

Dealing With Spiritual Pride

by Bill McLeod

Spiritual pride is a pervasive problem that can only be overcome through humility and a recognition of our limitations before God.

Duration: 53:56

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

Topics: "Pride"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on Isaiah 40 and 2 Corinthians 5 to emphasize the condescension, grace, love, and mercy of God. He uses the analogy of a drop of water in a bucket to illustrate how insignificant all the nations of the world are before God. The preacher highlights the transient nature of worldly possessions and reminds the audience that when we die, we leave everything behind. He also shares a story about a professor who realizes the limited extent of his knowledge compared to the vastness of the unknown. Ultimately, the preacher emphasizes the humbling reality that the earth is like an ant hill to God, and we should not be proud of our accomplishments or possessions.

Transcript

I have a difficult theme to lead you in this afternoon. How to deal with spiritual pride. Anybody here that's never been bothered with pride, would you raise both hands? I don't see a hand in the place.

I see some people sitting on their hands, you know what that means. How to deal with spiritual pride that bothers all of us. Sometimes in the middle of a prayer you find yourself filled with pride.

Sometimes you're reading the Bible. You find yourself full of pride. You sing a song, you feel full of pride.

You preach a sermon, you feel full of pride. You know, it bothers us, it plagues us from the cradle to the grave. However, there is an answer to it.

And we're going to look at that this afternoon. In Job it says, we are but of yesterday and know nothing. He didn't say, providing you don't have an education.

He just said, you don't know anything. I'm sure that in the light of the knowledge that is, we really don't know very much. Well, the Bible says nothing.

I believe the reference there had to do with the fact that they were living after the flood. Before the flood people lived to be six, seven, eight, nine hundred or more years. And this had been shortened drastically to three-score-ten.

And so he was saying, I think in relation to the way people used to live, we're just of yesterday, we don't know anything. But even if you forget that connection, really in the light of knowledge, that which God knows, we know nothing. That isn't very much.

There's a fellow, I forget his name, he debates on university campuses in the States. He debates with atheistic professors. And he's got a neat method of dealing with these men.

He'll begin chalkboard, blackboard, whatever he's got there, and make a little dot on the board. And he'll say to this professor, would you mind if we just, for the sake of the debate, would you mind if this little dot represents you? And the guy doesn't know what's coming, so he says, okay. And he says to this professor, of all the knowledge there is in the world, what percentage do you think you know? And usually they say, well, three percent.

Okay, fine. Then he makes a little circle around the dot. The circle may be this size.

He said, now that's what you know. The dot is you, the circle is what you know, and outside that circle is what you don't know. Then he lowers the boom.

He says, how dare you say there's no God when this is all you know? Then he asks some biasing questions. Have you been to the moon? No. Well, how do you know God doesn't live on the moon? Have you been to Mars? No.

Well, how do you know God doesn't live on Mars? You're telling the world there's no God? You're telling the wrong, because you only know three percent. It's quite devastating, obviously. But if you forget about the knowledge that the world knows, and think about the knowledge that God has, then, people, I mean, it's very hard on us.

Sometimes, you know, I use the illustration of an ant and an elephant. The ant represents me, the elephant's God. But then I feel I have to apologize to the elephant, because I say, you know, if you multiply the elephant a million times and reduce the ant a million times, you'd still have to apologize to the elephant.

People, our concept of God is so small. We say God is a transcendent God, and He is. He's greater than the universe.

I mean, is it 30 million or 30 billion light years across? I forget now. Did I hear a billion? That's probably true. And our God is greater than anything He's made.

And He fills the heavens and the earth. And the universe is not large enough to contain God. That's why we live in an expanding universe.

He is stretching out the heavens like a tent to dwell in. And they'll never be big enough for God. And I say, dear people, our concept of God is so small.

We think of Him as a man. A little larger, but not that much larger. And it hurts us in our relationship to Him.

Then we have nothing. I heard of a place, was it Los Angeles? Where provided you were a millionaire, you could live in this area of the city. If you were a multimillionaire, you could live in this area of the city.

And if you were a billionaire, you could live in this area of the city. I read this in an article. And I said to myself, what nonsense.

You know, in heaven, they wouldn't pay for a woodshed with million dollar bills. They're not current over there. The rich and the poor meet together, the Bible says.

That is, on the same level. The Lord's the maker of them all. There was an American judge.

Was his name Giesel, I think? He was known as a criminal lawyer. They said no matter what crime you committed, if you paid him \$50,000, he'd get you off. He was the sharpest criminal lawyer in the United States of America.

Then he died, as all men must. And some newspaper editor had a little comment. He said, Giesel now stands before the judge of the universe, whom he cannot bribe or cajole or threat.

And that's putting it mildly. In Ecclesiastes 5, it says a man begets a son, and he comes in, that is, he comes into this world with nothing in his hand. Verse 14.

Verse 15 says, he goes out with nothing in his hand. And Paul may have had that in mind when he said in 1 Timothy 6, we've got nothing in this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. People, no matter how much you save, no matter how much you have, when you die, you've got to leave it all behind.

Everything. You know, some Christians, when the trumpet blows, they're going to go up feet first. Holding on to steering wheels of a new convertible, the doorknob of their new house, you know.

Their golf clubs, their fishing tackle, their guns, and all this junk we have, you know. Boats and motors and all this garbage, you know. Yeah, feet first.

There was a fellow who died. He was a motorcycle enthusiast, not a Christian. And his mother insisted that they bury his motorcycle with him, because she said it was his whole life.

So, they buried the motorcycle in his grave. Supposing they did that for you, for me, when we die, how big would the grave have to be? To get your house in, your car, your truck, your van, whatever, how big would the grave have to be? It's a good question. We've got nothing in, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

That's why Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2 that he invested his life in people, not in things. He said in Acts 20, I've covered no man's silver or gold or apparel. And he hadn't.

Even at this present hour, he said, we're hungering thirst and have no certain dwelling place. These things did not interest Paul at all. But he said, what is our hope? What is our joy? What is our crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and his coming? For you are our glory and joy.

People, I say, invest your life in people because they're forever. You know, chasing dollars and things, that's total madness. It says so in Jeremiah 50, it says they're mad upon their idols.

It is really a form of insanity. I think I said that once before. It's a form of insanity.

The dumbass speaking with man's voice forgot the what of the prophet, the madness of the prophet. Balaam was insane by God's standards. By the world's standards, he was perfectly sane because he was trying to get his hands on some dollars.

But that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. So we brought nothing in and we'll take nothing out. So what's life all about? Somebody said life was like a bird flying in an open window, circling once in the light and going out into the darkness again.

Somebody said life was a crude joke. Well, if you take Jesus Christ as a picture, life is a crude joke. That's all it is.

Man in his best state, the Bible says, is altogether vanity. Do you know what vanity is? It means emptiness. We might add the words wind and confusion.

Emptiness. Man in his best state. And how seldom are we ever at our best state.

Indeed, are we ever at our best state? At his best state, he's altogether vanity, emptiness. Nothingness, the Bible says. Surely, men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.

To be laid in the balance, they're altogether lighter than vanity. So which are you, vanity or a lie? Well, thank God for his salvation, which changes us. What I mean, this is our background.

This is what we've come from. And we need to keep this ever in mind. To see ourselves as God sees us.

If any man thinks that he knows anything, the Bible says, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. So you've got two degrees, five degrees after your name. Don't trust in it.

Don't get boastful about it. I read about a fellow. He had, I think, six degrees or something after his name.

And he was looking for God. And so, in his job, he moved a lot from city to city in the States. And so, he'd go to a city.

He'd look up the biggest church he could find. He'd go there. He'd have an appointment with a pastor, hoping that some pastor could convince him, you know, intellectually about God.

And it never happened. And he was looking for God on the intellectual plane. And the years went by.

Nothing ever happened. Then he was visiting some relatives. And they attended a country church and invited him to go along.

He said, well, it'll be boring, you know. This preacher probably doesn't know anything. And he really didn't.

But he knew what he needed to know. And this fellow, he did believe in creation. He believed there was a personal God who created the universe.

But he could not believe in the virgin birth. That was his problem, see. Now, this preacher doesn't know a thing about him.

You don't have to know anything about the people because the God that's speaking through you knows all about them, you know. And he'll lead you to say things you didn't plan on saying. And it'll be an arrow in somebody's heart.

And you know what the preacher had the nerve to say? He said, some stupid fools, they can believe in creation, but they can't believe in the virgin birth. And dear people, that's all they have to say. And the fellow saw it bang and hit it between the eyes.

Well, of course! If God created the universe, the virgin birth is nothing. And he saw it. And he became a Christian.

Yeah. You know, from time to time I read Isaiah chapter 40. And brother, if anybody's full of pride, it'll really... You know, it's like climbing into a cement mix and letting it run for two days.

You know. I said the other day, it begins with grass and ends up with grasshoppers and in between it gets worse. It says, all flesh is grass.

Peter said the same thing in 1 Peter chapter 1. It talks about grass and flowers. Well, in Isaiah it talks about certain people whose glorious beauty is a fading flower. A fading flower.

And dear people, that's what we really are. A fading flower. Do you know of anybody getting younger? I met a fellow one time I hadn't seen for 20 years.

And he looks at me and... You know what he said? He looks at me and says, Bill, you're getting older. So I looked at him and said, do you know of anybody getting younger? And he looked kind of startled and said, well, no, I don't. Matter of fact, he looked older too.

20 years. Grass. God says we're like grass.

All the glory of man is like the grass of the field. The grass withers. The flower fades.

Because the Spirit of the Lord glows on it. Surely it says that people is grass. That's God speaking.

Then grasshopper. He says that God sits on the circle of the earth. And the inhabitants thereof are like grasshoppers.

Do you see any beauty in a grasshopper? They're ugly, aren't they? Yeah. You know, in the old days when the cars... And I drove back in those days. In the cars, you know, there was holes in the floorboard and what not.

And you know where the brakes went down through the floorboard? It was about this wide. And if you ever got into a bunch of grasshoppers, they came hopping up through the floorboards and filled the car, you know. And the women would all be screaming and everything.

Grasshoppers. They're not beautiful. They're hurtful.

I mean, farmers don't like grasshoppers, do they? No. And God says we're like grasshoppers. People... He's not saying He doesn't love us.

He's just saying, you need to know from whence you come. You need to see Me as I am. You need to see yourself as you are.

Because people, if we don't see this, we'll never understand the grace of God. I know Isaiah 40 always helps me to understand the condescension, the grace, the love and mercy of God. Considering the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, as in 2 Corinthians 5. Then He says that all the

nations of the world before Him are like a drop in a bucket.

Now, if you were carrying an empty bucket and somebody came up behind and shot one drop of water in the bucket, would you be aware of what had happened? Not at all. That's one drop not representing you and me, but representing all the people, all the nations that have ever lived. All together before God, like one drop in a bucket.

How often does that drop have to be split before you get in the picture, before I get in the picture? And we're proud? I mean, pride is a form of insanity also. It has to be. When you know the facts, a drop in a bucket.

Then He says we're like the small dust of the balance. You know, if you see these old-fashioned balance scales, well, you can see it on any kind of a scale, I suppose, and you get the light just right, and you can look, and you see a little tiny film of dust on the scale. It doesn't register.

It's not heavy enough to register anything. And God says that we're like the small dust of the balance. We don't weigh anything before God.

Then He has the nerve to tell us that we are a mathematical impossibility. He says that we are less than nothing and vanity. That's why Maxwell used to say we're just a zero with the rim knocked off.

That's exactly what we read here. Exactly what God is saying. Less than nothing and vanity, emptiness.

I say again, wind and confusion. Nothing. Less than nothing.

Have you ever accepted that before God? Ever told God, I believe in God, that's me, you're right. I'm less than nothing. I'm like the small dust of the balance.

In the context here, He says, Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts are not sufficient for a burnt offering. Lebanon used to be a large forest area, thousands of stately cedar trees and hundreds of animals taking advantage of the cover. It's not that way today, but it was then.

And so God said if He took all the animals of Lebanon and all the cedars of Lebanon for a fire, it wouldn't be big enough for Him. And I think we could truthfully say you could take all the forest and cannon in the states and all the wild animals in the forest and they wouldn't be big enough to build a fire, to make a sacrifice to the God of heaven. People, He's so great, Psalm 113 says, He's so great, He has to humble Himself to behold the things that are on the earth.

Did you ever read that, Psalm 113? Can you understand that? You can't if your concept of God is small. But if you see God as the Scriptures present Him, it isn't all that hard. I was walking in the forest one day and saw an anthill.

It was about three feet high. I found a dry stick and I cut the top off the anthill and I stood and watched the ants carrying their eggs. And after a while, the activity all ceased because they go down inside.

They're a fantastic thing there, you know. But if you came by and said, Hey Bill, what are you doing? And I said, Well, I'm looking at these ants. Watch them go down in their holes.

And you came by a week later and found me still looking at the ants. You'd think there's something funny. And there would be.

I mean, they occupied my attention for maybe five or ten minutes. And after that, my interest was filled and I walked on. And dear people, the earth is like an anthill as far as God is concerned.

He's got to humble Himself to look at the things that are happening in the world. And I say again, and we're proud. Of what? Of what? But I didn't give you the whole verse in Psalm 113.

It says, God is so great He has to humble Himself to behold the things that are in heaven. Now that's hard to understand, isn't it? Our God is so great. Even the things in heaven that we think are so far beyond us are so far beneath God.

He has to humble Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth. That's what it says. And I believe it.

If a man thinks himself to be something when he's nothing, he deceives himself. That's what the New Testament says. You think yourself to be somebody.

You're better than somebody else. You're more handsome. You're stronger.

You're more beautiful. You've got more money in the bank. You've got better kids than somebody else has got.

You've got a bunch of kids in full-time service and you've got a neighbor a Christian who doesn't have any. You know? All these things, people, we boast about. Maybe not outwardly, but inwardly we keep congratulating ourselves that we're better than somebody else.

Dear people, any form of pride God hates. Those that walk in pride He is able to abase. Did you ever read Isaiah chapter 2? Of course, many of you have.

Ever notice the contents carefully? First of all, it talks about the world, particularly about the nation of Israel and talking about the fact that their land was filled with chariots and filled with horses and filled with silver and filled with gold and filled with idols. And Jeremiah had the thought their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. Then it talks about the coming day of God and pride is mentioned twelve times.

In other words, the prevailing sin of the world prior to the coming of Christ will be pride. And the day of God will be on all the lofty looks of men, all the haughtiness of men, it says, all the pride of men, all the tall trees, the cedars of Lebanon, the oaks of nation. These are people.

All the high hills, proud people. The mountains, proud people. The high walls, proud people.

It's all about that and how in that day God will bring all of these things down, so far down that men will take their idols they've made of silver and gold to worship and they'll throw them to the bats and to the moles and run for a place to hide when God arises to shake terribly the earth. The Bible speaks in Revelation about the wrath of the Lamb. Lamb? Angry? Yes.

References to what the world has done or not done concerning His death on the cross. They've ignored it. It says they made light of it and they went their ways.

Pursuing other objects that people think are more satisfying, more necessary. And religion? Well, you're attacking us like an appendix. It has no particular use that we know about, but it's there.

How do we deal with it? Well, I would say we've been dealing with it partly already. But we may know all of this and it may not do anything for us as far as pride is concerned. It should Certainly, at least, it ought to be a starter.

And for some it will be far more than just a starter. But let's get to the cross. In Philippians chapter 2 it says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being, it means existing eternally, in the form of God, found it not something to be tightly held on to or grasped at or coveted after, as different translations say, that he was equal with God, but made himself of no reputation.

Where was he born? In tiny Bethlehem. Not in New York City, or London, or Tokyo, or Sao Paulo, or some other huge city. But in tiny Bethlehem, that's where he was born.

By the way, did you know that the incarnation, God in Christ, Christ in a body of flesh, is God's way. And the cross is God's way at laughing at all human values. That's why in Isaiah 55 it says, Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

We've got to stop thinking the way we think and start, as someone said, start thinking God's thoughts after him. The Bible says God has declared unto man what his thought is. That's in the Minor Prophets.

He declares unto man what is his thought. Where does he find it? In the Bible, of course. He's told us what he thinks.

Among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. He's told us about the future. And it came to us from the nation of Israel because unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Let this mind be in you who being in the form of God it says he didn't think of something to be coveted after or held on to that he was equal to God. But he made himself of no reputation and he took upon himself the form of a servant and he was made in the likeness of man. Can you believe it? The God who created the universe carried nine months inside a woman nursed at a woman's breast the God of the universe.

You talk about the mystery of godliness. You talk about a demonstration of humility. It says, Jesus said, I am among you as he that serves.

The Son of Man has not come to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. He came to do that and that's what he did. So he made himself of no reputation.

He took upon himself the form of a servant. He was made in the likeness of man. And then it says, and being found in fashion as a man he what? He humbled himself to people he had to.

How else could he have stayed there in Mary's womb without humbling himself to the nth degree? It's one of those mysteries our tiny minds will never comprehend. The incarnation, Christ, the creator of the universe, I say, born of a woman, what a demonstration to me of the humility of God, the humility of our Savior, Jesus Christ. What does it say? It says, which means allow, permit, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Don't be striving for position. Don't be striving for worldly acclaim or church acclaim. Don't spend your days just trying to make money.

Our Savior said, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things, material needs, shall be added unto you. It's far better to make a life for God than to make money for self. Paul said in Galatians chapter 6, he was talking about some people, he said their only desire is to make a fair show in the flesh.

They're not really concerned about honesty. They're not really concerned about a walk before God. When Abraham was 99 years old, God said, I am the Almighty God.

Walk thou before me and be thou perfect. When I think of the word perfect, I think of something the Lord said in Matthew 5 and Luke 6, where perfection there, be perfect, He said, as I am perfect, was perfection, dear people, in love, as the context very clearly shows. Perfection in love.

We have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love. And He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in Him.

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And he that fears is not made perfect in love.

Perfection in love. The illustration that Jesus used was, my heavenly Father, He makes His rain to fall and His sun to shine on the field of the wicked man as well as on the field of the righteous. That's the illustration.

So then He said, now you be perfect like your Father is perfect. He means in love then. And in the same context, Jesus Christ said, if you only love those that love you, you aren't doing any more than the world is doing.

Sinners also love sinners. And then some people say, well, we can love as Christians with agape love and sinners can't. Why don't you look that word up in the Greek? It's agape.

Sinners also love sinners. So, if we only love those that love us, we aren't doing any more than the world is doing. Anyway, Paul talks about people who are simply totally satisfied with making a fair show in the flesh.

And sometimes as Christians, we're guilty of that as well. Billy Sonny said, some preachers spend all week cleaning the feathers of their shamanic peacock and then they strut it out for Sunday for the admiration of the public. Did you ever do that? I've done it.

Not for a long while, but I've done it. And it was always a mess. For the Lord knows how to deal with proud preachers, you know.

Just when you think you've done it, you find you haven't. You flopped. I'm so grateful for the faithfulness of God.

He doesn't really let us get away with anything you know. He spans us. And the Bible makes it very clear in Hebrews chapter 12 that if you're without chastisement, we're of all our partakers, then are you illegitimate children and not sons of God at all.

The mark of a true Christian is he can't get away with sin. I'm digressing a little. But Paul went on to say, these people, he said, they want the glory in the flesh.

He said, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. To me, people, the greatest mystery of all is the cross. Even more so than the Incarnation.

The cross. Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them even unto the end, which meant the cross. It says, even the death of the cross, even that, made a curse for us.

He hung naked there with a crown of thorns which had been beaten down on His head so that blood was running all over His face. His beard had been plucked off and they spit on Him. Even the sun hid its face and refused to shine for hours while Christ hung there on the cross.

When Christ, the line in the song says, the mighty Maker died, the man for creatures sinned. In the prophetic Scriptures, the plowers plowed upon my back. They made long their furrows, the Roman scourging.

I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. Isaiah 50.

In Micah 5, they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But this Judge of Israel was the Son of God. And as the sheep before His shears is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.

Christ said, If any man will come after Me, let him deny what? Himself. That self must die. Spurgeon put it in a different way.

He said, Praising God with all my might in the sea of God's delight, self is drowned and I am free. Christ and love remain in me. But people, it's not until self is drowned in the sea of the love of God that we're really free.

Self must die. God forbid then that I should glory save in the cross. At the cross, the world was exposed.

Because the ones that crucified Him, the military were there, the police were there, the religious leaders were there, the people were there. I mean, they're all there representing the world. He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.

People didn't know that. That hadn't been written then. But they're all there.

And the cross, dear people, it's the greatest demonstration of the love of God we can ever have. A great enough demonstration that no matter what happens in life, we never lose faith. The righteous shall hold on His way and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

But the cross, dear people, it crucifies the world. You know, some of the early Puritans, they used to pray, Dear God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs. You know, that's a good prayer.

I think I know a better one, maybe. Oh, my God, stamp the cross on my heart so that I'll be a willing slave to Jesus Christ. That book, you know, called To the Golden Shore, the life story of Adam and Adam Judson, when I read that, my heart was so helped.

My heart was so challenged. My heart was so broken. I said to my son Tim, he was then 12, I said, Tim, I want you to read this book.

He read it and came back. He handed it back to me afterwards and said, Oh, Dad, he said, that's a heartbreaker. A man completely sold out to God and went to Burma.

He suffered incredibly. They stuck a bamboo pole in the ground and they had a pulley on it and a rope and they put this rope around his ankles and pulled him off the ground so just his elbows were touching and he hung there for three weeks. They never let him down to relieve himself.

The flies came by the thousands. His wife was there. She was allowed to minister to him.

Otherwise, he would have died. But he never lost heart. He kept trusting.

And you know, he didn't really see a lot happen while he lived. But today in Burma, there's probably 350,000 believers. There's 25 or more Bible colleges and seminaries.

And he was a kernel of wheat that fell into the ground and died. It isn't what happens while you live, it's what may happen after you're gone. You never know.

There's rivers that flow from us forever by the grace of God. But when you look at the cross, if you look at it long enough, all of a sudden you see the world for what it is, a filthy, stinking thing. The god of this world is Satan.

Jesus called him the prince of this world. And then, by the same cross, I am crucified to the world. You know, it's hard to do that, to be that, because we want people to think we're sharp.

We've really got it all put together. We know how to handle life, you know. We want people to think that of us.

And sometimes we go to extraordinary lengths to convince people that we're really with it. That isn't what God wants for us at all. He wants us to be what we are, to walk humbly.

What does God require of us, it says? To walk humbly with our God. That's one thing He mentions. You know, it's really strange when you think of it.

To humble myself to walk with God. I mean, how can that be? Humble myself to walk with God? You see what I'm getting at? People, it's because their minds are so twisted and we're so influenced by the world around us that God has to use language of this kind. I'm too proud to walk with God.

Can you feature that? Too proud to walk with God? Too proud to be a known believer? I knew a fellow in Winnipeg. He was a Christian 25 years. Nobody knew that.

When he was dying in the hospital, he called a preacher friend of mine and had him come in. He said, look, I accepted Christ 25 years ago. I've been ashamed to confess Him.

I've never told a soul. I don't want to die without telling somebody. How many can I tell you? I guessed your people was better than nothing, but certainly not the way God would have had it.

How much different his life would have been, could have been, had he come out openly as a little light shining for Jesus. We now are the light of the world. We are the salt of the earth.

And we're not to hide our light, as the Bible tells us so clearly, under a bushel. And so the messages come from the cross to our heart. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and

cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Ah, I get another message. Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Christ also, I get another message, has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

This is my blood, He said, of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Do you know one of the problems? We know it too well. We've heard it too often.

And familiarity breeds contempt, a very polite, Christianized sort of contempt. I have a brother, he's retired now from the ministry, living in Prince George, British Columbia. A friend of his is here, by the way.

He told me, he said, I can never hear that song, Jesus paid it all, without the tears running down my face. And I said, Brother Don, I hope so long as you live you'll feel the same. Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain, and the God of glory left His throne and came and died on a wooden cross, so your sins could be washed away. Don't ever forget it. John Brown from John Brown's University, he was a Christian.

He's been long dead, of course, now. But they said he loved to preach on the cross, and he would keep saying with peers, Brethren, never forget, it was the blood of God on the cross. Never forget it.

What a demonstration of grace. My mom lived with me for quite a while, she's with the Lord now. And, you know, when Christmas time came, it was so difficult to buy her something that she didn't have, or didn't want, or didn't need.

So we'd get our heads together, well, what are we going to get Mom for Christmas tomorrow? She liked reading, we usually wound up with a book. Some people think when they get to heaven we'll be strumming a harp and singing forever. Well, I'm not opposed to that.

But forever would bother me a little. And then I came across this verse in Ephesians. It says, In the ages to come, millions and trillions of years, in the ages to come, He might show the riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

God will never be in the box we were in trying to get something that would surprise our mother. People, as long as eternity is, forever, our God being the God He is, He'll be unveiling to our eyes new wonders, new marvels. It will wonder people forever and ever and ever.

You know? It says He's going to make us drink of the river of His pleasures. You know, in this world, champagne Saturday night, real pain Sunday morning. But not with God.

Not with God. You know, in Proverbs it says, and Jesus said something like it, a little different, but the same truth. It says, In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

Okay? Jesus said, If a man keep my saying, he'll never see death. It's pretty well the same, only now He narrows the focus down. Righteousness has to do with knowing Christ.

Of course. But when a Christian dies, it's not the way a whirling dies. The rich man died, and he had alderman property, and the mayor of the town as his pallbearers.

The poor man died. He was a believer, and they threw his body in a cart, and took it over a hill, and dumped it on the hill, and the vultures took care of it. But you know what happened? The poor man had angels for pallbearers, because it says in Luke 16, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Wouldn't you like to have angels for pallbearers? I never worry about who's going to carry me in my casket, because I'm going to have angels for pallbearers. I mean, forget about it. People, we have such a hope in Christ.

But it's all related to the cross. God forbid, said Paul, that I should glory, save in the cross. The cross, all my glory.

All my glory. The cross, we sing, it standeth fast. Hallelujah! Surviving every heavy blast.

Heavy, that's not the right word. Stormy blast. Hallelujah.

The cross. We live by it. We die by it.

The cross becomes everything. Oh, should. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that's dead is freed from sin.

Romans 6.6, Colossians 3.3 simply says, you are dead and your life is hid with Christ and God. Many of us haven't recognized yet that God sees us as being crucified and resurrected with His Son. Indeed, in the New Testament Scriptures, it's taught clearly, it says we're crucified with Christ, we're dead with Christ, we're buried with Christ, we're resurrected with Christ.

It even says we are ascended with Christ. Is that just a neat theological package of some kind? Is that all it is? I don't think so. A certain, I won't mention his name, but the well-known writer, he said that crucifixion with Christ was strictly judicial and legal and non-experiential.

So I wrote him a letter. And he wrote me a rather warm letter back. I'm amazed it got to me without burning up.

But anyway, he reaffirmed what he'd said. It's strictly non-experiential. It's judicial entirely.

So I wrote back and said, it says we're crucified with Christ and Christ lives in me in the same context. Does that mean that Christ lives in me as non-experiential? It's judicial? It's legal? I got a hotter letter back the second time. So I terminated the conversation, the correspondence.

But dear people, it's experiential. Legal, judicial, yes, there's that element there too. But that's not the whole story.

Galatians 5.24 says, They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts. Have we done that? Have we agreed with God about this? You belong to Christ. They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts.

We sing it? Dying with Jesus by death's reckoned mind? Living with Jesus in new life divine? Well, that's based on Galatians 2.20, Romans 6, 10 and 11. But dear people, this is how the pride thing is dealt with. First of all, to see God as He is.

Then to look at the incarnation. I don't know if they'll have reruns in heaven, but if they have, I'd like to get a picture of the angels watching when Jesus was born. There's a translation that says that they stand on tiptoe.

Which things the angels desire to look into? And one translation says they stand on tiptoe looking. And what do we do? We sleep. We're so familiar with it.

Dear people, pray, pray, pray that God will so touch your heart that you'll never lose the glory of the cross. Think about it. When I survey the wondrous cross in which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and poor contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God. All the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to His blood. Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small, such love demands my soul, my life, my all it was understood.

And dear people of Doth, pride, oh people. I prayed once to the man, I guess if you could have heard his prayer you would have thought, well it's not very theological. Do you know what he was praying? He was praying, dear God, kill me, slay me, slay me, he used that word slay several times.

He was praying with all the intensity of his heart, facing Galatians 2.20. And you know God met him in a very remarkable way that day. In 25 years he told me he'd never won a soul to Christ, although he was known as a Christian, a high school teacher, and eventually a college professor. Nobody ever came to him with spiritual problems.

Eighteen months after that day he met God in this issue. He contacted me, he said, I've prayed and counseled with 400 people in 18 months. Some of these are people I've led to Christ, others are Christians I've led into a fully committed walk.

What happened? The cross became alive, a reality in his heart. I want to close in a moment. You know Romans 6.10 and 11 it says, in that he, that's Jesus, in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he lives, he lives unto God.

And the first word of the next verse, depending on your translation, but I looked it up in the original, and it means this, likewise, reckon, reckon. The Greek word here has many English equivalents in the New Testament. There's words like think, believe, esteem, count, act, count, and impute.

They're all translated from the same Greek word. Reckon you also yourselves to be what? To be dead indeed unto sin. And as Christians we've never done that, most of us haven't.

We think in terms of, I'm going to sin the rest of my life. I know what life is like, and there's no such thing as sinless perfection. I don't believe there's such a thing as sinless perfection in this life either, and I'm not teaching that.

But I feel like Billy Sunday again, who said, I wish the church of God was as afraid of imperfection as it's afraid of perfection, perfection in love, as we said before. Reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, and alive unto God. How? Through His power alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ever done that? It's time you did it. Then let God make it a reality in your life, which only God can do. Pride, bury it by the grace of God a thousand miles deep.

People, we're not worthy, it says, of the least of God's mercies. And I close. God just shot another verse and I'll close now.

James 2.10 You know, one of the problems often is this, that we say to ourselves, well, I became a Christian, but I never really got fouled up in sin. You know, I never committed adultery. I never stole anybody's stuff.

I sure didn't kill anybody. I wasn't a habitual liar. I was never drunk in my life.

And it's all in a pride deal, you know. Do you know what James 2.10 says? It says if you keep the whole law of God and offend in one point, you're guilty of all. Which means there isn't anybody in this room that isn't guilty of adultery, of murder, you name it, you've done it, in the eyes of God, that is.

Do you know why? Because the law of God is an indivisible unit. Think of it as being a rope. You can break that rope any way you want, politely or otherwise.

When you break the rope, you've broken the law of God. The law of God is an indivisible unit. So no matter where you break it, James 2.10 says, you're guilty of the whole thing.

Which means there's no such thing as a polite sinner. This should certainly save us from sitting in judgment on people that have fallen deeply, so we say, into sin. We're all deep-dyed sinners.

We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. And apart from Christ and the Gospel, we don't have the ghost of a chance. God be merciful to me, the sinner.

Ought to be the cry of all of our hearts. I say in closing then, God forbid that I should glory in anything but the cross.

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