

Discerning
Truth in the midst of *Error*

Part One: **Essential Truth**

The Call for Unity

- Many loud voices are calling out for compromise in order to achieve peace and unity amongst the “Christian religions”.
- We are told not to judge and to blindly accept “Christians” as true believers.
- To compromise core scriptural convictions for the sake of mutual acceptance, unity, and freedom to work together on common causes.
- *“No doctrinal differences are important enough to keeps us from working together.”* (Catholic Deacon, Cursillo recruiter & speaker) **But is this true?**
- E.C.T. leaders and documents call for unity, as if the biblical evangelical gospel and Catholic sacramental salvation are in biblical agreement.
- The call for unity stems from human reasoning supported by a false understanding of **John 17:20**.
- Jesus High Priestly Prayer gives us a deeper glimpse of what has been going on since eternity past regarding the salvation of all believers.
- **Jn.17:1-5** – The plan for your salvation and mine began in eternity past.
- God the Father promised to give a remnant of chosen ones to God the Son.
- God the Son was sent purchase eternal life for all those whom the Father had given Him – to bring them into oneness with the Son and Father.
- The Father made a choice and lovingly draws the elect to Christ for the purpose of giving them as a gift to the Son.
- This gift was not left up to fallen human nature to choose Christ. But God elected and for-chose whom would be members of this love gift to the Son.
- **Jn.17:6-12** – Jesus came to those whom the Father had given Him and they believed that Jesus was Messiah.
- Jesus wasn’t praying for everyone, only those whom the Father had chosen.
- Jesus kept watch over the Elect but was about to depart thru death on cross
- He is committing the Elect back into the Father’s care and keeping.
- Once again, the care and keeping of believers is NOT left up to chance or human will. None have nor will ever slip through the fingers of God.
- **Jn.17:13-19** – Once Jesus was gone and before the Holy Spirit was to come with power to indwell believers, He asked the Father to protect gift.
- Believers are NOT of this world any longer. We are set apart by the Father to truth, God’s word is truth.
- **Jn.17:20-21** – Jesus prays for His disciples AND for all who would be drawn to Him in the future and be given saving faith with which to believe.

- **Does Jesus ever pray a prayer that is not answered? If so, He is Not God.**
- The unity Jesus prays about is by being joined to Christ, not ecumenism.
- A unity accomplished by the Father, in Christ, and not left up to human will.
- **Rom. 6:4-6** tells us believers are united and permanently joined with Christ.
- Those who were chosen by God as a love gift to the Son in eternity past, are drawn by God to the Son, and given the gift of faith with which to believe.
- They are made one in Christ together with the Father...by the work of God.
- The call for unity at the cost of compromising the Biblical gospel is wrong.
- We must call people to Christ alone with the biblical gospel to have unity.

The Purpose of this Study

- Part 1: remind ourselves of the biblical truth in the area of basic doctrine.
- Part 2: compare false religions around us with the biblical truth – to discern.
- Not to express arrogance or exclusive possession of truth.
- Not to bash people who are deceived by the false religions.
- To expose error by the truth of God’s Word for our benefit...and theirs.

Why is this Study so Important?

- Why is **Discerning truth in the midst of Error** so important?
- **2 Cor.11: 1-4, 12-15**, How do we discern error? By knowing the truth.
- **Rom.16:17-20**, False teachers want us to blindly believe them and depend on them. They don’t steer us to Christ alone and to the scriptures alone.
- Should we marginalize our message so we don’t “push unbelievers away?”
- **Unbelievers are already as far away from eternal life as they can possibly be and clear words of truth can only help draw them nearer to the Savior.**
- **Gal.1:6-10** – Do we want false external unity or true unity in Christ?
- We must not step away from solid doctrinal ground to meet anyone halfway.
- Like us, everyone must leave all other hopes and come to the biblical Christ.
- **We must not join with false religions in ministry, it will be perceived by the deceived as an endorsement of ecumenism, and give false hope.**
- We should engage unbelievers in relationship and conversation to the end that they know they must reject what is false and embrace biblical truth.
- Don’t be too quick to affirm salvation. Let fruit of true transformation speak.
- It is safer to give the true gospel to those you don’t know very well, than to affirm their salvation, after a few moments of religious discussion.
- The only way to know someone is saved is to see the fruit of transformation.

Essential Scriptural Truth

What is our source of truth?

- The Bible itself claims to be the word of God and there are plenty of external evidences that support the Bible's claim.
- The integrity has been maintained over the centuries and it is reliable.
- We no longer have the original Bible manuscripts but by studying T.A.P.S. we know the scriptures have been accurately preserved.
- T.A.P.S. – Transmission, Archeology, Prophecy, Sufficiency

Transmission: How the Bible was transmitted and kept textually accurate.

- To preserve accuracy, O.T. scribes counted the number of lines, words, syllables, and letters on each page comparing the new copy with the old.
- The Massoretic Text dated around 900 A.D. were the oldest source documents until the Dead Sea Scrolls dated 150 B.C. were found in 1947.
- Fragments of almost all O.T. books and two copies of Isaiah were found to be more than 95 percent accurate when compared with Massoretic text.
- The variations consisted chiefly of slips of the pen and spelling variations.
- The NT has over 5,000 supporting Greek manuscripts dating within 100 years from original text with only 1% textual variation not affecting meaning

Archeology: Confirmation that the Bible is historically accurate.

- Over the last 100 years archeology has served to confirm the O.T. reliability on hundreds of historical facts.
- No archaeological discovery has ever proven the Bible inaccurate.
- Whenever the Bible could be checked against other extra biblical sources it has proven accurate.

Prophecy: Is the Bible **Inspired by God and Inerrant?**

- The most irrefutable proof that the Bible is God-breathed and without error is the fulfillment of prophecy.
- Roughly 2500 prophecies exist in the Scriptures with 2000 already fulfilled.
- 300 prophecies in O.T. about Christ's life and ministry have all been fulfilled.
- With only 8 prophecies made hundreds of years before Christ, the chances are 1 in 10¹⁷ of coming true. And yet 300 have been confirmed.

- Some notable examples are **Psalm 22** and **Isaiah 53**. Crucifixion described 500 and 200 years before it existed as a form of punishment and death.
- What about Scriptures own claims to inspiration and inerrancy?
- **2 Tim.3:13-17, 1 Pet.1:10-11, 2 Pet.1:16-21, 2 Sam.23:1-2, Lk.1:67-70, Ac.1:15-16, Ac.3:17-21, 1 Cor.15:3-5, Heb.1:1-2.**
- Firm warning from God is given to those who would want to add to or take away from God's inspired and inerrant word. Don't do it. **Rev.22:18-19, Prov.30:6**
- **We can be confident that we have the same Scriptures as the original text.**

Sufficiency: The Bible is Sufficient, Complete, and Authoritative.

- **2 Tim 3:16-17**, Scripture is God's divine Word written in human words through divinely chosen men who wrote 39 O.T. and 27 N.T. books/letters.
- Even though the canon was not complete and closed until 363 A.D., the inspired word of God was in full use by the churches for those 300 years.
- The canon was established using several strict criteria:
- Is it **Authoritative** – did it come with the authority of God? **Mk.1:22, Ac.4:13**
[The Pseudepigrapha or false scriptures (i.e. apocryphal books) were emphatically rejected as fanciful, lacking divine dogma.]
- Is it **Prophetic** – was it written by a man of God? **Gal.1:1, 2Pet.1:20-21**
- Is it **Authentic** – did it tell the truth about God, man, etc.? **Ac.17:11**
- Is it **Dynamic** – did it come with the life-transforming power of God? **2Tim.3:16, Heb.4:12, 1 Pet.1:23**
- Was it **Received** - was it collected, used, & accepted by the people of God?
- The Lord provided, protected, and preserved His word and did not leave it up to believers to handle this on their own. **Jn. 14:25-26, 16:12-15, Ac.1:1-8**
- Jesus told His disciples that He would be departing but would send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, existing & new truth.
- All false religions today have added their own oral traditions, councils, and visions to the canon of scripture. Satan deceives with partial twisted truth.
- The completed Canon of scripture is clearly established and God-breathed WITHOUT ANY of the oral traditions and councils of men. **It is sufficient!**
- Beware of new translations & new teachings that delete/change the Word.
- These 66 books of Godly wisdom will guide you in every aspect of life.
- **Psalm 119:106, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.**

Who is God?

- The only place we can learn about God is in the Word of God.
- These truths are then confirmed in nature, history, and transformed Lives.
- God is NOT a nebulous unknowable force. God can be known...in part.
- God is One God made up of three equal Persons. **Gen.1:26, 3:22, 11:7**
- The names of God in Scripture reveal attributes of God.
- **Elohim** and **Adonai** are plural, **Yahweh** and **Jehovah** - The Self-Existent One, **El Roi** - The God Who sees me, **El Shaddai** - The All-Sufficient Almighty One, **Jehovah Rapha** - The Lord who heals, **Jehovah Rohi** - The Lord is my Shepherd, **Jehovah Tsidkenu** - The Lord Our Righteousness.
- God is the Eternal, Self-Existent, All-knowing, All-powerful, Omnipresent, Actively Sovereign, All-righteous, Holy, Perfect and Just, All-Glorious, Majestic, Exalted, Loving and Merciful One.
- God is the gracious creator, life giver, life sustainer, and owner/ruler of all.
- **Gen.1:1, Heb.11:3, 1 Pet.1:16, Rom.1:18-20, Eph.2:4, Rom. 11:33-36**

Who is Satan?

- Satan is not a made-up coping mechanism of monotheists.
- In order for God to be seen as good, He doesn't need an evil villain.
- What we know about Satan also comes from the Word of God.
- Satan/Lucifer was created the most wonderful of all angels until corrupted.
- Lucifer was expelled from God's presence because his sin, pride, and rebellion against God. **Ezek.28:12-17, Lk.10:18, Isa. 14:12-14**
- Lucifer is now **Satan** – adversary, the **Devil**, slanderer, and false accuser.
- Satan is the enemy of God and attempts to murder all whom God gave life.
- Satan and 1/3 of all the created Angels were banished from heaven.
- After Creation was complete Satan initiated his murderous plot against man.
- Adam and Eve were deceived and murdered and death enveloped everyone.
- Satan became the "father" of the unsaved and of deception. **Jn.8:44**
- Satan enslaves mankind in sin, blinds them from truth, & leads the rebellion.
- Satan wages spiritual warfare against God and God's people. **Eph.6:10-17**
- Satan is nothing more and nothing less than a fallen angel. No "Omni's."
- Satan is not equal to God. Don't give Satan too much credit or too little.
- He is alive and roaming around as a lion seeking to devour. **1Pet.5:8**
- Satan's days numbered. His rage will end at the 2nd coming of Christ.

- Then he'll be bound for the millennial Kingdom, let loose once more before being cast forever into the lake of fire. **Rev.20:10 – God has already won!**

What is the Spiritual Condition of Mankind?

- The original condition Adam and Eve was perfect, complete, & fulfilled.
- Created in the image of God with mind, emotions, and will to know, love, and obey God. Man was created perfect and knew only good. **Gen.1:26-31**
- Man knew only good because they only experienced created perfection.
- For them to know evil it would have to come from Satan. **Gen.2:15-17, 3:1-5**
- Satan's tempted them with what he was consumed with...pride.
- Independence from God, self rule, and to become gods unto themselves.
- By choosing independence from God, Adam & all mankind were murdered.
- Adam died spiritually immediately, would eventually died physically, and eternally unless forgiven by God for his sin. **Gen.3:6-13** Death = separation.
- Spiritual death was passed to all of us. **Jer.19:9, Rom.1:20-21, 3:10-12, 23, Rom.5:12, 17a, 18a, 21a, 6:23a, Eph. 2:1, 5, Col. 2:13.**
- Death and separation spiritually is confirmed by our sin nature that desires what does not please God, is self-serving, and self-gratifying.
- Eternal death is separation from God for all eternity. **Heb.9:27**
- Mankind is **Totally Depraved** with **Absolute Inability** and **Hopelessness**.

What is the Spiritual Solution?

- In this condition of absolute inability and hopelessness, we cannot come up with, or even aid in, the spiritual solution to our sin problem.
- Dead men cannot make themselves alive...or even help in the process.
- Nor can a group of religious dead men, nor any act of human invention.
- Since ***all our works are as filthy rags***, since the ***heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked***, where can our help come from?
- The solution that gives spiritual life must come from the Creator of life.
- The eternal affects of sin must be nullified and righteousness given instead.
- The solution is the righteousness of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Without the gospel only the wrath of God is revealed. **Rom.1:18**
- But in the gospel, righteousness and life is imputed to the unrighteous dead who believe. Justification takes place. **Rom.3:21-22, Rom.4:9-25, Rom.5:1**
- In order to receive the gracious gift of life from God, sin had to be paid for.
- Someone would have to be willing and **perfectly able** to atone for sin.

- It was God's plan from the beginning to send One to atone for sin. **Gen.3:15**
- One who would offer His perfect self to satisfy our sin debt. **Heb.10:11,12**
- God introduced from the beginning the example of sacrifice as the solution.
- When Adam and Eve sinned God killed animals and clothed them. **Gen.3:21**
- Abel knew that to be accepted by God he must offer a sacrifice. **Gen.4:4**
- Cain, like his parents, tried his own way and was rejected. **Gen.4:3,5**
- Noah offered sacrifices of animals and birds on an altar. **Gen.8:20,21**
- God provides an unblemished substitute for Isaac. **Gen.22:2, 7-13**
- The Passover Lamb foreshadowed the Promised Savior. **Ex.12:5-7**
- Sacrifices had to be without defect. **Lev. 22:20-22, Lev.17:11, Heb.9:22, 10:1-4,10-12**
- The Promised Messiah would NOT be born a sinner who sins...a mere man.
- He would be able to defeat Satan, rescue the spiritually dead, & restore life.
- He would offer the Perfect Sacrifice for sin **once** and would satisfy God.
- The spiritual solution is to be declared righteousness by God through an act of God. And to have spiritual life replace the condition of sinful spiritual deadness. All of this had to be accomplished by God alone, not by spiritually dead mankind, through a Perfect Satisfying Sacrifice once for all.

Who is Jesus?

Jesus Incarnation

- God is holy and righteous; everything He is and does is perfect.
- Satan is the adversary of God who deceives, murders, and opposes God.
- Through Adam's sin, death in all its forms has been passed on to all mankind.
- The solution to man's problem is to be declared righteous by God.
- We could never BE righteous any other way. Especially not by our efforts.
- We are totally dependent upon God to provide a perfect satisfying sacrifice.
- Who is Jesus? Is He the Promised One? Is He the perfect sacrifice for sin?
- Once again, we must get our information about Jesus from God's Word.
- No one disputes that Jesus, the man, lived. But that's where the unity ends.
- If Jesus is not God, then He could not be part of the perfect solution.
- **Jn.1:1-5**, The Word and The Light are titles for Jesus Christ. He is God.
- Jesus is the Creator, full Deity, and the exact representation of God. **Col.1:19-20, 2:8-10, Heb.1:1-3.**
- Jesus is Holy and Righteous, Lord over His creation, and Savior of mankind.

- Jesus clearly claimed to be God...and performed the miracles to prove it. **Jn.1:6-13, 4:25, 13:12-14, Acts 2:36**
- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. **THERE IS NO OTHER WAY! Jn. 14:6**
- Jesus is narrow minded and exclusionary about salvation. Only one way.
- Jesus in The Christ, Messiah who reconciles us. **Jn.20:30-31, 2Cor.5:16-21**
- The Jews understood Jesus claim...and tried to stone Him for blasphemy. **Jn.5:18, 10:22-39**
- Someday all will confess that Jesus is Lord, some willingly, others unwillingly.
- **Lk.2:8-11, Rom.10:9, Phil.2:9-11, 2Th.1:6-9, Rev.5:6-14, 1Pet.3:18-22**
- We must accept Jesus as Savior and also as Lord, for that is who He is.
- *"At salvation we surrender all we know about us to all we know about Christ."*
Adrian Rogers
- Indeed Jesus is God in a human body, born of a woman, equal with God. **Jn.1:14, Gal.4:4, Phil.2:5-8**
- Jesus was fully man with all physical attributes and cravings. He was tempted from all directions **but was without even a single sin. Heb.4:14-16**
- Jesus was not born a sinner with sin nature. Being God, He could resist sin.
- If Christ was like man in physical and spiritual condition, He would also be condemned b/c of sin, He would not be able to condemn sin, and in Him there would be no freedom from condemnation for sin. **Rom.8:1-3**
- The only way to avoid condemnation for sin is to be intimately associated with the Perfect Man. **1Tim.3:14-16, 1Pet.1:18-20, 1Jn.3:5, 8b**
- All who deny the incarnation of Christ play into Satan's scheme. **1Jn.4:1-3, 2Jn.7, 1Tim.2:5**
- Jesus came according to the O.T. promises...including His virgin birth.
- **1Cor.15:1-5, Gen.3:15, Is.7:10-14, 9:6a, Mt.1:18-25, Lk.1:26-35, Rom.1:1-3**
- Jesus is unique. He is the **ONLY VIRGIN BORN** human being...Not Mary.
- Jesus was a descendant of David, physically thru Mary, legally thru Joseph.
- Clearly Jesus fulfilled all the requirements to prove that He is the Messiah.

Jesus Propitiation

- Was Jesus the final and perfect Sacrifice for our sin? **Rom.3:21-25a, Heb.2:17, 1Jn.2:2, 1Jn.4:10.** Propitiation means to make satisfying payment.
- Jesus shed blood is the pure spotless blood of a perfect sacrificial Lamb. **Jn.1:29-36, Col.1:19-22, Heb.1:3, 9:11-12, 10:11-14**
- **Christ was the satisfying sacrifice for sin, once for all, no more needed!**

Jesus Resurrection

- If Jesus did not rise from the dead He could not be the Savior.
- **1 Cor.15:1-8**, Christ died, was buried, & rose again according to Scriptures.
- **1 Cor.15:12-19** – if Christ was not God, sinless, and risen, then He was not the satisfactory sacrifice for sin. And all our preaching and hope is in vain.
- **Matt. 16:21-23**, Jesus told the disciples that he would die and rise again.
- **John 2:18-22** – Jesus again predicted His death and His resurrection.
- **Without understanding of the BIBLICAL Christ there is NO HOPE.**
- Faith in a redefined Jesus brings condemnation. **Gal.1:6-9, 2Cor.11:1-4**
- **Acts 4:12, *there is salvation is no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.***
- Who is Jesus? Jesus is fully the Perfect, Holy, and Righteous Creator God and Lord of all. He became fully the Perfect and Sinless Man while still retaining full Deity. The promised seed of the woman, the Messiah, the virgin born child without Adam's sin and death reigning over Him. Who was tempted and tested to the fullest degree without a single sinful thought, intention, or action. The pure spotless substitutionary sacrificial Lamb of God whose one-time death and shedding of His perfect blood on the cross satisfied God's just demands for full payment for all our sins. He is our Risen Savior, victorious over Satan, Sin, Death, and Hell. Who will first rapture His Bride of true believers out of this world and then return a second time to Reign as King over His literal Millennial Kingdom. Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.

How is someone saved?

- A person is not saved by praying a prayer, going forward at an altar call, or by asking Jesus into their hearts. These acts in and of themselves do not save.
- A vital saving work has to take place below the surface...in the heart.
- Religious rites of passage, baptism, performing a set of sacraments, or even Bible knowledge do not save.
- Included in the biblical gospel are some essential elements of saving faith.
- And there are also biblical responses to the gospel that show true salvation.
- We must not pressure people for a quick "I believe in Jesus" response by a fast drive-by gospel encounter. Verbal assent to a set of facts does not save.
- **Jms.2:19, *You believe that God is one. You do well: the demons also believe, and shudder.***
- Human faith is NOT the same as saving faith, which is a gift of God.

The Basics of the Gospel and Salvation

- God is holy and just, loving, and merciful. Man is sinful, spiritually dead, and deserves eternal separation and punishment in Hell forever.
- God sent Jesus, God the Son, who is perfect, who paid for our sin with His shed blood on the cross. He died and rose again on the third day.
- We must respond by humble surrender of all self-effort, wrong beliefs, and sinful distractions that keep us from the truth.
- We must embrace the Lord Jesus Christ alone thru faith alone. To call on the Lord Jesus Christ with a desperate and dependent cry for salvation. **Rom.10**
- But it is impossible for us, on our own, to understand gospel truth and respond through faith alone in Christ alone. God must do something first.
- We are in a condition of total depravity and absolute inability...dead.
- Head knowledge of facts is natural and humanly possible. Biblical understanding is spiritual and impossible for fallen humanity.
- **1Cor.2:1-5**, Paul did not resort to entertainment to soften up the crowds.
- No effort was made to manipulate their response to the gospel of Christ.
- Paul was after true salvation and was not motivated by big numbers.
- The power of God for salvation is in the biblical gospel which Paul preached.
- **Rom.1:16, *I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.***
- **1Cor.2:6-7**, Paul and his companions were educated (a Pharisee of Pharisees) and could reason with the sharpest of minds.
- They spoke God's wisdom and explained the mystery of the gospel of Christ because of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. **1 Cor.2:12-14**
- Unless the Spirit reveals truth, it cannot be understood by natural man.
- The Spirit of God had to illumine our hearts and minds. To unshackle them.

The Basics of Unconditional Election

- Our salvation is from God and for God's glory from beginning to end.
- Scripture teaches us that our salvation is by God's choice – thru Christ.
- By unconditional sovereign election from eternity past God made a choice.
- Purely on account of his gracious mercy and love, God chose to save some sinners from the condemnation that is justly deserved by all. **Rom.9:14-18**
- Salvation originates with God. He is the only source it could emanate from. **If God does not do the saving, no saving could ever be done. 1Pet.1:1-2**
- We are chosen according to the active "fore-choosing" of God the Father.

- In God's time we are set apart by the Holy Spirit unto salvation by faith.
- **Eph.2:8-9**, *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God' not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.* God will NOT share His glory with man. Man gets zero credit.
- **Jn.15:16**, Jesus said, *You did not choose me but I chose you...*
- God planned our salvation before the foundations of the world. **Eph.1:9-11**
- We are predestined for salvation according to the purpose and will of God.
- God chose us ahead of time, and then called and drew us to Christ through the gospel. **2Thess.2:13-14, 16-17, Jn.6:44**
- In Christ, our eternal standing is sure and is based solely upon God's choice.
- If God did not choose in eternity past and if God did not draw us to Christ, NO ONE WOULD COME TO CHRIST!
- We are commanded to ...**go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation...** **Mk.16:15** Of course, we sow the gospel truth seeds to everyone.
- It will only take root in the hearts of those being drawn to Christ by God.
- **1Cor.1:26-31**, if you are saved, it is b/c you were divinely chosen and invited to salvation by God...of Him, by Him, by His doing we are in Christ Jesus.
- **Ac.13:44-48**, You can't get any clearer than this.
- We should not question God's goodness or justice based upon our limited understanding. He is the Potter. We are the clay. **Rom.9:19-21, 11:34-36**
- *"God does not do something because it is good and right. Rather it is good and right because God does it."* Thomas Paine
- God defines justice because by nature He is completely just and perfectly righteous. Therefore everything God does is just because He does it.

The Basics on the Free Will of Man

- What about free will? What about the "*whosoever believes*" in John 3:16?
- This is where the clear biblical teaching on total depravity comes in.
- We must embrace the biblical view of total depravity and absolute inability.
- These truths do not allow for human ability or human free will.
- **Eph.2:1-10**, We were dead in our trespasses and sins. Made alive in Christ.
- Prior to salvation we had a will that was captive to sin and completely free from righteousness. After God saved us we have a freed will and new life.
- **Rom.6:20-23**, Prior to salvation, slaves to sin, free from righteousness.
- After salvation, freed from slavery to sin, and enslaved to God, resulting in being set apart for salvation, and God's use to proclaim His truth.

- **1 John 4:7-10, 19**, Not that we loved God...He loved us and sent His Son.
- Propitiation is the satisfying sacrifice for sins. We love b/c He first loved us.
- **Phil.1:6**, *I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- God began a good work in us, we did not choose it by our free will.
- All the names of saved were written in the Lambs Book of Life from the foundation of the world. **Rev.13:7-8, 17:7-8**
- Every new believer ought to be taught the doctrine of Sovereign Election right away so they understand God's work of mercy in their salvation.
- No room for pride, only humble admission that if God had not first chosen me, I would never have responded to Him. All mercy and all grace from God.

The Basics of the Great Commission

- We are commanded to preach the gospel and pray for others' salvation. **Mk.16:15, Eph.6:18-20**
- Satan is battling to keep a soul from salvation and spiritual growth.
- The battle is over the transformation of our minds. **Rom.12:2**
- Some argue that since God has already chosen, the Great Commission is simply unnecessary busy work. Not true! **Rom.1:16-17, 1Cor.1:18-24**
- To those who reject Christ, the gospel is silly talk. But to those who are saved, it is the dynamite power of God. A glorious message of hope.
- We preach the gospel out of obedience to God. For it is the vehicle through which God chose to deliver truth and draw sinners to Christ for salvation.

The Basics of the Biblical Elements of the Gospel Call

- The basic elements of the gospel call that we are to preach are these:
- **1Cor.15:3-4**, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- **Rom.3:23**, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
- **Rom.6:23**, *the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life thru Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- **Jn.14:6**, *Jesus said unto them, 'I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but thru me.'*
- **1John 4:10**, *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

The Basics of the Biblical Response to the Gospel

- The salvation call is not a call to intellectual knowledge of some facts.
- True saving faith is a gift from God, not a conjured up human response.

- Biblical elements of **saving faith** separate it from a mere **human faith**.
- There are so many reasons that people claim to believe in Christ and give lip-service and factual acknowledgment of Christ, but something is missing.
- Children want to please mommy and daddy and be in heaven with them.
- The addicts or abused want to believe in some greater good/higher power.
- The poor and jobless will believe in anything to get physical needs met.
- The rich, influential, or political need to identify with the “religious right.”
- But a love for Christ that surrenders to Christ as Lord is missing.
- Not human effort or human works to love and surrender to Christ. Rather, a **Rom.10:8-13** type response to the gospel.
- The type of faith that is a gift of God has certain characteristics. **Eph.2:8**
- The word **SURRENDER** properly describes what Saving Faith from God is.
- The gospel calls for repentance and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- A call away from prideful independence from God and slavery to sin to humble surrender to Christ and slavery to God. **Rom.6:22**
- **All of this is a gift and work of God, not human works or mere human faith.**
- The unsaved can fool us by human faith for a time but not God. **Mt.7:21-27**
- True saving faith will produce the fruit of obedience. **Mk.4:1-9, 13-20.**
- True saving faith will produce visible evidence over time, not just lip-service.
- True repentance will bear fruit in keeping with repentance. **Mt.3:1-2, 5-8**
- The only way to know if we or others are saved is the change of direction.
- In **John 8:31-59** we see a great contrast between human and saving faith.
- **8:31a**, Like the seed landing on shallow soil or among the thorns, they believed Jesus words. Jesus was believable so far. But were they saved?
- **8:31-32**, They may have liked what they heard but only those who persevere are true disciples. Perseverance is the evidence of true saving faith.
- **8:33-43**, True disciples not only will continue to believe Jesus words and obey them...they will also love Jesus and will understand His words.
- **8:44-59** – Those whom had “believed Him” with human faith, which does not endure, were now ready to kill Him.
- **True saving faith will persevere in obedience. Not perfection but direction.**
- **1 Pet.1:3-9**, Saving faith is enduring faith that is protected by God.
- **Jms.2:18-26**, Good works validate true saving faith.
- **1Jn.2:3-6**, The God-given ability to hear, understand, and obey the word of God gives confidence that we are in Christ and are eternally saved.

- **WARNING: Do NOT cling to past words, prayers, or religious formula.**
- **WARNING: Do NOT affirm someone's salvation based upon words alone.**
- Eternal salvation from the eternal penalty of sin is a complete gift of God. It originates with God and emanates from God to all whom He has chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world. Salvation is preached and heard in the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ alone which is the power of God unto salvation to all who truly repent and believe – rejecting false teachings and embracing biblical gospel truth alone. Salvation comes by grace through faith, which are both gifts of God, and cannot come from sinful man. True saving faith will be recognized by the transformation of attitudes, words, and deeds over time. Obedience and the fruit of repentance are the only real evidences of salvation and not words, prayers, or religious rituals. The forgiveness of sins, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the sanctification away from slavery to sin and Satan unto slavery to God and righteousness, and eternal peace along with the promise of eternity in God's presence are all accomplished at salvation. Salvation in Christ and becoming disciples who are enslaved to God are inseparably accomplished at the moment of salvation. As new creations in Christ and being God's workmanship, filled with the Spirit of God, growing evidences of that new life will be seen, not just heard. All true repentance, all true saving faith, and all the true fruit of repentance and saving faith are the result of God's workmanship and not man's frail human effort. Unless God does the saving, nobody would be saved.

What Happens to the Saved and Unserved?

- **Heb.9:27, *it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment***
- Unless the rapture happens in our lifetime, each one of us will die.
- Physically we will die but the soul, our immaterial consciousness, lives on.
- There will be a future bodily resurrection of all, both the saved and the unsaved – either to eternal life or to face judgment and eternal death.
- **Jn.5:25-29**, resurrection to life or to judgment, all will see one or the other.

Good News for the Saved

- **Jn. 6:38-40**, All who truly repent and have received the gift of saving faith...
- All who, by God's grace, savingly trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone...
- At death redeemed souls immediately pass into the presence of Christ.

- Those who will be martyred during the tribulation are ushered immediately into the presence of Christ. **Rev.6:9-11**
- **Lk.23:43, Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.**
- Physical death or the rapture is the open door into the very real and much better presence of Christ. **Phil.1:21-24**
- When separated from the body, the soul is immediately in the presence of the Lord. **2Cor.5:6-8**
- Christ's resurrection was **phase 1** of the First Resurrection or Resurrection unto life. **1Cor.15:20, Mt.27:50-54**
- The rapture is **phase 2** of the Resurrection unto Life when glorified resurrected bodies and souls are reunited. **1Th.4:13-17**
- Then we who are alive will be taken up body and soul, no death/separation.
- At the end of the tribulation, at Christ Second Coming, is **phase 3** of the Resurrection unto Life when the glorified bodies of the Tribulation's dead in Christ will be reunited with their souls.
- The redeemed from all ages will reign with Christ during Millennial Kingdom. **Rev.20:4-6**
- The Second Death, eternal death, and eternal punishment for sin has no power over the redeemed. The truly saved shall always be with the Lord.
- After the millennial kingdom comes the new heavens and new earth – the eternal state. **Rev.21:1-7, 22-27**

Bad News for the Unsaved

- The Resurrection unto Life is for the redeemed only.
- The Resurrection unto Judgment is for all who are not saved.
- Until the second resurrection unto judgment takes place at the end of the millennium, the unsaved will be kept under punishment.
- **Luke 16:19-26**, describes Hades which has 2 compartments. One was called Paradise/Bosom of Abraham, and the other called the Place of torment.
- Immediately when the unsaved die, their souls are placed in this place of torment. This, along with knowing they are separated from God, will be bad.
- They will be held there until the second resurrection at the end of the Millennial Kingdom.
- **Rev. 20:7-10**, After 1000 years, Satan will be loosed and will attempt one last rebellion against God. He will fail and be thrown into the lake of fire.
- **Rev. 20:11-15**, The Great White Throne judgment is to judge the unsaved.

- There will be a bodily resurrection and joining with their souls from Hades.
- They will be brought before God for their final judgment.
- At this time the unsaved are thrown into the lake of fire, the second death.
- All who do not repent of their sinfulness and who do not surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ through saving faith...these will be cast into the lake of fire.
- Hell, the Second Death, the Lake of Fire, Outer darkness, the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, eternal punishment, eternal fire, and eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord. **Dan. 12:1-2, John 5:29, Matt 25:41-46, 2 Thess.1:9**
- **Matt.7:13-14**, Hell is just as real as heaven. There is a broad road marked with fun, freedom, riches, & man-made Religion, leading to eternal death.
- It is the MANY who willingly stay on the broad road even when the gospel lifeline is thrown to them.
- Then there is the narrow road that is marked with **The Lord Jesus Christ Alone**...leading to eternal life.
- It is the chosen FEW who by God's mercy and grace get plucked from the broad road and placed on the narrow road to eternal life in Christ.

Being deeply rooted and firmly grounded in these essential biblical truths is absolutely necessary for every believer. We must know the biblical Christ in order to preach the biblical saving gospel message. We must never compromise these essential biblical truths and move away from the rock solid biblical foundation for the sake of false unity and ecumenism. For true biblical unity all must come to Christ alone by faith alone which is a gift of God.

*The word of God is so sweet and oh so true;
 May this always be how it tastes to you.
 The only foundation on which we can stand;
 To know Christ and be saved by God's gracious hand.
 Never give in and truth do not compromise;
 To do so would be foolish and very unwise.
 The biblical Christ and not man's inventions;
 Not sacraments nor works nor man's own intentions;
 Can accomplish salvation and the Father's approving nod.
 Only by grace, only through faith, loving gifts from our loving God.*

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This is a summary of the adult Sunday School class originally taught at the Aurora Free Church of Aurora, WI. by Tim Spanton from September, 2009 through January, 2010. The full Sunday School sessions are provide in MP3 format on the aurorafreechurch.org and timspanton.com websites. They can be listened to online or downloaded to MP3 devices. May the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified and may all believers be further equipped in **Discerning Truth in the midst of Error** and be able to, *“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”* (2Timothy 4:2).

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