Faith or Works or What? — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 22:15–19 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, May 19, 2024 · *The Patriarchs*

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Really thankful for the Lord's presence in this place, even as we've been worshiping through song. Hope we can continue in that posture of prayer and worship as we open up the word of God and see what the Lord has for us this morning. In the book of Genesis. So if you have your Bible, you can turn to Genesis chapter 22. If you're new to Broadview, we've been going through the book of Genesis for several months now. Actually close to half a year—actually maybe more than a year now. We've gone through the book of Genesis.

We've been going through the life of Abraham for about six months. Wow. I can't believe it's been over a year that we've been in Genesis. That's wild. Anyway, the reason we've spent so much time in the life of Abraham is he's one of the characters of the Bible that you can't really understand the Bible unless you get him. He's one of three big dogs, maybe four big dogs you've got. Five, I guess you want to add Adam and Eve. Okay, Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus. Those are pretty much your big characters if you want to understand the redemptive arc of history, if you want to understand God's plan for the world.

And Abraham's a fascinating character because he was a pagan. Who was kind of doing his own thing, and out of nowhere God called him and said, I want you to follow me. And if you'll follow me, if you'll have faith and trust me, I'm going to bless you. And he promised him land, he promised him a lineage, he promised him that if you'll do what I'm wanting you to do, I'm going to bless every nation of the earth through you. And sure enough, that's exactly what Abraham does. And we've kind of chronicled his mountain peaks and his valley lows and it's been really fascinating.

In addition to really understanding the character of Abraham, the other thing that's important to understand about Abraham and just about the Bible in general is this idea of covenant, because all of God's promises to Abraham flow through this thing called covenant. And a covenant is language we don't use anymore today. We sometimes talk about a marriage covenant, but when you think about your marriage covenant, you're probably not

thinking about what the Bible talks about when it talks about covenant. Because the covenant was a binding relationship between two parties where there were stipulations laid out for either side, and then there were blessings and curses attached to your faithfulness to the stipulations.

So that's the part you didn't have in your wedding vows, right? If you don't love me and cherish me, I'm going to kill you. You know, you didn't have that part in there. But that's what's technically in a covenant, and God has given covenants all throughout the Bible. You've got a covenant, it's implicit in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, you've got a covenant with Noah, the covenant signed with the rainbow, I'm never going to flood the earth again. You've got a covenant with Abraham that gets said and reaffirmed over and over again that we're going to see this morning.

You've got a covenant with King David, you've got a covenant with Moses in the giving of the Ten Commandments, and then you've got a covenant with Jesus called the New Covenant. So covenants are central, Abraham is central. The reason I'm talking about that this morning is because all of God's greatest promises come to us through the covenant. For us today, it's called the New Covenant, but that new covenant is building upon the foundation of all of these Old Testament covenants. The reason we're addressing this today is because our text raises a question about God's covenant that is really thorny.

This is one of those sermons that some of you are going to absolutely love it because you like debate and controversy and irreconcilable conflicts and some of you are going to hate it because you don't like any of those things. It's also one of those sermons that's going to take a little bit of time to develop. I heard someone say the other day, sermonettes produce Christianettes. So we don't want Christianettes around here. It's an issue that you need to have your hands around and your head around because it's I think it's the biggest difference between what Christianity actually teaches and every other religion in the world.

And that question is, are the covenant promises of God given to us through our faith or through our efforts? Is it because God promised? And so long as we believe what God promised, then by virtue of the belief, God imparts to us his blessings. Or is it God has promised us, but that He will not give us His promise unless we do what He's asked us to do in the covenant? Another way to talk about it more technically is are the covenants of God unilateral—is there only one person who does everything, which is the Lord, or are they bilateral?

In other words, it takes God and us to do a little dance for everything to work. Way out? Are they conditional? In other words, they're conditioned on our obedience, or are they unconditional in that even if we're faithless, he remains faithful. These are questions that are not easy to answer because the Bible seems to emphasize both truths and the covenant we're

going to look at this morning. emphasizes one at the expense of the other. And I almost just was going to pass over this. I wasn't going to do a sermon.

I was just going to do one sermon on Genesis 22. But I wrestled with this to the degree I wanted to invite you in on my pain and suffering so that you too can really wonder what is going on here. So with that in mind, Genesis chapter 22, we're going to start in verse 15. Abraham has just offered his son Isaac to the Lord. He was about to put the knife into the heart of his one and only son and then the angel of the Lord stops him and says, don't do this.

Now that I know I have your heart, I don't really need nor have I ever wanted the life of your son. And so a ram was substituted for Isaac, and we saw the Lord as the provider, providing atonement for sin and provision for the promised son. Then it says in verse fifteen that the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven. So same angel that stopped him from sacrificing his son. This is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. This is Jesus speaking to Abraham. A second time from heaven, and he is saying, by myself I have sworn.

This is the Lord's declaration. Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son. I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command. So Abraham went back to his young men and they got up and went together to Beersheba, and Abraham settled in Beersheba. So if you've been with us for a minute, you kind of probably see a couple of things with this.

If you're not, don't worry, I'm going to show you the first thing that I see when I read that passage is a ton of repetition from the other times in Genesis where God had made this covenant with Abraham. You see several words and themes get repeated, such as the theme of blessing. The theme of sand and stars and kings and royalty and the land—all of that shows up over and over and over again just to show you this if you're new to the book of Genesis. In Genesis chapter 12, this was God's original call to Abraham.

And his original call to Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, he said that if you'll follow me, I'm going to make you a great nation. I'm going to bless you; you're going to be a blessing all the nations of the earth will be blessed through you. You see all that language in Genesis 22 as well. Genesis 22, in other words, is repeating and reaffirming the promises of Genesis chapter 12. In Genesis chapter 13, that's where you saw the promise about your descendants are going to be as multiple as the dust of the earth.

If you'll go to that next verse for me, please. And then in Genesis chapter 15, it's as multiple as the stars in the sky. So dust of the earth, stars in the sky. You see the same exact language in Genesis chapter 22 as well. So again he is repeating and reaffirming the central promises

of the covenant again in Genesis 22. The other thing that got repeated is this idea of royalty or kings. In Genesis 22, he says, you're going to possess the gates of your enemies. And then in Genesis 17, he says to Sarah, Nations and kings are going to come from you.

In other words, you're going to rule over land that you're going to possess from others. You're going to take it from them and it's going to belong to you. And then you see the promise of the land throughout 12, 13, 17, 15, 22 repeated. So there's lots of similarities, okay? And the reason I'm pointing that out is because it wouldn't be a problem if all there were were similarities, but that's not all there is. There's also one glaring difference between all of these covenant promises in Genesis 12 and 13 and 15 and 17 and chapter 22.

And the glaring difference is that in Genesis chapter 12, 15, 17, the emphasis seems to be on Abraham's faith. Early in Genesis, all of God's promises seem to be given to Abraham because he believes. But in Genesis 22, it isn't because he believes. It seems to much more be focused on his obedience. Because you've done this thing, I'm now going to bless you. He says at the end of verse 18, because you've obeyed my voice, I'm going to do these things. If you'll go to that next scripture passage, I'll just show you these two back to back.

It seems like a contradiction, but in fact, I don't think it is. In verse chapter 15, this is the covenant originally being established. It says that Abraham believed the Lord, and so he credited to him as righteousness. But now in Genesis 22 it's obedience—because you've done this thing, because you've obeyed my voice. I'm going to bless you. So which is it? Do the covenant promises of God come to us because of our faith, or do the covenant promises of God come to us because of our works? That question split the church a little over 500 years ago between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation.

He had a guy named Martin Luther who saw a lot of excess and corruption in the Roman Catholic Church, but his main theological qualm was that they were teaching justification by grace through faith plus works. And Martin Luther came along and said, no, it's not plus anything. It's the five solas of the Reformation. It's grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, for the glory of God alone, and Scripture alone. So it's not about what the Pope thinks or says, it's about what the Scripture teaches. And so is it faith or is it works?

That's the question that we have in front of us today. Now I think the one thing everybody agrees upon, hopefully we can all agree upon this, the Christian life is a journey. Can we agree on that part? The Christian life is not a one-and-done. You say your sinner's prayer and you are immediately a wonderful Christian man or woman. Did that happen to anybody? No. Right? I think that's why we love that book, Pilgrim's Progress. If you haven't read it yet, I recommend it. It's very old, dated English, so get the paraphrase.

Get the kids version—that's the best version. Pilgrim's Progress is so good because it shows that the Christian life is a journey. It's not a one-and-done. It's mountain peaks and valley

lows. It's gradually becoming more and more of who God has called you to be. So the Christian life is a journey. I think we can also all agree, wherever you land on the debate, that salvation is not by works the thing that's unique about Christianity is Christianity says you can work your way to the bone. You'll never have enough good works to justify yourself before a holy God.

It's not enough. You're not enough. There is no good enough when it comes to the Lord. We're saved by grace. This classic passage in Ephesians chapter 2, I would commend it to you to commit to memory if you have it. You are saved by grace through faith. And this is not from yourselves, it's God's gift. Look at this phrase, it's not from works, so that nobody can boast. So when it comes to works, whatever works play into anything, it can't be our salvation because our salvation is by grace through faith.

And I think Catholics would say that, Protestants would say that. Every Christian who is a true Christian would say. Salvation is by grace through faith. But what about works? If you just read the next verse in Ephesians chapter 2, the next verse talks about good works. We were created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. So if the Christian life is a journey, it's not a one-and-done. And that salvation is by grace through faith, then what are we to do with works?

How do works play into the salvation process? How do works play into the covenant relationship and blessings from the Lord? So, to answer that question, I want to show you how the history of the church has tried to deal with it, and I want to show you how the New Testament tries to deal with it. We're going to start with the New Testament. Sorry. What's fascinating about the New Testament is the New Testament teaches both of these truths. And what I was fascinated by, and why I'm doing a whole sermon on this, is the New Testament uses the life of Abraham to teach both truths.

It's so crazy. Paul, in the book of Romans, uses Abraham as a template for how to teach justification by grace through faith alone. He focuses in on Genesis 15, 6 James, the brother of Jesus, uses the same character, uses the same story, I think uses even the same proof text to argue the opposite. It's not justification by faith alone is justification by works. Okay, let me show you this. This may be a little bit unsettling to you. Let's begin in Romans chapter four. Romans chapter four. I know we don't normally flip all over the Bible, but today we're going to just do a little bit of that just so I can show you how he's using Abraham to teach both truths.

Romans chapter 4, we're going to read verses 1 to 4. What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather, according to the flesh, has found? If Abraham was justified by works, then he has something to boast about—but not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. But to the one who does not

work, but believes on him who declares the ungodly to be righteous, his faith is credited for righteousness.

Now, a couple of things you need to know about this passage, this word justification, or it's the Greek word dikaioō. It's used over and over and over again in the passage. That's one of the terms that the Bible uses to talk about salvation. It's a little word that means to be in right relationship with somebody. If you're justified, the way an old preacher said it to me way back in the day, it's just as if I'd never sinned—justified, just as if I'd never sinned. It's always stuck with me. It's like let's say if you're in a relationship, one not with God, but with somebody else.

It's just as if you had never lied to them, never lied about them, never did anything to harm the relationship. That relational harmony that would be characteristic of that kind of relationship, that is justification. And you have that relationship with God, Paul says, by faith, not works. Just like Abraham was justified by faith and not his works. James, the brother of Jesus, has a different story. James chapter 2. If you'll turn there, James chapter 2. Same character, same word—justification—different takeaway. Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works in offering Isaac, his son on the altar?

You see that faith was active together with his works, and that by works faith was made complete. And the scripture was fulfilled that said Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Does anybody else see the problem here? Let's just feel a little bit tense. Which is it? Is it by faith alone? à la the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 4, or is it by faith? plus works, or faith completing itself through works.

A phrase I always think about—I don't remember where I heard it from— is that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone. The five solas of the Reformation I think are sound and true. That's why I'm a Baptist. That's why I'm a Protestant. But saving faith is never alone. Saving faith never stays alone. Saving faith always produces some kind of good works. But how are we to understand that in relationship to the covenant? That's where church history is kind of interesting. Have you ever wondered why we don't just have one church?

Why do we have all these different denominations? Baptist, Pentecostal, Church of Christ, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox. We could go on and on and on. All these schisms, all these separations. What's the reason for that? Well, one of the big reasons for the big split in the church between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism was over the issue of how to situate works with salvation. I want to be very clear. Not every Catholic believes what I'm about to say is the Catholic view, and not every Protestant believes what I'm about to say is the Protestant view.

These are just words to generalize. So don't get mad at me if you think I'm misrepresenting somebody's view. You could call them Bill's view and Bob's view for all I care, so long as we get to the gist of what each view basically teaches. The Roman Catholic view prior to the Reformation and post-Protestant Reformation was similar to the Protestant view on one thing, and that one thing is they both agree that salvation is by grace through faith. But I think there's a caricature of Catholicism that they don't believe in salvation by grace.

That's not true. Catholics believe you're saved by grace through faith because that's what the Bible teaches. You can't wiggle out of that. It's clear as day. Ephesians chapter 2, we just read it. Where Roman Catholicism kind of does things a little differently is what they will say is you're saved by grace through faith to be justified. But then after you're justified, you can add to your justification through good works. Does that make sense? Now I think there's a problem with that, on the one hand, because of the word justification. The word justification means you are, it's just as if I'd never sinned.

You can't add to perfection, right? If something is a hundred percent full, if the glass is a hundred percent full, you can't make it a hundred and one percent full, it's just going to overflow. So you can't add to justification in that way through good works. So I think there's an error on that way. The other thing is there's an issue there. And this is what you see in the history of the Roman Catholic Church, because they believe you can add to your salvation, they came up with additional sacraments to kind of help people get further along in their redemptive journey.

This language from the Council of Trent said that grace cooperates with effort. Through the sacraments like the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, and baptism—and they added five more. I think you've got confession, confirmation, marriage. last rites, and the ordination of the holy orders, becoming a priest. All of those are ways to kind of add to your salvation, but they didn't stop there. They also said if you can add to your salvation, you can also take away from your salvation. This is where the whole idea of mortal and venial sins are. And if you die in a state of sin and the sin that you are committing is mortal sin, then you are going to die separated from the grace of God.

In other words, you can lose your salvation. And I think that's an issue from the scriptures because there are a host of scriptures that teach the eternal security of the believer that when God saves you, you can't unsave what God does. So there are some issues with the Catholic view from my perspective. How does the Protestant view try to handle it? Well, the Protestant view is very comfortable with the language of the Apostle Paul they're all about justification by grace through faith, faith alone, five solas: grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, glory of God alone, Scripture alone, they give the nod to the Apostle Paul, and they would also nod to the book of James, and they would say works are important.

But they would say works don't add to your justification because you can't add to completion. So what they do is they come up with a different word. They don't come up with a word. It's a biblical word. It's the word sanctification. Sanctification, another Greek word. It doesn't mean just as if I'd never sinned. It's a little different than that. Sanctification, the word literally means to be holy. Or to be set apart, to be distinct. And they would say your works add to your sanctification. Now in one way they're right, because sanctification is a process.

The Bible talks about sanctification as God is sanctifying us gradually, progressively. I think we all know this practically speaking because when you got saved you didn't the next day quit all of your bad habits and and become a totally godly man or woman, right? You and you had to work some of that stuff out. As somebody said the other day, me and Jesus are still debating about that. You know, they're being sanctified. It's a progressive act. And so a lot of Protestants will say is that you add to your sanctification through your good works.

A couple of problems with that in my mind is if you think of works adding to sanctification, this is why a lot of Protestants become super legalistic. This is why some Protestant traditions take the Old Testament law and they say it's still on us. To a degree. What they do is they separate the Old Testament law, ceremonial law, the civic law, which is the laws about government, and the moral law. And the moral law of the Old Testament is still binding on Christians And so they'll argue about tattoos or not tattoos, tithe or no tithe. observe the Sabbath, don't observe the Sabbath.

And they have these debates because works, good works, are contributing to your sanctification. The biggest problem I have with that is that the Bible never talks about the Bible never talks about works adding to your sanctification. The Bible does say that sanctification is a process, it's gradual, but it also describes sanctification as something that is immediate and 100% fully received at conversion. You see this language in the book of Hebrews, chapter 10. You see this language in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 1. In Christ Jesus you were washed. In other words, you were justified and you were sanctified.

Past tense, completed action, one-and-done at conversion. So your works can't contribute to your sanctification any more than they contribute to your justification because it happens all at once 100% when you believe. The way I put it in your notes is that both sanctification and justification are gifts of God's grace. Works do not supplement a gift, as Paul said in the book of Romans, chapter four that we just read, if it was supplementing, then it wouldn't be a gift; it would be a wage. And we don't earn our salvation in any respect.

So if it's not, if works don't add to our justification and works don't add to our sanctification, then how are we to think about works? And I think the way to resolve the tension is not by resolving it with justification or sanctification, but by resolving it with the way that you understand faith itself. What is faith? I think we're at a disadvantage because in our English

language we've kind of taken the idea of faith and we've removed it from its biblical context. Have any of you guys heard of Richard Dawkins?

Famous atheist, the way that he talks about faith is that faith is believing something in the absence of evidence. And that's how a lot of people think about faith. Faith is like, I don't know, but I have faith. Faith is wishful thinking. Faith is hoping for the best. But that's not the way the Bible describes faith, at least not usually the Bible talks about faith not as the outer edge of our knowledge, the things that we can't know for sure that are on the periphery. Faith is believing something in the absence of seeing it, but it doesn't deal with the outer edge.

It deals with the inner core. Faith is your core assumptions about reality. Faith is what you believe and how you make sense of everything in the world. That is your faith. And if that is faith, then there is no world in which faith does not express itself externally the very nature of faith has to manifest itself externally because you cannot understand or live in the world without those core faith commitments. And in that way everybody has faith, right? Atheists have faith, secularists have faith, humanists have faith, Christians have faith, Baptists have faith, Catholics have faith.

Everybody has faith. The question is not what is your faith, because everybody has faith. The question is, is your faith properly placed? The question is, is it faith or works? That's a kind of almost a silly question because faith and works are really two sides of the same coin. One side focuses on the inner convictions of the heart. The other side focuses on the practical outworkings of that inner conviction in day-to-day life. That is why James says faith without works is dead. He's not saying that if you don't have works, your faith isn't real.

He's saying if you don't have works, in other words, if you're not living a life that honors the Lord Jesus Christ, then your faith is not in Jesus. Your faith is in something else. Because what proves someone's faith to be what it is their lifestyle. Your works expose or validate or confirm or complete in whom or in what you've put your faith. So you ask the question, was Abraham justified by faith or was he justified by works? The answer to the question is yes. He was justified by faith, and his faith was proven or visibly displayed through his obedience.

Because that's the nature of faith. Faith always manifests itself externally. So when it says that Abraham was justified by faith, He wasn't just justified because he believed something with a lot of faith. He wasn't justified because he believed something on the periphery of his knowledge when he wasn't sure, but he hoped for the best. Abraham wasn't saved because he had faith in general; in other words, Abraham was saved because his faith was properly placed. So the more interesting question isn't was he justified by faith or by works? The most interesting question is in whom or in what.

Did Abraham put his faith? Abraham was justified because his faith was properly placed. And this is what's so fascinating about Genesis. In whom or in what was Abraham's faith? We saw last week with the sacrifice of Isaac that the Genesis 22 wasn't about Isaac. It was about Abraham foreshadowing the ultimate act of redemption that God himself would accomplish on the cross through the true promised son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We said that Isaac was pointing to Jesus; Jesus is the greater Isaac. And that's exactly what you see here in this language about the covenant as well.

I don't know that you caught it with the CSB translation because it is translating it as of their enemies. But if you think, if you read it in the ESV, which is a little bit more literal sometimes, it really brings out the fact that this word offspring, it's the word seed; it's singular. So it's singular not in that it's talking about all of Abraham's offspring like Ishmael and Isaac. No, it's singular talking about one offspring. But the one offspring isn't Isaac, because Isaac is not going to possess the gate of his enemies.

Jacob doesn't possess the gate of his enemies. Judah, Jacob's son, doesn't possess the gate of his enemies. It's someone else. So who is the offspring that's in view in Genesis chapter 22? Who is the object of Abraham's faith? Well, if you trace it, what you see is it goes from Isaac to Jacob to Judah to on and on you can go through the genealogies, and it ultimately terminates. And the true offspring, the one who would crush the head of the serpent that Genesis 3 has been anticipating from the very beginning, and that man is the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is how Paul argues this in the book of Galatians and he's trying to explain how we can be how can we be children of Abraham? If Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation, how can Gentiles become children of Abraham and he's saying it's because it's not about biology. It's never been about biology because then Ishmael would have been just as much a child of promise as Isaac. It's never been about biology, it's always been about faith. And those who have faith are Abraham's sons. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.

He doesn't say seeds, plural, like all of the Jewish people or all of Abraham's offspring. They weren't all Jewish at that time, some were Arab, but he's referring to one your seed, who is Christ. You notice in Genesis 22 when Jesus is speaking to Abraham, what does he say? By myself I have sworn, this is the Lord's declaration. In other words, this is something that I'm going to accomplish, and it's your faith in me that has made you righteous, and it's your faith in me that's going to advance these covenant promises. through to the end.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise. And what you see, what Jesus accomplishes through his life and death and resurrection is he begins to fulfill all of the covenants of the Old Testament. Was the Abrahamic covenant conditional on his obedience? Yes. Was it also conditional only on the Lord? Yes. There is a sense in which only God could accomplish what was promised in the Abrahamic covenant,

but Abraham also had to be obedient in order for that covenant to continue. But why is it that we don't have those same stipulations on us?

Why is it that it's not our works that keeps us saved, like the Roman Catholic view? It's because Jesus Christ has already completed all of those works through his sinless life of love and obedience to God the Father. And that when you put your faith in Jesus, it's not as though Jesus only forgives you of your past actions and gives you a new heart so that you can do your best for the future, but that your future depends on you. That's not the Christian gospel. The Christian gospel is that it is both in Jesus' death and life.

That we are justified. It's through his death and life that we are sanctified. It's through his death and his life that we are glorified. All of our salvation, past, present, and future, is in Jesus. This is why we're not bound by an Old Testament law. This is why we're not bound by any law whatsoever other than the law of Jesus Christ. Because salvation is in him and in him alone. And when your faith is truly in Jesus, this is the point of the sermon, when you truly have real faith, genuine faith, it will manifest itself with works.

Your works will become evidence of the fact that your hope is in Jesus and Jesus alone. As the song we just sang, Christ be magnified, be magnified in me. When you truly have faith in Jesus Christ, it is going to be magnified in the way that you live your life. And so the really hard question for us this morning is what does my lifestyle say about my faith? Not, does my faith have any works? No, your faith has works. The question is, in whom or in what have you placed your faith?

Is your faith properly placed? And if your lifestyle suggests to the Lord and to everybody watching, it isn't really in Jesus, it's really in yourself or in money or in what people think about you or you know whatever the case may be —that faith is not saving faith there's only one faith that can save you, and it's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 says he is our justification, he is our righteousness, he is our sanctification, and he is our redemption. And if you are in him, then all of those things are true of you.

And so if you've never in your life come to a point where you rested your confidence in Christ alone not Jesus-plus, not some sinner's prayer you prayed when you were ten years old, not some baptism, but the active, ongoing, abiding confidence. That I am safe and secure in the arms of Jesus Christ because he became for me my righteousness and my sanctification. and redemption, then you don't yet understand the love of God for you in Christ Jesus. And this morning it may be that God is calling you. to stop striving, to stop wondering and questioning, am I good enough?

Will I ever be good enough? And to start resting confidently in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you will put your faith in him by virtue of that faith he will begin to transform you from one degree of glory to the next until the Lord calls you home. And so as we prepare to take the

Lord's Supper, I want to encourage you to examine your life, to examine yourself, let a man judge himself and see if the faith is really there. And if it is, then to take the Lord's Supper in a way that's worthy and honors the Lord.

If there's sin in your life that is uncharacteristic of someone who's truly walking with Jesus, I'll give you an opportunity to repent of that sin, to confess it before the Lord. If you're here this morning and you have not yet put your faith in Jesus, I want to invite you to come and to surrender your life to Jesus as Lord and to find the assurance that comes from being safe and secure in his work on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. And so you can come up here and talk to me.

I'll be here to receive you. You can also scan a QR code that'll be in your bulletin. and make your decision that way. But I'm going to ask our ushers to come up to the front and we're going to spend some time responding to the Lord and then we're going to take the Lord's Supper. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time in your word. I thank you that these theological knots, these paradoxes of the Scripture, they all find their resolution in the cross of Jesus Christ. He perfectly resolves every mystery, both fully God and fully man. full of grace, full of truth.

The infinite and the finite all meet together who he is and what he's done on the cross. And so we pray that this issue that we've been talking about this morning would find its resolution in him and that we would simplify our spirituality not with how much we do or don't do, but with whether or not we are truly trusting in Christ alone. for our life and for our death and everything in between. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.