

*"When he says, I have a good conscience, he's not just saying that he doesn't feel guilty for anything. He's saying, I trust that I'm on your side. I trust that you're saving me. I trust that you see me as not guilty. I entrust my soul, my life, to the one who judges justly. I don't judge myself. I don't accept their verdict of me. They say I'm guilty. I may even feel guilty sometimes, but I trust you. The verdict belongs to you."*

**Welcome to the Radically Christian Bible Study Podcast. I'm Travis Pauley, and here we have one goal: Learn to love like Jesus. Each week I visit with Wes McAdams, minister and author, and together we explore biblical passages and topics. I hope you enjoy this study.**

**WES:** Okay. So I'm going to read I Peter 3:21 to you. Man, you get to be the guinea pig, Travis, and I get to put you on the spot and say, what do you think this means?

**TRAVIS:** Fantastic.

**WES:** And I'm sure you know this passage, but it says, "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

So when I read that verse to you, what do you think of? What does that mean? What's your one big take-away when you hear that verse?

**TRAVIS:** I'd say that baptism is pretty important.

**WES:** Yeah. I think that's a great take-away, and I think that there's no arguing with that, for sure, for sure.

**TRAVIS:** Yeah.

**WES:** Let me ask you this: When you hear the word "save" -- I think that we have a lot of -- not misunderstanding, but maybe I think that we only tend to think of one aspect when we think of the word "salvation." So when you hear the word "salvation" or "save," "saved," what do you think of? How would you define that, maybe?

**TRAVIS:** I think -- I definitely think of, like, earlier in my Christian life, I would have gone straight to, oh, that means you're going to go to heaven. "Salvation" means Jesus is going to take you with him when he comes back, or raise you up when he comes back. And I think, as I've gone on, I realize that salvation is here and now. That just as much as any eternal life that we have hope for -- which I do believe we have hope for -- but I think Jesus is a -- he's a savior for your day-to-day life. He redeems moments in every day. I mean, I think, again, just that -- that idea of walking with Jesus, it's like, well, that's not -- that's not -- you know, we'll be with him in the afterlife, so the walking with him part's now.

**WES:** That's really interesting. And it's interesting that you went to -- the big fancy word would be the "eschatology" of it, eschatological salvation, in that the saved-in-the-last-day kind of an idea, which is good, and that's -- I think that's an important aspect. And then you kind of have come to also incorporate the idea of saved now and that we're saved for a relationship and we're saved for the life that we're living as followers of Jesus, and I think both of those are really good.

See, I would have gone -- you know, if I talked about my earlier Christian days, if I had gone -- and I think that there's an aspect of this in both of the things that you said. I would have gone to forgiveness. Like -- and so if you had said saved -- so if I said, saved from what? Like that's a question that I don't think we

often stop -- we just assume the answer to that, right? We just assume, you know, if somebody says you're saved, well, there's an automatic implication that you're saved from something.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** But what do we infer that a person is saved from? Or from what do we -- I tried not to end that in a preposition, but I did it anyway. From what is a person saved? So what would you say, when you think of salvation, from what is a person being saved?

**TRAVIS:** From sin and death, or more than that.

**WES:** Okay. Good. And I think that's good and I think that that's biblical, but I don't think that's the only type of salvation.

**TRAVIS:** Sure.

**WES:** And I think maybe that's where we get caught up. And so when I read this, "Baptism now saves you," I think we automatically jump to baptism means I'm forgiven. I'm saved from my sin and I'm saved from the death I deserve. And I don't know that that's entirely wrong, but I think that if we were to take the entire book of I Peter into consideration, I think that we might look at it and say, well, why would the people to whom Peter is writing -- why would these first-century Christians really be thinking about that in this context?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** Is that really what he was talking about? Now, he does talk a lot about forgiveness and having their sins atoned for, but I think that if we were to take the word "save" and we were to replace it with a synonym that we don't -- I think if we -- if Christians today think of the word "save," then we often have words in our mind that are synonymous, and we would go to -- you used the word "redeem."

Okay? So "redemption," and I think we would say "forgiveness." We might say "sanctification," or something like that, but we wouldn't often use what I think is the most obvious synonym, which is "rescue," right?

**TRAVIS:** I like that.

**WES:** So we tend not to think about being rescued when that is exactly what salvation means. And, again, we have this tendency to take a word and we assign to it just theological significance rather than its most obvious secular, you might say, significance and meaning to it. Whereas, the words that the biblical authors use, both in the Hebrew scriptures and in the Greek scriptures, were also used in day-to-day life. These weren't just theological words.

**TRAVIS:** Sure.

**WES:** They weren't just church words. They were attached to theological ideas, for sure, but they were also words that were just common words. And we could use the word "save" in a secular context and nobody would think that we meant eschatologically.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** They wouldn't think that we meant, you know, salvation in a theological sense; they would think that we mean, you know, I need rescuing. You know, we would talk about a life preserver, or something like that. We would throw it out to somebody and say, well, I'm going to save you. If somebody -- if I said I was on a boat and I threw a life preserver and I saved someone, we would automatically know from what were they saved. Drowning, right?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** They were saved from drowning. If I say this police officer saved this woman, well, okay, we might think, well, there was a bad guy involved, you know,

so he saved her from the bad guy. He saved her from being hurt. Or maybe there was a car accident, or something like that. So we would automatically start to say, okay, well, what scenario was being played out from which they needed salvation?

Well, now -- now that meaning and the nuance of it is opened up, and we say, well, okay, maybe this is broader than simply being forgiven. Yes, forgiveness is an aspect of our salvation, of our rescuing, but I think that maybe if we're going to go beyond just seeing salvation in terms of personal individual sanctification and forgiveness and begin to see that this is an epic story, this is a cosmic story about God rescuing his creation, I think "rescue" is a good word. I love that word. I love to look at scripture and say, how -- is this word "save" -- how might my connotation, how might my understanding, of this word be broadened if I replaced it with the word "rescue"? Now, that's not to say "save" is a bad word.

**TRAVIS:** No.

**WES:** It's a good word. But, again, when we have just a single limited nuance or connotation to a word, often I think that it sort of skews our perspective. So with that in mind, I want to -- before we come back to I Peter, I want to just look over at Psalm 7. And, really, I mean, I could pull out a lot of different psalms and we'd get the same idea, but I was just thinking about this this morning, and I thought, okay, well, what if we read a psalm first and then we go back to I Peter and we say, okay, well, how does that -- what if something like that is in Peter's mind as he is talking and encouraging these Christians who, by the way, are suffering persecution?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** And then he's encouraging them in this way, with this sort of mentality that runs all throughout the scriptures. And so let me just -- or, actually, do you want to read for us?

**TRAVIS:** Sure.

**WES:** So read maybe like the first five verses of Psalm 7.

**TRAVIS:** Okay. "O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, lest like a lion they tear my soul apart, rending it in pieces, with none to deliver. O Lord my God, if I have done this" --

**WES:** I know I told you to verse 5, but I'm going to interrupt you before that. So it's interesting. So you're reading out of the ESV, right?

**TRAVIS:** Yep.

**WES:** And so -- okay. So we already saw the word "save," and, again, we're talking Hebrew here, and we're talking Greek in the New Testament, but regardless -- but we also -- and I think this is important to point out. Verse 2 says, "lest like a lion they tear my" -- what?

**TRAVIS:** Soul.

**WES:** -- "my soul apart." Now, we need to get into this in the podcast at some point, and we touched on it a little bit in the last episode when we were talking about the dualistic idea of human beings, spirit and body and soul.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** We'll talk about all that eventually. But here it's -- and I'm really -- it's really interesting that the English Standard translators went with the word "soul," and I'm glad that they did. I like consistency. But oftentimes, they don't. It could be -- it's translated all kinds of different ways in different verses, but the Hebrew word is "nephesh," and "nephesh" means exactly what's obvious in this -- in this

sentence.

**TRAVIS:** Yeah.

**WES:** "Lest like a lion they tear my soul apart." Well, obviously, he's not -- the psalmist isn't in any way, shape, or form talking about even -- there's sort of multiple levels or layers of what he's saying, so he's not talking about actual lions, right?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** He's talking about pursuers. He's talking about people that are evil and that are trying to hurt him, right? So on the one level he's talking about people, and then he's comparing them to a lion. But he's saying, like a lion would tear my soul apart, that's what these people want to do. So even on the one layer of the literal meaning of what the pursuers want to do, and on the metaphorical level of what the lions want to do, "soul" doesn't mean disembodied spirit.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** It doesn't mean nonphysical, nonmaterial part of a human being. It means my life, my being, my self. The same way -- again, like we said last week, I think, you know, when we say that there are 200 souls on the ship that went down --

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** -- or there were 200 souls on that airplane, we're talking about a life. We're talking about a being or an individual. And so when he's talking about tearing his soul, "rending it in pieces, with none to deliver," he's very much talking about his organic life. He's not talking about some nonmaterial part of him. But that also helps us to discern what he means when he says, "O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers..." So, in the context there, it's easy to understand from what does the psalmist want salvation? Well, it's not

from his sins. You know, it's not -- it's not salvation in a forgiveness sense or a sanctification sense, or redemption, as we tend to think about redemption sense. It's save me from the bad guys, right? It's save me from the people that are trying to hurt me.

And then he really gets into -- you can pick back up, I guess. I'm sorry I interrupted you. So read the next couple verses, if you want to.

**TRAVIS:** Okay. "O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is wrong in my hands, if I have repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause, let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it, and let him trample my life to the ground and lay my glory in the dust."

**WES:** Okay. So, again, the word "soul" there -- and, again, it's the same thing, "pursue my soul and overtake it." And, again, the Hebrew word "nephesh" literally means, like, my throat, you know, so it's like my life, my being, and they're pursuing it. And he uses "life" as a synonym, so "let him trample my life to the ground and lay my glory in the dust."

Now, it's interesting the way he begins in verse 3, saying, if I've done this, "If there's wrong in my hands, if I've repaid my friend with evil or plundered my enemy without cause," then let them. Let them tear me up like lions. Let them destroy me. If I'm wrong, if I'm the bad guy here, if this is just, if what they're trying to do to me, if what they're accusing me of, if what they want to do to me to punish me -- if they're right and I'm wrong, let it happen, because that's the just thing to happen. But his overall prayer, back to verses 1 and 2, is, don't let that happen. Save me from these things. Why? Because he believes that he's innocent, right?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** I mean, he believes -- he's confident that he's in the right, that he's not in the wrong. But he says, Lord, if I am in the wrong, if they're in the right, then let them -- let them destroy me. And so then he goes on, you know, and talks about, "Arise, O Lord, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury of my enemies; awake for me; you have appointed a judgment." And then he gets into the fact that, like most of the psalms, you know, if they're the bad guys and they've laid these traps for me and they're trying to hurt me unjustly, then let them fall by their own devices. Let their traps spring on them and let them -- let them suffer for what they're doing. And, you know, if they dig a pit -- verse 15, "He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made," and that's a constant idea in the psalms.

And so the idea of God's justice being the people that set a trap, let them fall into it and not the innocent victim, and that's what David is saying. That's what the psalmist is saying, is that I'm innocent here and I need you to vindicate me, and so I trust you to save me. Again, that -- this isn't a unique psalm, right? I mean, this kind of an idea about salvation goes all throughout the psalms.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** But we have this tendency, I think, to read it, and then we, like, read into it a, quote-unquote, spiritualized message, and we say, okay, yeah. Well, the psalmist was talking about, quote-unquote, physical salvation, but we're much more spiritual now and we're not worried about that.

Well, it's easy for us not to be worried about that because we live -- you and I live in 21st century America, and for the most part, there are no pursuers that are trying to devour our souls. There are no people that are trying to tear us up and hurt us. And so we live very disconnected from that, and so that's not our

question. Our question isn't, God, will you save me from the bad guys? Our question is, hey, God, when I'm really old, like when I'm like, you know, 95 and I'm on my deathbed and I'm ready to come and meet you, I want to know I'm forgiven and that I get to go to heaven to be with you. Like that's our question. That's what we're thinking about when we think about salvation. We're not thinking about people that are going to stab us. We're not thinking about, you know, being lynched. We're not thinking about being run out of town. We're not thinking about being thrown to the lions.

But not only were the people that were reading and singing the psalms, and the psalmists themselves, thinking about actual warfare and actual people that were trying to hurt them -- you know, David, as king, people that were falsely accusing him and people that were, you know, trying to overthrow him and these kind of things -- not only were they very literally thinking about those things, but as time went on, God's people sang these songs and they remembered these things and they thought about these things because these were very real and present dangers for them.

**TRAVIS:** Yeah.

**WES:** And then when we get into I Peter -- well, yeah, that's sort of the context there, as well, so we'll go back to I Peter. But all throughout I Peter, that's exactly the sort of thing that Peter is talking about. He's talking about, yes -- yes, there is an element of, hey, you've been forgiven and your sins have been atoned for, but when he talks about salvation, I think he's very much still talking in the same sort of idea that the psalmist is talking about because he's talking about suffering. He's talking about suffering unjustly.

**TRAVIS:** Yeah.

**WES:** He's talking about being persecuted for righteousness' sake, suffering for doing what is right and doing what is good. You know, I'm looking at the first part -- or, actually, even the middle part of I Peter 3 [sic]. So he says, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

Wow! I mean, we don't realize, I think, how challenging those types of instructions that aren't unique to this book -- I think about Romans Chapter 12, as well, and Chapter 13, where the apostles are admonishing the Christians who are beginning to suffer, and we know now, over the next few decades, would suffer immensely at the hands of the Romans.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** In the beginning, it was the Jews that sort of persecuted them to some extent, and to some extent stirred up the Roman powers in various communities a little bit. But, eventually, it became people like Nero who would -- I mean, Peter is writing this and Paul wrote Romans, and Nero put both of them to death.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** And the things that they did, like impaling Christians on spikes and dipping them in oil, using their bodies to light the streets in Rome, these are very real things that they weren't experiencing yet when Peter wrote this book, but that they would experience these things. And instead of Peter telling them, hey, grab your sword, grab your spear, grab your shield, fight these people. You're in the right.

Do -- you know, reclaim your rights, and, you know, don't let anybody stomp on you -- instead of that, he says, be peaceful. Do good. Honor the emperor. Love people.

And he even goes on to say, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and the gentle ones, but also to the unjust. For this is" -- and here's, I mean, just an amazing thing. "For this is a gracious thing..." in other words, this is -- this is a grace from God. This is a charity from God. This is a gift from God. "...when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it, if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."

I just realized, I think I said earlier that that was Chapter 3; it's actually Chapter 2. But that, I think, is the key to this entire -- to this entire book, but I think it's also the key to understanding salvation in the psalms and everywhere else. It says this, that Jesus, "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." Jesus said, I take refuge in you. I trust you. That I'm going to do what's right, and even though they put me to death in the body, I will live. You will vindicate me. You will raise me from the dead. So he entrusted himself to God.

That's exactly what the psalmist is doing. When we go back to Psalm 7 and

we think about what the psalmist is doing, he's saying, you judge me. You judge me, God, and if I'm guilty, let me be punished; but if I'm innocent, then let them be punished. If I'm innocent, let their traps spring on them. And that's what he means by "save me," "save me." He doesn't mean "save me" as in "forgive me." That's not to say the psalmist didn't need forgiveness; he did. But he's saying, in this instance, I'm not guilty and I entrust you to judge me. And if I'm guilty, fine. If I'm innocent, then I trust that you're going to save me, which is exactly what Jesus did. And as we go through I Peter, we have every reason to believe that we are innocent, not in the sense that we haven't done anything wrong --

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** -- but in the sense that we stand before God justified. And there, I think, is where the overlap between salvation and justification is, that we trust that we are being and will be saved because we are justified in Christ Jesus, but those two things are different ideas. One is I'm justified, and because I'm justified, because I'm innocent and righteous in God's sight because of what Jesus has done for me, then I trust that he's going to save me from death, from persecution, from whatever. That may mean that he saves me in resurrection and not that he saves me now. I very well, like Jesus, might be put to death, but I trust God, that God will -- he will judge me and he will say, because you're in Jesus, you're innocent and I raise you from the dead and you're mine.

**TRAVIS:** Well, let me ask you this, because I really identify with the psalmist, when David is saying, you know, if I'm innocent, then don't let their traps fall on me; let them fall on their traps, you know? But if I'm guilty, let them overtake me. And I get that. That -- you know, that's justice.

**WES:** Sure, yeah.

**TRAVIS:** Right? I think, you know, as we understand it, that's very just, and I get that. Then I read in I Peter 3:17, which is similar to where you were reading in Chapter 2, where he says, "It's better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil." I understand that as a concept, but I think, practically, that's a tough one.

**WES:** Yeah.

**TRAVIS:** And I think about times where I've made the connection of, oh, I'm suffering. I'm paying for something that I did wrong.

**WES:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**TRAVIS:** Whether that's reality or not, I make that connection, and there's something actually satisfying about that. I go, okay, I'll take the beating --

**WES:** Yeah, I deserve this.

**TRAVIS:** -- because I deserve it.

**WES:** Right, right, right.

**TRAVIS:** But I think that, in its own way -- but maybe even more so when you feel like you're suffering unjustly -- produces resentment.

**WES:** Yeah, it can. It sure can.

**TRAVIS:** And I think we're -- as we're kind of building in this narrative of how Christ is salvation in a larger sense, even, than eternity and standing before him on the last day, how does Christ redeem that resentment? How do you rise above that?

**WES:** Yeah. Well, and I think that that's exactly -- the psalmist will use words like what we translate as "meek." This is exactly what meekness is. Meekness is trusting that -- we're doing a series on Wednesday night about meekness right now, and the way I like to say it is that meekness is enduring the present in light

of the future. And so you cannot be meek and trust your current situation to God without faith, and the psalmist -- when the psalmist will -- will encourage, through their own suffering, people to trust God even though right now they're enduring something that is unjust.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** And they're saying, right now I'm suffering, but I trust you that this will not always be the way that it is, that, eventually, things will be better. Look at like Psalm 37, because this is where we get what Jesus says in Matthew 5:5 about "The meek shall inherit the earth." He says -- the psalmist, David, says in Psalm 37 and verse 1, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers..." and, really, that word "fret" goes back to what you were saying, resentment. In fact, the word "fret" there is about like boiling over. It's like being angry. It's not just worry. It's just -- why is this the way that it is? You know, kind of pulling your hair out, saying, why are they winning and I'm losing? This isn't fair. This isn't right. They're wrong and I'm right, yet I'm the one suffering.

And the psalmist says, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb." And then, you know, again, the passage we all know well because Jesus quotes it, verse 11 of Psalm 37, "But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace." And so the psalmist is saying, all throughout this psalm, trust God, because right now it looks like the bad guys are winning and the good guys are losing. It looks like the meek are being stomped on. It looks like the meek are chumps and that the bad guys are the ones that are shrewd and they're the ones that are winning. And we can look -- I mean, God's people have always been able to look at the world and say, man, that sure

seems to be the way that it is. If you're nice -- we even say that as a saying, that nice guys finish last, right?

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** And so we have this mentality that, man, if you're mean and you're cruel and you're crooked and you -- you know, you kind of bend things your own way, you kind of get ahead, you know? And we say, on the one hand, well, crime doesn't pay, but then we kind of think to ourselves, well, maybe it kind of does, you know? And so we have this way of looking at the world, and scripture says, yeah, I get it; it does feel that way sometimes. But what faith teaches us to do is to say God is just and it will not always be this way and that the evil people, the wrongdoers, will be brought down.

And we can look, even within time, even in this age, and see that every -- every evil empire that has ever been and has risen up that we can think about, eventually, they've come crumbling down. And at the moment -- in the moment, when you're suffering under the boot heel of a horrible, evil, wicked regime, you think, this is never going to end. These guys are going to take over the world and it will last forever. And, certainly, the evil dictator, he believes that his empire will last forever. He believes he's going to take over the world and that's he's going to have a dynasty that will never end. And guess what? It never works out for the bad guy. He always comes crumbling down every single time.

But our ultimate picture, eschatologically, you know, we're looking at the end and we're saying, ultimately, that's going to be true of all wickedness and all evil, and sin and death itself, and every persecutor that is stomping on God's people, that is stomping on the meek, that is stomping on the helpless and the poor, those people will all be brought down and God will rescue those who put

their trust in him. If you put your trust in God and you make God your refuge, you, as Jesus did, entrust your soul to the creator while doing good, he will save you.

And that's the idea, I think, in I Peter 3:21. And he even ties it to Noah, and he says -- in fact, I hate the way that the ESV reads because it kind of loses a little bit, I think, of what Peter is saying. He says that the people in Noah's day did not obey, that the other people didn't obey, "when God's patience" -- this is verse 20 -- "waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons," Noah and his family, "were brought safely" -- the ESV says, "brought safely through water." Well, in Greek it actually says something more like "they were saved through water," not "brought safely through." "Brought" in the English right here looks like "brought" is the verb. The actual verb is "saved." They were saved through water.

Well, wait a second. How were they saved through water? Wasn't it the ark that saved them? How could it be the water that saved them? Well, what did it save them from? That's the question. The ark saved them from the water, I guess, but the water saved them from the persecution. It saved them from the evil people. Why did they have to be saved? Well, Noah lived in a generation where they were incredibly violent, where their thoughts were wicked and violent all of the time, where the world had been overrun with wickedness and violence. And these people were disobedient, and God waited and he waited and he waited and he waited, but, eventually, God saved those eight people who put their trust in him, who trusted in him. They entrusted themselves to him who judges justly and they did good. They waited and they did good, and their patience and God's patience eventually bore fruit and they were saved through the water. The water

washed the world clean and it saved these people.

Now, Peter ties this to baptism, and he says, "Baptism" similarly, it is now -- "now," like present tense, back to your earlier point -- it is "now" saving you. Well, why would he be telling a bunch of persecuted people that are suffering unjustly --

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** -- that are being hated and despised by their neighbors and their family because they follow Jesus, that you are being saved through water? Well, not saved necessarily just in the sense that you're being forgiven. Baptism and forgiveness certainly are tied together, but here I think it's more than that. It's that your salvation has already begun. You're already being separated from and saved from the world, because why? Because you're appealing to -- or some say "pledging" a good conscience. And I think that when he says "good conscience," he says you're appealing to God for a good conscience, or some translations say you're making a pledge of a good conscience towards God. Either way, I think by "good conscience" -- when we read "good conscience," we tend to think like a clean conscience, right? Like I don't feel guilty about anything. That may be part of it, but I think there's also confidence there.

When you go back to the psalmist and you read like what David is saying in Psalm 7, when he says, I have a good conscience, he's not just saying that he doesn't feel guilty for anything.

**TRAVIS:** Right.

**WES:** He's saying, I trust that I'm on your side. I trust that you're saving me. I trust that you see me as not guilty.

**TRAVIS:** Man, that's good.

**WES:** I entrust my soul, my life, to the one who judges justly. I don't judge

myself. I don't accept their verdict of me. They say I'm guilty. I may even feel guilty sometimes, but I trust you. The verdict belongs to you. I entrust myself to you.

And so I think that's exactly what Peter is saying. He's saying, I'm pledging, or appealing, whatever the case may be, for a good conscience. I'm putting my confidence in you. And that's exactly what baptism is. Baptism is this act of saying, I surrender. I entrust myself to you as the one who judges justly and your will be done. You will save me. You will vindicate me. Even if they bring me down, I am still being saved through the water, just like Noah and his family were being saved through the water. It's all about trusting in him who judges justly while doing good.

And back to your first point about this current salvation, right now we're living as people -- Peter isn't -- he's not talking to non-Christians, saying, hey, get baptized because baptism now saves you. That's how we tend to use this verse. He's talking to saved people who are being saved, saying, you are being saved through your baptism. You're coming through the water. Just like Noah and his family are being saved from the world they lived in through the water, you're being saved from this persecution that you're enduring right now. You're already in the midst of salvation. Your salvation has already begun through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You are right now, currently, being saved, so right now you entrust yourself to the one who judges justly and do good. Even if you suffer for it, do good. Be peacemakers. Do good right now, because you're being saved.

**TRAVIS:** So one thing I thought of -- this ties into another study I'm doing right now on the nature of God. And one thing that really stood out to me, and this kind of dissonance between -- that I have -- I notice in my head that I have

between -- you know, okay, I don't earn my salvation; I understand that. You know, we're not saved through works.

**WES:** Right.

**TRAVIS:** But another part of my head does not believe that. And I'm -- not to get political or blame it all on one thing, but I know one thing that I thought of that made me realize like, oh, that's -- that's just in my DNA, to earn everything, is that, you know, the free market, capitalism, being competitive, and like just this idea of like it's built into our culture. It's in our DNA, especially in this country.

**WES:** Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, yeah.

**TRAVIS:** Exactly. It's hard not to approach God with that mentality. And, you know, 13 years into being a Christian, it's not getting any easier. Just by recognizing that, though, it at least became like, okay, well, I see where the big problem is, is constantly approaching God with, you know, I've judged myself. Putting David's words like that really -- that was eye-opening to me, what you just said, the idea of I don't judge myself. I may feel guilty, but at the end of the day, he's the judge. I think that's -- that's really powerful.

**WES:** John says something like that in his epistle, and so does Paul. Paul says, I'm not judged by you, he says to the Corinthian church. But he says, or any other human court or even myself. Like I don't even judge myself because who am I to pass a verdict on me? It's God's judgment that matters. And if he says there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, then I trust him and I believe that, not because I haven't done anything wrong, because I certainly have, and not because I've done everything right, because I certainly haven't, but because God has passed a verdict on us in Christ Jesus, and I believe that if I put my trust in him, that he is -- and I think that's -- to your point about, you know,

trying to save ourselves, I mean, that in and of itself is such a misnomer. I mean, how can you rescue yourself? That doesn't make any sense.

**TRAVIS:** Yeah.

**WES:** The very act of being saved is, to some degree -- and when I say "passive," I don't mean that we don't participate in it, because if somebody throws us a life preserver, you obviously have to grab onto it, but it's not -- but you're not -- by grabbing the life preserver, you're not saving yourself; you're not rescuing yourself. Someone is rescuing you.

And so the biblical picture is that humanity and all of creation is in desperate need of rescuing. It's in desperate need of redemption. It needs Satan and the forces of evil and the powers of darkness defeated, and for us to be delivered like the Israelites. That's why the biblical picture is so important. You think about Israel that is suffering in captivity or in -- well, in captivity, yes, in Babylon. Or you think about before that, in Egypt, and you think about Pharaoh ruling over them. There was no way to like -- okay, if we're really, really good people, then maybe, you know, Pharaoh will just let us go. That's -- no. You need a rescuer. You need somebody to step in. You need a hero. You need somebody to come in who's going to defeat the forces of darkness, who's going to show that he is the real, true God and he's going to bring you out of captivity. He's going to deliver you through the water, ironically. So through the water they're going to be baptized in the sea and in the cloud, and then they're going to come out on the other side saved people.

And it's always been salvation by grace through faith. We trust God to do the saving. We trust God to do the justifying. We trust God to do the forgiving. And when we entrust ourselves to God, then we just commit ourselves to, as Paul

says in Ephesians 2, you're saved by grace through faith. Now you have good works prepared beforehand for you to do, so now walk in them. You walk in them, not in order to be saved, but because you are saved, because you are saved and because you trust God to do the saving in the past, in the present, in the future. Trust God to do that. Now you can commit yourself to doing these things because, like you said, now the resentment is gone, and now, instead of seeing the suffering that I have to endure as punishment or as just or unjust, I don't have to worry about that.

In fact, I can look at it and I can perceive it as a gracious thing in the eyes of God. I can consider it a gift and say, you know what? As James says, consider it all joy when you encounter various trials because the testing of your faith produces endurance. This is going to help me be a better person. This is going to help refine me and shape me because I'm already being saved. I'm like Israel, and I'm halfway through the Red Sea and I'm on my way out the other side. And, yes, there's a past tense to my salvation; there's a present tense to my salvation; there's a future tense to my salvation, but it's God who is doing the rescuing. All I've got to do is trust him and continue to walk in his ways.

Now, that's not to say that -- you know, again, that once you're saved, you're always saved, or something like that. Of course I can refuse to be saved and I can say, listen, I don't want to walk in -- and that's exactly what Peter is warning against. He's saying, listen, you're being saved so just trust God. Trust God. Trust that what's happening right now doesn't mean he's turned his back on you. Trust that what's happening right now and the persecution that you're enduring is not an indication that he doesn't love you or that you're not forgiven, because you are. You're forgiven and he loves you, and this is for -- this is a

gracious thing in God's sight, and you are being saved. So just trust him and do good right now, in the present, because you're already being saved through baptism.

*I want to thank my church family, the church of Christ on McDermott Road, and our editor, Travis Pauley, for making this podcast possible. And thank you for listening. If you haven't already done so, please rate, review, and subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcast, or wherever you're listening. I also want to invite you to check out Logos Bible Software, who has partnered with us to give our listeners a great discount. Just go to [RadicallyChristian.com/logos](https://RadicallyChristian.com/logos). I think you'll love the software and you'll get a great discount by using that link.*

*As always, I love you, God loves you, and I hope you have a wonderful day.*