

Repentance Before Salvation?

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By James McGowan

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Theology in Perspective

P.O. 48
Hart, MI 49420

Online Sermons: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/doctorwoodhead>

When you have to do the sound for everyone else but when you have to do it for yourself, you suddenly forget everything, you know.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come to you this morning first and foremost with a recognition of our weaknesses, Father. The recognition, Father, of our need for you to speak in and through us, to speak to us, Father. A recognition, Father, that human wisdom no matter how great it might be can never approach the wisdom that's given by your Spirit. So Father, this morning as we address this issue that is so critical to the church, we pray, Father that you would speak through me, Father. That you would open up the eyes and the understanding of those who are listening, Father. That you would move me aside so that your word might come forth and your truth might be exalted and these things we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

What do you think is the worst possible thing that you can hear just before you get up to speak? I was back here fiddling around and I'm already nervous enough and I heard someone, I won't point him out but they said, "This has been the best conference I have ever been at." Now, that's the worst possible thing you can tell someone who is getting up to speak. If they had said, "You know, it's just been so-so," then there's no expectation but I want to thank those individuals for heaping that stress on me this morning. God bless you. Just kidding.

I want to give a quick disclaimer before I get into my topic. I appreciate so much what Dr. Leitner said in his opening comments regarding Lordship, salvation and the point stressing that we are not here to attack individuals. We are here to attack theological constructs, if you will, and that's appropriate and right that we should do so. However, at the same time in doing this, it's inevitable that we have to mention names and so if I do that in this presentation, I want to ask your grace and if I offend, I ask your forgiveness ahead of time. That's not my intention. But I feel like truth is so important that sometimes we do indeed need to name names so having said that, let's get into the presentation.

If you have your Bible, quickly turn with me to Jude verse 3 and, of course, I know everyone is very familiar with this verse but I just want to, again, remind us of what this

passage says. In Jude 1:3-4, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." And why did he say that? Why was that important? Verse 4, "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Now, that's a pretty potent statement, isn't it? I'd like you to keep that in mind as I talk this morning because I think it's apropos to the subject matter.

My topic this morning is: are repentance and confession requirements for salvation? Confusion on this critical issue is due to theological and doctrinal error and it must be remembered that one's theology dictates one's doctrine. These errors in my opinion include the following: the theological and doctrinal error that repentance means more than just to change the mind; the theological and doctrinal error that repentance and belief are separate acts; and the theological and doctrinal error of failing to recognize and maintain clear dispensational distinctions, and I believe that this is perhaps the most important one of all. This is where we really see the problem come to bear. Theologically speaking, the only way one can arrive at these conclusions is by committing hermeneutical suicide.

First of all, let's talk about the theological and doctrinal error that repentance means much more than to change the mind and this, of course, is what we're being told by the reformed and the Lordship camps. This is a basic tenet for both reformed theologians and Lordship advocates. According to this view, "One is saved by repenting," and please note the rest of the sentence, "which always means a turning from sin." Some illustrative quotes from the Lordship camp, "The necessary element in salvatory repentance is a true recognition of one's evil state and a decided resolve to forsake sin and thrust oneself at Christ's mercy. Repentance is related to the issue of sin which also includes unbelief in Christ. The primary New Testament word you write metaneo, always," notice these words they use, "always speaks of a change of purpose and specifically a turning from sin."

Some illustrative quotes from the Lordship camp continue, "Repentance is a supernatural and inward revelation from God giving a deep consciousness of what I am in his sight which causes me to loathe and condemn myself resulting in a bitter sorrow for sin, a holy horror and hatred for sin, and a turning away or forsaking of sin." Now, keep in mind this is all prior to salvation.

I have stated these definitions make turning away from sin an essential and necessary component of repentance and ultimately of salvation but the question we want to ask is: is this lexically accurate? The key question that must be addressed is: is the word "repentance," the verb "to repent," correctly defined as a turning from sin? A brief look at two of the most authoritative Greek resources indicate that indeed this is not the case. BAGD indicates that the Greek word metaneo is used to translate the English verb "repent," and means "to change the mind." They go on and say, "Moreover, this is a compound verb made up of the preposition meta, after, and the verb noeo, to grasp or

comprehend something on the basis of careful thought to perceive and think. So we come up with the idea of to perceive afterwards or to change the mind."

Additionally, the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament states, "In pre-biblical and extra biblical usage, metaneo and metanoia are not firmly related to any specific concepts." Please note that. "At the first stage they bear the intellectual sense of subsequent knowledge. With further development, both verb and noun then come to mean 'change of mind.'" This is a critical paragraph here. "The change of opinion or decision, the alteration in mood or feeling which finds expression in the terms is not in any sense ethical. It may be for the bad as well as for the good. For the Greeks, metanoia, never suggests an alteration in the total moral attitude of a profound change in life's direction, a conversion which affects the whole conduct." Did you hear that? That the Greek word metaneo means to change the mind is the consistent judgment of all lexicographers.

That's an established fact so why is there a problem? The problem arises from the fact that Lordship theology, a distinctly reformed structure, I decided to use that word "structure" since Dr. Leitner used it. Anyway, a distinctly reformed structure presupposes a theological construct which in turn dictates to the text. In other words, it's eisegesis instead of exegesis. For example, notice what John MacArthur's response is when he was asked about his personal theology. Now, again, quickly, let me say, I am not attacking John MacArthur, however, it's important that you understand where he's coming from, in my opinion. He says, "I was raised in a dispensational environment. There is no question that as I got into seminary I began to test some of those things." Now, if he had just stopped right there, he would have been in good shape. That's one of the purposes of seminary. But he goes on and he says, "I have been perhaps aptly designated as a leaky dispensationalist." Now, earlier on someone mentioned and I thought, "Well, everybody is going to give all of my notes away before I get a chance to talk on it." But anyway, you see it here in writing and this is factual.

So here is what he says, "Here is my dispensationalism, I'll give it to you in one sentence, there is a difference between the church and Israel. Period. At the same time in seminary, I began to be exposed to reading among more reformed theologians and over the years of exegeting the Scriptures, it has again yielded to me a reformed theology." Are you hearing what he's saying here? "I was convinced of it," reformed theology, "when I started seminary and I'm more convinced of it now as I've gone through the text," he says. "I was convinced of it when I started," look at his reasoning here, "because I read so many noble men who have held that view. It was more at that point hero worship, and now it's become my own."

My point here is to demonstrate how John MacArthur who claims to be a dispensationalist has arrived at his position on Lordship salvation. This is important. My contention and I have stated this on the website, is that John MacArthur needs to withdraw his name from the dispensational camp and if he doesn't want to do that, he needs to call himself a MacArthur dispensationalist. He needs to quit calling himself a normative dispensationalist because he's not by his own words. Incredibly, due to this

imposed perspective, Lordship adherents like John MacArthur, in spite of the undisputed lexical meaning of the word, insist on changing the basic meaning of *metanoeo* and its derivatives to include concepts beyond its clear meaning.

Let me give you some examples. In "The Gospel According to Jesus," John MacArthur Jr. initially argues for the basic meaning of "change of mind." Then later he says that biblically its meaning does not stop there. Echoing this sentiment, Marc Mueller, who was for a time on his staff, declares repentance is far more than a change of mind about who Christ is. But Richard C. Trench deals a fatal blow to this idea of a greater meaning demonstrating that these added concepts have been forced upon the text. Here is what he says, this is insightful, "It is only after *metanoia* has been taken up into the usage of Scripture that it comes predominantly to mean a change of mind, with the added idea of taking a wiser view of the past, a regret for the ill done in the past, and out of all this a change of life for the better. This is all imported into, does not etymologically nor yet by primary usage lie in the word." Did you get that? This so-called greater meaning for *metanoeo* came into the picture only after certain theologians added to its legitimate received definition.

What is the conclusion? Both the non-Lordship and the Lordship camps agree that the Bible, specifically the New Testament, teaches that repentance is necessary for salvation. However, the Lordship view that repentance always involves sin and that repentance is turning from sin or the resolve to turn from sin, is not supported from the lexical and biblical evidence. On the other hand, the non-Lordship view holds that repentance is a change of mind, attitude, and disposition which implies and normally leads to an outward change in life and conduct, though the latter is not essential to the term itself. The focus of repentance must be determined by the context. In regards to salvation, repentance is implied in the call to believe in Christ. Now, again, the point I'm trying to make here is that one of the things that Lordship theology says is that repentance always and that's the key word, it always deals with sin. It always deals with a resolve to turn from sin and the point I want to make here is that that's not correct. So if we can cut the legs out from underneath that, we are well toward defining a resolution to this issue of Lordship salvation, in my opinion.

The second point, the theological and doctrinal error that repentance and belief are separate acts. Lordship advocates consistently declare that repentance and faith are two distinct and necessary requirements for salvation. Note for example this statement made by a prominent reformed theologian, "The demand is for repentance as well as faith. It is not enough to believe that only through Christ and his death are sinners justified and accepted. Knowledge of the Gospel and orthodox belief of it, is no substitute for repentance." Excuse me? "Where there is no realistic recognition of the real claims that Christ makes, there can be no repentance, and therefore no salvation." This is scary stuff to me.

According to the Lordship theology viewpoint, these real claims that Christ makes refers to a repentance which is, notice, a commitment to or at least a sincere willingness to 1. Obey Christ's commands. Take up one's cross. Forsake sin. The failure of one witnessing,

please hear what I'm saying, the failure of one witnessing to declare these precursors in a Gospel presentation and a failure on the part of the sinner to willingly commit to them, means that the sinner cannot be saved. The question that must be laid at the feet of Lordship proponents is: how can one who is unregenerate, dead in trespasses and sins, and blinded by the God of this world, possibly make such a commitment? On the contrary, this is an impossibility as Lewis Sperry Chafer correctly points out, "No unregenerate mind is prepared to deal with the problems of true Christian living. These problems anticipate the new dynamic of the imparted divine nature, and could produce nothing but hopeless discouragement when really contemplated by an unregenerate person." I'd like for you to just think about that for a minute. When we tell people, if we insinuate to people that they have to get their act together before they come to Christ, we're asking them to do something that is absolutely impossible. It's absolutely impossible. We are putting a requirement on them, a pressure on them that they can't possibly live up to.

In contrast to the teachings of Lordship theology that repentance and belief are separate acts, it must be recognized that when the words "believe" and "repent" are found together, they are never used in a manner that would suggest two separate requirements for salvation. On the contrary, when salvation from eternal condemnation is in view, "repent," meaning a change of mind, and "believe" are in essence used as synonyms. Chafer again notes, "It is as dogmatically stated as language can declare that repentance is essential to salvation and that none could be saved apart from repentance, but it is included in believing and cannot be separated from it."

A few examples where repentance is equivalent to belief in the person and work of Christ include: Luke 5:32, Jesus declares, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Here repentance is evidently a synonym for faith or salvation through faith. The whole tenor of Jesus' ministry was to call men to faith in the Gospel, thus he says, "Repent and believe the Gospel." Acts 11:18, the apostles declare, "God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." It is clear from the context that "repentance to life" refers to the Gentiles' faith in Christ. Consider also Acts 10:43. I'm not going to read all of these but just list them up here for you. Let me also interject here if you want a copy of this presentation, I will make it available to be put up on the CTS website or whatever, so I didn't say this at the beginning, I perhaps should have, it's absolutely impossible to deal with this issue in 45-50 minutes so I have to just fly over it 40,000 feet and I hope you'll forgive me for that.

Next point, next example, 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Here one clearly sees the convergence of repentance and faith. Men will perish unless they come to faith in Christ, but men will not come to faith in Christ unless there is a change of attitude about him and his promises.

The conclusion then is clearly, in passages where salvation is in view, to repent is the equivalent in meaning with to "believe" or "trust in" and always involves a change of mind from any form of self-trust in human works to trust in the finished work of Christ

which alone has the power to save us. Simply stated, to repent means a turning from self-trust to trust, belief, in Christ.

Point 3: the theological and doctrinal error of failing to recognize and maintain clear dispensational distinctions. Again, what I'm attempting to do here is, if you will, knock out the legs of the chair, alright? So this is the third leg in my opinion and I think this is perhaps the clearest one of all. John MacArthur Jr. writes and, again, I'm giving you background information here. "There is a tendency, however, for dispensationalists to get carried away with compartmentalizing truth to the point that they make unbiblical differentiations. An almost obsessive desire to categorize and contrast related truths has carried various dispensational interpreters," and I list the names of the people he puts in his book. There they are: Chafer, Ryrie and Hodges. So he's saying these are the men, these men are carried away; these men are making unbiblical differentiations; these men have an obsessive desire. So if you follow them, guess what he's saying about you? So he says we are carrying this, "far beyond the legitimate distinctions," and notice what he lists here, "the legitimate distinctions between Israel and the church. Many would also draw hard lines between salvation and discipleship." Hello? Yes, I think so. He says, "we would draw hard lines between the church and the kingdom." Hello? Right? He says, "some will draw hard line distinctions between Christ's preaching and the apostolic message, between faith and repentance," and look at the last one, "and the age of law and the age of grace." Now brothers and sisters, what I'm saying to you this morning is by taking his own words, I want you to see that he is actually removing himself from the normative dispensationalist camp. I'm not saying this about him, this is what he's saying.

A most critical point in the discussion of dispensational distinctions has to do with the use of the term "good news" in the New Testament. Ryrie points out the important dispensational distinctions when he writes, "Even the New Testament uses the word 'Gospel' to mean various types of good news, so one has to describe what good news is in view." A distinctive feature of normative, classical, traditional dispensationalism is that it has always held to the inherent differences between the Gospel of the kingdom and the Gospel of grace. Now, why am I saying that? Again, the whole point here is that we're convoluting the dispensational distinctions. This is what John MacArthur does openly, and here's the big place he does it is between the doctrine of the kingdom and the Gospel of grace.

Lordship advocates deny these clear dispensational distinctions resulting in a coalescing of law and grace. Now, the reformed theologians, they are open and honest about it. They don't have any qualms with it. They say, no, dispensationalism is ridiculous so of course they're going to do this but when one of our supposedly own camp gets up and says, "I'm a dispensationalist," but then he starts going back to the law, we have a big problem, brothers.

For example, Lordship advocates insist that the way of salvation is presented in the Sermon on the Mount. Countering this error, J. Dwight Pentecost writes, "False and even heretical doctrines have been taught and erroneous standards of Christian conduct have been promulgated because of faulty interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount. If the

way of salvation is outlined therein, we will find a plan of salvation advocated by our Lord which is divergent from that of the rest of the New Testament. If standards of Christian conduct are contained therein, we will find a standard which differs from that presented elsewhere in the New Testament. It is of utmost importance then, because this does represent one of the major discourses of the Lord, to determine the group the Lord is addressing. Hermeneutics. The purpose of the instruction, the primary interpretation and the secondary applications that our doctrine and walk may be in keeping with his divine plan."

As has been stated above, Lordship proponents insist that repentance is always presented as the resolve to forsake sins, or the actual turning from sins, and that this in fact is prerequisite to salvation. They seek to find support for this in the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles. Lewis Sperry Chafer however, points out that, "It is an error to require repentance as a preliminary act preceding and separate from believing. Such insistence is too often based on Scripture which is addressed to the covenant people, Israel. They, like Christians, being covenant people, are privileged to return to God on the grounds of their covenant by repentance. There is much Scripture both in the Old Testament and in the New that calls this one nation to its long predicted repentance, and it is usually placed before them as a separate unrelated act that is required. The preaching of John the Baptist, of Jesus and the early message of the disciples was 'repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' but it was addressed only to Israel. This appeal was continued to that nation even after the day of Pentecost or so long as the Gospel was preached to Israel alone."

A cursory look at a few pertinent passages will assist the student of the Bible in determining whether the claims of the Lordship proponents are justified and will in fact reveal that this is not the case.

The preaching of John the Baptist. In Matthew 3:2, we're told that John came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and also that he preached a baptism of repentance. It is noteworthy that most, and please hear this next portion, this is critically important, it is noteworthy that most, if not all commentators and scholars, understand John's preaching of repentance as parallel with the Old Testament preaching of shub, resulting in the force of "turn away from sin." This is significant because according to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, the theological uses of shub in the Old Testament were expressed in the context of the covenant community and their return to God and were thus non-soteriological. This is insightful in helping and providing us with a framework from which to determine John's understanding of repentance. It was non-soteriological.

This can be demonstrated by considering the Apostle Paul's commentary regarding John's baptism of repentance in Acts 19:4 where he stated, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ." Clearly, the Ephesian disciples were Jews who had understood something of their spiritual need and had submitted to John's baptism. However, they had not believed on Jesus Christ as is clear in that they had not received

the Holy Spirit. Recognizing this, Paul declared the Gospel of grace to them and demanded that they come to faith in Jesus Christ. This suggests that Paul understood John's baptism of repentance as preparatory to faith in Christ. The conclusion therefore is that John's use of "repent" and "repentance" simply meant a "change of mind," a new attitude and disposition in preparation for the salvation soon to be revealed by the Lamb of God.

Consider also John's use of "repentance" in the offer of salvation found in Acts 13:24, and it says there, "John had proclaimed before his coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel." Not only is the inference that John's preaching was preparatory to Christ, but the text clearly states that John's audience was specifically "all the people of Israel." This is important because repentance for Israel had distinct significance under the Mosaic covenant. It was the means by which the sinning nation repaired its covenant with God and returned to his blessing. You see these passages here, Deuteronomy 30:2, 10; 2 Chronicles 7:14, for example. An examination of these verses will reveal that each one contains the idea of repentance as an inner attitude which leads to the normally expected overt obedience. Only in such a state of blessing could the nation as a whole accept Jesus as their Messiah. Clearly, repentance in John's preaching was designed to prepare the nation of Israel for faith in Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Therefore, repentance for the Jews in the context of John's preaching must not be divested of covenantal implications.

Finally, attempting to place equivalent emphasis to John's preaching of repentance to Israel during the transition period between law and grace with that of the author of salvation for all people in the dispensation of grace, is to profoundly confuse clear dispensational distinctives and will only result in error and ultimately another Gospel.

What about the preaching of Jesus? In his preaching of repentance in the Gospels, did Jesus always demand a prerequisite reformation of life? First of all, it must be noted that like John, Jesus' preaching was at times directed toward the nation of Israel in the context of covenantal obligations. This is most obvious in his upbraiding of the independent Jewish cities in Matthew 11:20-24. These were the cities to which the 12 apostles were sent when Jesus said specifically, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Clearly, their refusal to repent was a refusal to change from their sinful attitude of self-righteousness and rejection of God's righteousness in Christ. It was not primarily a refusal to reform their lives.

Another example where Jesus' message of repentance did not demand a resolve to forsake sin is in Luke's Gospel where he tells an innumerable multitude that just as the Galileans were killed by Pilate and the 18 were killed by the tower in Siloam, unless you repent you will all likewise perish. The point of this teaching is that those who died were not more sinful than anyone else. Judgment awaits all who do not repent. The message had special significance to the sinful nation of Israel as illustrated in the following parable of the fruitless fig tree. Unless there is evidence of repentance, or fruit, during the time of opportunity, the nation would be judged. Exactly what they must change their minds

about is not strictly stated in the context, however, it is obviously related to their attitudes which had led them to reject Christ thus far. Repentance, that is a change of attitude, mind or disposition which would cause them to forsake their disbelief in Jesus as Messiah and Savior, is as much as one can conclude from the passage.

Finally, Jesus' words in Mark 1:15, "Repent and believe in the Gospel," may give the clearest sense as to why Jesus preached repentance. It expressed in covenantal terms the way in which the Jews could restore their relationship with God through the Messiah. The command to repent reminded them of covenant obligations that had been neglected, while the command to "believe in the Gospel" looked forward to the work of Jesus the Messiah and the faith that would appropriate that work for salvation.

What about the preaching of the apostles? Have I lost you? Are you still with me? The first example of apostolic preaching of repentance is Peter's sermon recorded in Acts 2:38. There he responds to the crowd's question of, "What shall we do?" in verse 37 with the words, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Notice that the text describes the emotional state of the people: they were cut to the heart, *katenghasan* is the word. This word connotes a "sharp pain connected with anxiety and remorse." This is a description of their deepest innermost feelings. Now, keep that in mind at this point. He has told them what they've done and they are grieving over this. Peter's admonition to repent therefore must certainly address another kind of response besides emotional grief. Clearly, the people were compelled by feelings of remorse to seek an avenue of change and it was for this reason that Peter says "repent," or in other words, "change your mind and attitude about Jesus Christ." But how were these devout Jewish men brought to this point? This is the crucial question.

There are clues in the contacts about the focus of their repentance. First of all, Peter addresses the specific sin of Israel's crucifixion of the Lord Jesus in verse 36. In context then, verse 37 reveals that the source of their remorse was the mistake of crucifying the Messiah. Now they must repent or change their minds about who he is and change their disposition toward him. Charles Talbert comments, "The condemnation of Christ had been done in ignorance, but in raising Jesus, God showed the Jews that they had made a mistake: they had crucified the Christ. Now, however, the Jews are given a chance to change their minds, in other words to repent." Dwight Pentecost agrees and writes, "They had already come to regret their sin, now Peter urges them on to a change of mind about Christ. Of course, repentance to the exclusively Jewish addressees had special significance in that they had to change their attitude about their own righteousness in contrast to God's provided in the Messiah."

Notice that the progression in Acts 2:37-38 is expressed by 2 Corinthians 7:10, where it says, "For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation." From their sorrow, the Jews were led to the point of repentance and being repentant and being repentant, get that, they were repentant, they believe in Christ, their remorse over the sin of crucifying Christ moved them toward a true repentance which focused on their thinking about Christ. Simply put, Peter challenged these heartbroken Jews to change their minds and attitudes

about Messiah, a change that, if real, would then lead to their outward identification with Christ through baptism, the natural result of their new spiritual birth.

Another passage cited by Lordship proponents is Acts 14:15. There Paul tells the inhabitants of Lystra, "We preach to you that you should turn from these vain things to the living God." This passage is usually correlated with 1 Thessalonians 1:9 where Paul says of the Thessalonians, "you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Now notice the wording here, notice the difference in the wording. Lordship proponents attempt to argue that this defines repentance but their argument is severely weakened by the fact that no form of the word "repentance" is used in either passage. More importantly, the verb "turn or turned" is *epistrepho* which is never translated "repent" in the English New Testament. Had this been what Paul wanted to say, he would have used *metanoeo*. So what was Paul saying in these passages? He was focusing on the desired and actual result and the outer manifestation of the implied inner repentance and faith of his subjects. Thus the turning is related to, but distinct from, what caused it.

Conclusion: is repentance a condition for receiving eternal life? This is what you've been waiting for, right? Yes, if it is repentance or changing one's mind about Jesus Christ. No, if it means to be sorry for sin or even to resolve to turn from sin, for these things will not save.

Is repentance a precondition to faith? No, though a sense of sin and the desire to turn from it may be used by the Holy Spirit to direct someone to the Savior and his salvation. Repentance may prepare the way for faith, but it is faith that saves, not repentance unless repentance is understood as a synonym for faith or changing one's mind about Christ.

What about public confession? This is the second part of what I'm supposed to talk on. Did I go through that fast enough for you? Notice what Lewis Sperry Chafer says here. I think this is a very insightful comment. "The ambition to secure apparent results and the sincere desire to make decisions for Christ to be definite have prompted preachers in their general appeals to insist upon a public confession of Christ on the part of those who would be saved." Now, listen to what he says here, "To all practical purposes and in the majority of instances, these confessions are in the minds of the unsaved," and that's what we're concerned about here, "coupled with saving faith and seem, as presented, to be of equal importance with that faith."

Now, I'm not here, again, to pick on anybody but just by way of illustration consider Billy Graham's ministry. Consider all the times that he gets up and he goes to these, you know, stadiums that are just filled sometimes with 100,000 people and he makes an appeal, "Come down to the front to accept Christ." Somebody gets out of their seat, they come down to the front and they think, again, we're talking about the unsaved here, they think that because they have come down to the front, they think that because they prayed a prayer after someone, that this means they are saved. And follow up work, of course, shows that in many instances all these wonderful decisions that have been made, for some reason, disappear. Nobody knows what happens to them. They're gone. And so I think this is a point Chafer is trying to address here is that in the mind of the unsaved,

they're not, you may actually be saying something correctly but the way you're presenting it is in such a way that they are hearing, you say, "If you'll just come down to the front, we're going to have one more verse of 'Just as I am.' You come down to the front."

They're hearing that and associating that with meaning that, "If I go down to the front, if I pray a prayer, I'm now saved," and, of course, that's not true. Now, I'm not saying don't have invitations but what I am saying is if you're going to have an invitation and that's your methodology, you need to be absolutely certain that you have some way to take those individuals off to the side and you need to sit down with them and you need to thoroughly explain what being a Christian is all about, how you get saved. They need to understand that before they leave. And I was raised up in the southern Baptist church and I can say from experience that that's not the case typically. Now, I haven't been a southern Baptist for some time so maybe that's changed. I don't know.

But two passages most often used to justify public confession are Matthew 10:32-33 and Romans 10:9 and here they are. "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." How many have you heard that before? You know, you see, you must confess Christ. There it is, plain as day. Then Romans 10:9, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." Again, you know, the Roman's Road, the whole point of the Roman's road is to get them to this point, right?

The weight of New Testament passages, some 150, reject the notion that public confession of the Savior is part of the Gospel message and therefore a requirement for salvation. How then are we to understand Matthew 10:32-33? Here again, I was raised up at Tyndale so we take it in context. Does that make sense to anyone? If you want to understand what something says, you take it in context. In Matthew 10:32-33, the Lord was not challenging unbelievers, hear me, but his own disciples with regard to the commission he gave them to go to the lost sheep of Israel. Due to the hostility of the Jewish religious leaders and the Gentile world in general, they would be placed at risk. They are warned that if people despised and persecuted the Savior, the disciples too could expect the same. Jesus then encouraged them against fear and he challenged them to confess him before men and warned them against denying him before men.

Now, think about this for a minute. This is just plain old common sense. If you had been one of the 12 disciples, you'd been following Jesus around and you'd been observing what had been going on, probably the number one thing you'd notice besides the miracles was the opposition. Do you think so? And when Jesus said, "Okay, now I'm going to send you guys out." What would be your first thought? "Ah, well, I don't mind the miracle part of that too much but I'm not so sure about the other part of that." Kind of sounds like today, doesn't it? You know, we want the miracles but we don't want the suffering and the persecution that goes with it. Well, they are no different than we are, brethren. They were men just like us. So Jesus had to take the time to charge them. This was imperative.

It is clear that the challenge and warning in this context refer primarily to the commission of the disciples and, secondarily by application, to the responsibility of all believers to be

witnesses of the Savior. Again, I can't help it, I was weaned on Tyndale theology and Tyndale seminary and we had drilled into us hermeneutics, hermeneutics, hermeneutics, hermeneutics. And one of the things that hermeneutics tells us is that Scripture has one interpretation. One. It may have many applications but it has one interpretation. So therefore to go to a passage like this and say, "See, here it is. Here it is, this is clearly a requirement for salvation," is disingenuous and it's just wrong. Was I soft enough on that?

Let me interject a comment here. I had an individual tell me this past week what they thought was going to be a bit of a correction to me and the comment they made was, they were actually talking about me and they said, "Well, you know, Jim McGowan, he's a little bit aggressive." The next thing he said was, "Well, you know, he's been influenced by Dr. Couch." And that was said in a negative light and I thought, "Okay, I've learned something."

It is clear that the challenge and warning, again, is to all believers to be witnesses for the Savior. What about Romans 10:9-10? Now, this is going to be a bit wordy here. I would encourage you not to try to write this down, just get the presentation if you want to. In order to understand this passage, again, we have to go back to context, alright? If we're going to talk about Romans 10:9-10, we must go back to context so let me give you a quick outline of Romans 10.

1. The prayer and desire for Israel's salvation is in verse 1.
2. The problem of Israel's self-righteousness in verses 2 through 3.
3. Provision of righteousness through faith alone in verses 4 through the 8 and that breaks out to Christ's termination of the law for righteousness in verse 4; Moses's declaration about those who practiced the law in verse 5; God's initiation of salvation by grace through the message of faith in verses 6 through 8.
4. Paul's description of the grace message in verses 9 through 13 which breaks out into the message described in verse 9; the message explained in verses 10 through 13. That's really important.
5. The priority of preaching the faith alone message in verses 14 through 17.
6. Finally, the witness of Deuteronomy and Isaiah in verses 19 through 21.

That's just a quick dirty outline there. Again, don't try to write that down.

If we just take a quick overview of Romans 10:8-14, just those verses, this might help us understand the passage. Romans 10:8, "But what does it say? The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith which we are preaching." And what is he saying here? Well, this points to the initiative of God's grace in bringing salvation to men. So we have the availability of salvation mentioned first.

Then we come to man's responsibility in verse 9, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." In the first half of the verse in the context which deals with Israel's rejection of Jesus, it means to acknowledge to God that Jesus is Yahweh of the Old Testament and is therefore

an affirmation of his deity. That's really important. The second half of the verse we're saying believe in the resurrection which confirms one's faith in all that the resurrection proves.

Then we come down to, I think that should be, the next section is an explanation of verse 9 so Paul sets forth man's responsibility and then he comes down to verse 10 and he explains it. Romans 10:10a, "For with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness." 10b, "and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." Notice in 10a he says with the heart, in other words, from the inner man, man believes. He puts his trust in the person of Christ who imparts his righteousness and salvation. You're saved right there. Did you hear that? You're saved right there. Then in verse 10b, "with the mouth he confesses," meaning he acknowledges or he affirms to God his faith in Christ resulting in salvation. Now, again, who is he affirming this to? He's affirming it to God. He's not coming down to make a public profession before the body, right?

Then we move to the justification from the Old Testament in verses 11 through 13. In verse 11 through 12a, the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek." And here he's explaining faith. Come across the screen there, verse 11 through 12a quotes Isaiah 28:16 to show salvation comes by faith, man's first responsibility. This explains the "whoever" in verse 11, that is, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

Back to the left side in Romans 10:12b through 13, "for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon him, for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." This explains confession. Come back to the right side, verses 12b through 13, it explains the other part of man's responsibility, the confession of the mouth. It means to call on the name of the Lord.

So the question then comes in. Paul says, "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Here again, the two key ideas, belief and calling on the Lord, are linked together and this corresponds to belief and confessing with the mouth in verses 9 through 10.

Conclusion: just as good works are faith made visible, so confessing Christ is faith made audible. Public confessing of Christ is not a condition of salvation but it is the natural result of salvation, "For whoever shall believe on him shall not be ashamed."

What about confession of sin? I don't know how any clearer I can state it than I'm stating it right here. Note Scripture requires confession of sin as a condition of salvation in this age. The book of 1 John, written to believers and often appealed to by Lordship salvationists, reveals that as believers we are in a relationship of fellowship with the Father. This realization should bring joy to our hearts. He says in 1 John 1:3-4, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

In verses 6 and 7, John also clearly delineates that sinfulness in the believer hinders every phase of his walk. This sinfulness, if left unresolved, makes ongoing fellowship with Christ and his fellow believer, impossible. By failing to deal with his sin, the believer robs himself of personal joy and blessing. And by the way, that was not a Catholic, that wasn't, you know, blessing in hindsight. I was showing you the relationship there. I actually thought I saw some paleness back in the back. In verses 6 and 7, he says, "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth, but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

Lewis Sperry Chafer again says, "A regenerate person who has wandered from fellowship may return to his place of blessing by a faithful confession of his sin. 1 John 1:9 is addressed only to believers, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'" Being raised up as a southern Baptist, we used this as a salvation passage all the time. All the time.

Now, I love this example here. The prodigal son presents an illustration of the way in which a Christian may return to fellowship and blessing. Although in a far country, he was no less a son than he was in his own home. There is no indication that his return was conditioned upon either sacrifice or atonement. What is stated is that he was welcomed back into fellowship with his father based upon his confession, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Likewise, confession of sin is the only requirement demanded of a sinning saint. Sin in a believer, of necessity, interrupts his fellowship with a holy God, though not his salvation.

Chafer again says, "When fellowship with God is broken by sin, it can be reestablished only by a frank admission of guilt and failure on the part of the sinning one. To refute the confession is to contend that right is wrong and wrong is right, which would be a contradiction of the very nature and character of God. Confession reopens the way of fellowship with God and of access to God, but it does not in any way atone for sin. Propitiation for sin was perfectly accomplished at the cross."

I'm almost done. What is the distinction between a requirement for salvation and a result of salvation? There is a clear distinction between a requirement for salvation and a result of salvation. The two should not be confused with each other. A willingness and desire for Christ to rule over one's life are prompted by the new spiritual life imparted by the Holy Spirit when he regenerates the believer at salvation. The unsaved do not and cannot submit to divine rule. Just as a tree cannot have apples unless it already has the nature of an apple tree, so a person cannot have a willingness and desire to submit to Christ's rule unless he already possesses the new nature received by regeneration at salvation. Thus, even the willingness and desire to submit to Christ's rule are the result of, and not a requirement for salvation.

"Outside the doctrines related to the person and work of Christ," this is Lewis Sperry Chafer again, "there is no truth more far-reaching in its implications and no fact more to

be defended than that salvation in all its limitless magnitude is secured, so far as human responsibility is concerned, by believing on Christ as Savior. To this one requirement no other obligation may be added without violence to the Scriptures and total disruption of the essential doctrine of salvation by grace alone. Only ignorance or reprehensible inattention to the structure of a right soteriology will attempt to intrude some form of human works with its supposed merit into that which, if done at all, must, by the very nature of the case, be wrought by God alone and on the principle of sovereign grace."

And here is the recommended reading from where I got my information. I'll leave it up there for a minute for you to look at and also some websites you can go to. Let me say just quickly that I have never had an original thought in my mind from the day I was born so I don't want anyone to think that anything I presented here was from me. I stole this from a bunch of other people, okay? And I've tried to be very careful to put all that information here for you if you needed it, all right? Thank you.

I thought I just gave a disclaimer.

Yeah, again, I had to give a 40,000 foot view. I really couldn't get as in-depth as perhaps I would have liked to. But, again, let me just say that no matter who gets up in front of you here and speaks, it's imperative on your part that you verify the information; that you go back and you check it out for yourself. Don't look at anyone standing up here as the one who is the be-all and the end-all. We're just in the best of our ability trying to impart the information as best as we understand it.

Go ahead.

I still think that you're talking to a specifically Jewish audience and I think repentance in that context has to have a covenantal idea to it and consequently repent, I think in the broad picture is going to have to be in terms of what they believe about who Jesus is. Now, you know, I haven't specifically looked at that so I'm just kind of giving you this off the top of my head and I apologize for that. There may be someone else out here who could address that perhaps even better than I. You know, when I was asked to do this, I was real comfortable doing it because I knew Dr. Leitner was going to be here. He was going to talk on Lordship salvation and I knew that there was another individual who was an expert on Lordship salvation and I was going to pull from them if I could and guess what happened? They left so I apologize for that.

That's a good point. Good point.

Maybe we should ask you to come up and answer questions.

That's a very good question. I can only give you my opinion on this. I really am of the opinion that the real root problem is that these individuals feel like it is incumbent upon them, for whatever reason, to defend God. I really believe that's what's at the root of this because they see people coming down and supposedly making professions of faith, supposedly asking Christ in their heart, and then they are falling away and they can't deal

with that. Alright, they don't want to deal with that so they want to defend God and by trying to defend God, they put all of the emphasis on the person. You see, they take the keeping power of God out of the picture and they put it on the person, you have to keep yourself. Now, they would deny that, they would argue with me on that, but I think that that is very, very much at the root of the issue but that's just my opinion.

That's a good question. I would agree with Dr. Leitner that the idea that we would have people think that they must confess sin to be saved is getting the cart before the horse kind of a thing because we have the finished work of Christ on the cross. Once Jesus said, "It is finished," he paid for sin and to tell someone that they need to ask for forgiveness of their sins, who is not a believer now, okay, we're talking about an unbeliever, to ask an unbeliever to ask for forgiveness of their sin is to totally misconstrue what salvation is in my opinion. What is the good news? Maybe that's the real issue. The good news is not that, well, how should I say this? The good news is that there has been a provision made available for you, alright. So you'd not have to, as the Jews do, you know, every year, the day of atonement, what they're supposed to do is go back over the previous year and outline, list out, everyone they've offended, everyone they've done something wrong to, every person they've cheated, whatever. Today, I'm talking about. This is what they're supposed to do and then once they have done that, then they're supposed to go to each one of these individuals, now, can you see this happening, right? And then once they've done that, then they can come and they can find forgiveness and that's what, in a sense, what we're telling people. And Jesus said that the only condemnation upon man right now is what? What is the condemnation? That they do not believe, so to tell people that they have to, you know, repent of sins and confess sins is totally backwards in my mind.

Now, I think that when we ask Christ into our heart, if I can use that terminology, I'm ex-Baptist, what are we doing? I mean, first of all, we're acknowledging our belief in Christ. I mean, that's a transition that's an invisible transition that takes place in the heart but then David said, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so who he has redeemed." It's going to be the natural outcome, I think, of your salvation that you're going to then suddenly have a sense of what God is doing in your heart in terms of sin and those kind of things. I'm sorry, I sort of ramble around a lot. I apologize.

While I think too that when we present the Gospel to people that we should also tell them that that as Paul says, that we're new creatures in Christ Jesus and we need to maybe elaborate a little bit about what that means. To invite someone to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and then to leave them to their own devices is to invite failure; is to invite error or whatever else. We need to as part of the Gospel presentation when someone does make a profession of faith, we need to make sure that they understand that they are now a new creature in Christ. You know, there is an information transfer that has to take place. You're a newborn babe. You don't know what's going on.