"Of Saving Faith" part 1, WCF 14.1.1–2, The Grace of Faith and How It Is Given 2021.03.07 Sabbath School Lesson Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

WCF 14.1

I. The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,(a) is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts;(b) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word:(c) by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.(d)

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(a) Heb. 10:39.
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- (b) II Cor. 4:13; Eph. 1:17, 18, 19; Eph. 2:8.
- (c) Rom. 10:14, 17.
- (d) I Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:11; Luke 17:5; Rom. 1:16, 17.

The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: ³³ partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; ³⁴ for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. ³⁵ Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

³⁷ "For yet a little while,

And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith;

But if anyone draws back,

My soul has no pleasure in him."

³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts

^{2Corinthians 4:1} Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God

deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So then death is working in us, but life in you.

¹³ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. ¹⁵ For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Ephesians 1:15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

Ephesians 2:1-10 And <u>you He made alive</u>, who were <u>dead</u> in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ <u>even when we were dead in trespasses</u>, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

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All right good lord said everybody. We're if you got a sheet off the back, you'll see where now into chapter 14.

And of course the confessions in the back of the solder hymnals if if you want to copy that and they're extra bibles on the table.

Let's start with prayer.

My father in heaven how we thank you that? We who were dead in our sins might come. This morning not only to have fellowship and to have this class but even in the holy assembly to draw near and glory in the heavenly Zion. The Holy of Holies itself that we may come with confidence in Christ.

That we may come by a faith that we had no ability to produce but that you gave us. And so we pray for this and the next couple of weeks as we start studying this faith that you have given us that you would give us understanding that you would increase our faith that your spirit would help us as we study your word by which you give and by which you strengthen faith.

So do that for us now and this time we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So we come to chapter 14 of the confession of saving faith and.

This week, we're hoping just to do the first half of the first paragraph, but I'll read that whole paragraph for you. The grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls. Is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts. And is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the Word.

By which also and by the administration of the sacraments and prayer. It is increase. And strengthened. All right, so notice you start the they start out with the grace of faith.

One important thing that we must always remember is that faith is not a work. God does not take his perfect righteousness and complete obedience to all of his commandments on one side and say well, I'll trade you all of those works for the work of believing in my son.

Now it's right to believe in Jesus and it is an obedience to the gospel it's the right response to the preaching of the gospel to believe in Jesus, but saving faith is not a work that that God says that faith is good enough. When God when God saves us through faith that faith rests in Christ and it's Christ who is good enough it's Christ's obedience that's good enough it's Christ's sacrifice that wipes out the guilt of our sin and so this is an important phrase right at the beginning the grace of faith, it's something that God gives us through which he saves us.

So the grace of faith whereby the elect and we studied that already whereby the elect are enabled to believe we're actually going to consider that in the next in the next clause when we get to is the work of the spirit of Christ in their hearts that we have to be enabled to believe in the first place to the saving of their souls and now.

The first part that we're going to study from Hebrews chapter 10 is on how it is through faith by the instrument of faith that our souls are saved by Jesus Christ. So the you see in the footnote there are the proof texts that they only took verse 39, but we are not of those who draw back to perdition but of those who believe unto the saving of the soul.

So they took verse 39 because that's the place where you have the particular phrase that it is believing that is unto the saving of the soul but that of course comes in a context and we need to study the whole scripture to see the significance of this believing unto the saving of the soul in that context, so let's have.

Into three let's have four readers. All right Jordan, give us verses 19 through 25. Charlie if you'll give us verses 26 to 31.

Asa. Versus 32 through 34.

And Peter versus 35 through 39, please. Hebrews chapter 10.

Here with the true. Having our hearts sprinkle. And our bodies washed. Let us hold fast. En our host. Wendy promises faithful. Let us consider one another in order to stir up love. Not forsaking. Ourselves together. Because the matter of self. But exhorting one another and so much the more that you see today.

Or at least. We have this seed and knowledge of the truth. There are no longer remaining to sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful expectation of judgment inspiring you with nation, which will devour the advantage. Anyone who has rejected Moses's law dies without mercy.

Of how much worse punishment he used to pose will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underput. Countess of blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified in a common thing and insulted the spirit of grace. For we know him who said then Jesus's mind.

I will. And again the Lord would judge people. It is a terrible thing to fall into the land of hands. Being God. But recalled forward days would after you were enlightened. From a heart. Struck sometimes being publicly exposed to coach. To sometimes being partakers with those who were so treated.

If you had compassion on those. Joyfully accepted the thundering of your property since you knew that you yourself had a better possession and inviting them. Therefore did not pass away your confidence, which has great reward for you you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise but you have a little while and he who is coming will come and will not tear you.

Now just shall live by faith and if anyone draws back I soul has no pleasure in you. We are not of those who draw back to perdition but of those who believe to the saving of results. Okay, thank you. So the just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back my soul has no pleasure in him but we are not of those who draw back to perdition but of those who believe to the saving of the soul, so there are several things in this passage that accompany salvation but there is one that is the instrument through which God actually brings us to the salvation of our souls.

Faith and we're going to talk about the nature of faith, especially when we get into the second paragraph of the confession which isn't of this chapter the confession which isn't on your sheets, but faith is described in in various ways here it is a boldness to enter the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus that you have such confidence in who Christ is the God man.

God who God the son who became man to save you to redeem you by his blood. You have so so much confidence and who he is and what he has done that you can approach boldly the presence of the holy God we draw near verse 22 with a true heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience now that's that's important baptism signifies a spiritual reality, but it is the spiritual reality.

That saves so it a true heart and full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies lost with pure water when he's urging them verse 23 really until the end of the chapter let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering and it's in that context that he says in verse 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, this is one of the reasons why so many of us were a lot.

Alarmed when so much of the church so easily stopped assembling together because the assembling together is something that is a necessary consequence of the holding fast the confession of our hope we hold to Christ we exist for him our life, our death is is for him and for his worship and this is what he has what he has called us to do.

This is how he not only glorifies himself and our worship but how he works in us in the midst of that worship during us up and so forth, so it's an essential of clinging to Christ that you gather with his church. And then in in much of the rest of the this passage you see some things that accompany salvation but you can have them and if you don't have faith if you don't have this confidence in Christ this drawing near to God in Christ this certainty of who Jesus is and what he has done and that that has brought you near and cleansed your conscience taken away your guilt and brought you to God if you have these other things but you don't.

Have that faith then you will not be saved in fact it's even worse so he says if for if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth now would don't have time to to get into talking about this if we send willfully and talking about the difference between.

How believers resist their sin and how unbelievers are indulging the the sin that the they commit we talked a lot about that and chapter on sanctification but the what I have that underlined for is especially this after we have received the knowledge of the truth. You are right now as you read your Bible and as you understand the theology that the Bible teaches you receiving knowledge of the truth.

You kids as you memorize your catechism questions every week and encourage us all by the still what's being stored up in your minds you're receiving knowledge of the truth, but it is possible to receive knowledge of the truth and perish. Faith is more than just not knowing right theology so you can know justification that being made right with God is only by God's grace only by believing in Jesus

you can know that that's true you can know that you need that double imputation that Jesus is righteousness would be counted for you and that your your sin would be counted against Christ's death on the cross or his death would be counted against your sin.

For you to be made right with God, you can know a lot of truth. And still not belong to God by a holy spirit given confidence in Jesus and the things that you know about will not be yours. It's kind of like you can read a lot about other people's wealth.

But unless you have it it doesn't do you any good you can't use it. Unless you're a government official and you just get together with a bunch of other government people and write a statement that says it's yours now, then you just take the wealth but faith is more than knowing the truth.

So you can know the truth and if you don't have faith, you'll perish you can even be a church member. Who receives baptism and the supper. And perish. Of how much we're punishment verse 29 to use opposed will he be thought worthy who has trampled the son of God under foot.

Counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified. A common thing. And insulted the spirit of grace. He's talking about those who draw back to perdition there. That there are people who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant now that's not that work of sanctification that work of making the one who who is right with God in Jesus more righteous in thought and and behavior it's talking about being set apart by Jesus's blood as holy in God among God's covenant people that's what happens when you're baptized we don't pour blood on you why.

Because the blood by which you're set apart to God by which he takes the people who are who are in his church and he makes a visible difference between them and the world the blood is in glory coursing through the veins of your redeemer, the blood was shed on cavalry and so he's given us a non-bloody sign but it is still the blood of Jesus Christ.

By which those who are in his visible church and have been marked off from the world. Have been claimed by God, these are mine same when we come and we eat the bread and we drink the cup he says what this cup is the new covenant in my blood now praise.

God, there's no blood in the cup. Yes, you you think trying to get people to to drink the wine that the church used forever until you know, the 1800s is as bad what if we had blood in the cup? I well maybe just because we're fleshly that wouldn't be so hard to get people to do you wouldn't get me to do it.

Unless Jesus had commanded it, but praise God. Jesus is not commanded at why. Because his blood was shed once for all at the cross. And yet when you drink of the cup that he says, this is the new covenant in my blood a cup that belongs to the covenant people.

I'll cut that belongs to his church and not to the world which is why we say you have to have believed in your believed in your heart and confessed with your mouth, you have to have been set apart as a as part of his church. If you are not a member of his church if you are not identifying yourself with this covenant community, then you don't get the covenant cup.

Which is a covenant that is in his blood well you the apostle here is saying you could have you could know the truth you could have good doctrine you could be set apart as holy unto God as a member of his church by the blood of his covenant you've received baptism you receive the supper, you know, what those things mean?

And you might still perish.

Because those things aren't the instrument through which we are made right with God in Jesus Christ the alone instrument of our justification. The the instrument through which our souls are saved is believing and that's why he follows this this. These 15 verses or so by saying therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward, he reminds them of how much Christ was worth to them when they believed and he urges them to keep clinging to that Christ.

Here just you to keep clinging to Christ that you would continue to have this boldness in Jesus this true art and full assurance of faith that your heart would be sprinkled from an evil conscience by the boldness that you have to draw near to God in Jesus, so he says therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

Right just shall live by faith and then that's all the context it's one of the difficult things we've mentioned this before when you have a document like this and you read the grace of faith whereby the elector unable to believe to the saving of their souls you say, okay footnote Hebrews 10:39 he just look at Hebrews 10:39 and says, but we are not those who of those who draw back to petition but of those who believe to the saving of the soul you say.

Does that really prove that well yes in the context of the passage as a whole it really proves that and so they're expecting and we have to do the extra work because our Bible knowledge is as small so yes, it is say it is faith that is the instrument through which our souls are saved now.

Where does this faith come from? The grace of faith means it doesn't come from whom. Doesn't come from us. But it has to come from someone has to come from somewhere. And so let's move on to hearing from scripture that the grace of faith whereby the elector unable to believe unto the saving of their souls is the work of the Spirit of Christ.

In their hearts. So, Let's let's take second Corinthians 4, you'll notice the they gave us just verse 13, which is and since we have the same spirit of faith and if you read that you notice New King James didn't even capitalize spirit there.

But if you have the context going back to verse 1, you may decide that spirit there doesn't just mean you're inward spirit. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what is written I believed and therefore I spoke we also believe in there for speak. So if you just have verse 13, you might be scratching your head and saying is that really say that it's the work of the Spirit of Christ and their hearts.

So, let's study the passage and see that yeah that really really does say that.

So, let's have one reader for verses one through four. Justin. Let's have a reader for verses. Five and six Ms. Emily. Let's have a reader for.

Verses. Seven through ten. Charlie Isaac, will you read for us versus eleven and twelve? And then we need one more for verses 13 through 15. Heather.

's to. Insider. But of our gospel, he did his kids for them at their loss. In whom the God of this world packed winded the minds to them, which will lead not let the light of the poor disgust or Christ who is the image of God to shine unto them.

Hi, it's not ourselves.

For to be safe.

And. Because we have this treasure in her vessels. About the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us but we are hard-pressed on every side yet not crushed we are perplexed but not in despair persecuted but not forsaken struck down but not destroyed always carrying about in the body of the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be men of just it in our own body.

And.

For all things are. Great. Spread through.

Good thank yous out explaining why he just plainly speaks the truth and verse two he says, We have renounced the hidden things ashamed not walking craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God and so he says all we do is we open up for us with the Bible says he of course as an apostle was also had inspiration was preaching and writing new revelation at the time.

But plainly speaking the truth all we do is plainly speak the truth, we're not trying to be crafty, we're not trying to be manipulative because we know that God has planned these collisions between his truth and men's consciences. So by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Now why well because a there are people about whom he's not going to be able to do anything if our gospel is veiled it is veiled to those who are perishing. There are people who will not believe no matter how plainly no no matter how well you tell them the gospel.

Jesus Christ, some of you youth are excited about apologetics and I'm excited that you're excited about apologetics and evangelism. But it has one of the mistakes of a new youthful vigor for defeating arguments and skillful conversation in taking out from under someone all of their excuses for not repenting and not believing the it is one of the.

One of the common mistakes is to think that you can do that so well that someone's just got to believe. It's you know, you'll come and you'll say well I've got a friend and he said this and I said that well, what do you say when he says that and I tell you what, you know what by God's mercy to me, hopefully is a wise thing to say that I know and you go back and you try and they still don't believe me.

I tried that pastor they didn't believe. Well, there are those who are perishing. And the gospel will be veiled to them. The now the devil has blinded their hearts you see that whose minds the God of this age has blinded they do not believe lest the light of the gospel the glory of Christ who is the image of God should shine on them Satan hates Christ, he hates the glory of Christ he hates for the glory of Christ to be seen he does not want anyone to come to faith in Jesus Christ, that is the worst thing.

For him and yet against this finite but great power that that the devil exercises on those who are dead and blind and done actually take a whole lot of power to keep a dead person dead, but you've got their deadness and you've got the opposition of of spiritual forces of darkness, so you got that on one side of the scale, but then you've got on the other side who.

Verse six.

It is God. Who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So you put the power of God on the other side, you got your spiritual debt or someone's spiritual deadness yours before you believe to the unbeliever spiritual deadness and the exercise of all that the devil is and all that the devil can do to keep him dead on one side but then you put the power of God on the other side and the scale goes.

There's nothing else that can make the scale do that is there. All right, so in order to produce saving faith, it takes the exercise of the power of God and you'll notice what he refers to. Someone under the age of 10 tell me where in the Bible I can find the statement.

Let there be light.

Victoria, you don't go. You do count honey you count more than anybody else, that's why I won't let you answer.

Ms, Josie.

Genesis, right? Genesis chapter 1 right and what is God doing in Genesis chapter 1. He's creating what is the work of creation?

The work of creation is we're not still under 10 we can be and even the work for creation is God's making. All things out of nothing this is why we need young people to help us answer in the space. By the word of his power in the space of six days, he I need young people don't mean it by the word of his power and the space of six days and all very good so the apostle refers back to God speaking into existence all that exists.

And he says, that's the power required to create saving faith. That's why my preaching ain't fancy he says. Well, he probably didn't have a Galilee in accent which I always imagined to be like the first century Hebrew equivalent to the southern accent. But says, Ain't no fanciness in your preaching in a convert, nobody.

It's the truth of the word that God who created by his word that alone has the power to produce faith in an unbeliever. And that's why we do that and that's why. That's why he goes on to say in verse 13 after he talks about all that they are suffering but they're confidence is in Jesus and so what can the suffering do to stop their ministry?

Jesus isn't going to fail to save somebody just because they're being beaten just because they're being hard-pressed just because their plans don't seem to don't seem to happen we're perplexed just because they're being persecuted or struck down. They said we're always being delivered unto death. But life is working in you verse 12, and since we have the same spirit of faith.

Since the Holy Spirit who gave us faith and the Holy Spirit who gave you faith is the one who is making us speak according to what is written I believed and therefore I spoke he says the only way I came to believe in the first place was because the Holy Spirit exercised almighty power on me and it's out of the faith that the Holy Spirit has produced in me that the speaking of the Gospel is coming out of my mouth.

And if God the Holy Spirit gave me faith and God the Holy Spirit is the one who's going to give the people I'm preaching to faith then. I have all kinds of confidence in the preaching not that everyone is going to be not that everyone is going to believe but that for those who God is saving they will surely be saved and that he has planned to do it by his power through this speaking ministry.

Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus. So same thing you got power of creation earlier in the chapter, you've got the power of Jesus through resurrection later in the chapter both demonstrations of the power of the same. Holy Spirit, who is the one who gives faith?

For all things or for your sakes that grace having spread through the many may cause and because it's God who does all the work it's or supplies all the power it's God who gives all the gets all the glory may cause Thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Now I don't think we have time to work through the Ephesians passages and the same a lot amount of detail. I think they are a little bit more obvious on the surface. Refusions one 15 through 19, he's thanking God for their faith and praying to God that they would have more faith why well you thank someone because he or she, Did what?

My three-year-old were to thank you note this morning. Well. Mom included a three-year-old and writing a thank you note this morning. Because someone had given her something. He thanks God for their faith because God is the one who gave that faith he prays to God for their faith to increase because God is the one who gives that faith that increases so that's basically one fifteenth through nineteen it's just a couple verses later that he launches into chapter two one through ten you he made alive who were dead chapter two and verse one chapter two and verse five even when we were dead in trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and then he picked.

Up that by grace you have been saved in verse eight again and that verse that many of you probably have memorized for by grace, you've been saved through faith. Okay, so we were dead we couldn't do anything life was given to us as a gift and we were saved through believing in Jesus and that was not of yourselves it is the gift of God God is the one who gives faith so scripture demonstrates that or teaches us that the grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe unto the saving of their souls is the work of the spirit of Christ in their hearts, let's pray.

Our Father in heaven thank you for teaching us again this morning that it is through faith that we are saved that there are many other things that we can have like theology and membership and sacraments and yet not be saved but that everybody who believes in Christ will absolutely be saved so we pray that you would stir up our confidence in him thank you for teaching us also that this faith is given by you pray Lord for any who come this morning not.

Sure that they believe wanting to cling to Christ but feeling that they can't oh Lord none of us can apart from your mercy giving us according to your power and so we pray for them we pray for us indeed we pray for all who hear this gospel that you would attend that hearing with your power to give them faith to believe into Jesus unto the saving of their souls.

Which we ask in Christ's name amen.