The Gospel of the Grace of God

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The Gospel is the 'Good News.' However, this 'Good News' is not good for those who died in their sins. In this essay we will explain what the Gospel is and what it is not because there is much controversy surrounding this all-important subject. We hope to alleviate the confusion because the glory of God and souls are at stake.

WHAT THE GOSPEL IS

The Gospel concerns the history of who we are,² how we got here,³ and where we are going.⁴ The Gospel identifies the Creator by name,⁵ expounding His key attributes.⁶ The Gospel explains the duty of His creatures, duties which the Creator has commanded.⁷ It explains how man has failed in carrying out these duties, as well as the penalty for such failure.⁸ The Gospel identifies God the Son as Savior, naming Him as the only One qualified, authorized and appointed to that task,⁹ having been sent to earth 2,000 years ago for that express purpose by decree of God the Father.¹⁰ The Gospel further identifies the Savior as both God and man,¹¹ supernaturally born of a Jewish virgin, without the seed of man,¹² sinless,¹³ by the seed of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ The Gospel demonstrates why this must be so.¹⁵

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From the Greek noun meaning 'glad tidings.'
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2 Genesis 1 ff.

3 Ibid.

4 Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29.

5 Exodus 3:14; John 8:24.

6 Matt. 28:18; Matt. 19:26.

7 Mark 1:15.

8 Romans 6:23; Romans 3:23.

9 Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:10-11.

10 John 5:36-37.

11 Phil. 2:6-8.

12 Luke 1:31-35.

13 II Cor. 5:21.

14 Luke 1:35.

15 II Cor. 5:21

The Gospel reveals an eternal covenant made by the Triune God to save men from their sins. ¹⁶ It explains man's disobedience to his God and the gravity of this transgression. The Gospel expounds the cause of man's death as the result of sin and its penalty. ¹⁷ The Gospel proclaims the one and only way to escape the second death, consisting of eternal pain and punishment. ¹⁸

The Good News lies in the fact that not all men will be eternally condemned,¹⁹ though all men deserve such an end.²⁰ Those who escape eternal condemnation are promised eternal life in the presence of their God, in a new state of existence, far surpassing anything man on earth can imagine or hope for. ²¹ Those who escape eternal damnation do so because their God determined to save them from their sins.²²

Incredibly, He determined this in His eternal counsel, before His creation existed, before man was created or born, even before man chose good or evil.²³ In other words, the grounds for God's choosing certain individuals was not based on His looking into the future to see what they might have done with His Savior, accepting or rejecting Him. God's choice emanates from within Himself, and is not biased pro or con by the foreseen actions of His creatures.²⁴ This Good News sounds too good to be true. The Lord God determined to save certain sinners, though they hated Him and would have nothing to do with Him. What God determines to do, He always does.²⁵ He cannot fail to accomplish His will.²⁶ Only God has the attribute of always succeeding in fulfilling His desires.²⁷

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16 Jer. 31:31-34; Jer. 32:40; Hebrews 8:7-13; Hebrews 13:20.

26 Daniel 4:35.

17 Romans 6:23.

27 Hosea 11:9.

18 John 11:25; John 14:6.

20 Romans 3:23.

21 I Cor. 2:9.

22 Matt. 1:21.

23 Romans 9:11.

24 Romans 9:15-16.

25 James 1:17; Malachi 3:6.
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WHAT THE GOSPEL IS NOT

The Gospel is not the Good News that God loves everyone without exception, yet despite His love most humans will spend eternity in Hellfire, consciously experiencing torment with unspeakable agony. The Gospel is not the Good News that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will -- i.e., earnestly desires -- to save all mankind, yet is unable to do so. The Gospel is not the Good News that you can recite a stock 'Sinner's Prayer' and be guaranteed a seat at the Supper of the Lamb. The Gospel is not the Good News that once saved you must work hard to keep your salvation, nor is it the Good News that you may lose that which you once had. The Gospel is not the Good News that once saved you now have license to sin and are not required, in due season, to bear the fruit of a Christian. The Gospel is not the Good News that all who name the name of Christ are saved from damnation. The Gospel is not about living a tribulation-free existence. Nor is it about receiving material, worldly blessings.

WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE GOT HERE

Man is a created being made originally in the image and likeness of His Creator, the Lord God. Man is not a little god, though he would like to think so. The first man, Adam, was created perfect. He had no defects in body, soul or mind. He was also perfect in that he had no sin. At this time Adam had free will to sin or not to sin and was given rule over the creation. One single, solitary law or commandment was given him by his God. It was Adam's solemn duty to obey this command. To disobey meant immediate spiritual death -- separation from God's presence and fellowship -- as well as eventual bodily death, separation from an earthly existence.

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28 Genesis 1:26-27.
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²⁹ Genesis 3:5.

³⁰ Genesis 1:31.

³¹ Genesis 2:25.

³² Genesis 1:28.

³³ Genesis 2: 1-6-17.

Adam disobeyed his God.³⁴ He did so by his own free will. He freely chose to do evil. Such disobedience is called sin.³⁵ Through Adam's transgression, the disease of sin passes to all men, the descendants of Adam.³⁶ Now men are no longer in the image and likeness of their God. They are now sinners in the image and likeness of Adam.³⁷ Now all men are disobedient and in rebellion against the commandments of their God. Now no man has fellowship and communion with his God. Nor does man desire a relationship with his God. In fact, he runs from Him.³⁸

WHERE WE ARE GOING

Left to our own devices, our own wills, man would remain in a sorry state of sin because no man of his own will seeks the true God.³⁹ In such a state man's destiny necessitates eternal separation from his God.⁴⁰ Eternal separation from God is a darkness in which man is conscious, experiencing torment, weeping and gnashing of teeth......forever without end.⁴¹ This is not Good News.

WHO IS MAN'S GOD?

Although it is impossible for finite man to fully understand our infinite God, it is possible to understand certain fundamentals of His nature, attributes He wills we comprehend.

Our Lord is holy.⁴² He has no sin, nor will He ever sin. His holiness will not allow sin in His presence.⁴³ Thus, because men are now natural born sinners, all men are born separated from, and at enmity with, their God.⁴⁴

Our Lord is just. ⁴⁵ He will not let sin go unpunished. All men receive the initial punishment for sin, which at birth is separation from God. All men are born to eventually die a bodily death, a second punishment for sin. Babies and small children die, not for any sin committed on their part, but because of Adam's transgression, the guilt of which has been imputed to all mankind. ⁴⁶ By imputing the guilt of Adam's sin to all men, the Lord remains holy and just, though we may not agree with it.

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      34 Genesis 3:6.
      40 Matt.22:13.
      46 Romans 5:12.

      35 1 John 5:17.
      41 Matt. 24:51; Rev. 14:11.

      36 Romans 5:12.
      42 Is. 6:3.

      37 Genesis 5:3.
      43 Habakkuk 1:13.

      38 Genesis 3:8; Romans 5:10; James 4:4.
      44 Eph. 2:12; Romans 5:10.

      39 Romans 3:11.
      45 Romans 9:14; Psalm 145:17; Genesis 18:25.
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Our Lord is sovereign.⁴⁷ As Creator of all things, both visible and invisible, He is ruler over all. Nothing happens without His consent.⁴⁸ Nothing slips by Him unaware.⁴⁹ He does not sleep,⁵⁰ nor get distracted or confused.⁵¹ He doesn't take vacations. He does not need to rethink or revise plans because none of His plans and purposes fail. ⁵² No one succeeds like the Lord. He does not ask our opinion, nor require our counsel. ⁵³ What man was asked beforehand to help determine his birth parents, birthplace, time of birth, (including second, minute, hour, day, month, year and century), gender, personality traits, unique gifts, and physical appearance? These are fairly important decisions, would you not agree? Yet man was not consulted on any of these issues. In fact, what man was asked to be born in the first place?

Our Lord is love. ⁵⁴ God's love is both sovereign and unconditional. It is sovereign in the sense that He decides whom' He will love. ⁵⁵ It is unconditional in that His love is not conditioned on the love displayed toward Him by man. ⁵⁶ In fact, man is the natural enemy of God. ⁵⁷ The Lord's love emanates from inside Himself and has nothing whatever to do with man's attributes drawing Him, causing the Lord to fall in love. Unlike humans, the Lord does not fall in love.

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47 Romans 9:21; Romans 11:34; Rev. 1:18; Isaiah 45:12.

48 Ephesians 1: 11.

49 Psalm 139.

50 Psalm 121:4.

51 I Cor. 14:33.

52 Danie1 4:35; John 17:12; John 19:30; Hebrews 10:14.

53 Romans 11:34; Ephesians 1: 11.

54 I John 4:8; I John 4:16.

55 Romans 9:15.

56 Romans 9:16; I John 4:19.
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Our Lord is gracious, merciful, and compassionate. ⁵⁸ His goodness and kindness manifest themselves to all people in various forms and degrees. ⁵⁹ But it is to the Elect alone, those chosen for salvation by God from eternity, that our Lord freely gives saving grace. ⁶⁰ They are those whom the Lord has chosen to love forever, to share eternity with Him. ⁶¹ This is truly Good News. Undeserving men from all cultures and ages, from all walks of life, have been chosen by God to escape damnation that they may know Him, experience Him and love Him always, without end.

THE WAY OF SALVATION: CHRIST ALONE

To effect and procure our salvation, God the Son, in eternity, graciously volunteered to come to earth, ⁶² taking upon Himself human flesh, ⁶³ to do that which Adam could not: live a perfectly sinless life, always in obedience to the Father. ⁶⁴ However, that accomplishment alone was not sufficient to appease the wrath and justice of God against sin. By living a righteous and holy life, Jesus of Nazareth earned the right to be punished in the stead of men, as their substitute. ⁶⁵ Sin required punishment and Christ, out of love for the Elect, volunteered to take men's punishment on their behalf. ⁶⁶ As proof that the Father was appeased and that Christ had propitiated -- satisfied completely -- God's justice on behalf of sinners, Jesus Christ rose from the dead three days later, and is now alive in a glorified state at the right hand of the Father, where He always makes intercession for His people. ⁶⁷

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58 John 1:14; Psalm 23:6.
59 Acts 10:34; Matt. 5:45; Rev. 5:9.
60 I Peter 1:2; Ephesians 1:4-5.
61 Rev. 7:15-17; Rev. 22.
62 Psalm 40:7-10; I Peter 1:20.
63 John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16.
64 John 5:19; John 5:30; II Cor. 5:21.
65 John 1:36; Rev. 5:6.
66 Luke 23:24; John 17:9.
67 Romans 4:25
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FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE AND RISE FROM THE DEAD?

If Christ were but a man, He could not guarantee all His plans would succeed. But because He is also God, He *can* guarantee a 100% success rate.⁶⁸ This critical fact holds true for all His plans and promises, not the least of which is the very mission for which He came to earth: To save His people from their sins.⁶⁹ All for whom Christ came to save will be saved.⁷⁰ This is Good News. Christ will not fail to save one sinner for whom He died. His blood is 100% efficacious in saving sinners.⁷¹ At the cross, Christ atoned for the sins of all whom the Father gave Him. ⁷² Christ paid in full the sin debt of all whom the Father gave Him, who were chosen -- elected -- for salvation by the Father before time and creation.⁷³ It is for these, and these only, Christ died and rose from the dead.⁷⁴ Christ was under no obligation to die in the place of one sinner, yet He has done so for innumerable sinners.⁷⁵ This is truly Good News.

THE WAY OF SALVATION: FAITH ALONE

The Lord has declared salvation is through the redemptive work of Christ alone.⁷⁶ He has also declared man's duty to believe in Christ as Savior, placing total trust in Christ's work of redemption.⁷⁷ Without faith in His Christ it is impossible to please God. ⁷⁸

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68 John 17:4; Deut. 32:4.
69 John 17:12.
70 II Timothy 2:19; John 17:12.
71 Acts 20:28; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:17; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Peter 1:19; Rev. 1:5.
72 Romans 5:11; Galatians 6:14; Ephesians 2:16; Col. 2:14.
73 Matt. 6:12.
74 Matt. 7:21-23.
75 Eph. 2:8; Rev. 7:9.
76 Acts 4:12.
77 Mark 1:15; Matt. 18:3-4.
78 Heb. 11:6.
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SAVING FAITH IS GOD'S FREE GIFT TO THE ELECT

Christ paid the full price of redemption for those given Him by the Father. ⁷⁹ Included in the purchase price are all gifts necessary to satisfy the conditions of salvation as specified by the Lord. ⁸⁰ Saving faith is one of those essential conditions which is freely given as a gift to the Elect. ⁸¹ Once this gift is given, man can now say, *Jesus is the Lord*, by the power of the Holy Spirit, distinct from a confession of the flesh so prevalent today. ⁸²

THE WAY OF SALVATION: GRACE ALONE

The Lord is in debt to no man. ⁸³ He owes man nothing. Thus, when He determined to save an individual, it was due to God's grace, undeserved mercy and compassion, which He determined to freely give that individual even before he was born or committed sin. ⁸⁴ The Lord is not an 'Indian-giver.' He does not give saving grace only to take it away later. ⁸⁵ Saving grace is not given conditioned on the sinner's attitude, behavior or religiosity. ⁸⁶ If it were, then the sinner stands the possibility of losing it. Saving grace is given unconditionally to those chosen by God for salvation before they were born, never having had the chance to commit random acts of kindness. ⁸⁷ The Lord does not change His mind. ⁸⁸ His mind was made up concerning the destiny of all individuals before time and creation. ⁸⁹ This is truly Good News. The saved Christian has substantial reasons to believe he is safe from judgment in part because the Lord will not change His mind, He does not love you one day, then send you to Hell the next. Those professing Christians who are rejected by Him on Judgment Day, being cast into the Lake of Fire, were never His in the first place. ⁹⁰ He never knew them as His. Nor did He ever love them.

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79 I Peter 1:18-19.

80 Romans 8:32; Eph. 1:3; Eph. 3:7; Eph. 4:7-8; Eph. 4:11. 81 Eph. 2:8-9.

81 Ibid.

82 I Cor. 12:3; Matt. 7:21-23.

83 Romans 11:35.

84 Romans 9:11; Eph. 1:4-6.

85 Romans 9:11; Eph. 1:4-6.
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THE WAY OF SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE ALONE, THROUGH FAITH ALONE, IN CHRIST ALONE

The judicial term, *justification*, is rarely mentioned in evangelical circles today. One reason might be the fact that it addresses the issue of judgment. Most sinners naturally avoid the issue of judgment at all costs. Their conscience pricks them and guilt wells up inside when the judgment of God is mentioned. Thus, to escape such uncomfortable and disconcerting feelings, the popular method of evangelizing today is to emphasize that which is less offensive. *Ye must be born again*, is the hue and cry heard. But the Bible speaks more often and in much greater detail on the subject of *justification*, proving this doctrine to be of vital importance for all who would seek forgiveness of sins.

Our earthly existence mirrors, in many respects, heavenly truths.⁹¹ Americans pride themselves for living in a free society governed by just laws. The heavenly realm is also governed by just laws given by the most righteous and holy Judge of all, the Lord God.⁹² He demands perfection from man in order to qualify for eternal life in everlasting bliss.⁹³ The perfect man would then be *justified* -- i.e., be considered blameless and righteous, no longer guilty of sin -- by his perfect words, thoughts and deeds. Such a man would receive the reward of Heaven and personal, eternal fellowship with his God. But no such man exists. All men are sinners in varying degrees. There are none righteous, no, not one.⁹⁴

⁹¹ John 3:12.

⁹² Psalm 50:6.

⁹³ Genesis 6:8-9; Genesis 17:1; Deut. 18:13; Matt. 5:48; Luke 10:25-37.

⁹⁴ Romans 3:9-20.

Our all-knowing God has overcome what is an impossible obstacle. He has wisely and graciously determined a way to justify a sinner. He does this by imputing -- positing to a sinner's 'track record' in life -- the righteousness of Christ, who is the perfect man. He does this when a sinner exercises faith in Christ, believing on Him for salvation. Thus, it is not a sinner's works, but faith in Christ's finished, redemptive work which justifies him. It is important to remember that saving faith is the gift of God. Left to himself, a sinner will never believe in the true Christ. Description of Salvation and Salvation of Salvation of Salvation.

THE WAY OF SALVATION: IT IS ALL OF GOD

Man contributes nothing to his salvation.¹⁰¹ If he did, then he could brag about it, and rightfully so. Arminianism teaches man contributes his free will decision for Christ. But Scripture teaches the opposite. No man can come to Christ unless the Father draws him.¹⁰² No man naturally seeks the true God.¹⁰³ Unregenerate man is in bondage to sin and Satan.¹⁰⁴ Only Christ can break that bondage, setting the captive free.¹⁰⁵

Sinful man has always sought solutions to satisfy the anger of a just God. No matter how creative, they are all vain inventions incapable of addressing and satisfying God's holy justice. The Lord can't be bought, bribed or flattered. ¹⁰⁶ There is only one way His anger can be turned away, His wrath appeared, and that is through placing one's trust and complete faith in Christ, the God-man, as Savior.

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106Haggai 2:8; Ezek. 7:19; Job 37:24; Acts 10:34; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 16:19; 96 II Cor. 5:21. 2 Sam.14:14; Prov. 24:23; 28:21. 97 Romans 3:20-30; Galatians 3:11. 98 Eph. 2:8. 99 John 6:44. 100 I Peter 2:7-10. 101 Jonah 2:9; Gen. 49:18; Psalm 3:8; Rev. 7:10; Rev. 19:1; Eph. 2:8-9. 102 John 6:44. 103 Romans 3:11. 104 John 3:19-20; John 8:34; 2 Timothy 2:26; Rev. 12:9. 105 John 8:36; Luke 11:21-22; I John 4:4.
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Consider.....

- The Lord freely determined, unconditionally, to save sinners from judgment, blessing them with eternal life and happiness. 107
- The Lord predestinated innumerable individuals to receive eternal life. 108
- Those whom the Lord predestinated will most certainly be assured their destiny is Heaven.¹⁰⁹
- Those whom the Lord predestinated will most certainly know they are Elect, for the Spirit witnesses the truth of their election and the Scriptures verify it.¹¹⁰
- The Lord was under no obligation to save even one person.
- ❖ The Lord freely gave the ultimate gift as Savior, His only begotten Son. 112
- The Son consented to take upon Himself human flesh. 113
- The Son consented to take upon Himself the sins of sinners.
- The Son consented to being punished in the stead of sinners.
- The Son successfully lived a sinless life, in perfect obedience to the will of the Father.
- The Son suffered humiliation, shame and unbearable pain in the place of sinners.
- Only the Son satisfied the justice of the Father on behalf of sinners.¹¹⁸ Only the Son made atonement for sin, purchased redemption, provides forgiveness of sins, as well as all spiritual gifts necessary unto salvation and through glorification.¹¹⁹
- Saving grace is the free gift of God. 120
- Conviction of sins is the free gift of God. 121
- Repentance for sins is the free gift of God.

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107 Genesis 12:1-3.
                                                         117 Isaiah 53; Matt. 26:39.
108 Romans 8:29-30; Rev. 5:9; Rev. 7:9.
                                                         118 Romans 3:25-26; Romans 8:33; I John 2:2;
                                                                                             I John 4:10.
109 John 10:28-29; John 17:12 & 20.
                                                         119 Romans 5:11; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 13:38;
                                                                  Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:3; 4:7-12.
110 John 14:17; 16:13; 1 John 5:13.
                                                         120 Eph. 2:8; John 1: 17; I Thess. 1:1;
                                                                   II Thess.1:12; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 2:11.
111 Eph. 2:8; Matt. 20:1-16; Titus 2:11.
                                                         121 John 16:8.
112 John 3:16; 1 Peter 1:20.
                                                         122 Acts 11:18.
113 John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:15-22; Heb. 2:14.
114 II Cor. 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-5; John 1:36.
115 Ibid.
116 John 17:4.
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- Seeking Christ for forgiveness of sins is the free gift of God.
- Saving faith in Christ is the free gift of God. 124
- ❖ Justification is the free gift of God. 125
- The righteousness of Christ imputed to believers is the free gift of God. 126
- Reconciliation with the Lord is the free gift of God.
- Peace with God is the free of God. 128
- Good works are the free gifts of God.¹²⁹
- Belief in the truth is the free gift of God. 130
- Sanctification, love of holiness and hatred of sin, is the free gift of God.¹³¹
- Perseverance in the faith is the free gift of God. 132
- Glorification in a perfect body is the free gift of GOd. 133
- Love of the brethren is the free gift of God.¹³⁴
- Love of neighbor is the free gift of God.¹³⁵
- Love of God is the free gift of God. 136
- Your first earthly birth is the free gift of God. 137
- Your second spiritual birth is the free gift of God. 138
- Eternal life free from hunger, thirst and tears is the free gift of God.¹³⁹

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123 John 6:44 & 65.
                                                        136 I John 4:10;19.
124 Acts 13:48.
                                                        137 Rev. 4:11.
125 Romans 3:24; Romans 5:9; Titus 3:7.
                                                        138 John 3:6-8.
126 II Cor. 5:21; Romans 4:6.
                                                        139 Rev. 7:16-17.
127 Eph. 2:16; II Cor 5:18; Heb. 2:17.
128 Eph. 2:14; John 14:27; II Thess. 3:16.
129 Eph. 2:10.
130 John 6:29.
131 II Thess. 2:13.
132 Rev. 7:3-8; Rev. 14:1-3; John 10:28-29.
133 Romans 8:28-30.
134 I John 3:14.
135 Galatians 5:13-14.
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"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

At this very moment Jesus Christ is gathering a people in His name. His call is going out worldwide. Do you hear His call? Do you feel the weight of sin in your life? Do you feel the judgment of God upon your soul? Do you lack that peace which surpasses all understanding? Have you tried other solutions, but they have all failed? Jesus Christ is the One who has the power to change that which you cannot. Jesus Christ is the One to whom you should direct your prayers, to whom you should place your faith, to whom you should trust with your soul.

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