

Galatians 1 (Part 2): 6-10 • No Other Gospel

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Galatians chapter 1. Before we actually get into the text of what we're going to be looking at here today, I wanted to define something a little for you because it, I wanted— the reason I wanted to define this is because Paul talks about it a lot in this letter and that is the gospel. And we've had 2,000 years to muck up, the definition of the gospel.

You know, I mean, we, different groups have risen up and they've said, Here's the gospel and it's like different from what the Bible lays out as the gospel. And so, when Paul talks about the gospel, it's important for you to know what he means, okay? Because that is, it's the crux of his argument, if you will.

So I'm going to put it up on the screen for you. The gospel, which by the way, just means simply “good news.”

The Gospel

(Means: “Good News”)

The message that Jesus paid the penalty of our sin when He gave His life on the cross, and that all we need to do to have eternal life is to believe and trust that His sacrifice was enough.

If someone were to ask you, what is it? It is the message that Jesus paid the penalty of our sins when He gave His life on the cross and that all we need to do to have eternal life is to believe and trust that His sacrifice was enough.

That's the gospel. That is the essence of the gospel. It's very, it's really very simple. In fact, a child can know and understand what the gospel is. They can even repeat it to you. So, with that definition, here we go. We're going to look at verses 6 through 10 here this morning. So, look on as I read these verses. It says,

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ⁷ not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel

of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹ As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Let's stop there. Let's pray.

Lord, as always, we come humbly before Your throne as we dig into your Word, because we know that apart from the work of Your Holy Spirit, these are just words on a page. But Lord, we believe that Your Word is alive, and as Your Holy Spirit uses that Word in our hearts, Lord, You can do a work of instruction and grace in us that allows us to benefit in untold ways by just yielding to Your heart, to Your voice, to Your will.

That's what we want to do this morning. And I pray that You would apply this study today to every heart and to every mind according to where each person is with You. Guide and direct us through this time. We ask it in the Name of Jesus Christ, amen. Amen.

Paul diverts a little bit from his usual way of doing things. In all of Paul's letters, he starts off with this greeting and we covered the first five verses last week, which was the greeting Paul did here with the Galatians. But, after giving his usual greeting, he would end that greeting by giving them a prayer or a praise, or maybe a saying thanks.

Like, I thank my God because of you, because you guys are so incredibly awesome or whatever. But he doesn't do that here with the Galatians. He skips over all of that. He goes right to the urgency of his subject matter. And that would speak to you and I of just how important this is, and just how urgent this message is.

And verse 6 wastes no time spelling out the urgency of his exhortation to them. He says in that verse, if you'll look with me again, *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.*

And when we look at the phraseology of this verse, we realize that we're talking about big, rotten, nasty stuff. We're not talking about minor differences of

opinion. We're not talking about maybe the minor differences that might be between Calvary Chapel and the Nazarene church down the street. Those are minor. We're talking about life and death issues, and you can see it by these two key phrases. One of them is "*deserting Him who called you,*" and "*a different gospel.*"

I mean, think about that. When you— *deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ.* Wow! Notice Who's being deserted. These people aren't deserting one another. They're not deserting the apostle Paul. It says, you are *deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ.*

They are deserting God because they are opening their hearts to a different gospel; one other than the gospel Paul brought when he started those churches in the region of Galatia. And this is an incredibly serious charge. I mean, when somebody says— if somebody were to say to you, "Dude, you're deserting God."

You'd kind of like, "What in the— what do you mean? What do you mean, deserting God? Talk to me." That's a serious thing to say to somebody. Right?

Well, so let's remember what's going on here. Paul had brought the gospel that we put up on the screen a moment ago, that simple gospel; he brought it to this region of Galatia, and he had shared it. And these people had gotten saved and the church had started there, and they were moving along.

But then we know that some Jews from Jerusalem followed up Paul's missionary journeys; came to that region of Galatia, and began to tell people that in addition to believing in Jesus, they must also submit to the rite of circumcision, as God commanded the Jews; and they must also follow or keep the Law of Moses. And that's what you have to do in order to be saved.

And so, Paul says here, I'm astonished how quickly you're deserting God. Now, this might bring up a question in somebody's mind. Wait a minute. Didn't God give circumcision? I mean, wasn't it God who told the Jews to do that? And wasn't it God who gave the Law through Moses and told them to keep it?

So how can you say that by adding those things to the gospel, you're deserting God? I mean, God gave those things in the first place. How in the world is that deserting God?

Well, the answer comes back to that definition of the gospel that we put up at the very beginning. Let's put it up again. What is the gospel?

The Gospel

(Means: “Good News”)

The message that Jesus paid the penalty of our sin when He gave His life on the cross, and that all we need to do to have eternal life is to believe and trust that His sacrifice was enough.

It is the message that Jesus paid the penalty of our sin through His death on the cross and that what is needed now for us to have eternal life, what is required of you and I, is to believe and to trust that His sacrifice was sufficient. Right? Enough. All by itself. Right?

Here's the deal. Yes, God gave circumcision. Yes, God gave the law. But those things were never meant to be a means of obtaining eternal life. You know, we've gone through the Old Testament. We've studied through those books of the Bible. We've looked there. And God doesn't say to the Jews, Keep the law and you'll go to Heaven. He doesn't say that. He doesn't promise them Heaven.

You know, the Jews came to that conclusion all by themselves. But God never said that. He said keep the law, and I'll bless you in the land. Right? The belief that the law can somehow save you, or mingling it with the gospel, is a good thing. It belies the whole purpose of the law.

Why did God give the law? Well, Paul explains, let me show you this from Romans chapter 3, verse 20.

Romans 3:20 (ESV)

For by works of the Law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the Law comes knowledge of sin.

He says, first of all, “...*by works of the Law, no human being will be justified. Right? In God's sight. Alright? Let's just get that out there. By keeping the law, by doing works of the law, no human being is going to ever be justified in God's sight. Because he says, since through the Law comes knowledge of sin.*

You see, the purpose of the law was to cause you and I to become aware of our sin. That was the purpose; one of the reasons God gave the law was so that we would look at ourselves and go, I can't do this. At least not perfectly. Right? I can't keep this enough to go to Heaven.

God never gave it to them to go to Heaven in the first place. But the point is, I look at the law and I see my sin. It makes me aware of my sin. Right? That's what the law does. And whenever you give the Law to somebody, Paul tells us it actually awakens sin. Okay?

Paul uses that kind of a picture in the New Testament. He says when I heard the law, sin sprang to life (Romans 7:9), and suddenly I wanted to do all those things I was told you can't do.

I've told you guys before, but many years ago, we had a guy in our fellowship who came up and admitted to me that when he was like in like, the sixth grade or something like that, they had a video in school about don't do drugs. And he'd never, ever tried drugs and that day he went out and got some drugs and tried it. That day! Just from hearing this video going, don't do drugs.

That's what the law does. It's like this: Don't do that. And what does it do? It awakens. Oh, interesting; I think I have to give that a shot. It's our natural rebellious nature. You can't tell me what to do! In fact, if you tell me not to do that, I'm going to go do it. Aren't we just a piece of work?

But anyway, so Paul says that through the law comes knowledge of sin. So, you see that's what makes this mingling of the gospel and the law so dangerous because it denies the very purpose of the law, which is to make us aware of our sin.

But the law can't do anything to save us from our sin. It can't change our sinful condition. It can just simply measure for you and I just how really rotten we are. Right? And we've many times likened it to the bathroom scale. Right? That bathroom scale cannot cause you to lose weight. Right? You, if you get on your scale and you go, Oh mercy. And then you and you come back a day later, and you get on that scale, it's going to tell you the same thing or worse, but 24 hours will have done nothing to help you. Right?

It'll simply tell you. It'll simply tell you, this is what you need to do, and this is how far away you are from where you want to be. Right? Isn't that what your bathroom scale tells you? That's what mine tells me. But it can't help me. The law can't help us change. The law can't make us righteous. It simply tells us how unrighteous we are.

So, you see, this mingling then of the gospel and the law is like, Wait; that's craziness. Right? And what Paul says is, it essentially creates a different gospel.

That's the next phrase that he uses here that is very strong language. *A different gospel* there at the end of verse 6. In other words, it's a distortion.

He'll actually talk about that here as he goes on. But the reason it's so important for you and I to read these words by the apostle Paul today is because of the error of the Galatians. It's still going on today. It hasn't stopped. We've just come up with new things to add to the gospel.

We don't go around telling people today you've got to be circumcised. Oh, but this keeping the law thing— I mean, some places maybe they do the circumcision thing but this “elements of keeping the law” and all these other things. Oh, we've done that. We are doing that. Not we, as “in here,” [meaning within CCO] but in other sectors of Christianity, there are groups that are adding to the gospel with a works-based kind of a program.

And Paul says that's not any really gospel at all. Because remember, gospel means good news. Do you guys understand why we call it good news? It's because we can have assurance. That's the good news part. You can know today, right now, that your sins are forgiven. Without any doubt, you can know it.

But when you add an element of a works-based program, that goes out the window. You introduce doubt now into the equation, and you can't know for sure. Right? The reason we are confident of our salvation is because it has nothing to do with me!

It's all His doing. He worked it out. God sent His Son to die on the cross bearing my penalty. He did it. And when He finished doing it, He declared that He was finished doing it.

It is finished! (John 19:30)

Good grief. Why don't we get that? Why do we have a hard time understanding those three words? *It is finished.*

Oh, wait, you have to add this, though. See, that's what we've done. We've added, we decided, oh well, okay, hold the phone here a little. When He said *It is finished*, He didn't mean it was finished-finished.

You've still got to be baptized. Right? If you're not baptized in water, you're not saved. That's what some people are saying. Aren't they? Some of you have come out of churches where they told you that very thing. See, if you're not

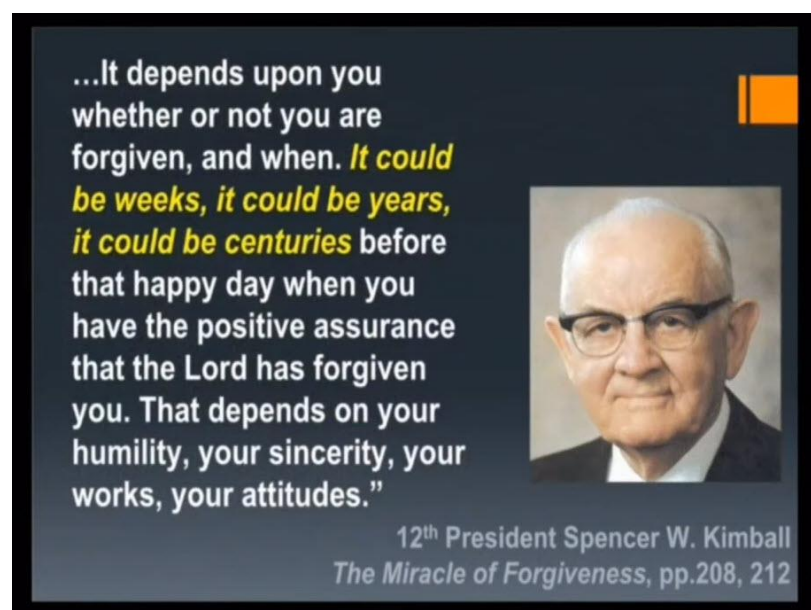
baptized, you.... Finished? Please understand, there are these things you still need to do— beyond putting your faith in Christ.

Guess what? That's not good news. Because see, now something of your salvation depends upon you. Something of the work that needs to be done depends on you. And if any of it rests on our shoulders, it removes the element of assurance, and the element of confidence. Because we end up with that nagging question of whether or not we really, truly measured up and did it right.

Because inevitably somebody's going to come along and say, Well, it's not just being baptized, it's being baptized with this formula [Pastor Paul pretends to hold a contract]. Oh, and by the way, it has to happen in OUR church, or it's not effective. I've had people tell me that, so I'm not making this stuff up.

You see, you have to be baptized in the name of Jesus. None of this Father, Son, and Holy Spirit junk. It's the Name of— listen, I'll tell you. Right? And boy, and they're just, this is the formula, and if you don't follow the formula, ugh, be careful here. We know the formula. These other people don't. This is the kind of stuff that's being propagated and has been propagated within the body of Christ, and we're adding all these things.

Do you guys remember here just a number of weeks ago, we had Eric Johnson here from of the Mormonism Institute. He talked about, in part of his talk, the issue of salvation and the issue particularly of assurance, and I stole one of his slides. Here's one that he showed you. This is a quote from the 12th President of the Mormon Church, Spencer Kimball, from the book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. He cites the pages and everything, and here's what he says,



...It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. **It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries** before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes."

12th President Spencer W. Kimball
The Miracle of Forgiveness, pp.208, 212

“It depends upon you whether or not you are forgiven, and when. It could be weeks, it could be years, it could be centuries, (I’m not sure how long he expects us to live, but he says) before that happy day when you have the positive assurance that the Lord has forgiven you. That depends on your humility, your sincerity, your works, your attitudes.” Yeah.

Hey listen, I'm not here to throw stones, I'm just here to tell you what is being said. And within the context of Mormonism, there is no assurance. This is what they're saying. There may come a day, we don't know when you'll have that assurance of your forgiveness, but who knows, because it depends on you.

Well, if it depends on you, you'll never have that assurance because you'll never know. Because you're not the Judge. God's the Judge. And in some of these groups, he's being a little vague about what needs to be accomplished. Right? And so, it ends up not being good news.

That's what Paul says. He says you guys have embraced another gospel if there even is another gospel. That's what he says in verse 7. Because, essentially, there isn't a gospel. Look what he goes on in verse 7 to call it. He says, *but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.*

He calls it a distortion. By the way, if you have a New King James on your lap today, your word is *perversion*. And that's a good word. We think of perversion as always being connected to something sexual. But it's not. Anything that you mix with something else to create something other than what was originally intended is a perversion.

That's the definition of that word. And that's why in the New King James Bible that word is very accurate. He says, there are people who have come among you who are attempting to *pervert the gospel of Christ*. And it's not just Mormonism. It's not just Mormonism that's distorting and perverting the gospel of salvation as it is given to us in the Bible.

There, listen, anything from any group— and as I’ve said, in 2,000 years we've seen a lot of stuff come down the pike. You know from, even from Christian groups that have just got— just begun to veer off. And then pretty soon you end up with a completely different gospel.

You know, some of you guys, and again, I am not here to throw stones, I'm not here to offend people. But I am here to tell you the truth. Some of you guys have come out of Roman Catholicism. People, Roman Catholicism preaches a different gospel. It's not the gospel Paul preached. It has added many things. It

has added confession to a priest. It has added doing penance. And if you don't get that penance taken care of before you die, you might end up in purgatory where you have to work off those sins there.

The Bible knows nothing of purgatory. The Bible knows nothing of working off sins for your salvation. The Bible says *It is finished*. Right? It is completed. But you see, in Roman Catholicism, these things have been added. And there's all kinds of other things, you know. And it doesn't have to be Roman Catholicism.

Like I said, any Christian group, any group, that just begins to veer off. I've already made reference to the necessity of water baptism by many: You must be baptized in water or you're not going to Heaven. And then that has created all these weird teachings and doctrines from that.

When you begin to demand something, well then you've got to make it practical. You know we, by the way, we call that doctrine "Baptismal Regeneration." It's the belief that if you're not baptized, you can't be regenerated or born again. Well, when you believe that, then pretty soon you come up with all these issues, these problems.

Wait a minute, what if somebody's on his deathbed and we can't dunk him? Well, we've got to come up with an alternative, you see, if baptism is required. That's how sprinkle baptism got started. Because it wasn't practical to dunk people if they had a confession on their deathbed of Christ. We can't pull them out of bed. You know, it's just not possible.

Oh, wait, we got this thing dialed in: Sprinkling is just fine. You see, that's where these things come from. Because we create doctrines that create doctrines. That create loopholes. That create doctrines. You see what I'm saying? Because we've gotten away from the simple gospel that Jesus is enough. And nothing else is required for your salvation.

So how serious is it? How serious is the issue of these distortions? These, as Paul says in the New King James, "these perversions." Look at verse 8 with me. *But even if we, even if it's us, or an angel from Heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed.*

Or if you have an NIV, your Bible says, *let them be under God's curse!* Make no mistake about it, what Paul is saying is, let them be eternally condemned. In other words, may they spend eternity separated from God in Hell. And that includes *even we*, Paul says. If I start changing my mind about what I brought to

you initially regarding the gospel and how a person is saved, may I be eternally lost.

In fact, he goes on to say, even *if it is an angel from Heaven*, which would be pretty amazing. I have to say, I have never seen an angel from Heaven that I know of. The Bible says that there are angels among us, but we're just not aware of it. Kind of makes you wonder about the person sitting next to you for a moment. But anyway....

If I were to see an angel and vroom, there was this light and glory and booming voice, I would have a tendency to go, okay, I'm going to listen to this. But Paul says if it proclaimed a message that varies from the gospel message given here in the Scripture, let him be eternally lost. Let him be eternally separated from God. Condemned to Hell. That's serious language. And if you didn't get it the first time, he repeats it in verse 9. He says, *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

And that means anybody because we tend to be impressed by certain people. If they have a PhD after their name, or if they have done this or done that; we just— there are things that impress us about people. And Paul says, anybody, it doesn't matter who they are. Maybe they were even preaching the gospel initially, for even a long period of time, but then as they got— as time went on, things just started to change. No! He says, you must reject that. Right? I found a quote from one of my favorite authors. Let me put this on the screen for you. John Stott wrote this in a book.

We're not to be dazzled, as many people are, by the person, gifts or office of teachers in the church. They may come to us with great dignity, authority and scholarship. They may be bishops or archbishops, university professors, or even the pope himself. But if they bring a gospel other than the gospel recorded in the New Testament, they are to be rejected. As Dr. Alan Cole expresses it, “The outward person of the messenger does not validate his message; rather, the nature of the message validates the messenger.”

– John R.W. Stott

He said, *“We're not to be dazzled, as many people are, by the person, the gifts, or the office of teachers in the church.”* He says, *“They may come to us with great dignity, authority, even scholarship. They may be bishops or archbishops, university professors, or even the pope himself. But if they bring a gospel other*

than the gospel recorded in the New Testament, (he says) they are to be rejected.” And then he goes on to quote another man by the name of Alan Cole who said, “The outward person of the messenger does not validate his message, rather, the nature of the message validates the messenger.”

So, it's what they say. It's what they say that validates their message. It's not who they are. Even if it's an angel from Heaven. You got an angel from heaven appear to you? Listen closely, and if what they say doesn't match up with the gospel of Jesus Christ, you are to reject it.

Paul goes on in verse 10. He says, *For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

Now, we don't know the specific accusation that was leveled against Paul that caused him to come out with these two rhetorical questions and this statement, but obviously it was something having to do with the fact that Paul was somehow pandering to his audience, saying what they just simply wanted to hear.

Well, he's saying to them in this verse, so am I doing that now? Am I now trying to just say what you want to hear? Or am I telling you what is true because I fear God and not man?

And why is Paul so strong in his explanation of the gospel and his defense of it? He explains it in the first chapter of Romans. Let me put this on the screen for you. Romans chapter 1 says,

Romans 1:16-17 (NIV1984)

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, and here's why, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, look at this, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

A quote there from Habakkuk chapter 2 (verse 4b). Look what Paul says in that passage. Isn't that a wonderful passage? *I'm not ashamed of the gospel.* In fact, I'm going to defend it. Here's why. *It is the power of God for salvation.*

You mix it with other things, it is no longer the power of God for salvation. You with me? You mix it with something that you have to do. It is now no longer the power of God for salvation. It becomes your power because you've diluted it with something you have to do. You've got to go to church on a certain week, you see, a day of the week. Otherwise, you're not doing it right.

You've got to do this, you've got to do that. We've come up with all these things. But what does Paul say in this? For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed that is by what? What is that righteousness by? *It's by faith.* Isn't that what that passage says? *It's by faith.* It doesn't say it's by works. It doesn't say it's by you doing this, or you doing that. *It's by faith* that you are declared righteous in God's sight. Right? That's the gospel!

And that's the gospel that Paul says we must defend. Here we are in what I believe to be the last days of the last days. And if there was a need to defend this Biblical gospel, to just say, you know what, forget about all this other junk, let's just get down to the Word. Let's get down just to the Scripture. What does the Bible say? What is the gospel? And let's stay there, and let's not deviate from it. Boy, do we need to do that, especially in these last days because Jesus spoke prophetically about this gospel being proclaimed to the whole world. Let me show you what He said. This is a fascinating passage.

Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

He says, *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

You know, but this gospel, that refers to what's right here. Cut out all the other junk. Cut out all the religiosity. Cut out all the traditions of man. Take away everything else that we've said, oh yeah but you've got to add this, take it all away. We're coming back to the gospel, and it is this gospel that will be proclaimed throughout the entire earth before the Lord's coming, and I believe we're seeing a fulfillment of that today.

And you know how? Crazy as it might seem, I think we're seeing it through the Internet. The Internet, which can, by the way, be a great tool of the enemy, make no mistake about it. It is also a tool that God is using in these last days to share the gospel all around the world. We're seeing it.

I've told you guys before, completely apart from trying, we simply started a YouTube channel, and we are nearing 4,000 subscriptions to our YouTube channel, from people from all over the world. We never asked, we never solicited. We were simply putting our videos up there. That's all, and it just started growing, and I get emails every day from people all over the world.

Got a lovely note from a guy from Norway yesterday. Very broken English, sorry if he's watching live, but he did a pretty good job of communicating. Sue got a lovely note from a pastor's wife in South Africa just this weekend saying we want to do your women's Bible studies. Can you send us these study guides, so we can do them? And we're like, yeah!

There's a guy in Canada who wrote me and said we're watching your Acts study for our home Bible study. And there's somebody in Korea who's watching and people from all these other, and what's funny is that they'll say to me quite often, if I ever come to the United States, we want to visit Calvary Chapel, Ontario, and I'm thinking, you're going to be disappointed. They're going to get here and go, what a letdown. Yeah, we have Ore Ida. But they think this is going to be like New York or something. It's a little podunk place. Anyway, this is what God is doing. This is not what we are doing.

You understand? There's a hunger. There's a hunger around the world for people to hear the simple truth of God's Word. Cut out the religiosity. Cut out the churchianity. Cut out all this junk that has been added to the Word of God and to the pure, simple gospel: Jesus is enough. And give it to me straight. Oh, there's a hunger for that and it's beautiful. It really is. It's a lovely thing.

And the Bible says, as we saw in that prophecy by Jesus, this gospel will be proclaimed throughout the entire earth in the last days. And we're seeing it happen. We're a part of it. And it is so exciting.

I'm trying to convey to you a sense of the importance of defending the gospel that we have received through the scriptures and being very, very careful to say no, that's not part of the gospel.

The gospel is simple: Jesus died for your sins. Accept Him and that work, finished work, by faith. There is nothing else that needs to be done except to

receive. And that's not a work. There's no goodness, there's no righteousness that you have to perform in order to be saved. He did all the work, and because He did all the work, we have the assurance. We can know that we know that we know. I am saved. I am forgiven because Jesus died for me. Amen?