Simple Faith ReGroup 10-20-2026

Allistar Begg – video clip: The thief on the Cross -or- The Guy in the middle

Major on the Majors:

I was an insurance agent in the mid 1990's and called on a believing farm couple. We talked extensively about the Lord and he asked me to call on his brother and sister-in-law to sell Insurance. The farmer and his wife were easy going and just sweet to talk with- but his brother was a different story.

His brother met me at the door, led me to an easy chair and handed a big King James Bible. He and his wife then began to interrogate me. They both drilled me with question after question, some which made little sense, and are lost to memory.

But the big question for him seemed to be if I was baptized - which I said I had been as an adult- in a lake. That made him happy and sat back in his chair and seemed to relax. I then said baptism didn't save me but was a public demonstration of my new life in Christ. I asked if the thief on the cross was baptized and he went nuts. He stammered for an answer and I think decided I was a lost cause. He didn't buy insurance and I didn't ask.

When I was saved at age 18, I understood 4 things:

- *God loved me*
- *I was a sinner and headed to hell*
- *Jesus gave His life to save me from hell*
- *My only hope for salvation was in Jesus' death on the cross*

Basically, that's the *4-Spiritual Laws* via Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU). It's the plan of salvation laid out in a simple and understandable way.

The first verse I read and really understood was (John 3:16):

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. That whosoever may believe in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life."

In Summary:

Forgiveness from sin is a *gift of God* and not a result of our good works.

Gifts are free -and we contribute *nothing*.

We are saved by Grace through Faith -Christ died on a cross in my place. It took His own blood to pay the price of my sins.

"… 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; [10] for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

Not going to Hell was my priority when saved at 18. I got a new understanding for Christ's death on the cross, felt different about life, and I had a peace I'd not known before. But a life of service to Christ wasn't much of a consideration yet.

I didn't clean my act up to be saved. I was a sinner and that's how God met me. Like the old Hymn "Just as I am" -that's how I came to the cross.

I drank out of a glass- not a fire hose. *Believe in Christ and be saved.*

A fly in the ointment:

"Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor. " (Ecc.10:1)

I was confident God was happy with me. I was saved and my future assured. But some years later, *new information* was presented that made me wonder.

Our pastor told my Sunday school class "*If Jesus is not your Lord, then He's not your Savior*"

The class came unglued, women started crying, nobody knew what to do. One girl in tears said she'd thought she was a Christian but now realized she wasn't. I didn't know what to think. My pastor, the man I looked at for guidance and truth was saying some pretty wild stuff.

The church split, 6-pastors walked out the door and hundreds of members followed. The church never recovered. Families were torn apart, husbands and wives fought while their kids watched. Many never went back to church again.

A Simple Prayer?

I was told "*A simple prayer doesn't save you – that's easy believe-ism*".

To truly be saved; *I must turn my back on the old life and embrace a new life of devotion and service to God*. Anything else was just *fire insurance*.

I must make Jesus the Lord of my Life, because if He's not my Lord, then He's not my Savior.

(The reality is, Jesus is Lord. I don't make Jesus Lord- He is Lord! I do nothing but place my hope in salvation by His work on the cross)

Altering the formula:

The new formula miss reads **Eph 2:8-10** - *focusing on vs 10 and adding it to the mix, which* ***nullifies*** *Grace*: Grace + Faith + *Good Works* = Salvation.

> ***"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— [9] not by works, so that no one can boast.***
>
> ***[10] For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph 2:8-10)***

(Good works are evidence of salvation after the fact. They are nothing but filthy rags before we are saved)

> ***Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Mt 7:22-24)***

Nothing Added- Nothing Taken Away:

The perfect plan is just that- *perfect*. Nothing added, nothing taken away.

Paint formulas are very specific. Specific tints mixed in exact amounts make the perfect color. Change the formula and you screw up the final product.

Same with a recipe for a cake. My previous church printed a cook book of recipes shared by church members. One "saint" shared her prize cake recipe she was famous for. But when her friends tried to make it, they never could get it right, even when followed to the letter. The reason was because she'd *intentionally* left out a key ingredient. No jewel in her crown!

Paul calls out Peter:

Peter and Paul are probably the 2 most influential men in the New Testament. Both were outspoken and without question dynamic men of God. Peter walked with Christ and first proclaimed Him as the "**Son of God**":

*13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples,
"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist;
and others, Elijah; but still others, [b]Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."
15 He *said to them,
"But who do you say that I am?"
16 Simon Peter answered, "**You are [j]the Christ, the Son
of the living God.**"
17 **And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona,
because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven**.
18 I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the
gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Mathew 16:13-18)*

But years later in Galatians 2, the Apostle Paul sought Peter out and publicly rebuked him:

*11 But when Cephas (Peter) came to Antioch, I (Paul) opposed him to his face, because he
[a]stood condemned.
12 For prior to the coming of certain men from [b]James, he used to eat
with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof,
fearing [c]the party of the circumcision.
13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with
the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.
14 But when I saw that
they were not [d]straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the
presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it
that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?[j]*

*15 "We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;
16 **nevertheless
knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in
Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by
faith in Christ and not by the works of [j]the Law no
flesh will be justified**.
17 But if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have
also been found sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!
18 For if I rebuild
what I have once destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.
19 For through the Law I
died to [k]the Law, so that I might live to God.
20 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is
no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live
by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
21 **I do not nullify
the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died
needlessly**." (Galatians 2:11-21)*

Cain and Able -Humility vs Self Righteousness:

The first act of murder in the Bible was between 2 brothers, the children of Adam and Eve, Cain and Able. They represent two fundamentally different approaches to life and faith.

"Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast." (Gen 4:2-5)

Abel walked in humility, offering his best to God and trusting in the Lord's righteousness.
Cain embodied self-righteousness and self-will. He wanted God's blessing but refused to submit to God's requirements.
We bring nothing to the table when we stand before God. His Son's blood covers our sin- *and nothing else*.

The Perfect Formula - *Jesus plus Nothing!*

Salvation's formula can't be messed with. You don't add to it and you don't take anything away.

God's plans are always perfect. We might question them, and we may not understand them. but they are not to be changed without bad results.

(Example: David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem on an ox cart in 2 Samuel 6)

God knows His children, as a Shepard knows his flocks. They are sealed by His Holy Spirit for Eternity.

Jesus is the Lamb of God. He is the perfect sacrifice for sin. Holy and blameless without blemish. His death on the cross is everything we need.