



A Well-Defined
FAITH

[fāth] (noun)

Biblical words used in church...
Discover what they really mean.



Sunday
May 3, 2026

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - This application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

“Salvation - To deliver from destruction”

Introduction

This week in our series “A Well-Defined Faith”, we turn to a word that sits at the very center of the Christian gospel – Salvation. It is one of the most frequently spoken words in church, sung in nearly every hymn, and assumed in nearly every sermon. And yet, like faith, it is rarely examined with the precision it deserves.

Salvation is often understood as something negative – an escape from punishment, a rescue from what we deserve. But the Bible presents salvation as far more than that. It is deliverance from destruction in every form: spiritual death, bondage to sin, and even the slow ruin that comes from living for the wrong things. The destruction we need saving from is not only external. Much of it is self-inflicted.

Every person is being shaped by something. Every person is moving toward something. The question salvation forces is this: toward what – and by whose power? The Bible's answer is that the human condition, left to itself, bends toward destruction. Not because people are incapable of good, but because no human effort can ultimately undo what sin has done or secure what only God can give.

Exodus 14:30, Exodus 15:2, and Ephesians 2:8-10 bring us to the same point from three different angles – one through dramatic rescue, one through praise born of memory, and one through theological clarity. Together they show us what salvation is, who accomplishes it, and why it transforms the whole of a person's life.

As we begin, sit honestly with a few questions: What are you trusting to save you – or at least to hold your life together? Is salvation something you believe doctrinally, or something you have actually experienced? And what does it look like to live as someone who has been rescued rather than someone still trying to earn their way?

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- Have you ever been rescued – physically, emotionally, or otherwise? What did it feel like to realize you couldn't get out alone?
- What do you reach for to feel secure or in control? How does that compare to what you say you believe about God?
- Is there a version of self-destruction – slow, quiet, socially acceptable – you've never thought of as something God wants to deliver you from?
- "Saved by grace through faith, not by works" – does that feel like relief, or does part of you resist it? What does that resistance reveal?
- If your obedience is part of the rescue rather than payment for it, what changes?

On June 6, 1944, Allied soldiers waded ashore at Normandy under withering fire. No soldier standing on that beach had conceived the strategy, built the fleet, or chosen the moment. He entered a rescue already in motion – planned by others, resourced by others, and made possible by sacrifices already paid before he ever left England. Whatever courage he showed on that beach, he showed it inside something larger than himself, authored by someone else, made possible by what others had already given. The rescue preceded him.

- That asymmetry – carried into freedom before you could act – is exactly what the Red Sea crossing is trying to show, and exactly what Ephesians 2 insists is true of everyone who has ever come to God.

Highlight | Read Ex 14:30, 15:2, Eph 2:8-10

Exodus 14 records the moment Israel stands between Pharaoh's army and the sea – hemmed in, terrified, and entirely out of options. Moses tells them to stand still. What follows is not a battle. It is a rescue. Verse 30 draws the simplest possible conclusion: that day, the Lord saved Israel.

Exodus 15 is the song that follows. It is Israel's first extended response to what God has done – not an argument or a theology, but praise. And at its center is a declaration that has echoed through Jewish and Christian worship ever since: the Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation. Salvation remembered becomes the source of worship. It is not abstract. It has a face, a moment, a before and after.

Ephesians 2:8-10 brings the same reality into sharp theological focus. Paul writes to a church that contains both Jewish and Gentile believers – people from radically different backgrounds – and insists that both are saved the same way: by grace, through faith, not by works. The source is God. The channel is faith. The evidence is a transformed life that walks in the good works God prepared in advance. Salvation is a rescue that issues in a direction.

- What is the significance of Israel doing nothing at the Red Sea – and what does that cost our instinct to contribute something to our own rescue?
- Ephesians 2:10 says God prepared good works "in advance" for us to walk in – what does it mean that your obedience is something God authored, not something you invented?

Explain | Consider the Context

Exodus was written to a nation that had just experienced the most dramatic rescue in their history – and would spend the next forty years forgetting it. The Song of the Sea was composed while the memory was still vivid and the water still wet. Israel's entire identity traced back to one conviction: we were slaves, and God saved us. Their law, their calendar, their worship, their ethics – all of it flowed from that single fact.

Ephesians was written into a prosperous, religiously pluralistic city where every religion operated on some version of earned divine favor. Paul cuts against every instinct: you are not saved by your effort. You were dead. Dead things do not cooperate with their own resurrection. God acted first.

Both texts place salvation entirely in God's hands – and both immediately connect that rescue to a response. Israel sings. The church walks in good works. Salvation is not passive in its outcome, only in its origin. The person genuinely rescued does not remain unchanged.

- Israel had to be reminded of the exodus constantly because they kept forgetting. What is your version of forgetting what you've been saved from – and what brings you back?
- Where do you still operate as though God's approval can be earned – and what would it actually cost to stop?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

Salvation means deliverance – from destruction, from bondage, from the patterns and powers that ruin a life from the inside out. It is not only rescue from sin's consequences; it is rescue from sin's grip, from death's claim, and from the slow wreckage of a life built on the wrong foundation.

The difficulty is not usually understanding that salvation is God's work. The difficulty is living as though it actually is. Most people who affirm grace by doctrine still practice something closer to performance in daily life – still managing impressions, still measuring worth, still quietly trying to prove they deserved rescuing. Apply means asking where that gap lives in you.

Salvation produces praise. The song of Exodus 15 is not a theological treatise. It is worship that erupted from people who could not explain what happened or take credit for it. Genuine salvation changes what a person reaches for when words run out.

Salvation issues in a direction. Ephesians 2:10 refuses to leave salvation as merely a legal status. The rescued person walks in good works – not to pay for salvation, but because salvation gives them both the capacity and the calling. Obedience is not the price of rescue; it's the shape rescue takes in life.

- Is there a form of self-destruction – a habit, a pattern, a way of thinking – that you have not surrendered to God because you have not named it as something He wants to deliver you from?
- What would it look like for your week to be shaped by the conviction that the rescue is complete – rather than by the anxiety that you still need to prove something?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

Israel's first response to the Red Sea was not a plan. It was a song. Before strategy, before next steps, before application – they worshipped. There is something important in that order. The person who has genuinely reckoned with being rescued doesn't immediately ask what do I do now? They first have to sit with what was done for them.

And sitting with it changes something. Worship is not a warm-up to the real work – it is the reorientation that makes the real work possible. Israel sang before they took a single step into the wilderness. The song did not come after they had proven themselves worthy of the rescue. It came from people still standing at the water's edge, still catching their breath, still unable to fully explain what they had just witnessed. That is where genuine response begins – not in resolution, but in awe.

Salvation is not a doctrine to affirm once – it is the reality a person learns to live from, day after day, the same way Israel was meant to live from the memory of the sea. And Ephesians 2:10 shows what that living looks like in practice. You are God's poiema – His workmanship, a crafted thing made with intention. The works you walk in were prepared before you drew your first breath. That means your obedience, your service, your faithfulness in ordinary moments – none of it is improvised. It is the path the rescued person was always meant to walk.

- Where are you living as though the rescue is not yet complete – still performing, still managing, still earning – and what would it look like to actually rest in what God has done?
- What would change about the way you pray, speak, or treat the people around you if you genuinely believed you are God's workmanship, crafted for a purpose He defined before you were born?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

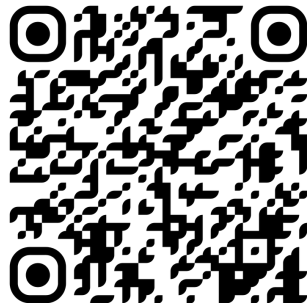
Additional Commentary

- On yasha (Exodus 14:30) – "saved" - The Hebrew root carries the sense of being brought into a wide, open space after being hemmed in. Salvation is not merely forgiveness of a debt – it is spatial and relational liberation. What God did at the sea was not just remove an enemy; He opened a way where there was none. That sense of spaciousness echoes throughout the Psalms and Prophets.
- On Exodus 15:2 – strength, song, and salvation in the same breath - The compression of this verse is intentional. God is not only the source of Israel's rescue – He is the content of their song. He does not merely provide strength; He becomes it. Salvation here is not a transaction Israel can separate from the person of God. To be saved is to be brought into relationship with the one who saved. The song is the overflow of that reality.
- On charis (Ephesians 2:8) – "grace" - Grace in the Greek world meant a gift freely given by someone with the power and goodness to give it – no obligation on the giver, no claim on the recipient. Paul uses it to dismantle every transactional instinct about standing before God. The grammar is impossible to misread: grace is the source, faith is the channel, and "not of yourselves" removes any ambiguity about human contribution.
- On poiema (Ephesians 2:10) – "workmanship" - The word appears only twice in the New Testament and refers to something crafted with intention. The believer is not a project God is hoping will come together – they are something He has already made, for a purpose. The good works were prepared in advance. This is not a call to passivity; it is a call to walk in what already exists rather than invent what to do with a rescued life.
- On the structure of these three texts together - Exodus 14 gives the event. Exodus 15 gives the response. Ephesians 2 gives the theology. Read in sequence, they trace the full arc of salvation: God acts, the rescued community worships, and the apostle explains what it demands going forward. Together, they refuse to let salvation remain either purely experiential or purely doctrinal. It must be both – and it must issue in a direction.

Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our [leadership resources](#).

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

Watch

Bible Project - Ephesians



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into **Ephesians** and its themes.

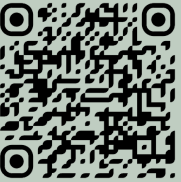
Bible Project - Sea Crossing



In this video, we look at the **Sea Crossing** in Exodus 14 + the Song of Moses in Exodus 15.

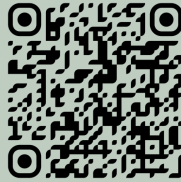
Overview

Enduring Word - Exodus 14



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings of **Exodus 14**.

Got Questions - Ephesians 2



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, social media, podcasts, and more on **Eph 2:8-10**.

Expand

Bible Ref - Exodus 14



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of **Exodus 14**.

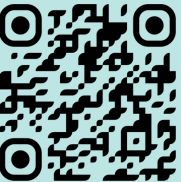
Bible Hub - Ephesians 2:8-10



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on **Ephesians 2:8-10**.

Deepen

Logos Factbook - Salvation



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about **Salvation**.

Blue Letter Bible - Ephesians



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on **Ephesians 2:8-10**.

