Small Group Questions:
One Faith
October 7, 2007

Getting Started
A headline in the Grand Rapids Press read, "Conversion to Hindu Faith Is Tortuous." The article stated that a German businessman had completed his conversion to the Hindu faith by piercing himself through the cheeks with a ¼-inch-thick steel rod and pulling a chariot for two miles by ropes attached to his back and chest by steel hooks. Other converts had walked through long pits of fire, donned shoes with soles made of nails, or hung in the air spread-eagle from hooks embedded in their backs.

Aren’t you glad that conversion to Christianity is not accomplished by self-inflicted torture? In contrast, Jesus Christ was afflicted with one of the cruelest forms of torture ancient Rome could devise so that He could freely give you the gift of salvation. Jesus paid the price for your conversion so that you could not and would not have to do a thing to earn it. The only requirement is for you to receive the greatest gift God gave.

Getting In
Two key components make salvation available to all: God’s grace and our faith. Read Ephesians 2, then focus on verses 8-9.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, . . .

1. What is the "gift of God" given to you?

2. By what means have you been saved?

3. What response is necessary on your part?

4. Read Romans 10:9, then answer the following questions.

a. What are two important components in expressing a saving faith?

b. What is the result of your confession and belief?
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

5. According to these verses, what you are not saved by?

6. Why is salvation a gift rather than the result of merit or effort?

Discussion Questions:

7. We’ve seen that being good enough or working hard enough does not achieve salvation. Using the letters from the acronym WORKS, discuss with the group things that people do to try and earn God’s favor.

   W (Went to church this week)

   O (Offering: Giving to stay on God’s “good side”)

   R (Rituals: Going through the religious motions I’ve seen others perform)

   K (Keeping strict rules in an effort to win God’s favor…”I’m a good person”)

   S (Saying prayers I didn’t mean or understand)

8. Have you ever done these things out of guilt or obligation? Why?

9. In James 2:23 James quotes Genesis 15:6 concerning Abraham’s faith. Paul quotes exactly the same Scripture in Romans 4:3 to show that we are saved by faith, not works. How can we reconcile these two ideas—that we are saved by faith and not deeds, and faith without deeds is dead?

10. In your own life, what are some evidences of authentic faith in Christ?

11. What is one specific faith-action you can take this week? (Something that can do to demonstrate that your faith is not “dead”?)

“Salvation is worth working for. It is worth a man’s going round the world on his hands and knees, climbing its mountains, crossing its valleys, swimming its rivers, going through all manner of hardship in order to attain it. But we do not get it in that way. It is to him who believes.”

-Dwight Lyman Moody
One Faith
Sermon Outline
Ephesians 2:8-9
Pastor Scott McKinney
Oct. 6, 2007

Jeremiah 1:5- “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”

Psalm 51:5 For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I’m far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me.

We can fool one another but we cannot fool God.

Romans 3:23- All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

We cannot save ourselves.

We are saved by an alien righteousness
"alien" means "from another place."

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

We are saved by Faith alone in Christ alone and we know that from the Bible alone.

Grace is God’s free gift.

Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

Luke 15:11-31 “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to
fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

"My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "