Hebrews 5:9 9After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.

I agree. It is hard to fathom the truth of the Christian faith. From our point of view it just doesn’t make sense. Here it is in a nutshell. Why would some supposedly totally supreme being, who has all power and authority, and add to that all wisdom, first of all, create a world with so many problems and then secondly, why would you send your Son to redeem this world if you created the problems in the first place? That really is the dilemma of our Christian faith. And here is what I will tell you, get either answer to those two questions wrong and you will find that your Christian faith doesn’t make sense. Yet, you get those two answers correct and what you end up with is our Christian faith and the most gracious, caring, loving God there is or ever has been.

So let’s just take on that first question: Why would a supposedly supreme being create a world with so many problems? Here is the Biblical answer.

God, yes, the supreme, all-knowing, all powerful, holy and just God, the only God, created a world but He created that world holy and perfect. There were no flaws and there were no evils in the world of creation. Yet we have to grasp the reality of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That tree was there because you have given your newly created humans, Adam and Eve, a free will. I look at it this way. If I make a robot that does everything I command it to and it can do nothing but what I gave it, can that robot love me or even be a part of love? Since we all understand the world of cars, let’s use them to illustrate. I have a car. The car is great. It is a machine that does exactly and only what it is made to do. I love that car (remember, I am human)! Can the car return love to me? Fact is, the machine doesn’t care, doesn’t know, and is incapable of knowing or loving. You have to let this truth sink in. The car is incapable of loving but deeper yet, the car is totally incapable of even knowing it is a car, where it came from and what it does. It is unthinking, unemotional, it is not in any way or sense “alive.”

Had Adam and Eve not had free will, the mind and the emotional mindset to think and to freely have emotions, you don’t have humans. That tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the thing that made Adam and Eve the crown of creation. It gave them that true free will to actually make a choice, to think things out and make a choice. They could believe God and stay holy and perfect or they could not believe God and bring evil into their world. We know how that worked out. Despite the fact that they had all the knowledge, all the information, all the reasons to reject the disinformation of Satan, they chose to listen to Satan and they brought sin and evil into the created world.

As our Catechism simply states in question 368: *“What is meant by evil in the world?”* Answer: *“By evil is meant all the bad things that are a part of our life on earth as a result of Adam’s fall into sin.”* You name the bad thing: illness, erosion, hatred, murder, rust, the list is endless, and all of that is simply the result of the fall into sin. God did not create a bad world or even a world with bad things. God created a holy and perfect world and Adam and Eve, though they did not have to, choose, perhaps we could argue, choose in ignorance to open the door to the destruction and horror of sin. I believe Adam and Eve had every chance, every strength and every truth they needed to walk away from Satan’s temptation! In total disregard of the truth and everything they knew, they disobeyed the one, single command they had. “Don’t eat of that fruit!” Get this through your head, God is not at fault for the evil in the world.

But what is marvelous is that God chose to do something about the evil and the destructive force that sin is. God chose to send a Savior. God chose to bail Adam and Eve out of this horror they created. It would take a Savior who would and did atone for us. It would bring the wonder of Jesus. Our theme will be: **THE SOURCE OF SALVATION!**

The first thing I want to do is help you grasp the nature of what sin has done to us. I am going to use two different illustrations to hopefully help you get the reality of this. I have told you before that in the world of science there really is no such thing as “darkness.” Darkness is a term we have come up with describe a reality, but there is really no such thing as “dark.” Dark is the measure of the absence of light. Light illuminates, helps us see, and shows us the reality and truth of all that is around us. When there is darkness, we can’t see, and we don’t know the reality around us. Darkness allows for hurt and harm, for getting lost and, well, not surviving. Listen up, God is light, evil is dark. Evil is literally the rejection, denial and hatred of God. God loves, we hate. God is life, we do murder. God is good, we do the very opposite of that so often in our lives. We have become so bold in our darkness that today we call good that which is evil and evil that which is good. How blind we have become!

And please contemplate this. The idea behind the modern “defund the police” movement is that if we stop labeling things evil and wrong, people will stop doing evil and wrong! How did Shakespeare put it, “A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” Evil is still there even if you don’t call it that and since people are inclined to evil, when you stop applying the law, evil will begin to dominate the world. Evil by any other name is still evil and is still going to be done!

As sinners, we are not just lightly impacted. Go back to my illustration of a car. Sin is not like a bad battery and we just can’t get started. There are those who basically teach this and they then teach a Jesus who came to charge us up and now we can go and be what God wants of us. Please reject that that whole idea. If we are cars, sin to us is being hit at 90 mile an hour by a semi-truck, thrown off a bridge into a narrow 10 mile deep gorge, and bouncing off the walls all the way down to the bottom. You can’t even really tell what we are anymore. We are so wrecked or in such darkness but because, if you hook up a wire to the wiper motor, that wiper flops around, we think everything is alright. Years ago, I stopped being shocked at how people on a regular basis, keep doing evil and yet think they are fixing something! Welcome to a world infected by sin.

God chose to save this world. Now God is completely and totally just. In other words, if a wrong demands punishment, that punishment must be carried out. In the world of pure and holy justice, there is no leniency, no “we can skip the punishment” thing. Sin must be paid for. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit came up with a plan. The Son, the second person of the God-head, would enter into our world and by living perfectly, He would then offer to pay the price of sin for all of us. This was a plan of God’s love. God so loved us, so deeply cared for us, that His Son, willingly and lovingly came to pay for our crimes and evils. To drive that wonder home consider this passage: Hebrews 12:2 **“Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who is the author of our faith and the one who brings it to its goal. In view of the joy set before him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God’s throne.”** It took me a long time to fully grasp what that passage says. It basically tells us that Jesus came, knowing the horror of punishment he would have to endure, but did it because He knew the outcome, he know the joy of salvation it would bring, and with that in mind, came to save us. Wow!

Yet, isn’t that what our passage tells us? As you contemplate the words before us you really see the same lesson but given from a different perspective. Our verses give us the human side of what Jesus wrestled with and faced. Let’s look closer. **“In the days of his flesh.”** This tells us that we are speaking of the earthly existence and time of Jesus. He came into our world, humbled himself, set aside the full use of his heavenly power and glory in order to save us. Jesus had to endure every temptation we do and be without sin in order to save us. In other words, Jesus had the choice before him to ignore and reject the Father’s will but did not for our sake.

It says, **“He offered prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.”** I love this verse. Here is the very human Jesus who because he still is God, knows what is coming. Knows the total pain of the crucifixion and knows the utter devastating despair of the wrath of God for all the sins of the world. Pure and holy wrath, which means God isn’t going to pull any punches in his pouring out of “hell’s fire” upon his son. This passage gives us a greater glimpse into what happened in the Garden. There is Jesus pleading with his Father, in total agony of flesh and mind, sweating as if great drops of blood were pouring off of him. Yet what does Jesus say? **“Not my will, but your will be done!”** Father, on my human side, I am totally fearful and afraid. This agony that is coming, my human side doesn’t want! But Father, I will hear you, I will obey you, I will do what you decree is absolutely best. Father, your will be done!” Boy, how many of us, in a stressful situation, have ever uttered any such thing?

Now you grasp, the phrase “**and he was heard because of his reverence.”** Jesus yielded to his Father’s will. As a man Jesus knew this human side of him wasn’t seeing, at that moment, the total plan and will of God. So Jesus submits to his Father, gives total obedience to his Father. By the way, Adam and Eve could have done the same thing, but did not! They could have decided: “Nope, no matter what Satan says, no matter what promises Satan gives we will follow the will of our Father, we will not now or ever eat of that fruit!” And I believe what happened with Jesus would have happened for them.

You do remember and know what happened? We often do forget this one little fact. Luke records it for us. The disciples, who should have been encouraging and strengthening to Jesus, they were sleeping. But Luke records, **“An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.”** The Father sent the very human Jesus at this point, help and boosted his strength to endure. Even though the human side of Jesus was wrestling with the agony coming, because Jesus sought help from the Father, that help was given! Such is the way the Father is. I can tell you, as the man Jesus was helped, so will you and I be helped in whatever it is we are facing and enduring. Just do it the Lord’s way, follow the Lord’s will and path and all will be well!

Now verse 8. **“Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.”** It is such an interesting thing, this verse. The EHV Study Bible makes a few absolutely critical notes here. Here is the note on verse 8 *“Jesus was no stranger to obedience, but he learned the full cost of being obedient as our substitute. He was obedient even to the point of death on the cross (Phil 2:8). In his holiness, Jesus was never disobedient. Yet as true man, he grew in the way he demonstrated that obedience to God.”* Do you get it? Jesus’ “Your will be done” was the moment where Jesus simply yielded to his Father’s will. His human side was saying, “I don’t want to endure this” but his Godly side says, “I will endure this because that is your desire, my Father!” Jesus brings his human side to “listen to the Father.” That is the thing you and I face on a daily, almost hourly basis in our lives. Our battle is, “Do I listen to God or listen to me!” We get in really deep, deep trouble every time we determine that “me” is wiser than God!

And here is where it all comes out, verse 9: “**After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.”** Here is a verse of utter and pure joy. Jesus completed his goal. Jesus came to atone for us, to win for us eternal life and salvation. Jesus came to make sure that the wonder and joy of heaven was ours, guaranteed ours, because our getting to heaven does not depend or rely on us. It is about Jesus. Here is a passage that clearly and precisely tell us that, **“He became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.”**

Jesus is the source. He is the cause, the result, the foundation, and the rock. He is what it is about from beginning to end. You do not have and cannot have eternal life and salvation without the truth and marvel of Jesus. That Jesus paid for your sins. That Jesus has won and then gives us the gift of eternal life. And in total truth, it depends not one iota on us.

But Pastor, it says **“for everyone who obeys him.”** Do not read that like you would read the Law. When we speak about obedience to the law we are speaking of what we do and don’t do and whether or not we actually achieve that doing and don’t. Most of the time we fail. And we especially fail when we decide that though the Law forbids this I will do it or though the Law says “do this,” I have decided I will not! Do not read this that way.

Here is how I want you to get this: Here is 1 John 3:23, **“This then is his command; that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.”** I honestly would encourage every one of you to read and contemplate the words of 1 John. They are a marvel of understanding our faith. Again and again 1 John goes back to the source, to Jesus as the one who makes it all different, who changed the whole tone of religion because He is the Son of God who gave his life that we might live. The word obey here means you cling to Jesus and his message of salvation by grace. The word obey here means you listen to the message of atonement, substitutionary and vicarious atonement as the way that God has given and granted us eternal life. Yep, because Jesus lives so shall we, that is the message of Jesus as our source, our sureness of life and peace!

There it is, this wonder of God’s message for us. We have a Savior. His name is Jesus. Believe that the success of his goal is your eternal success and you’ve got it. This is our Christian faith. Amen.