

TRIUMPHANT LIVING
Taught by Dr. Bruce Bickel
“Heavenly Confidence” – Part 3
February 7, 2014

Gracious and Sovereign Lord, we humble ourselves before You and trust that You have cleansed us of all unrighteousness and that You would be pleased to have us sit at Your feet and that Your Holy Spirit will be our teacher. We pray, Lord, that once again You would open eyes that we might behold You more clearly for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Let’s turn in your Bibles please as we continue our study of Triumphant Living, Paul’s letter to the Church of Corinth found in 2nd Corinthians 2, 3, 4, and 5. Today we will be in Chapter 5:6-10 and I’ll be reading from the New American Standard Version and let us listen to the Word of the Lord. Paul writes this beginning at 2nd Corinthians 5:6.

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore, we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

AUDIENCE: *Thanks be to God.*

How do you view death? What do you think about when you consider death? Does your view of death affect the way that you live? The peculiar passage we just read about Paul is that he is giving his own personal feelings about his act of dying. Paul is not talking about death per se, he is talking about the act of dying. What do you think about when you ponder the fact that you are dying? You do realize that all of life is terminal. Disease is not terminal, life is. What do you think about when you think about dying? Does it impact the way that you live?

I believe Paul is really setting before us some of the great Christian insights about the act of dying to help us understand it. It is really, as we have seen before, that it is simply a change of address; in Chapter 5:1 you go from your earthly tent to your heavenly home. For the believer death is really a change of location. It is one life but two locations. I have a life here that is the same life that I will have in heaven, I go from my earthly tent which is temporary, to a heavenly home which is permanent. So really, it is just a transition and it is one life but two locations.

The real question before us today is, does the way that I view my dying impact the way that I am living today? That is Paul point in this passage of verses 6 through 10. He is basically saying that when you understand the Christian view of dying it will impact the way that you are living. As you and I consider our impending death, it ought to change the way that we live because after all Paul is the one in Romans 12, “Do not be conformed to the system of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” You have heard me say for years

that if you don't think right you won't act right. You and I need to think correctly about the act of dying because the way that we think about the act of dying is going to impact the way that we go through the act of living.

Now you ask the question, does that really make sense? Does one's view of death and how they are dying impact that the way that they live? Let me give you a couple of examples from some other cultures.

The Buddhist will cut off a member of a deceased warrior of the enemy so they will not have to fight them in the next war. When we were in Vietnam, we would find American soldiers with a finger or wrist cut off or a foot cut off because the Buddhist would say this, "If I dismember a part of his body, he won't fight me in the next war." That is their view of death. Some Vietnamese will bury their dead vertically in gravesites; they bury them vertically with clothes and food on the outside of the grave so that when they come back in the next life they'll have something to eat and something to wear.

Various cultures have a view of death, the act of dying, and it does impact the way that we live. That is what Paul is teaching us. He's saying that when you understand this magnificent truth, and notice what he says in verse 6: "Therefore, being always of good courage..." He is encouraged when he considers the Christian view of dying because he understands that it is two locations but one life. I go from my earthly tent to my heavenly home. As we saw last week, we looked about our earthly dwelling as our resurrection of our glorified body and our earthly clothing will be the righteousness of Christ. You and I will be wrapped in the robes of His righteousness. Paul says when you think of death that way, we are of good courage knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Before we take a look at this principle let me give you a couple of observations about what we have learned so far.

First, I would say life in Christ is not two lives, but one life. Look at verse 9: "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him." What is your motivation in either case? While I am here in this earthly body my motivation is what? To be pleasing to the Lord. When I am in heaven in my earthly body that has now been replaced by my heavenly body, what is my motivation? To be pleasing to the Lord. He is talking about the concept of one life in Christ, but two locations. It is really just a change of address. It is the same life in the body or the same life in heaven. Our life is really the spiritual flame, which God kindled which no physical changes can affect.

Secondly, are you an indestructible eternal body spirit brought about by our union with Christ simply changes its address? Death for the believer is a change of location; one life but two locations.

Now the comparison of the tent to the earthly home built by heavenly hands is not one of good or bad. It is really a difference between good and better. One of the Puritans writes it this way, "The comparison of home as in Chapter 5, verse 1 is not a comparison between good and evil, but a comparison of good and better. To be in heaven is to be with Christ visibly and is far better; to be on earth is really good. What we have in our earthly body, our earthly life, is a foretaste of our heavenly life." And so what you see: two homes, one life, but two locations and it is just a transfer of life.

What we want to talk about today specifically is verses 6 and 7 because our view of death does impact the way that we live. Let's take a look today at our earthly walk. We have seen our heavenly home, our heavenly dwelling. We saw our heavenly clothing and now we want to talk about our earthly walk.

How does your view and my view of death as Paul has just outlined it: one life but two locations, a transition, a change of address—how does that impact the way that you and I live? That is what he leads to us in our earthly walk. Notice verse 6 starts with the word “Therefore.” Paul is saying based upon what you think of death, we are confident, we are courageous and, “Therefore” we come to this conclusion and based upon our understanding of death, that it is one life but two locations, it is a change of address, and we live by faith, not by sight.

The kind of life that we live on earth is really a heavenly walk on earth and it is lived by faith. It is really the Holy Spirit mentioned in verse 5 that is the source of our being able to live by faith and not by sight. Notice what he says next: our present body is to be away from our other home, it is the one life but two homes idea again. That is the reason that a believer lives by faith and not by sight.

What does it mean to live by faith and not by sight. Let me give you some contrasts. Look at 2nd Corinthians 4:18; it is the same thing as 2nd Corinthians 5:7. 2nd Corinthians 4:18: “...while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” That is the same thing that he is saying in 5:7: “...for we walk by faith, not by sight...”

What does it mean to walk by faith and not by sight? Let me give you some contrasts. First of all, faith implies the possession of spiritual life. Walking by faith implies the possession of spiritual life. You can take a dead person and sit them up against the wall or put him in a chair but are they going to be able to walk? No. What does that mean? Living by faith implies the implantation of a regenerated spiritual life by the Holy Spirit so that you can walk and have a different direction in your life. So the very first thing that we see is that faith implies a possession of spiritual life.

A person who is dead in their trespasses and sins cannot walk. They cannot live by faith; only those born from above are able to walk by faith. So the very first thing that Paul reminds us is this: that walking by faith and not by sight implies the possession of a regenerated spiritual life.

Secondly, faith reveals the limitations of sight. It reveals the limitations of sight. You cannot look on the other side of a situation if you are looking at it through sight. In other words, you can see my face right now but sight is limited because you cannot see the back of my head. If I were to hide behind this podium you would not see very much of me because sight has its limitations. When you and I look at situations by sight, we do not see the full picture but only that which our eyes can see. There is limitation in sight because you cannot see the total objective of the situation.

Thirdly, I would say it reveals the limitations of darkness. Not only does it imply possession of spiritual life, faith reveals the limitations of sight and it also reveals the limitations of darkness. Now sin and darkness cover the true color of things and when you are looking by sight, one can only see the circumstances and not the Godly character that God is molding you into through the circumstance. If you look at just the circumstance, you will not see the Godly character that God is making you in to. That is when you walk by faith. It means this: you do not evaluate the love of God by circumstances. You evaluate circumstances with the love of God. Let me say that again: you do not evaluate the love of God by circumstances. “If God loved me, this would not have happened.” How often have you heard that? That is living by sight because you are saying, “I’m looking

at this one situation and I'm coming to the conclusion that God does not love me because he permitted this to happen." That is living by sight. Living by faith would be this: "I'm going to take that situation and evaluate it with the love of Christ, but the love of Christ is not impacted by that situation because I am walking by faith." See what I mean? Walking by sight has its limitations.

Lastly, I would say it reveals your goals and corresponding rewards only to be temporary ones. When you live by sight, you are basically saying, "I am looking for instantaneous gratification rather than long-term fulfillment." Walking by sight says, "I'm looking for instantaneous gratification or explanation and not long-term fulfillment." That which is seen is temporary, that which is unseen is eternal.

Let me remind you of Hebrews 11:1. Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Now the only person who can say that is a person who possesses a spiritual regenerated life. There is life in their being so they can see by faith and not by sight.

A couple of words which we need to understand in Hebrews 11. The words "being sure" deals with substance and it means "that which stands under," it is a legal term referring to the documents forming an evidence of ownership. In other words, it is a "title deed." When your faith is: "I have a title deed"... "faith is my title deed," if you would, "of what I hope for and certain of things which I do not see." I've got that substance there, that is my faith is the substance which permits me to have this title deed as a result of the Holy Spirit that I can have this assurance of my faith.

The second word we need to understand is the word "certain." "And certain of what we do not see." The word certain has to do with evidence...to have a conviction of things already done. I have the evidence in my faith of the conviction of things that are already done and I know this about my faith life: I know what is going to happen to me when I die...the act of dying is going to be a change of location. One life, two locations. It is just a change of address. You are certain of that and why are you certain of that? Because you are walking by faith and not by sight looking at your physical condition.

So, Brothers, one thing we need to do is this: do not evaluate the love of God by the circumstances. You evaluate the circumstances with the love of God and you are certain of that because you are walking by faith.

Below are a couple of good definitions of this which I find very, very encouraging.

Augustine says, "Faith is to believe what we do not see and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe." Charles Spurgeon says, "Faith is reason at rest in God's hand." "Faith is reason at rest in God's hand." John Flavel, the Puritan, says, "There are three aspects of faith: ascent, acceptance, and assurance. I ascent to my faith, there is an acceptance of my faith as a gift of God, and there is assurance of my faith."

Let me just give you some overview of what the Scriptures teach us about the big picture of faith. It is very interesting when we see the dynamics of faith. The objects of our faith, the Scripture tells us, are God, Christ, the writings of Moses, the writings of the prophet, the gospel, and the promises of God. Our faith are in those things of the Scripture. Notice this: that faith in Christ is the gift of God; faith is the work of God; faith is precious; faith is most holy; faith is fruitful; faith is accompanied by repentance, and faith is followed by obedience. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are designed to produce faith, not sight. I could go on and on. Here is one more thing that faith produces in the life of a believer, the person who is **in** Christ...this

is what faith produces and why we have confidence. Paul uses this phrase twice: "I'm greatly encouraged when I consider the act of dying because I understand I'm living by faith, and not by sight." Faith produces hope, faith produces joy, faith produces peace, faith produces confidence; faith produces boldness in preaching; faith produces the fact that Christ is precious to those having faith. Do you realize how precious Christ is to you in having faith? We always talk about Jonathan Edwards and his great sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Do you know what he talked about more than anything else? The beauties of Christ in our faith. He talked about the beauties of Christ...having faith in the personal work of Christ is such a precious gift because it changes everything about us. Faith is necessary in prayer. Notice this, those who do not have Christ, do not have faith. Those who do not have Christ, do not have faith.

I could go on and on and give you other demonstrations of faith but the point I'm trying to say is, Brothers, when you and I ponder the way that we are dying is radically going to change the way that we are living because we understand that we have great courage, great confidence in this: knowing that it is one life but two locations. It is just a change of address. It is a transition.

So let's make some applications here; let's try to get down to the practical things and talk about the contrast of living by sight and living by faith. Do you understand the difference of the limitations of sight? I just tried to give you some contrast. Do you understand those? Let's make some applications in our life to see what is the difference by my living by sight or by my living by faith. Here are a couple of examples. Here is a statement, "I believe God loves me because I have prospered in business ever since I trusted Christ." Now the first part of that is by faith. I believe that God loves me. That's by faith. The second part is by sight...because I have prospered in my business since I invited Christ into my life. See how subtle that is? The second part of this is saying, "I'm evaluating God's love based upon the circumstance," rather than evaluating the circumstance with God's love. Very subtle how we think and the difference between faith and life.

Now suppose you are not successful in business or some other venture? Does that mean that God does not love you? The person who would walk by sight would say yes to that. Years ago there was a young woman who used to attend the Bible Study and I haven't seen her in about 17 or 18 years...the Bible Study down at PNC. We were talking about election and the sovereignty of God in salvation and that salvation was a gift. She came up to me afterward and said, "I can never believe that I do not have a choice and you are telling me that my mother does not have a choice." And I said, "No, I'm not saying that. She does have a choice, she can only operate according to her nature." Well, she has never been back. I saw her about three years ago walking down the street and I just chatted with her for a minute and I said, "I haven't seen you at the Bible Study." And she said, "I'm never coming back because God did not do what He said He would do." And I said, "What do you mean by that?" She said, "Well, I was dating this young man and we were supposed to get married and he dumped me, and if God really loved me, He would not have let that happen, so I'm not coming back." You can go to all sorts of dialogue in that discussion, but there you see a little bit of the difference of how a person evaluates God's love by the circumstance which is by sight versus evaluating the circumstance with God's love which is by faith. Just one example.

Here is another example. "I believe I'm saved because I feel so happy." Another says, "I have trusted Christ but I'm not sure I am saved because I am so depressed." Which of those are by sight and which are by faith? Both are by sight. Both are by sight. Faith is not meant for the good times only, faith is also for the bad times, the disturbing times, and the depressing times. To walk by faith is to walk by the correct faith. If you have faith in your dreams, or the voices you heard you would say, "Regardless of how good or bad they are, they are only

going to last for a temporary time.” They are not going to last. One could have faith in something other than the personal work of Christ and still perish. You have to have the correct faith, not just faith in a chair, or faith in your car; that does not save anybody. You have to walk by the right faith.

The question is this: how do we live? Do we live by faith or do we live by sight? Let’s go to 2nd Corinthians 5:8-10. Take a look at our earthly motivation. What is our earthly motivation, if we understand this passage correctly? Paul is saying the way that you view the act of dying does impact the way that you live because it helps you understand that you live by faith and not by sight because the act of dying for the believer is essentially a change of location. One life but two locations. It is a transition, it is a change of address. When you understand that it will change the way that you live. Therefore, it is going to change the way that you are motivated in your earthly walk. So what is our earthly motivation?

Look at Chapter 5:8-10. “...we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” You see, because of our earthly existence is really a heavenly walk we really desire to be with the Lord. So, it is only natural then that we would want to live a life that is pleasing to Him. Look at verse 9. He talks there about the one life, two locations. I have a life on earth that is part of my being; my motivation is to be pleasing to Him. When I die, the act of dying and I change my location I go to my heavenly tent where the robes of righteousness and my resurrected body, my desire will be to be pleasing to Him. Whether you are here or there, absent with the Lord or present with the Lord you have the same motivation and that is to be pleasing to him.

Let me take you back to the Book of Colossians 1. Now Paul is praying for the people of the Church of Colossae and he opens with thanksgiving in verse 3, he gives a good report about them and then he prayed for something very specific and we pick that up at verse 9. “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understand,” There are three key words there: knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

Knowledge is the desire to obtain the truth. Wisdom is the application of that truth, and understanding is knowing the consequences of the application of that truth before I make my decision. Understanding the consequences of my choices before I make it. That is the result of wisdom, which is the application of truth, and knowledge is the desire to gain truth. Notice now I want “you to be filled...” The word “fill” there means to be controlled by. When you and I are filled with the Spirit, we are actually controlled by or led by, because we are equipped fully to be ones who can obtain knowledge, who can apply knowledge, and understand the consequences of our choices.

But let’s read on to this wonderful progression. Verse 10: “...so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects...” Now how is it that you walk in a manner of the Lord? That is defined by what? By pleasing Him. You see, there is a progression here. He wants you to be filled, controlled by the knowledge of God’s will in all wisdom and understanding so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing to Him. He is defining walking in a manner of worthy of the Lord as pleasing to Him.

Notice the results of that. Verse 10. “...bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” Notice it starts with knowledge and ends with knowledge. There is a wonderful progression in there. You begin with the knowledge of God’s will and understanding, all wisdom and understanding, so that you may

walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him, bearing fruit. What happens when you live a life that is pleasing to the Lord? You bear fruit. People say, “I want to be fruitful for the Lord.” Then live a life that is pleasing to Him. That is our earthly motivation. That is what Paul is telling us in 2nd Corinthians. Because we walk by faith and not by sight, our motivation...whether we are here or with the Lord, whether here or absent from the Lord or present with the Lord...our motivation is the same. It is the same thing. The motivation for a life of sight is self. The motivation for a life of faith is the Savior. The motivation for a life of sight is self. The motivation for a life of faith is the Savior. It is one life but two locations. Whether at home in our earthly body or at home in your heavenly glorified body, you have the same goal and that is to please Him.

Notice what Jesus says in John 5 and John 8: “I do nothing on my own initiative, I only do those things that I hear the Father teaching Me, showing Me what to do.” In John 8 He says, “I only do those things that are pleasing to the Father.”

Now the relationship that Jesus had with the Father is the same relationship that He wants us to have with Him and the motivation is the same. He wanted to please His Father; we want to please Him, whether in our earthly body or glorified body. It is very logical how we live like this with an earthly motivation of wanting to please Him.

Look at Hebrews 11:6. Talk about pleasing God. “And without faith it is impossible to please Him...” Now let’s talk about how we please God. This is very logical. In order to live a life that pleases God you have to live a life of faith and not a life of sight. We have already seen that. Here is why: there is only one life that ever pleased God. That is not you, that is not me, that is not Charles Spurgeon or George Whitfield or any of the great, mature spiritual leader we see. There is only one life that ever pleased God. The only life that ever pleased God was the life of Christ Himself. That life is available through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Does it not make sense that you trust that life...the life that is pleasing God...and you will be pleasing God. Look at it this way: there is only one life that ever pleased God—the life of Christ—and when you and I walk by faith and trusting the life of Christ, what are we doing? We are trusting the one life that pleased God and, therefore God is pleased with the one life that we are trusting because it is not ours but Christ’s. See how that works? That is what it means to live by faith. You are trusting the one life that did please God. The only way a person can please God is to trust the life that pleased God. That is the life of Christ; His person and His work. The only way to please God is to live a life of faith and not a life of sight. What we have been talking about is that Paul has been saying this: “Trusting the life of Christ is trusting Him moment by moment. I’m trusting Him, not myself.”

I was in a leadership conference the other day and we were talking about the need for a leader to lead by your strengths and they asked me what was my greatest insight into leadership. I said, “I’m learning to lead by my weakness.” In my weakness, I’m strong. You don’t lead by your strength, that feeds your ego. Let me give you an illustration. I lead by teaching. If I lead in the situation only by teaching all the time, nobody else is going to have anything to say and I’ll be the only one talking and I want to make sure that I get to do my thing. So I don’t want to lead by strength, I want to lead by my weakness. My weakness is what? Listening. I need to go into a situation and listen more than I need to talk. If I go leading by my strength, I’m going to talk their ears off because I love to teach. But if I lead by my weakness, I’m going to listen to what they’re saying and then I’ll know what to say and I’ll know what to teach.

My point is that we need to learn to lead by our weakness because that is what drives you to your knees. In my elder training program that I created in my church...we had a three-year elder training program...the number one requirement for an elder was weakness. Because you understand that you take a look at the Scripture and you see the overwhelming responsibilities of the role of an elder and you come to the conclusion, "I can't be that and I can't do that." That is what I'm looking for in somebody; I'm not looking for somebody that is saying, "I have these gifts and I have these strengths and I can do this." I'm looking for somebody that says, "That is so overwhelming that I can't do that, I need to be on my knees more than I need to be talking." I'm not talking about weakness of personality or character, that is not what I'm saying. I'm talking about the realization that the task is so overwhelming that unless I'm in a dynamic prayer relationship with the Lord, I cannot fulfill this responsibility. In my weakness and realizing that, I become strong. That is what Paul is telling us.

That is what it means to live by faith, because you're living by faith in the one life that pleased God. When you live by faith in the life that pleased God, you will be pleasing Him because that is the life that pleased God, and that is the life of Christ. It is quite logical in my mind. We can please God now and we can please God in all eternity by living a life of faith in the person and the work of Christ moment by moment.

Sometimes the best thing you can see is, "Lord, I'm just trusting Christ, I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm just going to trust You. I'm just trusting His life because His life pleased You and I just want to trust His life because I know in trusting that life I am pleasing You." It means trusting the life of Christ, His person and His work moment by moment.

So why do we do certain things? Do you do them because they'll make you happier if you do them, or do you do them because you must, because you are under some obligation? Or do you do them because it is pleasing to the Lord? These are simple questions. **When we transfer obligation into gratitude we will be able to please Him everywhere and always, and there will be nothing too small or nothing too great that won't be pleasing to Him when we are trusting moment by moment the personal work of Christ to work through us. The burden of obedience is removed and becomes the joy of obedience.** You see, many people say that obedience is so difficult...it is...no question about it. But what is the motivation behind it? When you have gratitude as your motivation and attempting to please Him, that obligation and that obligatory duty mindset that "I've got to do this because the Scripture says I have to do it and I don't like to do it." That mindset has changed into I want to do that because I realize the beauty of my relationship to the Savior and I'm trusting the one life that pleased God.

Yes, Matt?

MATT: *What you are saying, Bruce, is counter-intuitive as far as leading by weaknesses as men; we know where we are, what we do [UNCLEAR]how do we actually do that?*

That's a great question. I'm just learning how to do it. I think the way to do it is to recognize what strengths the Lord has given you and then look at the opposite side. In my case and the illustration I just gave you...I believe one of my strengths would be to teach to the point of understanding. What is the opposite side of that? Well, that means I would probably talk too much or talk too long and not give people a chance to express their needs, their feelings or their concerns. So that means, I need to listen. So, I'm trying to go into a situation and listen more than I talk because when I find out what they're saying, that is going to teach me what I can do for my strengths. So, I would say look at your strengths and look at the opposite side and say, "Lord, balance those

two things out.” We need to have balance in our leadership. Yes, I need to lead by teaching but I also need to lead by listening. I’m asking the Holy Spirit to balance those two things together so that there is more of a balance in the leadership than just one way or the other.

We have a tendency that if we operate strictly from our strength to feed our egos because I’m always looking for the opportunity for me to do it because “I can do it better than somebody else, because that’s my strength.” That needs to be balanced. Yes, there is some value in that but it needs to be balanced. All I’m saying is to learn to lead by your weakness just as much as you do by your strength.

Yes, Carl?

CARL: *Bruce, would you go back to where you gave the definition about knowledge, wisdom, understanding, etc.?*

Sure. Knowledge is the desire to acquire truth. The desire, the ability, the motivation...I want to observe truth. Remember, learning does not lead to knowledge, learning leads to living. This is not the accumulation of knowledge per se just to accumulate it, it is basically that I have a desire and the ability to acquire the right truth. That is the word knowledge in this case. Wisdom, then, is the application of that knowledge that you just acquired. The wisdom is the application of the knowledge that you just acquired. Understanding is to understand the consequence of my choices before I make it as a result of the wisdom I have applied in gaining that knowledge. In other words, understanding says, “If I do this, the consequence will be that...” “If I do this, the consequence will be this...” That is based upon your application of the wisdom you have and applying that truth that you learned. Is that helpful? Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Is that helpful?

Yes, Ted?

TED: *I would like to go back you were giving some applications about sight and faith. You said, “I believe God loves me because I have prospered in business.” Secondly, “I believe I’m saved because I’m so happy.” Let me take a couple more of those and get your reaction. “I believe I’m saved because I feel Jesus in my heart.” “I believe that I’m saved because I accepted Christ in my life.”*

I would say it is both faith and sight. The first part is, “I believe I’m saved” is by faith. When you add the appendage of the rest of the sentence “because I invited Christ into my life: that is by sight because you are saying this is something that I saw that I did myself. You are not saved by what you did, but by what He did. So there is a little bit of a mixture. My point, Ted, is what you are illustrating is there is a mixture of faith and sight that you and I need to be sensitive to. We sometimes flip it over just because it is so commonplace now in Christianity to use phrases like that: “I feel that I’m a Christian because I invited Christ into my life.” “Oh, isn’t that wonderful?” Well there is a degree of truth in that, but there is also a degree of falsehood in that because the second part of that is walking by sight and not by faith because you are saying, “This is something that I saw myself do, or I feel myself do.” We have to be careful about that.

Yes, please?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *Back to the topic of walking in a manner pleasing to Him...I would agree it starts with faith, but a result of that faith would be that [UNCLEAR] repent [UNCLEAR] that desire to obey His*

moral commandments...but a realization that you cannot keep them perfectly that brings you back to leaning on Him and trusting in Him...but there will be that desire to keep, I believe, to His moral commandments.

Yes. One of the things that Ted has taught us over the years when he has been teaching us is that the change of your desire. That is a key thought and you brought up a very good point. Ted has illustrated that numerous times in his teaching. What happens when a person is regenerated...there is a desire change in you now to have a different focus and so there is a redirection. Take a look at the word “repentance.” Just as a crass illustration...let’s just say you are going down Rt. 79 and you missed the turnoff at Mt. Nebo Rd. and you go past it. Now, first of all there has to be the recognition that I missed it. Secondly, there has to be the realization of why I missed it...I was fiddling with my cell phone. Thirdly, there has to be a redirection to get back to it. Fourthly, there is the refocus.

That is where repentance is. First of all, there is the recognition that I missed it...I missed the mark. Then there is the realization of why I did it...because of my sin. Thirdly, there is a redirection...I turn around and redirect myself and go back to the mark. Fourthly, there is a refocus and wanting to be pleasing to Him by focusing on that. That is just a crass illustration of the desire that changes when a person is reborn. A person who is reborn will have a different desire to want to be obedient to His moral law because it becomes a joy not an act of obligatory duty. Now there is nothing wrong with saying we have duties, we do have duties in Christ...no question about it. But there is not the obligatory duty, it is a joyful duty. That is what has changed. There is a joyful duty because the desire has changed.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I’m in one of those moments where a number of things that you taught me are coming together at once...and I might jumble them here...but when it becomes clear, I think this concept is very powerful. You’re talking about leading through our strengths and our weaknesses. I’m looking at it from the idea of the strength and I’m tying this back to [UNCLEAR] example. “I’m very good at this and I’m going to go out, I’m going to do this...this is the gift I have...I’m the man here to do this.” I’ve found that if I turn that around a little bit, maybe to the direction you’re going, and I go back to one of the things you taught about pursuing excellence vs. success, and tie it back to something they call [UNCLEAR] Warning, which is basically Yogi Berra saying, “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.” From successful in business now, it doesn’t mean I’m going to be successful [UNCLEAR]. This person was making a statement about, “The state I’m in right now of being successful now...” Well, if we start talking about the scope of life, take the time-frame out of this, if we pursue the excellence of the gifts that we have been given and instead of pursuing our gratification or our own glory by the things that we think we’re good at...I think we’re getting back to your point about we are glorifying God through the practice of that excellence rather than attempting to make ourselves feel good about what we are good at and not realizing why that gift is [UNCLEAR].*

That is well said, you summarized it well. Excellent. Thank you.

Yes, please, Tom?

TOM: *Is it part of that and all of this...if you are successful, who do you give the credit to...[UNCLEAR]*

Sure and that is part of it. You realize...the only thing success is going to lead to is failure. Because once you are at the top the only way you can go is down. That is why it is better to pursue excellence. What is excellence for the Christian life? It is pleasing God. That is the definition of excellence. If you really want to be excellent then do every thing you can to please Him. Now you need to have the knowledge of knowing what to do, you need to have the ability to apply it, and understand the consequences of your choices. But pursue excellence rather than success.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I was reading a devotional book this morning with regard to jealousy for instance. It is a very important factor to be jealous of or for and I think those apply to a lot of [UNCLEAR] also.*

Absolutely. God is a jealous God. He is jealous of things, it does not mean that His character quality is that He is egotistical wanting His rights; He is jealous of those things that are His...His children. He is very jealous of His children, those of whom He has redeemed, and He wants them to have the life that He has ordained for them to have and for them to have their holy calling...to be holy and blameless before Him. So He is jealous of that, and will do things in life to make sure that occurs. So there is a sense in that sense that God is jealous but not in an egotistical “want my recognition” sense but He is jealous of the things that are His, which are His children.

Yes, Bob.

BOB: *I’m reminded of your illustration that is in the Scriptures as well, talking about strengths and weaknesses of the time when He said, “Don’t you know I could call upon all these angels...but I didn’t.” There is a case where He chose weakness and it became powerful.*

That is a definition of meekness. Meekness is not weakness, but meekness is living according to the power of God. Meekness is this: knowing that I have another choice and I choose the one that pleases God. What does He say right after that? John 18: “Don’t you know that I could call down 12 legions of angels?” Now a Roman legion consisted of 12,000 troops: 6,000 infantrymen and 6,000 support troops. So, 12 times 12,000 is 144,000 angels. He said, “Don’t you know I can call 144,000 angels...to be on my side, BUT, I’m not going to do that because”...and this is the critical statement... “how would the Scriptures be fulfilled if I did that?” That is pleasing God. He had the knowledge of understanding. This is what pleases God. So, He had the ability to come from a point of weakness and to be strong. Because meekness is living according to the power of God. That is one of the best illustrations of what it means to be meek. Meekness does not mean weakness. If you think it does, try to be meek next time something happens. You’ll realize how strong you have to be. Weakness is not the definition of meekness. It is living according to the power of God. A great illustration, Bob.

Yes?

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT: *I [UNCLEAR] you know, even in our [UNCLEAR] it is, you know, even if [UNCLEAR] strength and say, “I’m going to do something that is way beyond me, that the only way this is going to happen is if God shows up.” Or whatever it is [UNCLEAR] what Christ said, “Not my will..” “Let this cup pass from me but not my will but your will...”*

It is the idea that in your weakness you realize this: in my weakness, I'm going to be strong. That implies something, it means that I need to be in deep fellowship with the Lord through prayer. There is an implication there. It doesn't mean that He is just going to come and rescue me; that is not what it is saying. It means that you are trusting moment by moment the one life that is pleasing to Him and that is the life of Christ. That is when you become strong. So in my weakness, I become strong. The other part to understand is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It is in your weakness that you are seeking His strength. It is in your strength that you are not looking for it because you say I don't need it...I'm strong, I've got this gift, I don't need it" but it is in your weakness that you say, "I can do all things through Christ." "I need the strengthening of Christ to help me in this situation which is way over my head and I need to be trusting Him moment by moment." That is exactly right. It is trusting Christ in our weakness which makes us strong.

All I'm saying, Brothers, is this: when you walk by faith there is a balance in our leadership. There is a balance between operating within my strengths...those gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us...there is balancing that out with your weakness because it is in our weakness that we become strong. Let that be a balance in your life and watch how pleasing that is to the Lord. The only way you can do that...to lead by your weakness...is to trust the one life that pleased God and you trust in Christ...His sinless perfection and perfect obedience moment by moment. That, Brothers, is how we please the Lord and that is our motivation whether you are here on earth in your earthly tent or in your heavenly glorified body of the same motivation, the same desire, just to please Him.

May it be so for Jesus' sake that it will occur in us. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the logic that You teach us in the Scripture through our Brother Paul, that the way to please You is to trust the one life that did please You, realizing that my life does not please you, nobody else, only the life of Christ. Father, give us the grace, give us the strength to trust You moment by moment in those periods of our weakness and also refine us in our periods of our strength. May it be so that You will receive the glory and our desire will be to please You whether here or in our glorified body in heaven. One life but two locations with the same motivation...to please You. May it be so for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said, "Amen."