank you for your sacrifice that you made on our behalf.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you had in your heart to please the Father in everything that you said and all that you did. You constantly were motivated by and committed to pleasing your Father in everything.

And so you have left us such a wonderful example of a commitment to the priorities of heaven as you lived them and taught them and modeled them for us.

Thank you, Jesus. We love you. And we thank you for your wonderful love for us that is so evident and shines so brightly in the Gospel but also in the way that you sustain us.

[1:16] The way that you provide for us. I thank you for Mark and Matt and the way that they serve the congregation on Sunday. I thank you for growth, for growing our church, for making our family something solid in this community, for preserving us as a ministry.

In all these ways, we have you to honor. We thank you now for your Word as we look into the truths therein and we ask that you would open our eyes spiritually to see wonderful things in your truth and that you'll help us to make application to our lives all in the name of Jesus and the will of God in the way of pleasing you in all respects.

Thank you for these beautiful, beautiful things that you're doing in our life and in our congregation. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Okay.

Hey, Tara. Come on in. Okay, we've got Colossians 1 is where I'll take you. And we are looking at the final lesson dealing with the foundation of growth in Christ and then we'll be moving to a different concept about our growth in Christ and everything that I'll be saying from now until we end in November will be based upon what I taught you in these first few lessons.

It's all based on the foundation that we have in Jesus. And we'll be talking more about why that's important and I'll be asking you a couple of questions about it as well. The foundation of growth in Christ and it's lesson number three although I think maybe I've done four because I did a two-parter.

[3:09] Yeah. And this is what we've what we're dealing with tonight. We're answering this particular question in the foundation. What has God done to secure your growth in Christ?

What has God done not just to make possible your growth but to fix you in a spiritual growing process?

Apart from what God has done in that there would be no way for us to progress in holiness in our spiritual life.

And this progress we make distinction from what it means for us to be brought into the kingdom of God and fixed in our position in Jesus.

We're going to talk about that distinction as we go through our time tonight. And I'll tell you that this is important because talking about our spiritual position in distinction but also as it relates to our progression in the faith is critical.

[4:29] If we get those mixed up we get into all kinds of trouble in the way that we understand and relate to God particularly when trials hit. So this is very important.

It's foundational. It's basic to the Christian faith and it always surprises me in a way that saddens me when I find ministries quote unquote where this is very weak if it's taught at all this distinction.

Christians are not helped in that. Hey Pastor Matt good to see you brother and God bless you and thank you. Good to see you man. I'll talk to you some more.

I haven't listened yet but I'm going to at the latter part of the week. Hey I've got nothing but glowing reports on you guys man so it's all good. I was telling I was telling Mark and I'll say this to the congregation on Sunday I'm going to make a big deal of this.

This is a huge huge blessing of Almighty God and a milestone marker in the growth of this church as if if this church goes on another hundred years this needs to be in the history.

[5:43] What happened Sunday? It's taken us seven years to get to the place where we could do what we did Sunday. where both of your recognized shepherds and elders were out and we had men step up to the plate and serve the church.

That is humongous. And other pastors that I've shared this with throughout this week and some conversations have all stopped me in mid-sentence and said whoa Jeff that's huge.

Yes it is. So God bless you and thank you. It's a beautiful and wonderful encouragement. All right so what has God done to secure your growth?

Let's talk about that some more and to do that we're going to read from Colossians 1 13 and 14. Now you've seen me work in this passage before some of you have and we're revisiting it it's that important and it's been a while so hopefully it won't be too redundant but it will jog your memory.

Verse 13 of chapter 1 in Colossians says for the Father He that pronoun there refers to the Father God for He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son or in a literal translation the Son of His love He transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of His love in whom in Jesus we have redemption the forgiveness of sins in other words God sent our sins away He sent our sins away this is a power packed passage with a number of very important words describing this transaction if you will that happened that this verse describes in our souls this happened in us so notice here on the screen

[7:48] He rescued us He rescued us He refers to God the Father what did God do for you how does this passage these two verses answer the question what did God the Father do for you and what would be the answer begins with an R He did what He rescued He rescued now that sounds super basic but think about it with me alright your soul needed rescuing now again folks this is not something that we need to take for granted I do this with you because I travel and I run into these things and I want to bring them back to you and hopefully even through me you know second hand it has a little bit of an impact on you there are so many people who will not teach this don't teach this and instead as Christians believe that everybody has some good in them unbelievers and so it's almost something that they describe in the way of salvation you get a spiritual soap bath you just get cleaned up this is very different from that this is radically different from that it needs to be preached it needs to be taught

God rescued you and I your soul needed rescuing but you lived for a time denying ignoring and suppressing that truth about yourself right I did you did and the Bible says we all do all unbelievers at some level and in seasons of their life are about denying ignoring and suppressing the truth that they need God to rescue their souls alright now rescue has the idea of being delivered from or being freed from so freed and delivered are key concepts key words relating the concept that's being conveyed here this is why God's work God's work in our deliverance is often referred to as freeing spiritual prisoners we were incarcerated in our souls to sin and to

Satan and to self get those three S's down because they help you with a great theology about the depravity of man our souls were incarcerated spiritually incarcerated by Satan sin and self and so we needed to be delivered or freed from all of that now the next question what did God rescue your soul from and I've just outlined it for you look what did the text say what does our passage say God rescued us from the domain of darkness the domain of darkness now you may not use that phrase very much but the Bible loves that phrase he rescued us from the domain of darkness and it refers to the spiritual authority so mark that word down we are talking about authority over your soul ownership who ruled you who had authority over you prior to

God doing this in your life Satan that's right we would like to think in our unbelief that we're our own self made person that's not true theologically that's not true this is the spiritual authority you were ruled by as you lived in spiritual imprisonment spiritual bondage to the ruler of this darkness Satan and I go on to say whose domain is dominated by evil self and sinfulness now that is the who and the what God rescued you from he rescued you from Satan and he rescued you from Satan's authority his domain his dominion over you and that has to do with spiritual authority here's why this is so important how did God do this how did God do this well look at the second half of verse 13 and tell me someone tell me how did

God according to verse 13 rescue you and deliver you perfect that's fine you're yes I got it in stereo it's good he rescued us from the domain of spiritual darkness bondage and death by transferring!

[12:59] you alright now I know some of this you've heard me do this before it's worth doing it again here here's how we want to say it I'll put it up here God transferred or he repositioned moved that's what it means to transfer if I take this case glasses case and transfer it over to this thing or move it I have changed its position entirely it's no longer there it's over here this is what's going on God transferred or repositioned or moved your soul from imprisonment in the spiritual realm under the dominion of Satan the authority of Satan and into the spiritual realm under the dominion or authority of Jesus Christ you are no longer under the authority of sin and Satan amen you are under the authority of a new king and the new king lives in you and defines you you see why this will preach and this is what we need to be reminded of constantly now everything that I am talking about to you right now has to do with the fixed!

position of your new spiritual identity this is what will define you as you stand before the Lord this is what will bring you into his heaven for eternity God has done this work in you in an eternal way so the power to accomplish this change in your soul's position could only come from God his power to save has set you in this new realm of life now you still live on the earth and you still live with your own sin you still live with the sin of other people and you're still under attack from Satan but you are no longer under his authority because you no longer belong to his kingdom you belong to a different kingdom a very different one as antithetical to Satan's kingdom as can possibly be this is your new realm!

Now you say what new realm? The kingdom of his beloved son and notice in this realm how you are described as one in Jesus who has redemption and the forgiveness of your sins these are the qualifying ideas or concepts that are true in describing you in this new domain under the authority of Christ you are a redeemed person under his authority and you are a forgiven person under his authority very different from where you were prior to this and this is your fixed position in Jesus Christ the word for redemption carries the ideas of deliverance ransom or release we've also used the word freedom here it means and I'll put it up here on the screen redemption means a releasing by payment of a ransom you were imprisoned and you owed a debt and the only way you could get out of debtor's prison is for the debt to be paid and you to be cleared once that debt is paid and your debt is cleared you are free you are no longer under the obligation of that debt it has been paid paid it yes who paid it is huge but the bigger issue is it was paid and it wasn't paid by you was it you have been released from the dominion or authority of your adversary the devil as your soul was incarcerated in the prison of his domain and you were released by the payment of a ransom

Jesus paid your ransom to free you from spiritual bondage now you've heard me ask this question several times I'll continue to ask it as long as I'm here and make sure people understand this who did Jesus pay on my behalf he paid God the father now let's stop right there for a second and ask why did he have to pay God the father and not the devil how would we explain that and that's the answer that's the answer even though we belong to Satan God didn't walk up to Satan and say I'll tell you what I know Trey belongs to you but I want to buy him back so here's ten grand or whatever I don't know what kind of currency heaven deals in but the blood of Christ I guess that wasn't the case at all he didn't pay Satan anything to deliver anybody because the debt we owe is not a debt to the devil the devil already owns us in that condition right and so who needs to be paid

God the father and the debt is the debt of sin our sin debt before a holy God needs to be paid and this is what the Bible means by Jesus being a ransom for many a ransom he was the ransom he was the releasing factor agent payment and he paid in his blood okay!

[18:47] Jesus paid your sin to God a debt of death a debt of death he made full spiritual payment for your sins to God so that Jesus fully satisfied the demands of God's law concerning your sins what is the real fancy word that we use to describe the satisfaction that Jesus won for us before the father it begins with a P there you go good propitiation right propitiation describes the theological biblical concept that Jesus fully satisfied the wrath of God the demands of the law as he went to the cross and paid our sin debt fully satisfied there is nothing for us to add to the work that Jesus did to ransom us release us and to propitiate on our behalf to satisfy

God's demands for our release Jesus was the full and satisfactory payment for all eternity you don't have to work it you don't have to earn it you don't have to convince God to give it to you you don't have to go to God after you are saved and reconvince God to keep you saved when you sin you don't lose what God has paid in his son's blood to purchase you from you don't lose that freedom you can't you cannot forfeit what God has done for you you cannot now you can be unsaved and be deceived and think that you are saved but you cannot be truly saved and be undone from Christ we good on that any question on that any verse that confuses you or issue okay

I know you guys believe these things it's just wonderful to restate them and be so convicted about it right have such a full and satisfying understanding now Jesus accomplished this satisfaction propitiation for you in two ways as it concerns your need to be holy before a holy God and this was the issue as God transfers you from one authority spiritual authority and domain dominion realm you can think of it that way kingdom into another take you from that and put you here you cannot go back when he puts you here you can't go back it's impossible you can't rebecome what he ransomed you from but it can feel like it all right but it can't happen

I don't care how it feels it can't happen you with me all right as Jesus Christ does that the issue in all of this as I had it up on the screen is that he is able to do that in two ways you don't get transferred from one into the other and become neutral you get transferred from one to the other and in that transaction you are made holy before almighty God in Jesus Christ your spiritual union to him brings you into a position of holiness you are positioned in Jesus you are union to Jesus and you stay union to Christ chained to him all right now what you do is you as you live your life positioned in Jesus you begin to show and demonstrate that reality in your life and you grow in that you grow to reflect that more and more and more that spiritual growth but the foundation for that growth is over here in this okay you're not growing in this this is fixed you can't get more of

Jesus than you have you can't get more of the Holy Spirit than you got when you were saved you get all of the treasures of heaven in Christ and you got Jesus now you come over here while you're still on this earth and you need to begin to grow to show what that reality is that's growth with me!

[23 : 48] living it living it now I got a little bit ahead of myself because I get excited so I'm going to do these two ways let's talk about these two ways that he accomplished all of this satisfaction for you as he ransomed you and transferred you into this new authority this new kingdom first notice on the screen Jesus took your sins on himself this is the gospel I'm helping us understand and explain and explore the gospel the good news of Jesus is salvation he did this so that hear this now so that God counted the debt of your sins against Jesus as if Jesus had committed your sins instead of you Jesus took on the shame he took on the guilt of your sinful life he took on the punishment due to the guilt and shame of your sinful life and he did all that as if he himself had lived those sins against

God he gave his life to ransom us from our sin debt to the Lord and the payment of that death that debt required death somebody had to die to make payment if you had died in that condition you would be separated from God for all eternity Jesus is life given on your behalf and suffering the death to pay for you purchased you away from that dark authority and put you in the kingdom of light his son and this is a transaction that only could happen on a spiritual level and can only be done by God Jeff what did I contribute to that transaction it begins with an S there's an I in the middle and it ends with the word in that's what you contributed that's what I contributed and

Jesus did something about that alright look at this verse with me when you were dead now please don't skip over that when you were dead in your transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh that's another way of saying when you were spiritually dead to God God made you alive you were dead God made you alive how together with Jesus having forgiven us all our transgressions not some all he forgave us having canceled out that certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us he has taken it out of the way he did that nail having nailed that decree to the cross the cross was where that debt was paid where all those decrees that list of sin against us it was all nailed to the cross because that's where it was paid for us for you so under

Jeff Jackson there was this gigantic list of wrongs done against God the father and as Jesus was tortured to death on the cross and gave his life he was giving his life to free Jeff Jackson from all that list of wrongdoing against the father as if he had committed them instead of me isn't that wonderful the cross was God's instrument of punishment and death against my sin not Jesus his sin how many sins did Jesus commit zero Jesus willingly received the full weight of God's wrath his holy anger against your sins my sins not the sins of his son there weren't any God punished Jesus in your place for your sins Jesus his death is one side of the coin of

God saving your soul all right the second way that Jesus did this is he acted as your substitute he lived a life of sinless perfection on your behalf now again he had to die a death on your behalf but he also had to live a life on your behalf he lived a life you can't live he died a death to make payment that you couldn't make so we've talked about his death his substitutionary death his propitiating death as it were but there's another side to it the perfect holy righteous life of Jesus is counted to you as if you lived it instead of him he gets your sin and you get his sanctification holiness that's right yep he was punished for your sins as if he had committed them instead of you you are rewarded with his holiness as if you lived that holy life instead of him that's the spiritual transaction

[29 : 35] God is making in this transference that we're talking about right here Jesus is perfect life operating in you alive in you is what you are growing into as a Christian you're perfect you're not you're not growing the holiness of Jesus the righteousness of Jesus that's not growing you got all the righteousness you could get from Jesus what you are growing into is the person who is demonstrating that your speech is becoming more holy your activities are becoming more heavenly prioritized your sensitivity to sin is growing so that you repent more quickly you repent more fully you repent more biblically but your position is fixed okay we're good I know

I'm I'm slamming this but there's a reason so Jesus himself hear this now Jesus himself is life I am the way the truth and he is the life he's not part of your life have you heard Christians say that Jesus is a really important part of my life no no brother sister Jesus is your life that's what Paul said it's no longer I who live uh huh and it is this life of Jesus Christ which God the father credits to you the life of Jesus is credited to you given to you and Jesus comes to live in you and the life which is alive in you by the power of the Holy Spirit is nothing short of the life of Christ you are you are animated in life by the life of

Jesus you get his life just think about that it sure is it no absolutely Dora says we don't deserve it now friends again that life is fixed in you you grow to show what's fixed in you the life's already there when God saves your soul from sin and death he counts Jesus his perfect sinless law fulfilling life to you as if you lived it so I'll put it up here God applies Jesus righteousness you said it a minute ago to you and sees you as he sees his own son folks wow and sees you as he sees his own son boy we cannot get our minds wrapped around that reality because we still sin every day we sin in what we think and what we say and in what we do and sometimes omission there are sins for things that we should have done could have done would have done but we didn't sometimes it's out of ignorance

I didn't know to do it that's no excuse though sin is sin but now you have to change from your old ways of thinking your old ways of speaking and living to show that Jesus lives in you that in Jesus you are made into a new so now God sees you in right standing with himself and pleasing to him your new life in Christ is pleasing to God because he sees you in his son and that pleases him because he's pleased with his son he said that in whom I'm well pleased that was as much a statement about you as it was about Jesus did you hear that so Dora one day you're going to hear one day you're going to hear God say that he is well pleased with you because he's well pleased with his son who lives in you yes yes now we'll answer for deeds that we've done in the flesh that didn't have much to do with

Jesus we sin but we will hear unequivocally and if we don't hear it we can't go into heaven I am well pleased with you because I am well pleased with the son that lives in you and that's the difference and that's fixed you can't change that your sin can't your sin is not more powerful than the grace of Christ righteousness living in you the righteousness of Jesus defines you it is an alien righteousness not yours God had to give it to you you didn't have any all you had was unrighteousness that's that's a devil's hell that's the dominion of darkness when he made this transfer he gave you the righteousness of his son he said to you my son's perfect sinless life is now applied to you as if you lived it and that's how I see you in my son when

[35 : 22] I look at you I see the person who lived the life my son lived I'm not making this up this is the truth one of the reasons that more of us don't preach this biblically and plainly is because it forces us to talk about sin and when we talk about sin people get turned off and they don't want to hear that they were once in this darkness or that they are now in this darkness people want to believe there's goodness in them and that God just gave them a bit of a spiritual bath scrubbed them up a little bit and now they're good don't I smell!

Purdy and that's not at all how the Bible describes the filth of our sin in his sight okay alright why does God see you in right standing let me say it again the way I've written it here because God credits to you the sinless holy life of Jesus his life becomes your new life and now you need to grow into that life more fully you need to learn to live it out more faithfully you are spiritually positioned in Jesus because Jesus has accomplished your liberation from the penalty of death and the power of sin to rule over you you will hear preachers who are doing it biblically!

correct talk about the power and the penalty of sin and how Jesus death on the cross delivered us from that power that dominion of death of sin and the penalty of that to remain in captivity to it for all eternity alright now look I'll put it up here bottom of the screen Jesus has done this for you it's personal by acting as your substitute in living his perfect life for you by dying his all sufficient death for you and by being raised in his glorious resurrection for you the transferring of your soul from death and the dominion of Satan and to life in the kingdom of God's son happened at the moment of your salvation you are not continually being transferred no that that would be theologically incorrect that transferring happened at your salvation and it's a one time event in your life okay but I say this you don't need more transferring you need more transforming and that is biblically correct your growth in Christ is about the Holy

Spirit's work to continually transform your mind your heart your thinking processing reasoning meaning making by renewing it in the truth so that now you make meaning in life according to God's truth you discern and define the issues of life by the truth that your spiritual eyes have been opened to that truth now is used by the Spirit to define you in your walk with God no longer are you under the authority and deception of the evil one you have the truth of God and the Spirit of God using the truth to light your way your word is a lamp and a light and we live by that don't we this is what we're talking about you learn to live out the truth that God is working into your now spiritually alive heart he's working the truth into your heart now all these blessings of God's grace come to you in the person of

Jesus because Jesus is the way the truth and the life Paul said that he is the treasure of all wisdom and knowledge so being spiritually united to Jesus the way Paul describes it spiritual union is your soul's new position in your relationship to God and that answers the critical question of what we grow from and what we grow to show hang on to that phrase it might help what do we grow to show this is the idea all right so here's how I'll write it out for you this new spiritual position of your soul transferred into the kingdom of God's son and being rightly related to God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ that is what you grow from and what you grow to show you're not growing to get more of Christ's righteousness you already have all that so you're not you're not growing in your position you are as fixed in

[40 : 42] Jesus as you can be what you're doing now is you're growing to show that that is true of you that is real that's the new you and so you're learning to speak like a new you live like a new you prioritize like a new you value like a new you be married like a new you parent like a new you do your job relate to others relate to your mom and dad as a new you you're growing to show what God has done in transferring you you're just growing to show it all right this is the goal the goal of all spiritual growth to become more like Jesus who lives in you and you again I told you you got all the righteousness of

Jesus that you can get that's not the issue so what do you mean when you say how did I say it where is it the goal of all spiritual growth is to become more like Jesus who lives if I have all the righteousness I can get in Jesus what do you mean!

become more like Jesus is what I just said you are not getting more righteousness you are coming over here and learning to live in that righteousness and express it in how you live how you speak how you think what you do and you'll do that until God takes you to heaven and this is why the Bible makes such a big deal of saying when you get to heaven all that stops because now you're with him and you see him as he is no more need for growth you're there you're done you're complete in him and when you when you see him as he is well let's let Paul say it look at Colossians chapter 3 with me Colossians 3 therefore verse 1 since you have been raised up with Christ keep seeking this is while you're here you won't!

have to do this in heaven keep seeking the things above where Christ is because that's where you've been positioned you are positioned in the same position he's positioned and where is that seated where at the right hand of God there you go that's where you are you're there you are positioned right there that's what he's saying in verse 1 keep seeking the reality of where you are and what you are and with whom you're in set your mind on the things above not on the things that are on earth why because you're already there for you have died your life is hidden with Christ in God Jeff to what degree is my life hidden with Christ in God verse 4 when Christ who is our life is revealed!

you also will be revealed with him in glory! that's how much you're positioned in Jesus when he's revealed you'll be revealed for who you are in him now you're complete no more growth you're done everything about you now is revealed for what it really is you you've been in Jesus the whole time and now you're as much like Jesus as a human soul can be like Jesus in heaven you get a glorified body yes positioned yes and that's the position of authority yes absolutely and what that means is that is that is such a fixed reality in the mind of God that he can say it's done it's it's completed all I've got to do now is bring your soul to be what

[44 : 47] I have already positioned and readied for it to be that's the whole mansion talk in my house are many mansions you know I'm preparing a place for you yeah that's right because you need one that won't wear out right we don't have to grease it it's all good yeah what do they call the sealed uh so you don't have to put any grease in the fittings they're sealed is that what they call it you with me so you don't have to no they call that something grease fitting that's sealed or a sealed help me sealed bearings yeah never mind i'll get a different i'll get a different illustration self lubricating here's the point whatever that joint is it ain't gonna wear out we need rob yes yes well he knows this stuff too he works on stuff he knows i'm just not giving him enough info yeah i'm not feeding him enough no you're all good i'm not i'm not feeding you enough all right the goal is to become more like jesus that's the goal all right now look at this verse but speaking the truth in love we are to what does it say grow up in all aspects into him who is the head even christ here again the head the authority we cannot escape the reality of this transferring now we are under the authority of jesus he's the head we are growing up in him we are taking our orders from him we are being defined by him we are taught to value what he values prioritize according to his priorities in heaven we're completely different people we are radically changed and our lives need to look like that all the resources of your life should be brought to bear under the authority of jesus we learn to spend his money talking to him about how that needs to happen and where that needs to go and you know everything all of it your spiritual growth is in respect to your new spiritual identity and position as being spiritually joined to the life of jesus at work in you the life of jesus makes that all real now remember up here on the screen remember your spiritual position of being united to jesus is not what is growing in you you see that not not what is growing in you okay this position is fixed it never changes fades falters by what you do or do not do because your position is based on the righteousness of jesus and not a righteousness of your own you are rooted in christ as a new person by god's miracle of spiritual union this is all over colossians because colossians exalts the deity of jesus as it relates to our walk with him notice in chapter 2 what does he say in chapter 2 verse 6 therefore as you have received christ jesus the lord that's your salvation so walk in him and now notice how he describes this relationship of being saved and walking in salvation having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established

in your faith just as you were instructed so you are now living out this reality of being rooted in jesus according to the instruction you're receiving about living in the will of god and then as a result of this happening in you boy i'm rooted in him i'm being instructed in him i'm getting to grow up in him i'm getting to showcase him more and more and what does it say an overflowing with gratitude why not?

why would that not be talking about you are this one more now one more slide here bottom of the screen you are fixed as god's child and now god commands you and provides for you to grow as his child and you i'm going to say it again look at the phrase you grow to show you don't grow to get more of jesus you grow to show more of jesus do you hear the difference i don't want you guys to be deceived i don't want you to fall into the!

trying to convince Jesus to love you and give you more of his love give you more of this or more of that when you sin or when you this is very important you are fixed as God child and God commands you and provides for you to grow as his child you grow to show that Jesus is your new life you are living in him so spiritual growth is about growing in your relationship to Jesus if you're not growing in your relationship to Jesus you're not spiritually growing you might grow in knowledge of the Bible facts of the Bible ability to do things with the Bible you may grow in your service in the church etc etc but I'm telling you if your relationship with Jesus is not prospering and growing then you're not spiritually growing you're just doing works we do it in faith in the Lord Jesus so that you are increasingly becoming more like Jesus in all that you think in all that you say in all that you do this is why Greg and I are constantly reminding each of us that Jesus is the main thing loving Jesus growing in Jesus so you've heard me say in a previous lesson when we have people come in and they're considering membership and they sit down with us we take them to lunch we bring them over for dinner whatever we're just trying to get into their life and get to know who they are we are always concerned to ask questions that help us better understand where they are in their walk with

Christ and if what we continue to see and hear over a period of time! is calling into question their conformity to Jesus the priority of Jesus in their life as they live in their lifestyle we have a cause for pause don't we step back and say wait a minute now that has served us really well because we have been able to help several people who were thinking they were saved but their Christian life really didn't look like anybody who was growing to be more!

[52 : 24] Christian was not how much Bible knowledge they had how many churches they served whether they had been an elder before and all that kind of nonsense we wanted to know are you growing to be more like Jesus tell me about that how do you know what's that look like how do you know that's happening in you what confidence do you have and in many cases lately they could not do any of that so you ask yourself is that spiritual immaturity or is it spiritual deadness and that's what we helped them discern I didn't tell them they weren't Christians I said I have cause for pause I think that we need to go through this biblical exercise together and let you make the decision about where your soul is and its status with the Lord isn't that what pastors do at the ground level isn't that what we're supposed to do we're not supposed to let people through that door for membership who aren't sheep you can't join this church if you're not a bat that's not a goat that's a sheep you gotta be a sheep all right questions other verses comments we have a few minutes for you to do that if not we can dismiss a little early my main goal tonight was to say to you

Christianity is about becoming more like Jesus if you're not becoming more like Jesus if your lifestyle isn't reflecting becoming more like Jesus and all that you think say and do you need to step back and ask yourself some really sobering questions about your relationship with God all right questions comments issues circumstances yes we are all created in God so think of God in the glove and when you put the hand in the glove aren't you glad it was a woman that she got it right praise the

Lord you start sweating when you hear stuff like that I hope they get it right that's a good analogy yeah yeah he is our life there's no spiritual life apart from the spirit spiritual is spirit okay thank you brother anything else good Michelle when you have a loved one they think they are safe but you question it do you approach that with them how do you approach it patiently wisely gently and you have to read the room well if your loved one is not teachable in that regard I would say wait and pray you do a great and wonderful thing if you discern that and wait and pray waiting and praying are not bad it's not avoiding it can be but it doesn't have to be wait and pray can be timing in the

Lord working in their heart whether they're saved or not working in their heart so I have this in my family I have it among some you know you know our situation and so right now much of our ability to handle that is wait and pray even with the ones who think they're Christians but it's mouth only you don't see anything about their life that helps you have any confidence that they're becoming more like Christ right spiritual fruit so I know that's a general answer but if you if you discern there's a level of teachableness there I wouldn't go into that context ready to dismantle their perspective about being saved I wouldn't go after that all right now y'all join me why do you think my first step toward them would not to be to challenge what they believe about themselves being a

Christian right is that what you said Tara yeah yeah but our concern would probably tempt us to go in eyes wide open you know oh no I don't think so so you don't want to put yourself in a position of telling someone else you're not saved why not why don't you want to play that role all right so the Holy Spirit is that's the role of the spirit so don't try to play the spirit you're going to get yourself in a lot of trouble so what would be a way for Michelle to approach someone that has a perspective they're saved but isn't!

[58:02] showing the spiritual fruit of that salvation and your concern for them okay did you hear that ask them questions start off with questions in a setting that is not full of distractions and a setting that isn't something where you're trying to do three or four things at one time and squeeze it in don't do that all right so let's let's ask a question this is really good ask questions so what what might we do yes good you are looking like your mama every day more and more do you see it wow

I'm not even going to say anything about you two looking like a dad all right ask questions so starting off asking them something about heaven what happens to us when we die or something that will get it started right what else what's another question there you go there you go and did you notice that we understand testimony but did you notice she didn't use that word she said tell me about how you came to trust in Christ or I don't know how that's how I say it trust I always say trust in Christ how did you how are you saved okay but you're still

I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry you understand we throw these words around and we know what they mean they're not bad words so I'm not saying don't do it but you may have to qualify it you may have to qualify testimony changed like the way you were and the way you are now have you noticed a change when you were and when you got saved okay now Dora jumped ahead in the sense of the question that we want is tell me your testimony that's what we're after but we're couching it in other words tell me your story how did you how did you come to trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins how did you become a Christian is a good one that's even more okay now what you're going to listen for is what she said you're listening for spiritual change you're listening for a biblical description of the transferring of a soul from the authority of

Satan to the authority of God you're you're carefully listening for how they're going to express that all right so I'm going to answer Michael discerning yes you're using your biblical understanding all right now I'm going to answer that question see where it goes okay well when I was 16 years old I had somebody talk to me about sin and they told me that for me to be saved I think is how they said it that I needed to ask Jesus into my heart so I did that and then they told me I had to be baptized so a couple weeks later I went down to the church where this guy was from and they dunked me and got me baptized and so I'm I'm a Christian thinking you were that thought that

I would have battled them and I would have come to it so much more of that belief that I was versus having an open heart of me going through 1 John kind of helps as well to be the free hearts of a believer and then you know in 2 Corinthians like ask yourself see if you're in the faith examine yourself and of course like you know Jesus saying many will come to me that verse in itself scared the you know and that's what was like oh my goodness but if somebody would have come up and kind of pointed the finger because there's several in my family that are not believers and I struggle with that because I want to you know jump all over them and shake them to death you know I guess what's the life but just from my experience I don't know why first time that that was a big you know to see what the two marks of a believer are and see if you have it right which is why it was written

[63:28] I don't know how to take someone through that very well it's not like I'm really filled in that I can just say right now good yes yes all right so let me let me deal with that by the way woo ha we'll make it into the sermon Sunday somewhere okay so at that point again you're discerning teachableness if the person is showing signs of receptivity and you know if they're not yeah then then you feel a certain freedom to keep going if that all they want to do is argue and push back don't make it worse by battling with them and don't drop the a bomb on them and tell them well your eternal soul is at stake so if you want to get an attitude that's up to you if you want to end up in hell that may be true but we don't want to that's not gentle because keep in mind that people who have maybe been in a certain story or something have probably told them that they're safe and that they're okay and so that's probably more what they're going on than just they're done now she's saying that because we've had this when we've challenged it no no no no my pastor said I was saved when did he say that

I was sitting right there with him when I got saved and he looked at me and hugged me and said you're saved now dismantling it's huge all right it's probably different for a person that's 20 28 35 they're a little more mature just as an adult they can probably work through and think through some of that so I think for a 16 year old it might be a little more difficult to say well you're still listening to that crazy music and watching those bad movies because I know that there are friends of mine that were truly Christians but they now I see the fruit in their life as they've matured and grown and they love the Lord but when they were 16 or 17 you know you could have said

I don't really know you know so I think they kind of have to good you want to build that rapport you want to let them know that you're not there to dismantle their whole world you'll let the Holy Spirit do that he will he'll use the truth to do that because he'll break them down he doesn't want them to stay deceived Jesus wants people to know the truth about their condition with him their souls he wants that okay so it's not like he's up there hiding it in a way that says well I'm you know if they've chosen to follow darkness and death after hearing the gospel this is why they say there's no return from the unpardonable sin the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is to deny the Holy Spirit's witness that Jesus is the Son of God and the only way to forgiveness for sin that's the blasphemy of the Spirit that's unforgivable because that's the only way to heaven is to believe that that's why Jesus says that alright you want to use the word at that point to let the word do the work so then you want to build a bridge toward well listen so we're told in scripture to test ourselves to see if we're we're in the faith and I love you

I'm concerned that me you and other people not be deceived about this so much is at stake could we sit down together and talk through some passages that help us do that test because I mean look we got nothing to lose if we do the test and find out we're good praise the Lord if we do the test and find out we're not good we got an answer for that we don't have to stay like that but one way or the other we got to know that's just one way that we can lightly lightly get in there but remember we're told whenever we do something like this with people that we're to be very gentle we don't have to bring the hammer the Holy Spirit is the hammer not us we're just we're just the conduit we're the messenger boy messenger girl so we we bring the truth and help them go right yes let the word do the work and don't and don't be afraid or intimidated in terms of sealing the deal right you don't have to close the deal in that moment right that's the spirit's role when I learned this it was so liberating that if I walked away from a situation like that and I have with my own family members and they didn't respond well

I could walk away grieved but I could also walk away and say well Lord I know I don't have the power to convert a human soul plant seeds be faithful pray Michelle I think I answered it this way to start the number one thing that I see in all of this is prayer pray pray pray because prayer says I'm dependent on the spirit I just preached this in Vermont so it's kind of fresh on my mind yes Mark I was actually going to go in Matt when he delivered the Sunday and that was actually where Jeremiah was going okay where when basically how did Jeremiah act then he jumped right into it then he sat down he prayed he waited for God good good excellent see they do listen thank you brother amen so we have two resources too that if you have opportunity to share with them or go through with them either way and one he shared with you guys a couple times ago when he taught he used a lot of his counseling and there's another version of that in the

[70:43] MacArthur study bible scripture and then Martha on her website has a like a four week application called salvation work because sometimes like we had somebody who counseled a woman who came in and believed that she was a Christian and she's been hurt and all but as we were going through scripture she always knew Jesus died for the sons of the world oh I'm part of the world and he died for the world so I'm good and when the personal aspect of it hit her she broke down she broke down and she said she said

I'm not saved I have never ever trusted Jesus for my sins with my sins I just assumed that he died for the world and I'm in the world and so we're good we're covered it's never been personal good thank you honey a lot of Christians Travis said believe that I think it was more generalized idea of I'm one of those people in the world that has responded to him when I took her to the to the gospel and looked into her eyes I said it's personal when Jesus died on the cross he died paying the price for your sins as if as if he had lived your sins and committed them instead of you that's how I witness and that that personalized you drove straight into her soul and she was like no I've never

I've never dealt with that before yeah yeah right yeah all right well thank you guys more to come that salvation worksheet she talked about from Martha now that is in depth that is she said for and it's and it takes a while and you got to be committed now it's a wonderful exercise if you can get the person committed to it but you can do it with all kinds of folks but just be prepared if you're going to have to put some skin in the game for that all right well let's pray and we'll dismiss and let you get a few goodies and I hope you'll be in prayer for Sunday as we gather together I'll be in Genesis again and we'll be continuing on all right let's pray together father thank you for the word of Christ thank you for salvation in your son's holy name thank you father for sending the son and receiving the son to yourself and sitting him now at the place of ultimate authority over all the universe that he has made and thank you that you have transferred us from Satan's authority and dominion into the authority and dominion of your beloved son in whom we have freedom from sin and forgiveness for sins we thank you for the gospel and we thank you for the work that you're doing in our souls and in our church family in

Jesus name amen