

# THE WORD AND THE WORLD

“Conversion By Discipleship Alone” Article No.31

**BY JIM FRECH**  
Pastor, Countryside Christian Church

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.  
But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” — James 2:14-19 ESV

► There is a *partnership* between having saving faith and acting out our faith – between the gift of salvation we cannot earn and working out our salvation with fear and trembling which requires effort, discipline, and endurance. Both require the grace of God.

There’s trouble on either side of that coin. If we emphasize grace/faith too much, we’re tempted to think we’re saved and there’s not much left to do except wait for the end of the world. If we emphasize good works too much, we run the risk of 1) legalism, or 2) works salvation – that we gain eternal life by following the rules and doing good things.

When He says the way is narrow and only a few find it, Jesus is not trying to make it difficult for people enter the Kingdom. He just knows that we complicate the process by our own rebellion, wishing to have it our way, and not trusting that Jesus is sufficient.

I’ve noticed 4 layers or levels. A concentric circle starting from the outer layer working inward.

- 1. Carnal, Cultural Christians/Unsaved** - There are those who ignore the invitation outright. In rejecting the blessing, they end up cursed. (Matthew 25:41)
- 2. Comfortable And Not Prepared** - There are those who want to be IN but keep putting it off and have ‘better’ things to do. (Matthew 25:12)
- 3. Close But Not Committed** - There will be those who believe they are IN purely by association. (Luke 13:26)
- 4. Committed But Not Connected** - There will be those who think they are IN because of their good works and acts of service. Matthew 7:21
- 5. Finally**, we reach what Jesus called ‘**The Narrow Gate**’ in Matthew 7:13.

In Luke 13:22, Jesus said, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow door.’ This makes some uncomfortable because it sounds like work, not grace. But this kind of work is a response to grace already given. Dallas Willard is famous for saying, ‘Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning...This is something you can do. God will help you. God will help me, but he will not do it for me. We run into some deep theology, having to do with misunderstandings of grace. The idea that grace eliminates effort, or effort eliminates grace.’

In truth, grace does not eliminate effort. Neither does effort cancel out grace.

Faith and Works (Grace and Effort) are not opposing ideas. When someone gives you a gift wrapped in paper and bow, you must receive it, unwrap it, open the box, and then use that gift in proper ways – in ways that will honor the giver.

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# Commission authorizes Sheriff’s Department to pursue vehicle lease-purchase

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – JUNE 23, 2026

**BY PHILIP STEVENS**  
HOMETOWN GIRARD

► Crawford County commissioners authorized the Sheriff’s Department on Tuesday to move forward with pursuing a lease-purchase agreement for patrol vehicles, after Sheriff Billy Tomasi and Human Resources/Finance Officer Adam Harrison said the department is down multiple vehicles because of recent crashes and staffing needs.

Tomasi told commissioners the department is seeking two new Dodge Durangos, at an estimated cost of \$58,868 each fully equipped. He said that figure is lower than the cost of the older trucks the department had looked at, which were estimated at \$60,379.

“The newer Durangos have been working out good for us,” Tomasi said, adding that the vehicles are all-wheel drive and would be under warranty.

Harrison said the two vehicles together would total approximately \$118,000. He said the department was looking at a 36-month lease-purchase agreement and anticipated an interest rate around 3.8 or 3.9 percent, though he said it could come back as high as about 4.2 percent.

The discussion came as the Sheriff’s Department is short four vehicles. Tomasi said he has been driving his personal vehicle to work, and he was not the only one in the department doing so.

The department has been trying to recover what it can through insurance claims, but Harrison said the county is not recovering enough to replace the damaged vehicles at full value. He said one totaled 2019 Ford Explorer would bring back only about \$4,000 after a \$10,000 deductible. A 2020 Dodge Durango was totaled at approximately \$14,000, with no deductible, after being struck by another driver. Harrison said the county was still waiting on numbers from another claim.

Commissioner Carl Wood asked whether the vehicles had gap insurance. Harrison said the county was still working through that issue on one of the lease-purchase vehicles because that agreement included three vehicles, and the lender needed to determine how much of the note had been paid down on that specific vehicle.

Commissioners also discussed used vehicle options. Harrison said the Kansas Highway Patrol did not currently have vehicles available and may be two to three months out because of recall reviews. Tomasi said the department had looked at used vehicles, but the ones they reviewed had either been wrecked or had other issues. Harrison said the department could not simply put a random vehicle into patrol service, because patrol vehicles must be pursuit-rated.

Commissioner Bruce Blair asked whether the

department’s budget could sustain the lease-purchase agreement. Harrison said the 2026 budget could handle it, in part because the county would only carry about four or five months of payments this year once the lease-purchase process is completed.

Commissioners ultimately approved allowing the Sheriff’s Department to move forward with the lease-purchase process and seek bids. County Counselor Jim Emerson said those bids would be sent out by the end of the week.

In another major discussion on Tuesday, consultant Josh Albin appeared by Zoom to review the next steps in the county’s planning and zoning process. Albin told commissioners the Planning and Zoning Commission has approved a draft of the proposed regulations, which he described as the eighth draft.

Albin said he will return in person for the July 10 commission meeting, along with Zoning Administrator May Smith and Mr. Gilmore, to present the planning and zoning recommendations. He said commissioners will have the option to approve the regulations, deny them or send specific sections back with comments.

Albin said the Planning and Zoning Commission voted on the regulations article by article, allowing commissioners to consider specific sections individually rather than requiring the entire document to be sent back each time if changes are needed.

The proposal includes three basic zoning districts: residential, commercial and agricultural. Albin said the Planning and Zoning Commission also voted to recommend countywide metes-and-bounds zoning, which would be considered as a separate motion by commissioners but discussed alongside the regulations because the two issues are closely connected.

Wood questioned why commissioners were not voting separately on countywide zoning before reviewing the full regulations. Albin said the regulations and countywide zoning recommendation are separate actions, but he believes commissioners should review the regulations before taking up the countywide zoning vote because parts of the regulations, including setbacks and renewable energy rules, would apply differently depending on whether the county remains partially zoned or moves to countywide zoning.

Albin said commissioners are not required to approve both, but he said it is more practical to consider the items together because many of the regulations are written with the possibility of countywide zoning in mind.

Commissioner Blair asked whether a zoning map would be included. Albin said there is not currently a physical zoning map in the document because that would be prepared after a decision on countywide zoning. If the county does not adopt countywide zoning, he said, only minor changes would be needed to the current zoned area. If countywide zoning is approved, additional mapping work would be required.

Commissioners also asked how the regulations would address potential future uses, including data centers. Albin said data centers are not specifically listed in the proposed regulations, but if the entire county were zoned, a proposed data center would likely have to go through the conditional use permit process before the Planning and Zoning Commission and then the County Commission.

Albin said zoning regulations could also be amended later if new industries or land uses arise. He said amendments could be completed in as little as about 45 days, depending on the process.

Blair asked Albin about one of the key issues: if an area is not zoned, the county has no zoning regulation over uses such as wind, solar or data centers. Albin confirmed that is correct.

The discussion also included questions from the public about whether existing wind turbines or solar panels would be grandfathered if new regulations are adopted. Albin said existing physical structures would be grandfathered in, but a contract alone would not be enough to establish a preexisting use. He also clarified that residential or on-site solar use would be treated differently than commercial solar production intended for resale to the energy grid.

Commissioners said they plan to review the draft ahead of the July 10 meeting. Commissioner Wood suggested keeping the July 10 agenda light so the planning and zoning discussion can be the focus of the meeting.

Earlier in the meeting, Explore Crawford County Director Sarah Runyon presented a memorandum of understanding between Crawford County and Pittsburg State University related to the county’s continued partnership with PSU and the new Russ Jewett Outdoor Track and Field Center.

Runyon said commissioners previously voted April 14 to continue directing one-sixth of the county’s transient guest tax to Pittsburg State University for 10 years, not to exceed \$1 million, to help fund the facility. She said the proposed MOU was reviewed by the Explore Crawford County Advisory Board on June 17 and recommended for final approval.

Wood asked whether local schools or other organizations would be

able to use the facility. Runyon said the MOU includes language stating the facility will be made available for youth track meets, local high school invitationals, regional leagues and championships as scheduling allows. Blair said the first event held at the track was actually a high school meet.

Wood also asked whether the county would pay more than about \$100,000 a year if transient guest tax collections increase. Runyon said the county would continue paying the agreed portion of the tax, but the total county contribution remains capped at \$1 million. If collections increase, she said, the commitment could be paid off sooner than 10 years.

Commissioners approved the MOU and authorized the chairman to sign it.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker also gave an update on the upcoming primary election. She said voters who are already members of a major political party could no longer switch to another major party after the June 1 deadline. Unaffiliated voters may remain unaffiliated until they vote and may choose a party ballot at that time for the primary.

Lusker said early voting in her office and the mailing of advance ballots will begin July 15. She said an early voting site will also be available at Homer Cole Community Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 25.

Commissioners also discussed ongoing disaster-related road documentation. Blair said crews are working to document expenditures, materials, locations, time and photos where possible. Lusker offered extra iPads from the election office that are not being used that may be able to help road crews take photos.

The commission approved the consent agenda, including the June 16 commission meeting minutes and accounts payable warrants totaling \$583,847.91.

Commissioners also signed motions from the previous meeting, including motions.

Future county meetings include a 9 a.m. work session June 26 with Bukaty to discuss insurance, a 10 a.m. public hearing June 30 on vacating a platted street and alley in the town of Dunkirk, a 9 a.m. budget work session July 7, and the July 10 planning and zoning presentation with Albin and Smith.

Commissioners also held a 15-minute executive session Tuesday to discuss Health Department director applicants under the non-elected personnel exception. No action was announced afterward.

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