

Theology Simply Explained — WSC86 “What Saving Faith Is”

Pastor walks his children through Westminster Shorter Catechism question 86—especially explaining that faith is a grace, that it always saves completely, and that it receives and rests upon a person (not merely ideas about Him or benefits from Him).

Q86. What is faith in Jesus Christ? **Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.**

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Catechism question this week is number 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ? The answer is faith in Jesus Christ, is a saving grace. Whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation. As he is offered to us. In the gospel. So, the first part is very important. That faith in.

Jesus Christ is a saving grace. As a grace. We know that faith is not a work, it is something that the Lord gives us. The ability to believe in the Lord, Jesus is not in any fallen person. Because when we sinned in Adam, we fell with Adam. We died in him.

So Ephesians 2 reminds us. That we start out now dead in our transgressions. So it's impossible. That faith would be anything other than a grace. That's why a few verses later in Ephesians 2. It says By grace, you have been saved through faith. In other words, you're saved. Not by anything that you do because you're dead and you have to be raised.

With Jesus. To begin. Even to believe. And so grace. Has to raise you up with him. Grace has to give you faith. In him to be raised up with him. And so faith, that Jesus Christ is a saving grace. The saving part is also important. Because there are those who believe in something called.

Or that they call prevenient grace. Which means it's grace that has given to everyone whether they're being saved or not. That God makes everyone just spiritually alive enough to believe. So that the difference between who gets saved and who doesn't get saved still ends up being in the person, instead of being in God's grace to the person, and I think that that somehow makes things more fair, but what that means is that there are those who by grace are given faith and are not saved.

Which doesn't make things fair. It makes grace powerless and the person instead powerful. No. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace. Everyone whom the Lord gives life to. To believe in Jesus Christ, he saves and he gives that life to believe that ability to believe gives that faith.

Because he's saving them.

So faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby and there are these two. Um, passive words, or Uh, passive. They're not passive in the form of the verb, but in the nature of what it is. Whereby, we receive Jesus Christ. So we don't take him. It's much better to say receive.

Jesus and savior, then. Take Jesus. A savior. They may mean the same things but he is the one who gives Himself to us. Whereby we receive and rest. Upon him alone for salvation the rest. Resting means he is doing all of the work. We don't do. Any of the work?

In our being saved. Now we are commanded to do things like fight and work and wrestle. Kill. And run.

But all of those things are done by grace through faith. Not by virtue of the greatness of our effort or how sincerely intended it is or anything like that.

Through the picture that I often have what faith is like. There's that faith is being carried. Like the great big fireman. Goes into the house. And, picks up the baby. That was crying and screaming and pulling up on the side of its crib. And was doing all of these things.

They couldn't save it. The fireman reaches down. He takes the baby in his arms. He climbs out with the baby and he carries the baby down. We are the baby. Of course, we rest. Upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We might have great ideas of how. We could pull up.

Flip ourselves over the edge of the crib. And get ourselves out the window, and send me down the ladder it's all nonsense, of course. Absolutely impossible for us. There's much more impossible for a sinner. To be saved. Then for that baby to get itself out. And so, faith is when the Lord Jesus takes us.

From all of our striking from all of our tribe, and we rest upon him. And sometimes. Faith this week and doubting. And sometimes. Faith struggles, even against the one. But as long as there is any actual resting. Upon him, it's not the greatness of the faith that saves it, the greatness of him.

Upon whom faith rests. Course, you shouldn't want. For your faith to be weak. And it is opposed to the nature of faith to be doubting. So you hate to be doubt. But you don't want to do any striving. That is trying to do from your own strength, which of course is to be against him.

But we receive and rest upon him alone. Not only. What he has done. Faith in Jesus Christ. Does not merely receive his obedience, it does not merely receive his righteousness. Doesn't merely receive his sacrifice. Doesn't merely receive his life. Doesn't merely receive his power. It receives.

This is why it's important that as you learn about things, like the alien righteousness and obedience of the Lord, Jesus, that is counted for you. For the atonement of the Lord, Jesus. That has counted against your sin. For the resurrection, life of the Lord Jesus. That is the way by which you are able to live unto God.

And so forth. That you remember that you are not resting merely upon. These things that belong to him or that he gives to us. But that you're resting upon him, a person, the one who made you, the one who made everything. The one who became a man, the one who went to that cross.

That he by his spirit has come now to you. At this point in time, thousands of years later. That he gives himself to you and that you're resting upon him. That, however, little we know him now and love him now, you know, like through a mirror and dimly. Even though it's the most wonderful thing we've ever known, the most wonderful thing we've ever loved and felt is to know Jesus and to love him.

Yeah, you will know him that much more clearly forever.

But it is a transaction with a person. It is an interaction with a person. Not a transaction in a property. So faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation. The salvation includes more than justification being made righteous. Then God's sight.

It's even more than adoption being legally identified as God's child. Even more than definitive sanctification. Where we are made holy in status, and in our new nature. And we have that new nature that is from Christ. That is holy and that shall prevail at last. In ongoing sanctification. Salvation includes all of those things, but it includes also.

Glorification, the perfection. But first, our soul. When we die. And then our body when we are raised, and our entering into the favor of our Lord. And receiving the crowd.

Now, all of these things continue to come by faith. We must not like those Galatians. Over whom the apostle grieved. That they were bewitched. Into having begun by faith trying to make advancement in Christianity by works. We must not think that we are going to make advancement in our Christian maturity or in our ability against sin or in the quality of our service or the consistency of our walk.

We're not going to make advances in any of those things. By virtue of the effort that we put forth. Or commanded to put forth effort, but it is by virtue of Christ in whom there is infinite virtue. That we will make this progress. And that we are guaranteed, not only to make progress but to arrive at the finish line.

And so, all of salvation comes. In this receiving and resting upon him alone. Justification is only what he has done. But even the parts that we are commanded to do in the midst of our sanctification and so forth. Are only possible and our only. Done. Through receiving and resting upon him.

And wonderful news is that this faith is not blind. Perhaps you have heard faith described as blind or most people don't like to say blind. Don't say it's a leap. You just have to trust even though it doesn't make sense. No, it does make sense. How do we know that?

It makes sense because God has said, so, Jesus has been offered to us in the gospel. Not merely Jesus's righteousness, not nearly Jesus as sacrifice. Not merely Jesus's life. Not merely Jesus's goodness. Jesus himself is offered to us in the gospel. God announces that. His son. Into whose hands he has given the judgment of sinners.

Which he will shortly execute. That judgment. With perfect justice. By no means letting sin go unpunished. You remember that's part of God's glory. Exodus 34:7. Yet his son into whose hands, he's given this judgment. He has offered to all who would believe in him.

And you can have Christ. So that when you appear at the judgment, you will not appear in your self and you will not appear in Adam. But you will appear in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you. Will not just receive credit forehead. But you and he will have a joint.

Verdict. Just as right now in your life, you suffer together. With him. We will be glorified together with him. And we will inherit. Together with him. Because it is that together with him, that's the essence of the gospel. That Jesus himself is offered to you. So that as I've been saying recently, Having spent some time in song of songs.

One, great. Way to know that you're a Christian. It's just to know or to be if you are one who says or it's able to say, I am my beloved and my beloved is mine. And so saving faith. It's not merely theological knowledge, that all of these things are available to us, from Jesus Christ.

Saving faith is hearing that. He is offered to us, he himself is offered to us. And receiving himself. And resting upon himself entirely.

So the question is what is faith in Jesus Christ. And the answer is faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace. Whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation. As he has offered to us in the gospel.