

What God Did to Save Sinners and How They Must Respond (TCOF 12-19)

Introducing the *Trinity Confession of Faith* Class 3 – 2023 Summer Discipleship Series
John McLeod – July 26, 2023

Quiz

Put the elements of the application of redemption in the correct order.

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|-----------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | a. Conversion (faith and repentance) |
| 2. _____ | b. Sanctification (right conduct of life) |
| 3. _____ | c. Regeneration (being born again) |
| 4. _____ | d. The Gospel Call (proclamation) |
| 5. _____ | e. Election (God's choice of people to be saved) |
| 6. _____ | f. Glorification (receiving a resurrection body) |
| 7. _____ | g. Death (going to be with the Lord) |
| 8. _____ | h. Perseverance (remaining a Christian) |
| 9. _____ | i. Adoption (membership in God's family) |
| 10. _____ | j. Justification (right legal standing) |

* see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 670

Goals for this class:

** Remember this series is **Introducing** the *Trinity Confession of Faith*.

1. Answer again: "What does it mean that we are confessional?"
2. Consider the doctrine of the *Application of Redemption* in Chapters 12-19. We will read portions of each chapter.
3. Convince you that many portions of the TCOF are edifying and worth reading and studying.
4. Answer your questions

I. *Confessionalism* revisited

What is different now that we subscribe to the Trinity Confession of Faith, in contrast with our earlier Statement of Faith?

- From one perspective, not much is different at all.
 - There has been no significant change in doctrine.
 - Both documents applied directly to the elders, not every church member. One does not have to agree with the TCOF to be a member at Cornerstone.
- From another perspective, things are a little different.
 - The TCOF is based on an historic confession (2nd London Baptist Confession of 1689)
 - This ties us more directly to the churches of the Protestant Reformation.
 - This ties us to many modern churches who subscribe to the 2nd London Confession (Reformed Baptists) or the Westminster Confession of Faith (Presbyterians).
 - The TCOF is more detailed and speaks to more issues.
 - The TCOF (and forthcoming Catechism) may be used in our denomination and our church as a teaching tool, equipping for ordination, and organization of doctrine.

Does a Confession of Faith create division or schism in the Body of Christ?

- No. A Confession merely states what we believe the Bible teaches.
- It is to be used to communicate what we believe to be true and beautiful in scripture, not to drive others away.

Why don't we say, "I just believe the Bible!" or "I have no creed but the Bible!"?

- All Christians have some kind of theological system. We have put ours down on paper for critique, sharpening, and accountability. Those who say they just believe the Bible often keep their theological and interpretive systems to themselves and do not submit them for public evaluation, scrutiny, or correction.

Does having a Confession mean we can never gain a new understanding of scripture and change our mind?

- No, we do not claim that the TCOF is flawless or infallible.

II. The Application of Redemption, Part 1 — **God** Does... (Chapters 12-15)

Another way to organize doctrine, TULIP

What is the relationship of these sections to the *Doctrines of Grace* (TULIP)? One thing that you'll realize as you read the Trinity Confession of Faith (as well as WCF or LCF) is that they are not organized according to the Doctrines of Grace (TULIP). If you're interested in exploring different sections of the TCOF that intersect with TULIP, here are a few places that connect.

- **T**otal Depravity — **7.2-4** (The Fall of Man); 11.3 (Free Will)
- **U**nconditional Election — **3** (God's Decree)
- **L**imited Atonement — **9.5, 9.8** (Christ the Mediator)
- **I**rresistible Grace — **12** (Effectual Calling); **22.4** (The Gospel...)
- **P**erseverance of the Saints — **19** (Perseverance of the Saints)

We recently offered a discipleship class to explain the Doctrines of Grace.

- <https://cornerstoneapex.org/messages/series/being-reformed>

Organized by the *Ordo Salutis* instead:

The *ordo salutis* describes the process by which the work of salvation, wrought in Christ, is subjectively realized in the hearts and lives of sinners. It aims at describing in their logical order, and also in their interrelations, the various movements of the Holy Spirit in the application of the work of redemption. The emphasis is not on what man does in appropriating the grace of God, but on what God does in applying it.¹

Other systematic theology headings:

- "The Doctrine of the Application of Redemption" in Grudem.
- Book Three in Calvin's *Institutes* which he titles, "The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ: What Benefits Come to Us from It, and What Effects Follow".
- In Bavinck, VOLUME 4: "HOLY SPIRIT, CHURCH, AND NEW CREATION"

¹ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing co., 1938), 415–416.

Compared to the Ordo Salutis we established with our quiz, the TCOF is different. It begins with four aspects that **God Does**, and then moves on to what **Man does**.

Chapter 12 — Effectual Calling

1. Those whom God has predestined to life, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. He effectually calls them by his Word and Spirit out of their natural state of sin and death, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills and by his almighty power causes them to do what is good. He effectually draws them to Jesus Christ, yet they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man nor from any power or agency in him. Being dead in sins and trespasses, he is wholly passive in this until being born again and renewed by the Holy Spirit. He is thus enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. This is by no less a power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

→ **Ephesians 2:1-6**

→ **Ezekiel 36:26-27**

Chapter 13 — Justification

1. Those whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by accounting and accepting them as righteous. This is not for anything done in them or done by them but for Christ's sake alone. God justifies them not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other gospel obedience to them. God justifies them by imputing Christ's active obedience to the whole law and passive obedience in his death, and he does this through faith. This faith they have is not of themselves. It is the gift of God.

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness is the only instrument of justification. Yet it is not alone in the person justified but is always accompanied with all other saving graces. It is not a dead faith but works by love.

- **Romans 3:24-26**
- **Romans 5:1**
- **James 2:26**

Chapter 14 — Adoption

1. In and for the sake of his only Son Jesus Christ, God has graciously granted the gift of adoption to all those who are justified. By this, they are numbered with and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God. They have his name put upon them, receive the Spirit of adoption, and have access to the throne of grace with boldness. They are enabled to cry, “Abba, Father.” They are pitied, protected, provided for, and disciplined by him as by a father. They are never cast off but sealed to the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.

- **Ephesians 1:5**
- **Romans 8:15**

Chapter 15 — Sanctification

1. Those who are united to Christ, effectually called, and regenerated, have a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection. They are also further sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them. The dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and its various lusts are more and more weakened and put to death. Those who are united to Christ are more and more enlivened and strengthened in all saving graces so that they practice true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. This sanctification is throughout the whole person, yet imperfect in this life. Some remnants of corruption still abide in every part, from which arises a continual and irreconcilable war—the desires of the flesh against the desires of the Spirit and those of the Spirit against those of the flesh.

- **John 17:17**
- **Galatians 5:17**

III. The Application of Redemption, Part 2 — **Man** Does... (Chapters 16-19)

We began with four activities done by God. Now we turn to four actions belonging to us. However, we will see in each of these that they are **enabled** and **empowered** by the Spirit's work in the believer's life.

Chapter 16 — Saving Faith

1. The grace of faith is a work of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of the elect, by which they are enabled to believe for the saving of their souls. This grace of faith is ordinarily brought about by the ministry of the Word. It is also increased and strengthened by the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, prayer, and other means appointed by God.

2. By this faith, a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word as the authority of God himself. A Christian also perceives an excellency in it above all other writings and all things in the world. For the Word bears forth the glory of God in His attributes, the excellency of Christ in His nature and offices, and the power and fullness of the Holy Spirit in His workings and operations. So the Christian is enabled to cast his soul upon the truth that he believes. He also acts differently based on what each particular passage contains: obeying the commands, trembling at the warnings, and embracing the promises of God for this life and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith have immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, and resting upon him alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

→ **Ephesians 2:8**

→ **Romans 10:17**

→ **Psalms 19:7-10**

Chapter 17 — Repentance to Life and Salvation

1. The faith that leads to salvation is also a faith that leads to true repentance. There is no saving faith that does not lead to true repentance and no true repentance that does not spring from saving faith. In their effectual calling, God gives the elect repentance unto life. This includes even those who have

lived some time in the state of nature, and served various lusts and pleasures while in it.

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace by which a person by the Holy Spirit is made aware of the numerous evils of his sin and, by faith in Christ, humbles himself for his sin with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-aborrence for it, praying for pardon and strength of grace. By the supply of the Spirit, this person aims and endeavors to walk before God in a well-pleasing way in all things.

4. Repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives on the account of the body of death and its sinful desires and actions. So it is every man's duty to repent specifically of his particular known sins.

→ **Mark 1:15**

→ **Acts 11:18**

Chapter 18 — Good Works

2. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments are the fruits and evidence of true and lively faith. By them, believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brothers and sisters, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God. They are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, that having the fruit which leads to holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

6. Nevertheless just as the persons of believers are accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him. Their works are not accepted as though they were in this life wholly unblamable and unreprouable in God's sight. But God, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, even though it is accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

7. Although works done by unregenerate men may be things which God commands and of good use to both themselves and others, yet because they do not proceed from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to the Word, nor to a right end, to the glory of God, they are therefore sinful and cannot please God. Nor can they make a man ready to

receive grace from God, and yet the neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.

→ **James 2:18**

→ **1 John 2:3**

Chapter 19 — Perseverance of the Saints

1. Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace but will certainly persevere to the end. They are eternally saved, for the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. Consequently, he continues to produce and nourish in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit which incline to immortality. Though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, these shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock on which they are fastened by faith. Notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God for salvation. There they shall enjoy their purchased possession, having been engraved upon the palms of his hands and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity.

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not on their own free will but on the immutability of the decree of election, which flows from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father.

→ **John 10:28-29**

→ **Phil 1:6**

→ **Romans 8:30**

Questions and Answers

More Resources:

- <https://cornerstoneapex.org/messages/series/being-reformed>

Coming Up

August 2 — **You: Made in the Image of God; Empowered by the Spirit**

- Teacher: John McLeod
- Topics: Two chapters we added because of our historical moment (“Man” TCOF 5) or our distinctive beliefs (“The Empowering Spirit,” TCOF 10).

August 9 — **What Do I Do Now?**

- Teacher: Daniel Baker
- Topics: How to make good use of the Confession in your life, your family, and the church; Resources to recommend; What is our Mission (TCOF 33).