

# Explaining Once Saved, Always Saved

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I do know we have some first-time guests with us tonight actually here physically in the house and I want to welcome you to probably one of the most unusual Wednesday night church services you may have ever been a part of and everything that happens here tonight is all y'all's fault. That's right y'all are to blame for everything that happens tonight because if it were not for your questions, we would not chased the rabbits we chase. Now, I'm sounding goofy when I say that, it's really not your fault, I'm just grateful that you have the questions.

In this box before me there are almost 100 cards that are in here. These are questions that have been submitted by email, by Facebook, by handwritten communication. These are concerns that you have, others have. People in other countries have emailed us and said, "I'm curious to know what does the Bible say about this." We call tonight "Ask Jeff" but really I don't have a clue. All I am is the conduit to the word of God. Really, I guess we should rename it "Ask the Bible." But that being said, we're going to pick out a question and we'll go from there and as many of y'all know, the most entertaining part of Wednesday night is not what comes out of this box, it's when your hand goes in the air and says, "Well, what about this? Or how does this approach this?"

So, without further ado, I will shake it up, pick one out. Okay, why is there already laughter? I haven't even read it yet. Oh, what I put it back in? Whoops, dropped that one. No. Okay, this has several questions. It says, "Are you once saved, always saved? And if the answer is yes, what happens to those Christians that know the word of God and walk away?" Now, this is a great question and it also brings up a little commentary before we go to the word of God. Those of you that are here faithfully every Wednesday night, you know at some level we have addressed this question at some point. I want to make something very clear: you may have been here when we addressed this question, somebody else may not have been here when this question has been addressed. Let me say that on this issue, of all the questions I get asked about the Bible, this is the number 1 question people ask me. This is it. This is the number 1 question. So, does it surprise you that it keeps coming up in various formats?

So the question is: are you once saved, always saved? I drew this a couple of weeks ago but I want to draw it again. Do y'all remember my line theology? This is my line theology and on that this side of the line, this is somebody who is lost and this is somebody who is saved. So the question to anybody but particularly tonight when we go to the word of

God is: if you have a person who is lost and the Bible says we have all sin, the wages of sin is death, so we're going to have lost person X here, the big question we've got to ask is, everybody here acknowledges and admits that we start off over here, the question is: how do we get across the line? Because if the question is asked: are you once saved, always saved, well, the question we have to ask is: okay, if you're over here, are you always over here? The first question you've got to ask is: what does it take to get over there? Because determining on what it takes to get over there determines what it takes to stay there.

Alright, so, the question is: what does it take to get across the line? I believe the Bible is very clear both in Romans 10:9-10, the famous John 3:16. The Bible is very clear that faith in Jesus Christ alone is what gets us across the line. Now, I think the reason this question about once saved, always saved comes up is because I think in the back of our minds or even in the forefront of our minds, would you just admit that sometimes that doesn't feel like it's enough? I mean, sometimes we say, "Okay," these verses, by the way, they say Jesus alone, okay? Well, if getting across the line, now I say the word "if," if getting across the line is Jesus plus something, then if this something is removed from the equation, then you have a valid argument to say that this position over here has been voided or lost. Do you see how important this line is here? If Jesus plus faithfulness, if Jesus plus something. I like to call this biblical math. Okay, if Jesus plus something equals salvation or Jesus minus something equals salvation or Jesus times something or Jesus divided by something equals salvation, then we're all in a mess, every one of us. I would declare biblically speaking, the Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, that the way that you or I or any human being gets across the line is that a sinner, we call upon Jesus to be our Savior.

So, what is it that holds us here? If it did not take our works to get us there, then how can we say it allows our works to retract us back? You see, one of my favorite examples and some of you have heard this: there is a group of people who like to advocate their "view of salvation." They typically dress in white shirts, black ties and ride bicycles. Are you all familiar with this group of individuals? Maybe they've stopped by your house. Some years ago and some of you have heard this story, I had a group of faithful missionaries who were coming to my house every Monday. My wife will testify that she was a schoolteacher at the time when she came home and she saw the bicycle and she just kept on driving. She didn't interrupt. I'm not kidding when I tell you I had a whiteboard in my house, we put the whiteboard up every Monday evening and we had Bible study for hours because you may not know, they go "on the clock at 9 AM." They don't get off till 9 PM so they've got all night long, so to speak, and the longer their visit, the better they are so they don't mind staying so I don't mind keeping them, so to speak.

So as we're going through all this, I had these 2 missionaries, I don't want to say I was playing the devil's advocate but I had them almost convinced that I was interested in what they were selling. Now, you've got to think about this for a moment: at this time I was a pastor of a small little Baptist church, can you imagine the accolades these young men would have gotten if a Baptist pastor would have converted? I mean, think about that for a moment. I am like the prize of their missionary journey here and so I had them almost

convinced because this is what I asked them and we can get into all the doctrine of what they believed, but I asked them, I said, "Okay, in order for me to go to heaven, in order for me to go across the line, I first have to believe in Jesus Christ, right?" They said, "Absolutely." I said, "I've got that one taken care of." I said, "What's the number 2 thing I've got to do?" They said, "You have to be baptized by one of our official people." I said, "Hmm, that's a problem." They said, "Why?" I said, "Because I haven't been." They said, "Okay." I said, "Let me ask y'all a question, are you eligible to perform that baptism?" "Oh," you talk about it was like saying sic 'em to a bulldog, they got so excited. They said, "We can." I said, "Well, I know this is going to shock you with my height but I can actually fit in my bathtub." I said, "Could we actually use my bathtub to have my baptism?" They actually asked this question, they said, "Can you get completely submerged in the bathtub?" I said, "Look at me, this is not a problem. We've got this covered." They said, "We could do it." I said, "So you're here to tell me, I already believe in Jesus, if I get submersed completely underwater by you in my bathtub, I've got step 2 taken care of?" Oh, they were salivating. I mean, literally salivating. They said, "Yes!" I said, "Let's just suppose tonight that we do this tonight." I mean, they're salivating.

Water. This makes great tv. Okay. I love messing with you, it's so fun. So I said...we're fixing to have fun with Brother George. Watch this. Push the proverbial pause button for just a moment and just work with me here. We're going to have some fun with him, okay? He'll be back, don't worry. Maybe. He's going to the choir room. I know where he's going. I'm glad I didn't wait on him. Well, is he like this at home, Miss Vera? Where did he go, the store? He can't drive. Oh well, we'll just keep going. I don't know. Brother, what took you so long? Oh goodness. I warned you visitors. Oh, those are nice and cold. Here you go, we'll make some decoration here. Here we go. Okay.

So, back to my story of my Mormon missionaries. So they're in my house. They are convinced that I can be completely submerged. They are also convinced that for me, Jeff Meyers, to go across the line, they believe, now, I don't believe the word of God defends this, they believe that you have to believe in Jesus number 1, number 2, they believe that you have to be baptized by one of them and there's a third element. The third element is that your works have to remain pure, okay? That's the official doctrine of what we know as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or what we know as the Mormons. That's their basic doctrine. So I had them convinced I'm ready, I'm excited. I can get number 2 taken care of right here, my second qualification.

So I said, "Okay guys, before we go back to the bathroom," I said, "I have a very important question to ask you." They say, "Sure." I said, "When people get baptized, do they get excited?" They said, "Oh man, they get thrilled. They feel cleansed." They gave me this big speech. I said, "But I have a feeling I'm going to get real excited." I said, "But here's my problem." They said, "What?" I said, "So you baptize me, I go completely under the water and all is good, right?" "Yeah." I said, "I get so excited when I come back here in the living room that I'm kind of at a half-jog, kind of skipping, I stomp my toe on the kitchen table and I let out a string of cuss words, then what happens?" They said, "That's not good." I said, "How not good is that?" I said, "Would I have to 'repent' and begin again?" They said, "Yeah, you would have voided your salvation." I said, "Then I

guess we've got to go back to the bathtub, right?" They said, "No." I said, "Well, why not? If I had to go into the bathtub to cross the line the first time, wouldn't it make sense that I would have to go the second time as well?" And for the first time in my life, I saw a group of Mormon missionaries who didn't have an answer. They didn't understand because they had never been questioned that, and this is still the original question, when you get across the line, is there anything that can void your standing when you're there?

Now, real quickly, let's go to John 10, standard verse. John 10:28, I'm sure many of you are familiar with this passage. John 10:28, it says, "And I give unto them," Well, let me back it up here, verse 26, "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Let me tell you the importance of John 10:28, the importance of that passage here is it says that our ability to be plucked out, our ability to stay is the fact that it is the hand of Jesus that carries us across the line, not our works, not our experiences, not our this and not our that. So, I believe what's important about this question and people always say once saved, always saved is because as the question alludes to: what about those who claim to go across the line but years later their lives look a lot like the other side of the line where they supposedly came from? What do you do about that story? And I've heard some of my friends that advocate that you can lose your salvation. They say, "Well, that passage says that nobody can pluck you out of his hand but if you want to, you can jump out of it." Well, aren't you somebody? Have you ever thought about that? It says "and nobody can pluck them." You are somebody, right? So that being said, I feel the Bible is very clear that if we're in his hand, we're in his hand, okay?

Before we go to 1 John 3, go ahead and go to 1 John 3, I want to give you a research project. 1 John 3 as we make our way over there. The pages are sticking together. Actually, 1 John 2. As we go to 1 John 2, I want to give you some biblical words for salvation. Did you know and please hear me clearly, work with me here: did you know that nobody in the New Testament, nobody becomes a Christian. You say, "What do you mean?" The phrase "become a Christian." People say, "I became a Christian when I was 18." That phrase "became a Christian" is not in the Bible. I know what you mean. Let me give you some of the words that are in the Bible. We've got the word "saved," right? "I was saved. I was born again." How about this one: redeemed? How about reconciled? How about this one: bought? You've been bought with a price. Any other good Bible words out there to describe salvation? Those are the words that are used: we're redeemed, we're reconciled, we are born again, we're saved. Lots of people in the Bible are born again, saved, redeemed, reconciled and bought. I'm going to give you an opportunity tonight, go home and read the entire New Testament and find anybody who is unsaved or becomes unborn again or becomes unredeemed, unreconciled or unbought. Anybody. There is no reference anywhere in Scripture to anybody who becomes un any of those. There is no mention anywhere.

So when you get to 1 John 2, I think this helps address the other question of what about those who "walk away"? The exact question is: what happens to those Christians that know the word of God and walk away? Alright, 1 John 2, beginning in verse 18, "Little

children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists," plural, "whereby we know that it is the last time." Listen to verse 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Three times it says that those who departed were never actually a part of.

Now, I have a phrase that I like to use that if you can say it 3 times real fast you're pretty impressive: a faith that fickles before the finish was false from the first. I'll slow that down: the faith that fickles before the finish was false from the first. Now, in the Gospel of Mark 4 and there are other places, Jesus tells the parable of the sower. Do y'all remember that parable? Remember that there are 4 seeds that are dispersed. A little Sunday school Bible trivia here: remember what happens to the first seed? What happens to it? This is where you actually interact. It's okay. What now? Scattered on the road and then what happens? It just, the birds come and it's gone. In fact, they never plant, is that a good way to say it? Actually in Jesus' interpretation, it says the devil comes and steals it, right? So the devil steals it. Alright, does anybody remember the second one? Rocky ground, very good. Remember what it does, it shoots up fast. It shoots up but it withers. Does anybody remember this phrase that Jesus uses? It has no root. There you go. No root. The third one becomes unfruitful because of the thorns. Do you remember the 2 thorns mentioned? The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. Now, it says that it becomes unfruitful then the last one is fruitful. It says some 30, some 60 and some 100 fold.

You're asking, "Why is this so important to the analogy?" Well, the importance is this: we all know that seed number 4 here, that's good, right? The fruitful 30, 60, 100, man, that's great. We really don't even struggle with the third one. It became unfruitful, the cares of the world but there's no mention of it being uprooted, there's no mention of it going away. It's just struggling with the environment around it so pretty much everybody says, "Yep, that one's good." Here's the interesting 1: number 2 is the one that I find intriguing. It shoots up, it's beautiful to look at, it is impressive but it withers because there is no root. I think in this analogy or in this parable, I think Jesus is giving us a lot of insight to this question. What about those, now the question said that are Christians. Let me rephrase that: what about those who claim to be, presume they are, say certain things or attribute certain things? I've heard it said like this: the greatest distance of salvation for most people is 18 inches, between their head and their heart. They acknowledge facts, they acknowledge ideas, they even may acknowledge morals and ethics but there is no genuine conversion. I have an old layman preacher friend of mine in Mississippi who says this: there have been a lot of people that have been convicted but never converted. They are convicted of their sin but they've never asked Jesus to forgive them. They are convicted of their sinful life. So I think biblically speaking we've got to put the X there and, of course, obviously we put it there on number 1 because it says there was no root.

Now, why is this important to the question? Because Jesus does not even allude to the third one ceasing to exist. It just says it's unfruitful. Now, the thorns of life come up and it's choking it. You've got the thorns of the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches.

Any of y'all enjoy gardening? When the forms come up, what happens? It chokes. What happens when you weed the garden? The plant was never eliminated, right? When we lived in Georgia, Tracy and I, now don't get nervous when I use the phrase, we were part of the community garden. Not a commune, a community garden. Big difference. Well, because of my schedule, I got stuck with the job of being the weeder. That was my job. My job was periodically to go and to rip out all the weeds. When I would rip those weeds out, the corn and everything that was growing was then free to grow to what it was designed to be but it never stopped being corn. It never stopped growing, the growth was stunted. And so I think that's an important analogy that Jesus gives us that once we are rooted and his seed is in us, once that begins, that process, even though we have struggles, even though we may have times of problems, we have a root, we have growth and we have security. Now, if we believe that we cross the line by our endeavors or our works, then we're naturally going to believe that if those stop or cease, we've retracted across the line.

So questions, concerns, thoughts or issues? I know this question has got lots of them. Yes sir. Ah, that's a great question. The term being a Christian. Go to the book of Acts 11. The question was asked: where did the term "becoming a Christian" or "being a Christian" come from? Ask 11, I'm going to introduce you to the city of Antioch. By the way, the city of Antioch is in a place known as Syria, have y'all seen that in the news lately? Isn't it interesting, all the places that we see on the news have all this heavy fighting and disagreement. Those are biblical grounds. Those are the places where the Bible was established and the apostles walked. In Antioch in Acts 11, by the way, you are about 3 to 5 years after the resurrection, okay? Jesus has risen and the early church has started. The apostles are going out and in Acts 11, I was in chapter 10, sorry. Verse 26 it says, "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." So about 3 to 5 years after what we know as Pentecost, we discover that it was the Antiochians, I don't know if that's the real word but we're going to call them Antiochians. That just kind of sounds neat, doesn't it? "I'm an Antiochian." There is probably someone here from Antioch that's offended by that and please forgive me. They watch these people and they call them Christians which means imitator of Christ, behavior like Christ.

Now, I want you to back up 2 chapters to chapter 9. This is the story of Saul becoming Paul, the Apostle Paul. In verse 1 of chapter 9, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." You ask, "Why is that important?" In the very early days of Christianity, we were not called Christians. We were called "people of the way." Now, why would that be used? What did Jesus say? "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me." A few years later, the world started using the term Christian as imitator of Christ or one who acts like Christ. To your exact question when did we start using the term, "I became a Christian"? Probably for hundreds of years. I mean, I'll be honest with you, I was born again, I was saved at some time in the past but how often in a casual conversation I'll say, "You know,

I've been a Christian for 30 years." I rarely say, "I've been born again 30 years." That's the more biblical phrase, "I've been born again." But usually we say, "I became a Christian." Here's the reason that I don't like that phrase: 1. It's not in the Bible. 2. What does "become" insinuate? Process. Salvation isn't a process, salvation is an event. You don't become saved. Now, you know the analogy Jesus used in John 3, right? Being born again? The process of birth is long up until birth, correct? When birth occurs, it's snap, you're there. It is an event. Even if, ladies and I don't want to bring up bad memories but even if labor is 24 hours in length, the birth was not 24 hours. The birth was instant. It was the birth pains that were 24 hours. So you and I, just as physical men, we did not become born, we were born. Does that make sense? Does that help at all? I don't like the phrase "become a Christian" because it insinuate that it's a process, not an event.

Now, sanctification is a process, the process of holiness, the process of obedience, the process of discipleship. Just like my children were born instantly, it was a process for them to learn how to eat on their own. It was a process for them to learn how to go to the bathroom on their own. It was a process for them to learn how to put on their clothes on their own. Those are processes, correct? Don't we as parents wish they were events? They're not, they are processes but their birth was an event. Does that help at all with the question?

But it's a phrase and I mean this seriously, when somebody says, "Oh, I became a Christian when I was 10 years old," I don't chastise them and say, "You know, that's a really dumb phrase to use." I don't say that because I know what they mean, I just want to help us become a little more biblical in how we communicate things. "I was born again when I was 10. I was saved when I was 10." Typically the word "saved" is the word that connotates the clearest picture. Does that make sense?

So, any other thoughts, concerns, issues, questions? Yes sir. Yes sir. Ah, yes, apostate. Right. Okay, now, the question he is asking: he took a course in high school on biblical history, is that what you said? Biblical history and the word was "apostate." Now, interesting, the word "apostate" or "apostasy," you read some were apostate, you know it's only used one time in the whole Bible. Only once. Go to 2 Thessalonians 2, I'm glad you asked this question because I've heard people say, "Well, what if somebody commits apostasy?" Well, we only have one reference to it in the whole Bible so here we go, 2 Thessalonians 2, does anybody know what this chapter of Scripture is about? The antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition. Chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians begins, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Here it is, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day," which is the day of Christ, "shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." Sir, that phrase "falling away" is the word "apostasy" in Greek. That's where we get it. So, let's go back to verse 3 and to your question, I'm going to put that word "apostate" or "apostasy" in there, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come an apostasy, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

Now, what's interesting is about becoming an apostate, the word is only used in reference to the end times right before Jesus comes back, okay? It's also the phrase used right before the coming of the antichrist and the word "apostate" or "apostasy" really, if you really drilled down deep means "one declares they never were." So if somebody is an apostate, they never were what they claimed to be. An apostate isn't someone who was and did not become or just a little way, it's somebody who never was what they presumed they were. So I guess what I'm saying is even though your teacher advocated this, I'd go back to 1 John 2. They became, to use your terminology, they became apostate because they never were in-state. Does that help at all?

Now, the Bible does talk about backsliding. Go to the book of Jeremiah. Go to the book of Jeremiah and have some fun here. Y'all know Wednesday nights we're going to use our fingers and our thumbs and our Bibles. In the book of Jeremiah, let's go to, hmm, I'm trying to think of which chapter we want to go to. Yeah, all of them. Thank you. Let's start in chapter 2. We can read all 52 tonight? By the way, do you know Jeremiah has a chapter for every week of the year, just in case you're curious, Bible reading here. Jeremiah 2, beginning in verse 19. Now remember, let me back it up here. Verse 11 says, "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people," these are the Israelites, "have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." A very famous passage, right? Look in verse 19, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." Now, go to chapter 3, verse 6, "The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot." Verse 8, "backsliding Israel." Verse 11, "backsliding Israel." Verse 12, "backsliding Israel." Verse 14, "backsliding children." Verse 22, "backsliding." I think we get the point, right? But look at verse 22, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

"My people," the Lord calls them. Here's the difference: backsliding and I know you've probably heard this term before, backsliding has a connotation, I'm not going to draw it well but this is going to be my mountain here. Backsliding, the picture is that you've got a person on the mountain who due to a multitude of various issues that Jeremiah describes, that their position slides down. Here's the important part of this analogy though: they're still on the mountain. He calls them "my people." He says, "My children have backslidden." He doesn't say, "Those who used to be my children, they are no longer my children because they have left the mountain." He didn't say that. He said, "They have backslidden."

So to your point, sir, I think the difference is an apostate is someone who comes out and reveals they never were what they claimed to be and that a backslider is one who still is



but is not in the position they need to be. I hope that makes sense at all. I will tell you, as far as that analogy of backsliding, our family enjoys snow skiing. I know you don't snow ski a lot in Baton Rouge, that's why you have to go somewhere else. But let me tell you about snow skiing in the Meyers family. Now, I know y'all know this because of our personalities. Those of you who have gotten to know my wife, have you noticed that Tracy, every time you see her she is very well kept, she's put together, she's very mature, she's very professional, unlike her husband at times but that's who she is. When we go snow skiing, the boys, they're all taking lessons being the boys. We go snow skiing together, we get to the top of the mountain and here's what we do: she takes off and it's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen. She goes from one side to the next. She goes back. She goes forth. She gets about halfway down the mountain and then whoosh, here I come straight down the mountain. My goal is to see how fast I can go. That's what I do. I go as fast as I can. At some point toward the bottom of the mountain I inevitably will fall and she picks up my skis behind me. That's how we go snow skiing. But here's the deal: when I fall on that mountain and I walk up to get my skis, I haven't left the mountain. I'm still on the same trail, I'm just not where I need to be or where I should be. And what does God say to them? "I will heal you. I will help you. I want you to be where you're supposed to be," versus apostate or apostasy means you never were what you said you were and it's only used one time in the Bible. I don't know if that helps at all with that question but that's a word we like to use, apostasy. It sounds theological. Apostasy. It's only used one time, not that that's not valid but...

Thoughts, concerns issues? Yes sir. No. That's correct. Right. Right and I love the verse John 5:22 says, "All judgment is left to the Son." You and I don't have the ability to judge one's eternal state. You know, I've got to tell y'all, I'm going to tell you all a good funny story about my wife. Some of you may have heard it. If you have, please forgive me. There is a phrase that I just love to use and this is going to sound really weird at first but I really like this, here's my phrase, this is mine, it says and I want this on my tombstone but Tracy doesn't, that's why I have to outlive her, okay? What I want on my tombstone, you're going to love this, sir, is and it's going to have to be a big tombstone. I'm a preacher. We've got to talk, okay? It says: we're all going to be surprised one day to find some prostitutes in heaven and some preachers in hell. Now, we're all going to be surprised to find some, that's the key word, some prostitutes in heaven and some preachers in hell. Now, here's my biblical justification for that: John 11, there is a woman caught in adultery that's brought to the feet of Jesus and I think we would all admit she receives forgiveness and grace. In Matthew 23 there are a lot of Pharisees who Jesus said, "Your converts are twice the children of hell than you even are."

So, that being said, I like to use that phrase. In fact, this was in my early days of pastoring, I liked to use it a lot. I just think it's a good phrase to use for people to realize where do you really stand here. Okay, just because you've got a horrible upbringing doesn't mean you can't be saved and just because you've lived a clean life doesn't mean you are saved, alright? So I used that phrase and we had a young family in our church that had a young man by the name of Anthony. At the time, Anthony was in the 5th grade. Anthony had a, for lack of better terms, a sleepover birthday party for his 10th birthday. A bunch of little boys came over to the house. You know what that's like, to

order pizza, typical stuff. Well, his dad is there in the kitchen and they had this little birthday party. My wife is his Sunday school teacher. That makes the story even more colorful. To which the dad to these 10 year olds says, "Okay boys, what do you all want to be when you grow up?" What do little boys say? "I want to be a police officer. I want to be a fireman. Construction." You know, all these great things. He gets to his son Anthony and he says, "Daddy, when I grow up I want to be a prostitute." Being a wise dad, he thinks on that for a moment and says, "Son, you want to be a prostitute?" He says, "Yes daddy, I do." He says, "Can you tell me why?" He said, "Well, Miss Tracy is a prostitute and she's going to heaven and I want to go to heaven too." He had equated that story as that's what you call somebody who is going to heaven. Now, thankfully about 2 weeks later I baptized the young man because he was dealing with the Lord.

Let's break all that down. I think we are going to be surprised one day who is and who isn't and it goes back to the line: it's not based on how generous you are, it's not based on how kind you are, it's not based on how much free work you give somebody. That's not what it's based on. It's based on Jesus alone. At the same time, how many times have you heard this story and maybe it's your story. If it is, that's great. How many times have you heard this story, somebody says, "Man, you're not going to believe I saw So-and-so. Man, they were in church. They had been baptized," and they go, "They got saved? Them?" Y'all know what I'm talking about, right? Because there are some of those folks they are just, excuse me, they're just hellions. For years they're hellions and they get saved and there are some folks that get up every week behind a pulpit that don't know Jesus because they don't advocate this line. They say that heaven is, to quote Dr. Jean from a couple of, if your good works outweigh your bad works, you get to go to heaven. There are a lot of people that promote that and they are preachers.

So as you're saying, we can't judge the heart, you know, we can't. I will tell y'all a funny story because I like to laugh on Wednesday night. When I was in Georgia, we had a judge there in town, his name was Judge Erwin, I don't mind using his name. Judge Erwin was funny. This guy, he did standup, a judge that did standup comedy on the side. I'm not kidding you. This guy was absolutely hysterical. Well, one day he was at this little gathering and he was doing his standup comedy routine, that was his gig that night. There were about 50 of us there and it was a special event in the community. They had gotten some leaders together and he's out there telling his stories and he looks down and he goes, "Well, I'll be." He said, "Nobody told me we were going to have a Baptist preacher here tonight," and he's pointing at me and he said, "Now, this changes my whole routine tonight because you guys are funny." And he pointed at me and I'm thinking, "Oh boy, here it comes."

So he began to tell stories and here's what he shared with them and I thought this was so profound, he said, "Let me tell you about these Baptist preachers. They are slick." He said, "Because these Baptist preachers when they do your funeral, they want to make sure are you in heaven or are you in hell because that's all that matters to these Baptist preachers." And I'm thinking to myself, "That's a pretty good analogy. That's really all that matters to us." And he said, "Let me tell you, these Baptist preachers, they are slick." He said, "They are smooth." He said, "If you ever go to a funeral and hear a Baptist

preacher that says only the good Lord knows where this soul is," he said, "That's Baptist code for he's burning in hell."

What he meant was we were trying to be cordial and nice but down deep, nobody really knows. You don't know. I don't know. I'm going to tell you, the only soul that I definitively know the eternal state of is my own. Now, I'll testify for my wife, my kids and most of y'all but down deep, if I had to sign on the dotted line how do you absolute, I do, I love Brother George even though you were late with the water. I love you and the evidence is abounding, the fruit is there, but I cannot, I don't have the ability to say for a fact this man is in heaven one day. I cannot. I believe you will be, brother. I believe it. But I cannot definitively say that. At the same time, I don't have the ability to definitively say somebody's going to be in hell even though all the evidence may be there. Remember, there are going to be some prostitutes in heaven and some preachers in hell and y'all be free to share that story with Tracy because it's true. Little Anthony.

Anything on this? Thoughts, questions, concerns, issues? I know we talk about it a lot but we're good. Uh-oh, we're going to, okay, here we go. Go for it. It's good. Go for it. Yes ma'am. Then verse 15 too. Okay. Right. Right. Okay. So, let's go to chapter 3, verse 5, we're at the church at Sardis here. It says, "He that overcometh," by the way, 1 John 4:4 says "he that overcometh is he that believes in Jesus," "the same shall be clothed in white garment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." With all due respect, you said that insinuates they can. No, it says they will not be. You see, when you go back to the book of Exodus, it describes and we could unpack all of this. I believe, the way I read the word of God and we've talked about the book of life here, when you were born, your name was in the book of life. When you die rejecting, it is taken out of the book of life. I believe what he's saying is, "I will not." I think instead of saying you could lose it, I think this verse is as much the opposite, he is giving us security that if you believe, you will not be blotted out. You don't have to worry about being blotted out. It's not a concern to you. Your name is always there. Your name will not be.

Now, to verse 15, lukewarm, "I wish you were cold or hot, lukewarm." Now, I'm glad you brought up this question. He said, "I will spew you out of my mouth." Basically it says we make God sick at his stomach. Now, I'm going to use this analogy because when we use the term "lukewarm," ma'am, we typically gravitate toward looking at it as that kind of backsliding thing, okay? So let's go with we've got hot, we've got cold and the last time I checked, everything else in the middle was lukewarm, correct? I mean, that's how I see it. What does Jesus say? "I wish you were this or I wish you were that. You are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth." So let me ask you: where on the board are you saved? Are you saved here? Here? Here? Here? Here? We know you're not saved here, right? No, the only place of salvation is here. So I think what Jesus is saying is even the lukewarmness, the pretending to be, the acting like it, that's not good. You're either for him or against him and if you're in the middle, you're actually against because he says, "I will spew you out. I will eliminate you." It does not say you were hot and became lukewarm like bathwater would. I mean, y'all have done that too, right? Pour the hot water, wait too long and go, "Yuck." I think what Jesus is saying there and, by the way, this is the church at Laodicea, he said, "I wish you were hot or cold but you're

lukewarm." I think where we have to draw the line of salvation is, back to my graph, this is the line, where do we fall on it?

Now, you say, "Well, why would he say cold and hot?" We recognize cold is that person who is just vile against the things of God, hates the things of God, speaks against the things of God. Lukewarm is that person who they are marginal, they give or take. I'll say a little joke, sometimes we might call these people the CEOs, Christmas and Easter only's. You know, religion and church for them is a matter of convenience. Again, we don't know their heart but I think what Jesus is saying here to this church at Laodicea, "The problem is you think you're okay and you're not. You think you're with me, you're not. Just because you show up to church occasionally, just because you give some money occasionally or just because you didn't tell that joke that you wanted to tell occasionally, you think you're good. No, no, no, you're lukewarm. I'm going to spew you out of my mouth."

So I think that's the analogy we have in Laodicea. Back to Sardis, by the way, here are, you opened up the can so I'm going to go there. In Revelation 2 and 3, the 7 churches, I believe and we could do a whole sermon series on this, we won't do it all tonight. I love the end of every one of these churches because it gives a promise to a believer. So real quickly, let's walk through these. Chapter 2, verse 7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Do you know what that says to me? As a child of God, I have eternity, I have the tree of life, the paradise of God. I have access to that one day. That's a promise from God.

Now, let's go down to the end of the next church, verse 11, "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." I never have to worry about hell. I never have to worry about the lake of fire. I never have to worry about that second death.

Verse 17 of chapter 2, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." That white stone, he is innocent, he is justified. I have a new name one day in heaven. These are promises that God is giving me, okay?

Now, to chapter 2, verse 26, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." Basically, we will rule with Christ one day. That's a promise.

Chapter 3, verse 5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Chapter 3, verse 12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the

name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Chapter 3, verse 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Why did I read all those? Because at the end of every one of those, I see security, I see guarantee and I see eternity in all of them. I don't see any of this, "Well, it might be and it might not be." If we are on "the right side of the line" we have a relationship with Jesus Christ, we are secure. The problem, ma'am, to your question, we've got a lot of folks right here, they are interested in the things of God, they even care some about the things of God, they even at times have interests but they are not saved. They have never admitted they are a sinner and they need Jesus to save them. They play church. They act Christian or whatever it may be and I think Jesus is saying, "Man, I am going to spew you one day."

Now, I don't know about y'all but that's just not a good analogy, is it? It's a gross analogy. I think Jesus is giving us a very accurate one. This is not good. I don't know if that helps your question at all but on the blotting out one, when you read all 7 of them, I see security in that. "I will not blot you out. I will confess you." And here's why that's important to me, okay, back to the line, this is our line, a different analogy. Okay, those of you, I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand but those of you that are saved, okay? Okay I will, how many of y'all been saved over 20 years, raise your hand, it's been over 20 years? Alright, you can put your hand down. If you've been saved over 20 years, have you ever, do not confess it out loud and don't elbow your neighbor, in the last 20 years of being saved has there ever been something you have done, something you have said or something you have thought where you thought, "Uh-oh, that might have just blown it"? Be honest. You've messed up, haven't you? Do you know what I think Revelation 3:5 is saying? "I'm not going to blot you out. I'm not going to do that. I will confess you. You are mine. You are my child."

I'm going to tell you and I know the analogy is all throughout the Bible, this is going to shock some of you but my kids are not perfect. They mess up all the time but I'm going to tell you, and mamas, you all know this. Hey, I can talk bad about them but don't you. That's right? Isn't that the truth? Because they are my children. They may have messed up, they may have blown something up literally, they may have done that but they are still mine. And the picture I get in Revelation 3:5 to your point, ma'am, is: "Do you know what? They are my kids, they messed up, they shouldn't have and they did but they are still mine. I'm not going to blot them out. I'm not going to get rid of them but to Hebrews 11 and 12, I may discipline them."

Did that help at all with the analogy? Because this is important to understand because here's the thing I want you to hear: fact, feeling. And I know I've said this before and I'm going to say it again: do not let feelings determine facts because sometimes it's indigestion. Hey, I don't know about y'all but I admit I ate a lot tonight and it was good and if I went based on feelings, we could have some issues here. There are times, I'm

going to use a very graphic analogy, okay, but it's true: if you're not willing to confess this, you're just not being honest. Do not raise your hand. There are times those of you that have been married awhile, sometimes you don't feel real married. I'm serious. Go ahead and admit it. Yeah, you know that but what's the fact? You are. There are times sometimes we don't feel much like a child of God but we are a child of God. There are times where we don't feel whatever it may be but here's the fact.

I'm going to tell you about a time when I was a senior in high school and I had this feeling that I was taller than I am. No, no, no, I know I tease you all about this. Y'all have to work with me here. You see, all the trouble that I got in growing up, I got in trouble with my first friends, okay? They decided that we had an indoor gymnasium in the church I grew up in and when I say indoor it wasn't a separate building like ours, I mean, it was just part of the big building. And it was a three-quarter basketball court and it had the indoor/outdoor carpet on the bottom, you know, it actually was a carpet floor and on the goals, you know, the goals that came out and you could swing them to the side. Have y'all seen those? Well, what we would do is after Wednesday night, we would swing the goals to the side and lock them and then what we'd do is we would dunk the basketball by jumping off the wall. Do you all understand what I'm saying? You run up the wall and you dunk it. Well, here's the problem, I'm 5'6", that didn't even help, so I decided all my friends are dunking the basketball, I never get to dunk the basketball, I'm going to get a chair. So I put a chair down, just like a normal chair, a hard chair, and I decided I would jump off the chair and I'd actually dunk the basketball. Here's the problem, ma'am, do you know how high I am in the air at 5'6" when I'm holding onto a 10 foot rim? When I dropped, I hit the ground and I tore my Achilles tendon when I hit the ground. My body said, "You're not supposed to drop that far. That's not what you're supposed to do." I felt like I could dunk a basketball. What was the fact? It's not, thank you, it's just not there.

Sometimes we feel things. I'm going to tell you what a lot of teenagers feel, they feel like they are invincible. Some of you adults do to. I'm going to tell you, the other day, I felt like I was a young person again. I tore my rotator cuff again. I thought I can do it. You know the old joke, "Hey guys, watch this"? I told my son, "Hey buddy, watch this." Big mistake. I felt like, "Man, I've still got the arm of an 18-year-old." I don't. The fact of the matter is it's aged. Let's make this a more serious matter: sometimes ma'am, we mess up. We feel like and rightfully so, we've disappointed God and we say, "Man, I just don't feel like God loves me anymore. I don't feel like I'm his anymore. I don't feel like I'm saved anymore." But what got you over the line? He did, not you.

Let me ask you a question: when you got saved, were you actually worthy of being saved? So why would you be worthy to remain saved? You weren't worthy and you're still not worthy. He is merciful. He is grace-extending. So I think the importance of this question, I'm glad you brought this up, ma'am, is this line is so critical because I think biblically speaking once we're across the line, we're good. Here's the problem: a lot of folks are flirting with the line and think that's good enough. It's called lukewarm or to be on the fence, that's right. The same analogy of lukewarm/on the fence, same issue. Does

this help at all with the Revelation passage at all? Maybe? Not really? Kinda, sorta? Are you feeling it? Get the humor? Never mind, sorry. I was trying to be funny.

Yes ma'am. Right. Not in the Revelation passage it's not. The question she said was: I've always heard the lukewarm is the Christian who's got one foot in the world. The picture in Laodicea because, let me go back to it, this is verse 20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The idea is he's outside. The idea is that there is no relationship there, there is a separation and so the lukewarm there, even though we teach it a lot as if somebody's got a foot in the world, I think biblically speaking it's somebody who thinks they have a foot in the Lord but doesn't. Does that make sense?

Second question. Okay. Okay. Sure. Right. Okay, the question is: what about children in particular? Your sister is 6 years of age, how do you know, okay, that they really know what they're doing when they "want forgiveness" of their sins? Right, salvation. Number 1. Remember, Jesus used a child as his example. Remember, he put a child on his lap and said, "Unless you adults have the faith of a child you will in no way enter into the kingdom of God." I think sometimes as adults we make salvation too hard. We make it too complicated. You've got to do this, this, this, this and this when the Lord says, "You've just got to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

So here are my 3 words for you: 1. The word is concern. The second is convicted. And the third is converted. Now, this is, by the way, I would say in child evangelism but in any evangelism, the number 1 thing is people, I'm just going to use the 6 year old as an example, a concern for their behavior/sin. The first "step" toward realizing your need to be saved is, "Um, I'm not supposed to be doing this." You have to realize this isn't good whatever this is. To a 6 year old, maybe it's mistreating a sibling, maybe it's saying something they shouldn't say. Whatever it may be, it doesn't matter. There is a concern, "I shouldn't do this."

Convicted, the realization of the consequences. I remember when I was 7, almost 8 years old, I remember I could take you back in my mind to the day where my concern went to conviction, where I realized that my sin earned me a spot in hell. That's conviction. I am convicted that my behavior and sin have consequences which are not good. That's conviction.

Conversion is going from "the consequences of hell" to the reality of salvation. And to your question: this is where we have lots of problems. Just because we know we've sinned, we know we deserve hell and we believe Jesus rose from the dead does not mean we're saved. That's just an acknowledgment of the facts and I think unfortunately not to your specific example but a lot of times, oh, if you agree with those things, you're good to go and we wonder why at age 16 there is no fruit. Well, just because you know you sinned and you know Jesus rose from the dead, that doesn't make you saved. That just means you have acknowledged the facts. The conversion and we could use lots of, Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." What does that mean to believe? Not acknowledge the facts but to believe that his death and resurrection when

confessed can eliminate the consequences and give me the reality of salvation. Belief is the transferring of saying, "I am a sinner. I need you, Jesus, to forgive me and save me." Not just saying, "I'm a sinner and I deserve it but Jesus rose from the dead, I'm good." That's a problem with a lot of folks. Acknowledging the facts does not necessarily mean one is saved. Does that help at all?

Now, to your point though, I have met 6 year olds who completely get it and are completely saved. All 3 of my boys were saved by the age of 7, before they were 7 years of age, okay? And they are just as saved as I am. Just as saved as any of y'all are because it wasn't just, "Okay, I'm bad, he's good, I've sinned, he rose." It was, now, what do you do with that? Converted means to go from one location to another, from one position to another position and I think that's where we fall short with a lot of kids. "Oh great, you messed up, you know Jesus is the answer. Great, you're good to go." That's up here. What's down here? That's the difference. And to some of the points earlier, I think that's why you see a lot of people as they become adults say, "I didn't know what I was doing." It's not that they didn't know what they were doing, it's that they were never taken from conviction to conversion. They knew the facts and that wasn't the problem. They never crossed the line. Does that make sense?

Now, to this point, I'm glad you brought it up whether I was talking to the 6 year old by myself or talking to a whole group at the end of the service, y'all notice that when we do the "invitation" here, when we pray at the end what I pray? I'm putting hopefully my words into your words whoever that is when I say, "I am a sinner. I believe I cannot save myself. I believe, Jesus, you're the only one who can forgive me and save me so today I ask you to forgive me and to save me." That's going from here to there. I acknowledge it. I'm asking you to actually enact it. Now, a 6 year old, not a problem if they truly grasp it. 16 year old, not a problem. 66 year old, doesn't matter. I don't think the age is the issue, I think this is a concern. Does that help at all?

Yes ma'am. Oh, this is like real life last night. Oh, this is not a hypothetical. This is last night at your house. Okay, well, we're in your living room, talk. Absolutely. Sure. So she's got this part no problem. She knows she's done wrong. Okay. That's a good example. Grasped it. Right. Okay. Again, if you could not hear all this, basically last night, real life, guys, this isn't just an illustration for a Wednesday night, this is real life here, okay? A 6 year old girl, your home, admits she has sinned, knows she's messed up, wants to be saved, says all the right words but you really don't know does she mean it, does she understand it, does she truly grasp it. Is that a good repackaging of what you've just said? Right. Right.

So, let me give y'all a little history here that may make you a little uncomfortable but hopefully it won't. Did you know that in the early church like 2,000 years ago, people were not baptized until 3 years after they were saved. Do you know why? Because they wanted to make sure they really knew what they did. It's not really a bad idea to be honest with you. Remember that 2 little twin boys that we baptized here last Sunday? Do you know they were saved 2 years ago? Now, I think we should be expedient with salvation, we should be slow with baptism, okay? Because a lot of kids will equate the baptism to



the salvation, you know, when they are on the same day, so to speak. Not that that's necessarily a bad thing. I was actually baptized the day after I was saved but I don't think the baptism saved me. I mean, I had that differentiation.

My point there is: I had an old pastor friend of mine. This was his testimony. Let me give you his testimony. He was about 26, 27 when he was saved. When he got saved, he worked at a radio station. That's what he did, I mean, in those days he played the records, okay? And he said that one day he was in this radio station and one of his pastor friends came by, witnessed to him, he decided that he needed to be saved, knelt down right there on the ground and got saved, okay? It was like on a Thursday, okay? That Sunday, he came to church, he walked down the aisle, made the public profession of faith, okay? That night, they baptized him, okay? Here was the question he asked, this is a great question: he said, "Did I get saved when I knelt on the ground? Did I get saved when I said amen? Did I get saved when I got up? Did I get saved when I started down the aisle? Did I get saved when I got to the end of the aisle? Did I get saved when I said yes I'll get baptized?" He said, "I don't know. I just know I'm saved." And his point is: I think sometimes we can get too finicky on the minute and the second and when that transfers when what you will know in time, when I mean time I don't mean 3 years from now but in the days ahead, begin to unpack this with her. When y'all are doing Bible study and devotionals and she says something about Jesus, say, "Well, what does that mean? Or tell me how to get to heaven. How do you get saved?" If she is able to articulate it and that it has happened in her life, then she is. Does that make sense? Because I want to be expedient with children but I don't want to push them.

Best analogy I've ever heard and forgive me it's because I lived in Georgia for 6 years, is picking a peach, okay? I actually grew up in Texas with a peach tree in my yard and didn't know how to pick them. You do not pick a peach by pulling on it, do you know that? Do you know what you can do? You can spoil it. You lift it up and if you lift it up and drop it, you know, you make the skin bend and when you let go, it will naturally fall off. Some of y'all know what a peach stick is, right? Do you all know what a peach stick is? Do you know what a peach stick is? In Georgia, almost everybody has a peach stick, a big old long like bamboo stick. You go up to the peaches and you thump them on the bottom and when you thump them up, if they're ripe they fall off. That way you don't have to climb the ladder either. It's really nice. You just go thump, thump, thump, and the ones that are ripe will fall and the ones that aren't ripe will stay. What I want to encourage you to do is to go home and keep thumping. Does that make sense? Just keep thumping. Keep asking questions. Does that make sense?

That's a good problem. Right. So, here, and let me address this because we're dealing with children and evangelism and this isn't a hypothetical. This is real life and this is your home. Oftentimes the biggest struggle with children and salvation are the children who know the most, not the ones who know the least because those are the ones who have never heard the name of Jesus. That one's pretty cut and dried but those kids who, you know, we joke around with first name, it was mommy, daddy, Jesus. They've been in church their whole life. The concern is she knows so much, is it real or is it just because she knows the information? And I think that's where you keep thumping and just

unpacking it and here's the deal: she might have gotten saved last night, she might have gotten saved a week ago and you don't know it. What if one night your little 6 year old girl was laying in her bed and she confessed she was a sinner to God and asked Jesus to save her and she didn't tell you? You don't know and that's the beauty of it. But here's the good news: we know she's concerned, she is obviously convicted, the question is the conversion. If she knows how to be and you're instructing her and you're walking through with her, as a peach, it will happen. Does that make sense? You just keep unpacking.

Now, my boys have been saved, my oldest child has been saved for almost 7 years now. When we do our Bible studies at night and we're doing and going through, when the term salvation comes up or redemption or whatever, we still ask him, "So what does that mean? You tell me how some person is saved. What do you mean forgiven of your sins? What do you mean forgiven of your sins? What do you mean? Why would you be baptized?" We ask them the questions just to keep validating they understand it for themselves and not just because they've heard it from us. Does that help at all? So, but just keep persisting, if that makes sense.

I know we're almost out of time. Any other thoughts, issues. Surprise, we hit one question tonight. Yes. Okay, the question is: because the surveys say and this is true, not just Family Feud, the survey says that the older you are, the less likely you are to be saved. Statistically, once you turn 19 years of age, statistically there is a 6% chance you'll be saved, that's it. 6%, alright? The majority of children are saved really before the age of 14. That's when most people are saved, between 10 and 14. I think there are multiple reasons. I think number 1, as sin builds up, the heart grows hard. Does that make sense? I think number 2, as one gets older, they find more alternatives or ideas to attach themselves to than the most important one. They get involved in sports. They get involved in family. They get involved in their job. They get interested in money. Whatever it may be. Their heart is hardened. Their interests are over here and the things of God are just not that important. You know, whereas a 6 year old laying in bed at night, her heart is not that hardened. Her interests are not that varied and what is on her little mind? The things that are really the most important things.

You know, I tell people this all the time: I don't know how lost people go to bed at night. I don't know. I don't know. I'm going to use myself as an example. I don't know how a 41 year old man puts his head on the pillow not knowing where he'll be when he wakes up. I don't know how you do that. But then again, I've been saved for over 30 years. When I got saved, I was young. I didn't sleep the week I got saved because I was scared if I went to sleep and woke up I'd be in hell. I'm serious. This is important stuff here, guys. I mean, who wants to go to hell? Not me. I'm 7 years old and I realize I'm convicted sin sends me to hell. I did this. I'm in a mess here. I don't want to go there. I need to be saved. It was the most important thing in my life. Go to a 41 year old today who's got a good job, he's got a wonderful family and his kids are busy, knock on his door and say, "Sir, are you going to spend forever in heaven or hell?" He says, "I've got to go to ball practice. See you later." In other words, there are so many distractions in their life it's just one of a lot of stuff happening versus a 6 year old who first hears the Gospel, it's like, "Wow, this is

life and death and eternity." I don't know if that helps the question. I don't know if I can really explain it, per se, but the older they get typically the harder their heart gets.

I'll end on this one last analogy. I've got 1 minute left even though it just ticked. My heritage, my dad's side of the family is Native American, we call them Indians and just so you'll know, I'm not offended by the word Redskins and I am one. I just thought I'd let you know I'm not offended by it. But in the Indian Native American tradition, the Christian tradition, they have an analogy called the thin wheel. The analogy is that this is how the Native American say it: there's a wooden wheel in your heart and the first time you sin it turns and it hurts and it bothers you and it's painful but then it goes back. The second time it spins a little further and it still hurts. Well, as time goes on, it creates a groove in your heart and it just starts spinning and it doesn't bother you anymore. That's a good analogy that as we get older that sin just keeps happening and we're just not bothered by it anymore. Get bothered up by your sin because it bothers God.

Alright, get out of here. Go pick up your kids if you have them.