

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 11, Conversion

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session 11, Conversion.

We continue our study of the doctrine of salvation, this time taking up conversion, but let's ask the Lord's blessing before we do.

Gracious Father, we thank you for your great grace in choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world, in sending him to die in our place and rise on the third day according to the scriptures, for sending your spirit to give us a new life that we might embrace Jesus as he is offered in the gospel. Work in us according to your good pleasure. Use your word and its teachings toward that end, we pray, and all things for your glory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. We're dealing with salvation applied, and that is how God actually brings into the lives of his people the salvation he planned before the creation of the world, the salvation that he accomplished in the work of Christ in the first century. Salvation applied is union with Christ; God joins us to his son spiritually so that all of his spiritual benefits become ours.

To complete the fourfold story, salvation planned, accomplished, applied, and consummated is beyond the scope of this course except for glorification and eternal life, which we have appended to the traditional application of salvation. Conversion, tiny biblical summary, faith, and repentance are necessary for salvation. Faith and repentance are inseparable but distinguishable.

They are two sides of one coin when it comes to conversion, for true faith always leads to repentance. People do not truly believe unless turning from sin occurs. Faith is turning to God, and repentance is turning away from sin.

Conversion, systematic formulations, conversion is shorthand for repentance and faith. Next head, repentance, and faith. The next heading is repentance.

I admit I haven't been too creative in this section. The next heading is faith. Next heading, justification.

That's a new topic. Conversion, indeed, is shorthand for repentance and faith. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are proud of the Thessalonian believers for their testimony, which has become well-known to people throughout their region.

1 Thessalonians 1:8 through 10, in every place, your faith in God has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to say anything for they themselves report what kind of reception we had from you, how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1 Thessalonians 1:8 through 10.

Conversion involves turning from as well as turning to, as the Thessalonians exemplify, for they turned away from idols to serve God. Conversion has two parts: repentance, turning from sin, and faith turning to Christ. It is wise not to regard these as two steps to salvation because doing so appears to make salvation a human work involving steps we perform.

These are not two steps but two sides of the same coin, as we said because turning is one act. Turning from something, in this case, sin, repentance automatically involves turning towards something else, in this case, faith in Christ. Conversion is theological shorthand for the biblical doctrines of repentance and faith.

Repentance and faith are related but not identical. When John the Baptist and Jesus call people to repentance, they do not mention faith, although it may well be implied. Matthew 3:1 and 2. In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying repent because the kingdom of heaven had come near.

Matthew 3:1 and 2. Again, I'm quoting from the Christian Standard Bible because these notes come from a recent writing project. From then on, Matthew 4:17, Jesus began to preach repent because the kingdom of heaven has come near. Matthew 4, 17.

Repentance and faith are not identical, but they are inseparable. There's not only one style of conversion in scripture for us to read, but God's dynamic conversion of Saul of Tarsus and God's quiet conversion of Timothy. The ascended Christ met Saul in power as he was traveling to Damascus to persecute believers in that city.

When Christ knocked Saul to the ground, Saul knew it was God, for he asked, who are you, Lord? Acts 9, 5. The answer Saul received is as shocking as any in scripture. Quote: I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Verse 5. Timothy's conversion makes a sharp contrast.

Though he had an unsaved father, quote, from infancy, the word is used of babes at the breast or young children, and Timothy had learned, quote, the sacred scriptures, the sacred scriptures that is, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:15. Paul tells us whom God used to lead Timothy to Christ.

Quote: I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and now I am convinced it is in you also. 2 Timothy 1:5. The important thing is not whether one's conversion is dramatic or quiet but that it is genuine as it was for Paul and Timothy. Further, scripture records the conversions of both individuals and families.

Paul's and Timothy's were individual conversions. Whole families also turned to Christ, as we see in Acts 16:14 and 15. Lydia and her household believed.

Acts 16:31 to 34. The Philippians jailer followed Papa Bear. The Philippian jailer's family followed Papa Bear and believed in Jesus.

Repentance and faith. It is not customary, but several times, scripture has combined repentance and faith as conditions of salvation. What is customary is to use, to have only one appear and the other is implied.

But sometimes we get the full, we get long hand if you will. Acts 19:4. Paul said quote, quote within a quote, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is Jesus. Acts 19:4. Or how about Acts 20:21 when Paul meets the Ephesian elders, sort of a proto-presbytery at Miletus, and he shares his life with them, his testimony and his intention to go on even to Rome leading even to his death if that's what it takes.

Paul says I testify to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus. Acts 20:21. Hebrews 6:1 and 2, when the writer to Hebrews urges the professed Hebrew Christians, most of whom are indeed believers and when he urges them to persevere in the faith, thereby demonstrating the validity of their profession and strengthening their assurance, he summarizes the ABCs of the faith if you will.

Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Hebrews 6:1 and 2. So those are the places I could find, and I'm not saying they're absolutely complete, but close where repentance and faith are combined, but more frequently, the Bible mentions only one or the other. Repentance alone.

Luke 5:32. Jesus said I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:32.

I quoted Matthew 4:17 above where Jesus mentions only repentance. How about Luke 24 in Jesus' resurrection appearance to his disciples. Luke 24:46, 47.

Jesus also said to them quote this is what is written: the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be

proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:46 and 47. How about 2 Corinthians 7:9 and 10.

I now rejoice Paul wrote not because you were grieved but because your grief led to repentance for you were grieved as God willed for godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret but worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:9 and 10. 2 Peter 3:9. The Lord does not delay his promise as some understand delay but is patient with you not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9. Most frequently, so sometimes, scripture mentions both repentance and faith. We're dealing with the topic of conversion, which is theological shorthand for the bible's teachings concerning repentance and faith, which mean turning from sin repentance turning to Christ as he's offering the gospel faith, and we have said sometimes, not frequently, scripture mentions both repentance and faith. Other times, more frequently, it mentions faith and repentance.

Most frequently however, it mentions faith. Most frequently, scripture lists faith as the sole condition of salvation. John 3, 16.

God so loved the world in this way he gave his one and only son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. Romans 1:16 and 17. The thematic statement of the book of Romans.

I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. First, to the Jew and also to the Greek, for in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith as it is written the righteous will live by faith. Romans 1:16 and 17.

It's my habit practice to repeat the verses in case somebody missed wants to write them down and missed them. Galatians 2, 16. We know a person is not justified by the works of law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even if we believe in Christ Jesus.

This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ in Christ and not by the works of law because, by the works of a law, no human being will be justified. That is the most emphatic verse in the bible on how justification is not of works but is of faith. Three times, it says both of those truths and Ephesians 2:8. A famous declaration you are saved by grace through faith, and this salvation is not from yourselves. It is God's gift.

Ephesians 2:8. Scripture then, at times, names both repentance and faith as conditions of salvation, but more often, it mentions repentance or faith, especially the latter, as the sole condition. Repentance and faith are distinguishable but

inseparable in God's plan. They are not the same thing but they are correlative they are inseparable in God's working.

They are not two separate conditions but two sides of one coin. So when scripture names only repentance or faith as the correct response to the gospel, it implies the other one. John Murray, in his little popular book, which is so helpful, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* in the applied section, hits the nail right on the head. Quote the question that has been discussed, which is prior faith or repentance.

It is an unnecessary question, and the insistence that one is prior to the other is futile. There is no priority. The faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith, and the repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance. That is worthy of memorization.

The faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith, a repentant faith, and the repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance. John Murray *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* page 113. Systematic theology in its reformed expression has moved on from Murray with a much greater emphasis upon biblical theology, for example, and an improved knowledge of historical theology, but his works are still valuable, solid, and helpful, a great foundation upon which to build.

Repentance: a further distinction is necessary when discussing both faith and repentance. Both are ways of speaking of initial salvation, as we have seen, but not only so, both are also ways of describing ongoing salvation. Repentance often speaks of people's turning from sin toward Christ in salvation.

Graciously, God enables sinners to repent and be saved. Acts 11:18, when they heard this, they became silent. Peter is reporting to the apostles about his experience with Cornelius, and they glorify God, saying that God has granted repentance, resulting in life even to the Gentiles.

That was God's object lesson. Acts 11:18 was in the Old Testament, but anyway, they needed to hear it to learn it that way. 2 Timothy 2:24-25 The Lord's servant must not quarrel but must be gentle to everyone.

When my pastor exemplifies that he is not able to teach and is patient, instructing his opponents with gentleness, perhaps God will grant them repentance, leading them to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 2:24-25. Another name for this is evangelical repentance.

Gospel repentance. I just made that up, but that's what the meaning is. In those verses, repentance is God's gift.

Earlier, we cited verses that show that repentance is a human responsibility. The two just cited show repentance is God's gift. Wow, God gave repentance to the Gentiles. The apostles remarked at Peter's astonishing news, and I know it's an unusual context it's Paul teaching Timothy to be patient with people in error trapped in error Patient instruct perhaps God will give them repentance so both of those your repentance is God's gift you with me another name for this is evangelical repentance is God's gift repentance is also human's responsibility Matthew 4:17 Jesus said as we have seen repent because the kingdom of heaven has come near Matthew 4:17 Jesus is exhorting his hearers to repent.

2 Corinthians 7:10 We've been here before. Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. 2 Samuel 7:10 Is sorrow over sin a good sign? Yes, is it a sure sign of conversion? No, it could just be self-pity. It could even be a sorrow, a real genuine sorrow for sin without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is initial and saving evangelical. It is also ongoing and sanctifying, so we're distinguishing between initial saving turning from sin, so-called evangelical repentance. I think the reformers might have come up with that expression and ongoing repentance as part of the Christian life. We're distinguishing between somebody repenting and coming, you know, Jesus and believers as part of the liturgy and worship of God publicly and privately repenting of their sins, confessing their sins every Sunday.

Daily repentance, even more often than Sunday, is a normal part of the Christian life and a fruit of initial repentance. Christian repentance is another name for it is repeatedly turning from sins to God out of gratitude to Jesus and a desire to further God's glory. Christian repentance ongoing repentance is repeatedly time and again turning from sins to God out of gratitude to Jesus and a desire to glorify God. Repentance is a way of life as Christians walk in the spirit and battle sin each day. Sometimes, believers stumble but then repent to walk rightly.

This process is lifelong, sorry. It involves saying yes to God and righteousness and no to sinful thoughts, speech, and actions again and again, as Titus reminds us in his letter. I don't have a passage written down, but it just reminded me of that.

It is dangerous to do this kind of thing. Titus 2, whoops, I thought I had her. Titus 2:11 for the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live upright, to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in the present age waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

What I'm looking for is saying no to sin and saying yes to righteousness. I don't think I made that up in Titus, but I'm going to keep going; I'm sorry. To the church at Laodicea, Revelation 3:19 and 20, Jesus has words of rebuke and encouragement as he does for each of the churches, quote, as many as I love I rebuke and discipline.

We're in Hebrews 12; every son God receives, he disciplines. So be zealous and repent see I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens, I will come into him and eat with him, and he with me.

In this context, it is not a gospel invitation. Could it be used out of context for the gospel? Yes. Is it a great idea? Probably not.

In its context, he's calling believers to repent and return to sweet fellowship with him. The concept of Christian repentance occurs in scripture often without the words repent. James Barr, in his famous book *Biblical Words and Their Meaning*, Barr is no guide for our faith in his own beliefs, but he's a brilliant scholar.

So, we benefit from his writings, told us not to commit the word concept fallacy. In this case, it would be to say you must have the word repent or the word repentance to have that concept wrong. That word, that concept could be expressed in many ways as, in fact, scripture does.

The concept of Christian or ongoing Christian life repentance occurs often in scripture without those catchwords. Ephesians 4:20 to 24, that is not how you came to know Christ, assuming you heard about him and were taught by him as the truth is in Jesus. To take off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires, to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, the one created to God's according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

The imagery is a change of clothes; taking off the old ways is repentance, and putting on the new ways is obedience to God. See also Romans 6:15 to 23, and we're not going to turn to all these places. Colossians 3:5 to 10, Hebrews 3:12 to 15, 1 Peter 2:1 to 3, 1 John 1:8 to 10.

One more time for those who want to write these down. See also for the concept of repentance without the words repent or repentance. Romans 6:15 to 23, Colossians 3:5 to 10, Hebrews 3:12 to 15, 1 Peter 2:1 to 3, 1 John 1:8 to 10.

Faith is believing in Christ, trusting him as Savior, and owning him as Lord. The Bible teaches that faith is necessary for salvation. Indeed, according to Hebrews 12:11 6 Hebrews 11 6, without faith, it is impossible to please God since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Salvation comes only by faith in Christ, as every part of the New Testament bears witness. John 14:6, Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 4:12 is only one name given under heaven among human beings by which we must be saved. That is the name of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 and 10, Paul quotes the Old Testament message that anyone who calls, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, and he applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved. Generic faith in God is not saved in the New Testament. Specific faith in Christ saves.

James 2:1, the one time beside the first verse of James that James mentions Jesus, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, along with partiality. You could translate our glorious Lord Jesus Christ or Jesus Christ the Lord of glory. Either one is a divine title for the Son of God.

Revelation 14:12, all these places tell us that one must believe in Jesus to be saved. Revelation 14:12. Here is a call for the endurance of the saints.

Immediately following a strong passage concerning hell or eternal condemnation. Wow. Here's a call for the endurance of the saints.

Those who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus. Actually, that's speaking of perseverance in faith in Christ, not only confessing him once and for all but continuing to believe in the context of revelation, even when suffering persecution. The scriptures depict faith in a variety of ways.

There are many Old Testament descriptions of faith, including believing the Lord. Genesis 15:6, Abraham believed in God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, taking refuge in God. Psalm 5:11, trusting him.

Psalm 9:10, relying on God. Psalm 21:7, waiting for God. Psalm 27:14, putting hope in him.

Psalm 42:5, 42:11, and more. What's going on here? Are these totally different things? No, no. We can have a big circle that speaks of believing in faith or trusting God.

And all these are ways of expressing that. Why this? For one thing, it shows the beauty of the Old Testament scriptures when using vocabulary variety like that. And for another meaning is some expressions in context get through to some better than other expressions in other contexts like that.

Even in doing these lectures concerning information, I thought for 40 years, I had learned things because I hadn't looked at them quite that way before. Boy, that even makes better sense than I realized or wow, that is so clear. That scripture is so beautiful.

I can explain it better now. I'm not joking. That happened during these hours together, doing these lectures.

So, God is gracious to his people, and he explains the gospel, in this case, the necessity of faith, in a multiplicity of ways to meet our needs. It is the same for the New Testament. There are many different ways of talking about faith.

The gospel of John alone speaks of faith predominantly as believing, 99 or 100 times depending upon a textual variant, that's a lot of times, but also as believing in Jesus. Just believe, okay? Believing in Christ. Believing in Jesus' name, John 1:12. Believing in him, John 3:16. Believing his word, 4:50. Receiving Christ, John 1:12. It doesn't mean something different than believing in him.

Accepting his testimony, John 3:33. Coming to him, John 6:35. Coming to him is defined in John 6:35, where Jesus contrasts, that's the wrong word, shows as synonymous, coming to him and believing in him. I'm the bread of life. Excuse me.

I'm the bread of life, Jesus said. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. And whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

In the verses that follow, sometimes it mentions belief, but it also says it comes to me. All the Father has given me will come to me. Everyone who has come to me, I will not cast out like that.

It means believing in Jesus. It's a way of speaking of faith in Christ, saving faith in Christ. As a matter of fact, the common use of abide or remain or continue, the verb *meno* in John 15:4-7, is another way of talking about faith in Christ in a continuing way that time.

Traditional moves now more towards systematics, and a traditional post-reformational analysis of faith is helpful. Faith includes *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*. *Notitia* means knowledge.

Faith involves knowledge. In order to believe, a certain amount of knowledge is necessary. One must hear the gospel message.

Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing and hearing the word about Christ. Including in that message is one's need for salvation, the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection, or minimally, at least his death, and the need for saving faith. That's knowledge, *notitia*.

Assensus means, as it sounds, assent. One must agree with the facts of the gospel to be saved. There are professors of the New Testament who have memorized the New Testament in Greek, who believe very little of it, or maybe none.

The most influential 20th-century New Testament scholar, Rudolf Bultmann, was a genius. He had memorized the text like that. He denied every major doctrine except the existence of God.

Oh, Jesus was a man, and he died, but he wasn't raised. He's not coming again. There's no heaven and hell, on and on and on.

Faith, not only in saving faith, not only involves knowledge but assent. Knowledge of the facts is necessary but insufficient. One must accept them as God's truth.

Fiducia means trust, like fiduciary. Fiducia means trust. Even agreeing with the facts of the gospel is insufficient.

Martin Luther said I knew the facts. I agreed with them. But he was not saved until he rested in Jesus, as my pastor likes to say, as he personally trusted Christ as his Lord and Savior.

One must personally trust Christ as Lord and Savior, which I just said, to be saved. Once more, I have a little bit of anxiety here. We should keep in mind these are not three steps to saving faith but three aspects of saving faith.

What's with you in the steps, Peterson? I am nervous about the four steps to eternal life. Repent, receive, believe. No, no.

That is not the way the gospel is presented. I'm afraid returning salvation to human work is not right. Is there not such a thing as easy believism? Sure, there is.

And so we explain the gospel carefully. A person's need to sincerely believe. And we don't sugarcoat the gospel and make it just asking Jesus to come into your heart without any other explanation.

Not a good idea. But neither do we give the seven steps to, oh my word, it irritates me. These are not steps, and they never were intended to be.

They're ways of analyzing what a full-orbed faith means. Are they necessary in presenting the gospel? No. But surely you give the facts and you encourage people to trust Christ.

And that way assent is implied. Knowledge, assent, trust. Notitia, assensus, fiducia.

My Latin has an Italian tinge because I learned medieval theology in doctoral studies from a Roman Catholic monk with a string of degrees an arm long from Rome, including a PhD. He said that when they got together for their classes, the students came from many countries and had to teach in Latin. But it was in Italy, so it was Italian, Latin, and I'll stop with that business.

We underscore the need to extol Christ in his saving work as the object of saving faith. The only basis for salvation is Jesus crucified in the place of sinners. John Stott is emphatic in his wonderful book, many regarded as his greatest work, *The Cross of Christ*, pages 202 to 203.

Stott said that substitution is not a theory of atonement, nor is it even an additional image to take its place as an option alongside the other images. It is rather the essence of each image and the heart of the atonement itself. This is important, to extol Christ as the object, the sole object of saving faith.

This is important because faith is only as good as its object. Great faith in unworthy objects is not only misplaced but sometimes tragic. Think of the Jonestown Massacre of 1978, when hundreds of people, it makes me angry, poor people, and minorities, just makes me angry.

I hate bad theology in that way because it hurts people. My goodness, it sends people to hell. I don't hate purveyors of it, but I hate their message.

Hundreds of people committed mass suicide at the direction of cult leader Jim Jones in Guyana. Sadly, those people had great faith in Jones, and their misplaced faith cost them their lives. Little children drank the concoction, the poison.

Luther correctly said Luther is such a character. I know he had a potty mouth, and I know he exaggerates, but boy, his stuff is so memorable. He said a little faith in Jesus saves because of who Jesus is and what he has done.

Great faith in unworthy objects does not save. A little faith we're not recommending only a little faith, but I get his point. The point is Jesus is the object of saving faith.

Paul is our trustworthy guide, Romans 10:17. Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. I've got to make sure we cover a topic here that I don't believe I have expressly written down.

Previously, we distinguished initial evangelical repentance from ongoing repentance in Christians' lives. Evangelical repentance, Christian repentance, I like to call it. Similarly, we distinguish initial saving faith from ongoing faith.

When we cited passages presenting faith as the sole condition of salvation, John 3:16, Romans 1:16, and 17, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2: 8, John 3: 16, Romans 1:16, 17, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2:8, we stress the importance of initial saving faith. Now, we affirm that faith is a key part of the ongoing lives of Christians as well. Faith is initial and saving, and it is lifelong.

It's initial and saving, and it is lifelong. For we aren't merely saved by faith once and for all, we also live by faith every day of our lives. We're saved by initial faith.

We live by ongoing faith or Christian faith, I suppose we could call it. 2 Corinthians 5, 6, and 7, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. He's contemplating being alive and being separated from Christ's immediate presence in heaven, and he's contemplating being absent from the body, dying, and present with the Lord in our immaterial part, our soul or spirit.

We're always confident and know that whether we are at home in the body or away in the body, while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. Let's try that one more time. We are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:6, and 7, Paul uses the common Old Testament image. It's a universal human image of walking as a metaphor for living, going step by step with God.

We can't see him. 1 Peter 1 says it twice. We don't see him, but we rejoice in him, full of glory.

Though you don't see him now, you love him, Peter says. That's true, but we don't see him. That is, we walk by faith.

The Christian life is lived by faith, not by sight in the glorified Savior. Or how about Galatians 2:20? I've been crucified with Christ, union with Christ, participating in his death, and I no longer live. The meaning is by myself, but Christ lives in me.

The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. If you were to memorize only 12 verses, that might be one of them. Oh my, the warmth, the evangelicalism of it, the blessing, the encouragement to live by faith.

Galatians 2:20. I've been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Even as repentance is initial and lifelong, so faith is initial and saving, and it is lifelong Christian faith as well. Second Thessalonians 1, 3. We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, since your faith is flourishing, and the love each one of you has for one another is increasing. Your faith is flourishing.

2 Thessalonians 1:3. Like repentance, faith is both the gift of God and the responsibility of human beings. Do I see patterns here? Sure, you are. Sure, you are.

It's beautiful. The Bible's teaching in this regard is symmetrical. It's clear.

It's straightforward and helpful. I'm never criticizing the Bible, but every doctrine is not this way because we don't have everything we might like to have, and sometimes we have to tentatively put things together, but we have a pretty good picture in this area. Repentance is God's gift.

Remembering not to commit the word-concept fallacy. I'm sorry. Yes, repentance is God's gift.

Faith is also God's gift. We don't always have the word faith, but we have the concept. Acts 13:48.

When the Gentiles heard that Paul and Barnabas had turned from the Jews to preaching to the Gentiles, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. God's appointment to eternal life, his actually eternal election of them resulted in their faith in Christ as he was presented in the gospel. Acts 13:48.

In that sense, God gives the gift of faith. John 6, 35 and 44. I'm the bread of life, Jesus told them; no one who comes to me, that means believes in me as we saw, will ever go hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.

Yeah, that's where we saw it right there. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day. Once again, coming to Jesus is synonymous with believing in Jesus.

John 6, 35. No one can come to me, and no one can believe in me unless the Father who sent me draws him. Paul doesn't use the word, John doesn't use the word calling the way Paul does, but the concepts overlap.

John's drawing is akin to Pauline calling. No one can come to me, can believe in me unless the Father who sent me draws him, calls him. That is, God gives the gift of faith in the sense that those drawn by God, those called by God, come, they believe.

God is good to sinners, giving us all that we need. Aha, so it's all of God, and we have nothing to do, right? Wrong. Just like repentance is both God's gift and our responsibility, it is the same with faith.

Faith is God's gift, but it's also human beings' responsibility. Many New Testament texts bear this out. Matthew 8:26.

Jesus said to them, why are you afraid, you of little faith? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. Matthew 8:26. John 8:24.

I told you, you will die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins. John 8:24. Jesus to his Jewish opponents.

Boy, they're after him. Oh, my word. We know who our Father is, they say.

Oh, my goodness. Bultmann was wrong. First-century folk people, the dumb people in the farmlands, understood that virgin births don't happen every day.

The myth of the No, it's not a myth. It was a miracle, and the people didn't believe it. You kidding me? No.

I know how Mary got pregnant, and the Jewish leaders threw it in Jesus' face. Mary put up with a lot in that regard. I suppose Joseph, too.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. You and your household, Acts 16:31. Romans 10:2-4.

Since the Israelites are ignorant of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Romans 10:2-4.

What should we say to these wonderful truths? Believers respond with gratitude to God for his good gifts of saving faith and evangelical repentance. We thank him for converting us, for turning us from sin to Christ, as he is offered in the gospel. We look to him for enabling grace to strengthen us to live a life of repentance and faith.

We also look to share the good news with others so that they can know Jesus and the new way of life he offers. Global church leaders captured this well, penning this in the Lausanne Covenant, online at www.lausanne.org. Content slash covenant slash, just go to Lausanne Covenant and you can get it.

L-A-U-S-A-N-N-E. Quote: we, members of the church of Jesus Christ from more than 150 nations praise God for his great salvation. We believe the gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission, to proclaim it to all humankind, and to make disciples of every nation.

We affirm that there's only one savior and only one gospel. We recognize that everyone has some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature, but we deny that this can save us, for people suppress the truth by their unrighteousness. Romans 1, a quote.

We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism to combining religions and dialogue, which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Rather, proclaiming Jesus as the savior of the world means proclaiming God's love for a world of sinners and inviting everyone to respond to him as savior and lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Wow, that is so wonderful.

Praise the lord. Oh, I know I'll say good people. I can't evaluate how evangelical they are that say, oh no, they'll never hear about Jesus there, so there must be other ways of them.

I'm sorry, people from 150 nations over the whole world believe the bible and produce the covenant. John started a real point of leadership there with his clear thinking and writing, his sound theology, and his humility to produce statements like that. But it was not only him, and there was a consensus on those things.

A couple of points that we need to think about: repentance is God's gift. Repentance is our responsibility.

So, how does that impact our preaching gospel? Oh, it impacts it very much. When we preach the gospel, we're not trusting people's free will to choose God. We're trusting God to work by the holy spirit to give them the gift of faith and repentance.

Is that the gospel? No, the gospel is believe. The gospel is repent. And we trust the lord to work through his word as he will in the lives of the hearers.

So, in that way, my reformed theology stimulates evangelism because God has his people out there and he will use his word to bring his people to himself. Oh, sometimes he surprises us, and we all probably know people who passed away, and we said she was such a lovely person and such a good person in many ways. I'm so sad she never believed in Jesus even though she heard the gospel.

And other times, we'll say, if we're honest, my goodness, the lord saved that guy. What a rascal he was. Oh, what a sinner.

God has a sense of humor, and God surprises us, and he is holy and just. And no, we do not understand everything about the lord and his ways. There is an issue in concerning conversion, repentance, and faith as it affects the world's population.

It is an issue today. Liberal theologies are pluralistic. All theologies and all philosophies lead to God.

Sometimes, they make exceptions for horrendous cults. Horrendous cults that abuse people. Anyway, that's pluralism.

All roads lead to God. Evangelicals, sadly, in my estimation, nevertheless truthfully disagree. They unitedly reject universalism, the view everyone's saved, and they unitedly reject pluralism, all religions lead to God, but they disagree concerning, they agree too that Jesus' death and resurrection is the only way to God, but they disagree concerning whether everyone needs to hear the gospel to be saved.

This is a distinction. Pluralism, all roads lead to God. Inclusivism, Jesus is the only savior, but you can be saved without hearing the gospel.

Exclusivism, I don't know where these terms came from, but give a dog a bad name, and you get him licked. Exclusivism or even worse, restrictivism, well that sounds lovely, teaches you not only is Jesus the only savior, but you must believe in him to be saved. Before I forget and explain further, Christopher Morgan, Dean of the School of Christian Ministries at California Baptist University, and I co-edited a book; really, it was heavy on our hearts.

Faith comes by hearing a response to inclusivism. We treat our believing inclusivist brothers and sisters, and that's what they are: fellow believers. We treat them well, we quote from their writings, we present their five main arguments, acknowledging not every one of them uses all those arguments, and some are better than others, and we respond to them, not just we, we have experts to do these things, experts in those different areas, we have positive presentations of the gospel and so forth and studies along those lines. Faith comes by hearing a response to inclusivism.

InterVarsity Press, it was easy to get a contract for that book because as I spoke to my editor at that time at InterVarsity, Andy Lepoe, I said, Andy, you have a number of good books on inclusivism; I think it might be time you have one on exclusivism. Yes, for their sake, they weren't endorsing the other, but they wanted to have both sides presented so it was easy. Anyway, again, inclusivists and exclusivists are united in rejecting pluralism, and that's important, okay? That's another gospel, that's no gospel, right? And universalism, the view that all will be saved.

They also agree that Jesus, death, and resurrection are necessary for salvation, and no one will ever be saved without Jesus, death, and resurrection. However, so they agree on ontology. Ontologically, Jesus needed to die and rise to save anybody, but they disagreed on epistemology and what you need to know to be saved.

Epistemologically, inclusivists say, and they do this in different ways, but generally, you can be saved by seeking God through general revelation. Some say you can, some say you can't, all right? But they go to Romans 1, and they say, Romans 1 does not say you can't be saved that way. Well, I don't know how close you have to get to say that.

It certainly does not say you can be saved that way, and it says those who receive God's revelation in creation are without excuse. Romans 10 says faith comes by hearing in Christ. So, that is not a good argument to me, but nevertheless, they say that. They also say, and again, the better evangelical inclusivists do not use this argument, all right? Because it smacks of pluralism, but it's not pluralism.

It's another form of inclusivism. They say that God is merciful and loving and so forth and desires for everybody to be saved, which is actually true, but it does not spin out this way in scripture, and again, many inclusivists even reject this view. This is like world religions inclusivism.

Any person who sincerely seeks God within the confines of Hinduism, Buddhism, Buddhism, or Islam, to name the big three, God will apply to them the death and resurrection of Jesus without their knowing it. Morgan and I firmly, yet respectfully, firmly disagree with that business, as do many inclusivists. We also disagree with that general revelation argument and the others that are presented.

We simply disagree. We do not just simply disagree; we strongly disagree based upon the teaching of holy scripture. You say this puts a tremendous burden on the church to get the gospel everywhere.

Amen. After co-editing this book, I carefully checked out Transworld Radio and began token monthly support because they beam the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true gospel, to every corner of the globe, to people who are not allowed to hear the gospel officially by their governments and so forth. And they even send out radios, and whole tribes of people gather together, and whole groups of people gather in the basement of a home.

It's exciting. Transworld Radio, some of my friends say, well, it's not reformed. Well, it preaches the true gospel.

It does it around the world. And what's it called? Some programs are designed for women. Is it Rachel's Children? Something like that.

Around the world, women are abused. All right? Astonishingly abused in some contexts. Women have come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior through the gospel in the box, the radio, and the ministry of Transworld Radio.

So, put me down as an unrepentant exclusivist. People need to hear the gospel of Jesus to be saved. Yes, ontologically, he's the only Savior, but epistemologically, can God reveal himself somewhere directly in an island without? Of course, he could.

But as Jim Packer says, said, we have no right to expect that based upon the Bible's teaching in any particular case. So, we act like this, as if they need to hear the gospel, because to the best of our knowledge, they do. In our next lecture, we will take up the important doctrine of justification.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session number 11, Conversion.