

e ssentials

Faith in One Accord

1) TITLE: We Believe the Gospel Unto Salvation

2) INTRODUCTION

A. Our support Scripture text for this lesson is Romans 1:16 (NIV)—*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."*¹

i. The Greek word for power is dynamis (δύναμις) where we get our English word dynamite or dynamic.

ii. *"Paul is not ashamed of this Good News because it is the dynamic, unharnessable power of God to effect salvation and all its temporal and eternal benefits for everyone who believes."*²

B. What we believe...

"We believe that all people were created in the image of God, but that sin came into the world through "one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12) and therefore human beings are born with a sinful nature. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood. We believe in the blessed hope of the personal, visible and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that all who

¹ All scripture from the ESV unless noted.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 27.

receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life" (GRCC Statement of Faith).

- C. Good News. Who doesn't like to hear or receive good news?
 - i. Imagine hearing your surgery was a success. Imagine hearing that you're going to be a mom or a dad, a grandma or a grandpa. Imagine hearing you qualified for your first car or made your final mortgage payment. All good news.

- D. But the greatest of *all* good news is when Jesus Christ of Nazareth, while retaining His deity, came down from heaven, and became fully human like us yet was sinless to set us free from the tyranny of sin and death, through His atoning death, *and* in exchange offered us eternal life and reconciliation with God the Father.
 - i. In fact, biblically speaking another way of saying Good News is the word Gospel for it means good news.

3) OUR KEY POINT

- A. The Gospel is tied to Jesus, for in Luke 19:10, Jesus said of Himself, "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*"
 - i. What was Jesus saying? He gave a correct estimation of humanity's spiritual condition that we are ALL lost and yet in need of a Redeemer, Jesus.
 - ii. 19th century Scottish minister, Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd once wrote, "*Man is a lost thing. You may look at him in many lights. He is a toiling, hardworking creature. He is an anxious, careworn creature. But for the Redeemer's purpose, the characteristic that surmounted and included and leavened and ran through all the rest, was, that he is a lost creature. All error from the right way; all distance from our heavenly Father's house; all destitution and danger and impossibility of return, and imminence of final ruin, are conveyed in that one word, lost. Trace that word's*

*meaning out into its various shades and ramifications, and you will find that it implies, as no other can, all that we are; all that makes our need of the Saviour— His sacrifice, His Spirit, His intercession."*³

- B. Furthermore, the Gospel unto Salvation is an act of God's grace.
 - i. *"Grace is an essential part of God's character. Grace is closely related to God's benevolence, love, and mercy.*
 - ii. *Grace can be variously defined as "God's favor toward the unworthy" or "God's benevolence on the undeserving."*
 - iii. *In His grace, God is willing to forgive us and bless us abundantly, in spite of the fact that we don't deserve to be treated so well or dealt with so generously."*⁴
 - iv. For God's love brings much favor to those in Christ Jesus.

4) TRANSITION

- A. So, let's look into the importance of salvation and the Gospel, and why it is essential to our faith in Jesus Christ.

TEACHING

I. Our Holy God

- A. In order to understand about fallen humanities need of salvation from sin, we need to have an understanding of God who sees all sin as an abomination and offense to Him because of His holiness.

³ W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Sermon Outline Bible: Luke 1–John 3*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 296–297. Original writer, 19th century Scottish minister, Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd.

⁴ <https://www.gotquestions.org/definition-of-grace.html>

B. Holiness is that one divine attribute that is central to our Triune-God's character.

1. Pastor Tony Evans writes, *"God's intrinsic and transcendent purity is the standard of righteousness to which the whole universe must conform. God's holiness is the key to understanding everything else about Him; this attribute infiltrates all the other attributes. Jesus is called holy, and the Holy Spirit's very name reveals his divine character."*⁵

C. The word holiness means *"to separate or to cut off."* So, what does this mean in light of who our God is?

1. God is separate in that He is all different and unique who has no equal yet separate from the presence of evil and sin for He is eternally pure, and faultless, thus He is holy.
 - a). God's holiness distinguishes Himself from all His creation including humanity.
 - b). In Isaiah 6:3 seraphim worshipped God saying, *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"*
 - c). And in Revelation 4:8, angelic beings worshipped God saying, *"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"*
 - d). The Nelson Study Bible pointed out that *"To say the word holy twice in Hebrew is to describe someone as "most holy." To say the word holy three times intensifies the idea to the highest level. In other words, the holiness*

⁵ Tony Evans, *The Tony Evans Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 2019), 1556.

*of God is indescribable in human language. To be holy means to be different, distant, or transcendent."*⁶

- D. I share the holiness of God for the purpose of contrasting us as His created being who possess freewill and by the consequences of our choices—sinned against a holy God who knew we needed a Saviour to save us from ourselves.

II. Humanity Created in God's Image

- A. God's final creation—humanity—was personal for we're the only created beings made in His image, referred to as the *"imago Dei"*—the image of God.
1. Genesis 1:26a-27—*"[26a] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness....[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*
- B. To be made in His image does not mean we were made to possess deity, but originally created with certain intangible attributes such as:
1. Having a sinless nature, possessing freewill, creativity, intellect, reason, to be social and so forth are all reflections of God's attributes instilled in us in order to have a relationship with the holy Triune-God.
 2. We believe that Adam and Eve were created in God's image and were sinless beings. But then we have the Fall.
- C. Now, before we can explore the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ who died for our sins, we now have to look into the bad news of the state of fallen humanity who rejected their Creator God and spiraled out into sin and immorality.

⁶ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Is 6:3.

III. Humanity's Fall

- A. Now, in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we see the words *"God said"* at least eleven times.
 - 1. But at the start of Genesis chapter 3:1, Satan through a serpent spoke for the first time—*"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman..."* and by Satan's temptation, humanity introduced sin through their disobedience, rebelliousness and pride.

- B. We were created by God with the capacity or ability of choice; to voluntarily choose in making decisions.
 - 1. Unfortunately, humanity in their freewill, enticed by the power of the knowledge of good and evil through the lying words of Satan chose as an act of sin or lawlessness to disobey God's word which resulted in humanity's separation from their holy Creator God.
 - 2. Sin diminishes humanity's conformity to the character of God, which includes His holiness, resulting in our way of living that no longer glorifying God but now lost and helpless without hope from God's wrath against our sin.

- C. So, how can fallen humanity be saved or be redeemed from sin that separates us from our holy Creator God? God's plan of Salvation.

IV. God's Plan of Salvation

- A. Since the fall of humanity, we all have been born with and have experienced the fullness of sin and its consequences.
 - 1. But God in His grace and mercy immediately implements the plan of salvation to set free humanity from the bondage of sin through His Son Jesus who was to

come *"who would stand in for the human race as both sacrifice and Redeemer."*⁷

- B. So, in their feeble attempt to make right their now broken relationship with their Creator, humanity used fig leaves to cover their bodies as a gesture for their guilt and shame.
- C. But because God is holy and knew exactly what was the best way to reconcile sinners back to Himself—since God was never ever the transgressor—He initiated His plan of salvation found in Genesis 3:15 also known as the *"Protoevangelium"* or the First Gospel.

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

- 1. The woman's offspring points to a future Messiah, a future saviour who is *the* Jesus of Nazareth who was to suffer a temporary bruise "of his heel" by way of crucifixion but would be resurrected.
 - 2. And yet counter back with a decisive blow to the serpent's head who is Satan, bringing a permanent defeat that is yet to come, once and for all.
- D. And then in that Garden of Eden, because of His holiness and love, God's merciful act of kindness would become a shadow of His plan of redemption through Jesus on the Cross of Calvary—killed an innocent animal, shed its blood, and used its skin to cover the man and woman as an act of grace to cover their sin and shame.

⁷ *The Jeremiah Study Bible, Dr. David Jeremiah, p. 1551, Worthy Publishing, 2013.*

1. God's intervention set in motion His rescue plan on behalf of sinful humanity which pointed to Jesus as the only Deliverer who can redeem us from the grip of sin.
2. Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)—*"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins."*
3. But what motivated God to implement His plan of Salvation? John 3:16-17—*"[16] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."*
4. Furthermore, 2nd Peter 3:9—*"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

V. Jesus Died for Humanity's Sin

- A. Throughout the Old Testament, it spoke of a coming Messiah which means the anointed one, the Saviour of the World. Christ is the Greek translation for Messiah in Hebrew.
 1. The only person who ever fulfilled the requirements to be the Messiah of a coming Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), who was from the tribe of Judah (Micah 5:2, Revelation 5:5), a direct descendent of King David (2nd Samuel 7:12-16), the Scripture prophesied He would be born in the town of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), and that He would be born by supernatural means to a virgin young woman (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:22-23) was Jesus!

- B. And Jesus' Messianic arrival as Redeemer was for all of humanity—both Jews and Gentiles.
1. When it comes to the Gospel—Jesus is the central part of God's plan of salvation for humanity.
 2. Romans 1:16 (NIV)—*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."*
- C. Also, look at Romans 3:23-25 (NLT) for this is the Gospel in a nutshell—*"[23] For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. [24] Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. [25] For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood."*
1. Wages is what we all earned—the wages of sin is death. This is what we deserve, death because we're sinners and sin is an offense to God who is holy.
 2. But the free gift of eternal life in Jesus is something we do not earn nor deserve but is graciously given by God.
 3. This gift of grace is received the moment we believe by faith in Jesus Christ for our salvation.
 - a). Galatians 6:8—*"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."*

VI. Salvation is By Grace Through Faith

- A. Ephesians 2:8-9—*"[8] For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*
- B. The greatest gift God has given humanity is the gift of salvation which we could never earn or attain through our own self-righteousness or strength but by faith in Jesus.
- C. So, since we have by grace been saved through faith in Christ Jesus, we now get to live manifesting the life of Christ which brings pleasure to God until Jesus's return to bring the final victory against our nemesis Satan, the old serpent from the Garden of Eden.
- D. Salvation is a free gift from God. But to whom is salvation offered to? To every lost sinners on the basis of saving faith—who put their trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation.
 - 1. *"Because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes."*
 - 2. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith."*

VII. The Work of Our Salvation

- A. God's plan of salvation began in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) in our human timeline yet ordained before human timeline (Ephesians 1:1-12) to send His Son Jesus to reconcile us back to the Father by acting as our Substitute, the Lamb of God (John 1:29) who died and forgave us of our sin.
- B. And in the process of our salvation, as followers of Jesus, we have experienced our PAST Justification, we are experiencing our CURRENT Sanctification, and finally we will experience our FUTURE Glorification.

C. OUR JUSTIFICATION—The Christian is *SAVED* by grace.

1. God saved us sinners through His Son Jesus, and through Him, the Father forgave us of our sins and declared us righteous or just—*Just As If We Had Never Sinned*.
 - a). J. I. Packer writes, *"Justification is a judicial act of God pardoning sinners (wicked and ungodly persons, Rom. 4:5; 3:9–24), accepting them as just, and so putting permanently right their previously estranged relationship with himself. This justifying sentence is God's gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15–17), his bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 5:21)."*⁸

2. One element of God's grace that works in tandem with justification is the Holy Spirit's ministry of REGENERATION *"in which the Spirit of God indwells a repentant sinner and imparts eternal life to his or her spiritually dead soul."*⁹
 - a). Ephesians 2:1-5 says, *"[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3] among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—."*

⁸ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 164.

⁹ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Ro 1:16.

- b). Therefore, in our justification, when God saved us by Jesus's finished work on the Cross—the believer has been saved from the penalty of sin. It is God's grace who declares us as being in right standing before Him who put their trust in Jesus for their salvation.

D. OUR SANCTIFICATION—The Christian *GROWS* in grace.

1. Our salvation through Jesus Christ involves the process of sanctification *"in which God develops the new life of the believer and gradually brings it to perfection."*¹⁰
 - a). Sanctification is *"the act of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to a supreme love to God."*¹¹
 - b). Furthermore, in our sanctification, after God saved us sinners—we are presently now *"being saved from the power of sin."*
2. In Philippians 3:12-14, the apostle Paul understood that sanctification is a lifelong process.
 - a). Many Christians try to live by past experiences or past spiritual accomplishments when God wants to work in you in the **PRESENT** for your future growth and blessings.
 - b). Calvary Chapel founder, Pastor Chuck Smith once shared—*"Rather than resting in the past, what God has done, let's look forward to what God wants to do...Let's not just sit back and rest, let's press forward to what God has for us in the future."*

¹⁰ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Ro 1:16.

¹¹ Noah Webster, *Noah Webster's First Edition of An American Dictionary of the English Language*. (Anaheim, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 2006).

3. As another Bible commentator shared—*"Spiritual progress is ever the imperative Christians must follow"*¹² —as we depend totally upon the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to help grow in our faith because Jesus has made us His own (Philippians 3:12c).

4. Additionally, the daily reading and the study of God's Word is paramount to our sanctification.
 - a). When Jesus was praying over His disciples He prayed, *"[16] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. [17] Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. [18] As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. [19] I sanctify myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth"* (John 17:16-19, CSB). Jesus, who is the Word, is Truth. The Father is Truth. The Spirit is Truth.

 - b). Psalm 119:9 says, *"How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word."*

 - c). But take note of Psalm 119:9-16, especially verse 11—*"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you"*—theologian Herbert Lockyer shared that *"the underlying thought of the stanza is 'making our heart a home for the Word of God.' What is the condition of your heart, your home?"*¹³
 - (i) Would we rather fill our heart which is now the home of the Holy Spirit with God's Word or be filled with the ways of the flesh and the world?

¹² Barker, K. L. (1994). *Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition: New Testament)* (p. 806). Zondervan Publishing House.

¹³ As quoted from James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 107–150: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 976–977.

- d). Nineteenth century English pastor and preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon writes, *"Yes, the greatest heed we can take will not keep us out of the mire unless God's Word is a continual lamp to our feet and a constant light on our path."*¹⁴

- 5. Our sanctification is a big deal to God, so much so, that He is faithful to complete our sanctification through the Holy Spirit where we find ourselves in a daily state of separation unto Him. We are saints in a world that is not ours.
 - a). But thanks be to God according to 1st Corinthians 15:53-54 (NLT) our sanctification reaches its end—*"For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"*

- 6. Once we were saved by grace and grow in grace, next we will be completed or finalized through grace, which speaks of our GLORIFICATION.

- E. OUR GLORIFICATION—The Christian is finalized through grace.
 - 1. In Romans 8:30 Paul writes, *"[30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."*
 - a). Furthermore, Philippians 1:6 says, *"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ"* when He returns for His own, the Church.

 - b). The late R. C. Sproul said, *"The doctrine of glorification refers to that time when, at Christ's second coming, the true believers, both living and dead,*

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Spurgeon Study Bible: Notes* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 791.

*will have full and final redemption of their bodies and reach their final state."*¹⁵

c). He continues to say, *"Glorification, then, is the believer's great hope for the future. God will make all things right and keep it that way throughout all eternity. But glorification is a present comfort as well. In this fallen world where we experience sin both within and without, there is comfort in knowing that God is working even now to purify his saints in preparation for their future glory. The believer is in one sense already glorified, sealed for eternity, evermore a child of God."*¹⁶

F. Therefore, by God's grace, the believer has been saved from the PENALTY of sin (our past JUSTIFICATION); the believer is being saved from the POWER of sin (our present SANCTIFICATION), and finally, the believer will be saved from the very PRESENCE of sin (our future GLORIFICATION).

VIII. Finally, We Believe in Jesus Christ's Imminent Return

A. Jesus's imminent return is part of the Gospel; it is part of the Good News of Jesus Christ because we get to be with Him for all eternity. The word imminent means to happen at any moment or approaching near.

1. Acts 1:10-11 (CSB) says, *"[10] While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. [11] They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.'"*

¹⁵ R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

2. James 5:7-8—*"[7] Therefore, brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. [8] You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near."*
3. Luke 12:40, Jesus said, *"You also be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*
 - a). To "be ready" is to be intentional in anticipating Jesus's guaranteed return, at any given moment.
4. Also, when we gather for Holy Communion we are reminded of His imminent return—*"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"* (1st Corinthians 11:26).

IX. CONCLUSION

- A. In closing, sin—humanity's act of sin—separated us from our holy Creator God; but His love brought us to Himself through Jesus's act of Redemption. Salvation is a divine work of God and not of man. *"Salvation is both of the Lord and from the Lord."*¹⁷
 1. So, by God's grace: our salvation was initiated by the Father; our salvation was effectuated by the Son; and our salvation is administered by the Holy Spirit.
- B. We have a holy, gracious and loving God who overcame our bad news with the Good News of Jesus Christ who is the embodiment of God's grace by which we are saved through saving faith.

¹⁷ R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992).

C. So, in closing—

"We believe that all people were created in the image of God, but that sin came into the world through "one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12) and therefore human beings are born with a sinful nature. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the basis of His shed blood. We believe in the blessed hope of the personal, visible and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God and heirs of eternal life" (GRCC Statement of Faith).

This concludes our series—Essentials: Faith in One Accord.

To God Be The Glory Forever and Ever. Amen!