

# **ELDER STATEMENT ON THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF SAVING FAITH**

We believe saving faith is simple trust in God's promise that all who look to Jesus Christ and his death, burial, and resurrection for us will receive the gift of forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:14-16). It does not require any kind of commitment or submission or a promise of obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Saving faith is about trusting what Jesus did on the cross as a substitutionary payment for our sin. It is not about a commitment of what we may do in the future.

This trust is more than mere intellectual assent of who Jesus is or what he did. It is a turning from sin and receiving Jesus alone for salvation. Implicit in saving faith is the element of repentance from our dead works and any sense that our own goodness could merit God's forgiveness and our salvation. We acknowledge that in ourselves we only deserve God's wrath, the judgment that fell upon Jesus Christ on the cross. We repent of thinking that life without God is acceptable. We repent of relying upon any means of salvation other than trusting Jesus Christ alone. It is saying to God, "My life is sinful and wrong; it is headed to destruction, and I need your saving grace in Jesus Christ."

Though they are connected in the outworking of our salvation, we distinguish between the call to initial salvation (justification) and discipleship (sanctification). The first is the call to believe in Christ as Savior and to receive the free gift of eternal life. The second is the call to follow Jesus as Lord and become a faithful disciple. The first is how one becomes a child of God. The second is how one grows as his child.

In the outworking of genuine saving faith, believers are not left alone to their own devices. God works within us (Philippians 1:6; 2:13). He disciplines us (Hebrews 12:6). Those born again by the Spirit will produce some fruit, some good works. However, not everyone who is regenerate will finish well in this life. Some may shipwreck their faith (1 Timothy 1:18-20) and end up being generally useless and unfruitful (2 Peter 1:8-9). But eternally secure, they will end up being saved yet as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15).

In summary, we believe that justifying faith whereby we become children of God is simple trust in Jesus Christ who died in our place on the cross. Good works are not necessary to merit, to maintain, or to prove salvation, but rather are part of discipleship and the basis for receiving eternal rewards.

Adopted May 2026 by the current elder board: Jack Arrington, Brion Burns, Dick Hohn, Mike Harvell, Don Johnson, and Wade Hasty