

## I. Relational Framework

- A. The biblical teaching of salvation is tied to a historical event and a person who in real time, in a real place, after surviving unimaginable brutal beatings suffered the agony of having His hands and feet pinned to wooden beams. Three days later the known world began to shake in wonder as that same man rose from the grave under His own power. Our dull academic musings in theological circles today regarding this event would be nothing less than offensive to those who knew Him and were present in those days.
1. If one's ideas about the cross remain theological and philosophical, not only is it possible to walk away from the cross unmoved, you also grow in danger of removing the necessity of the identity of the one who hung on it. Yet, if you join John at the foot of the cross watching the chest of your best friend and the Lord of glory heave its last excruciating breath you are thrown into a whirlwind of emotions.
- B. Throughout this series, I have tried to emphasize the importance of approaching the study of God within a relational framework. Nowhere is this more central than when considering salvation. We should view salvation from the perspective of God's burning desire to be in fellowship with the pinnacle of His creation. Salvation is often looked at as a mathematical spiritual equation that equals our eternal safety. Salvation is a God incarnate in a person named Jesus who subjected Himself to unthinkable, undeserved, torment and death in His zeal to have relationship with you.
1. Our hearts are meant to be overwhelmed by the events of salvation, our intellect, however, is not. A common perception in the body of Christ is that the subject of the cross and salvation is far too complex to fully understand. I would like to submit that those who hold that sentiment are generally not viewing salvation through the lens of relationship, but rather through the lens of religious dogma.
  2. **Salvation summarizes His accomplishment, and relationship, His motivation.** Atonement, redemption, justification, and regeneration are all different aspects of the broad theme of salvation. All believers need to understand and communicate these aspects of their salvation.

## II. Conversion through Faith

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)*

- A. Man is incapable of doing anything meritorious of salvation and therefore salvation is by grace alone. Even though we all were the hateful enemies of God, He deeply desires the salvation of all who are estranged from Him. His drawing and grace is available and accessible to every person. (Jhn 3:16, Acts 17:24-31, Rom. 1:20, 1 Tim. 2:3-4, 2 Pet. 3:9)
- B. Faith is the admission that we cannot do anything to obtain our own right standing with God (salvation) and therefore we trust in the saving work of Jesus on our behalf. The bible clearly contrasts faith and works and explicitly states that the only way to obtain salvation is through faith alone. (Rom. 3:26-27, Gal. 3:11)
- C. There is clear consensus in the evangelical community around the confession that it is by grace, through faith, in Christ alone that we are saved. Sadly, the substance or characteristics of saving faith have come into question in our day. One can seemingly believe just about anything they want about Jesus and still be accepted as being a Christian. We must be rooted in the truth of what the bible qualifies as saving faith.
  1. Christ Alone is Savior – The first, and biblically primary, characteristic of saving faith is belief that Jesus the Christ is the sole means of salvation. He alone made the quality of sacrifice necessary that no other could ever provide for themselves. (Jhn. 14:6, Acts 4:10-12,
  2. Faith Grounded in Truth – Second, this belief must be informed by the biblical testimony of Jesus and His death and resurrection. We are warned by scripture that there would arise teachers who teach a different Jesus than the Jesus of the bible. (Mat. 24:24, 2 Cor. 11:2-4, Gal. 1:6-9)
  - The Primary issue of identity that has been under attack since the coming of Jesus is the truth that He is fully God. Again and again His identity as God is linked to saving faith. (Rom. 10:8-9, Cor. 12:3, Phil. 2:9-11)

3. Repentance – Saving faith is accompanied by repentance. Genuine belief is inseparable from action. In addition to sorrow over past transgressions repentance includes turning from ungodliness. This turning is manifested by sincere intention to obey all that God reveals. (Mark 1:14-15, Acts. 2:37-38)

### III. Walking in Relationship

A. Once there has been a true conversion to faith in Jesus we then set ourselves to walk out our Faith through an ongoing relationship with God. This aspect of our relationship with God is called by many names sanctification, discipleship, abiding, walking, etc. We will talk more on this in coming sessions, for now we will cover 4 basic principles of walking with Jesus.

1. Cooperation – Through our choices, obedience, and aligning with truth we position ourselves to cooperate with the grace of God that leads us to maturity. He will not do our part and we can't do His part. We should all be free to walk out our relationship with God per our created uniqueness but with a healthy sobriety. We must apply the same intentionality and care and that is necessary for personal relationships. (1 Cor. 9:24-27, Phil. 2:12-13, 2 Pet. 1:5-10)
2. Confidence – There is no deficiency in the kindness or intentions of God. He will grant forgiveness and give new mercy daily as we seek it. We never need to fear rejection or that the Lord will not receive us even in our weakness when we desire righteousness in our lives. (Jhn. 10:28-29, Rom. 8:38-39, Phil. 3:13-14, 1 Jhn. 4:17-19)  
Our complete assurance of our salvation rests on two pillars.
  1. The complete and perfect saving work of Jesus (death and resurrection).
  2. Our sincere intention to love and obey God.
3. Perseverance – Many evangelistic messages today paint a picture of Christianity bettering circumstances and prosperity. Though there are aspects of truth in these messages, they run contrary to the biblical testimony of the need for perseverance in our faith. In choosing to walk with Jesus we will be called into a lifestyle that is countercultural and offensive to the world. Our old man and the powers of darkness fight us every step of the way. (Jn. 15:19-21, 16:33, Acts 14:22, 2 Tim. 3:12, 1 Pet. 5:9)

4. Falling Away – The emphasis in Scripture is on the great assurance we can have as believers because of the fierceness of His love and the faithfulness of His leadership. We do not need to fear falling away and it is very hard to do so. However the scriptures are clear that it is possible for once sincere authentic Christians to walk away from the Lord to the point that they sever their relationship with Him. (Mat. 24:9-13, 2 Thes. 2:3, 2 Tim. 4:1-2, Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-31, 2 Pet. 2:17-22)