

# (Colossians) Are You Qualified?

by Brian Brodersen

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*Brian Brodersen emphasizes the importance of recognizing our qualification by God through repentance to fully experience His blessings.*

**Duration:** 56:24

**Scripture:** Colossians 1:9

**Topics:** "Human Nature", "Sinfulness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that despite technological advancements, human nature remains unchanged. He argues that the societal issues and abominable acts we witness today are not new, but have been present throughout history. The Bible, according to the preacher, provides a sufficient message of the gospel to address these problems. He highlights the sinful nature of humanity and the power of sin and Satan, citing biblical examples such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the captivity of the Ninevites. The preacher rejects the notion that modern problems cannot be treated with biblical solutions, asserting that the only difference is technological advancement.

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## Transcript

Colossians chapter 1, let me read you verses 9 through 14. For this reason we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, for all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness, and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Now Paul is penning out his prayer. He's writing to this church in Colossae, there's this body of new believers, Paul is thrilled for what God is doing among them, and as he's writing them this letter, he writes down for them the things that are on his heart, he's praying for them. And in the midst of his prayer, he suddenly is overwhelmed with the reality of his salvation, and the salvation of these people in Colossae.

And so in the midst of his prayer, he just breaks into a time of thanks. He's just thanking the Lord for what he's done, just thanking the Lord that he has qualified them, and himself, he includes himself, he's qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Oh, and he's delivered us from the

power of darkness, he's conveyed us.

Paul is just, he's just caught up in this spiritual moment. You know, we have those times occasionally where the Lord will just sweep us up, and the reality of our salvation will hit us. They're extraordinary times, really.

You know, we can go along, and we're thankful, we praise the Lord for what he's done for us, and, you know, we understand it, but we don't see it fully, we don't see it in all its glory and all the majesty that there is in relation to our salvation. But then there's those certain times where, you know, you might just read a passage of scripture, and suddenly, suddenly you're struck with the awesomeness of this thing we call salvation. You might hear the verse to a song, and suddenly you're struck with the awesomeness of your salvation.

You know, I had this happen last week. Last Wednesday, I was in England, and we were finishing up a pastor's conference, and at the end of the time of worship, they closed the whole thing with a hymn by Charles Wesley, the hymn Amazing Love. And there's a line in that hymn that always gets to me, and it got to me again.

Amazing love, how can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? And as I sang those words, I just was suddenly struck with the reality of what's happened. In salvation, that God, the God of heaven, the God who made the earth and everything in it, that that God became a man and died on the cross of Calvary so I could be saved. And there was just that moment of being caught up into it, and I'm rejoicing in it, and we're continuing on with the hymn.

And then there's another line, and I looked at it, it said, "'Tis mercy all." "'Tis mercy all." In other words, everything that's happened in my life, all of God's goodness, all of his kindness toward me, all of the blessing is simply because of his mercy. It's just the Lord's mercy. It's just because of his goodness.

And so, you know, we have those times, and there are certain things that bring it out. I think the hymns have a tendency to bring that kind of a thing out. I've been thinking a lot lately about our contemporary worship and praise scene, and there are certainly many good praise songs.

There are many nice choruses that are edifying and quite enjoyable, and, you know, as you're singing them, you really, you know, are communing with the Lord. But it seems to me that there was a greater depth with a lot of those hymns than there are with most of the modern choruses. There was something deep, there was something profound, there was a greater insight theologically.

You know, it might have to do with the fact that, you know, people were just more serious back then about their faith than some are today. A lot of people are producing praise music today just for the sake of producing it and selling an album, or a CD or cassette, I guess, is what they're selling today. But, you know, they're motivated by sales, they're motivated by getting a new product out.

And so sometimes they even bring in people who don't know the Lord to play on the recording in order to have the best possible. And I think in a case like that, you can understand why there would be an element of shallowness or maybe something missing there. But, oh, when you go back to these hymns and you find these men who knew God and passionately loved Him and served Him, Charles and John Wesley going all over England and preaching the gospel to tens of thousands of people, and you see the things that were born out of their hearts.

Sometimes you miss that. But the Lord can use that. And I think the Lord wants to use that to bring us sometimes into this greater awareness of what it is that we have.

And so the Lord, you know, here in our fellowship, I believe the Lord wants us to move more into doing some of the hymns. And, you know, over the past few weeks, we've done a few, and I can't believe the comments I've received. You know, it's great.

But I remember years ago at Calvary Costa Mesa, when I first became a Christian and began to attend church there, I remember initially the hymns were difficult, but it was more the organ that I had the problem with. You know, I came out of the rock and roll generation, and I was suddenly sitting in a church listening to an organ. And, you know, I was a little taken back by it.

But it didn't take long before I saw that regardless of the organ music accompanying the lyrics, the content, the theological depth that was being expressed in these psalms was wonderful. And I remember many, many times coming to church and, you know, being downcast, being oppressed, you know, whatever the case was. And I remember through the time of singing the hymns, I would become so refreshed and ready to receive the words.

It's a glorious experience. Those experiences of being caught up to a fuller realization of what it is that God has done for us. You know, sometimes we just get so trite in our thinking.

Oh, yeah, we're saved. Oh, yeah, I'm saved. And, you know, we don't think of what that really means, the full implication of that, how it happened and what it implies presently and what it holds in store for me in the future.

And I think that's what happened with Paul here. The Spirit of God, of course, was on him anyway as he was writing the word. But I think at this very instant, the Spirit of God came upon him in even a more powerful sense.

And he just goes into this time of giving thanks to God who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Think about that word for a moment, qualified. You know what that word means.

You know the implication of it. You go somewhere and you're applying for something, and the first thing a person wants to know is, are you qualified for this or what qualifies you? And we know what it's like to be disqualified. You've been in some kind of a sports deal and, you know, you broke the rules and you became disqualified.

What? You couldn't partake of it any longer. You're not allowed to participate. Paul is rejoicing in the fact that God has qualified us to partake of this glorious inheritance.

You see, we were previously disqualified. I was disqualified. I wasn't fit to partake of this inheritance of the saints in light.

What disqualified me? Sin. Sin disqualified me from partaking of this inheritance. And sin still is disqualifying the vast majority of the human race.

But here's a sadder thing. Sin is disqualifying many Christian people from experiencing the blessing of God upon their life. God is a God of blessing.

God is a God who wants to bless you. You know, when you think about the Lord, what do you think about? There are many people that think about the Lord and the context is always judgment. When they think of God, they're troubled.

When they think of God, they're anxious. There's an anxiety that comes upon them because they have a concept of God that isn't accurate. They think that God wants to judge them.

They think that God wants to mete out his wrath upon them. But nothing could be further from the truth. God wants to bless his people.

That's the heart of God. That's the nature of God. He called Abraham and he said, Abraham, I'm going to bless you and I'm going to make you a blessing.

And the same promise that he gave to Abraham is a promise that he gives to us. God says to you today, I want to bless you and I want to make you a blessing to others. But you have the ability to disqualify yourself from that blessing.

Now, Paul, of course, is talking about our previous condition. We were we were all at one time disqualified because of our sin. But through faith in Christ, we've come into this new relationship with God and now we're qualified.

We partake of this glorious inheritance. This the inheritance is the life of God. As you read through the pages of scripture, God is offering us a life.

There's a life that God has for us. It's a it's a glorious life. The Bible refers to it as an abundant life.

It's a life that's described as one filled with joy, with peace, with purpose. That's the life that God is offering to us. That's what he's describing here.

The inheritance of the saints, it's this it's this wonderful life here on Earth, not a problem free life, but a wonderful life in as much as it's lived, experiencing God and his blessing upon us. But it's a wonderful life here on Earth that goes into eternity forever with him, freed from anything and everything that would. At all cause life to be unpleasant.

That's that's what the Lord has, and he has qualified us to be partakers of that both here and in the future. But there are many Christian people who have disqualified themselves, not necessarily from heaven. But they've disqualified themselves from the present blessing that God wants to bring upon them because of their sin.

There is nothing. That is more of a contradiction. And there's nothing that is really so pathetic as a miserable Christian person.

A miserable Christian is a contradiction of everything that Jesus Christ came to do. But, you know, the sad fact is there are multitudes of Christians who are miserable. They're miserable people.

And they're miserable because they're in sin, because they're disobedient, because they're rebellious against the Lord. And so they're miserable. Their lives are just miserable.

You see them and they look miserable. You listen to them and they sound miserable. And wherever they go, it's just murmuring and complaining and grumbling and misery.

And yet they say they believe in Jesus. And yet they say they're a follower of the Lord. They say, I'm a Christian.

What a contradiction of what the Christian life is really all about and what it's supposed to be. You see, the fact of the matter is sin has disqualified you from the blessing of God. It's not that God doesn't want to give it.

God longs to give it. He's waiting to bless you, but your sin has disqualified you. It's kept you back from the blessing.

And yet there's only one requirement to restore the blessing, to bring you back into that qualified place, to have God's fullness being poured out upon your life. That one requirement is to admit that you're in sin and to turn from it. And the thing that I marvel at is how people refuse to do that.

I've been in the ministry 16 years now. 13 years ago today, I came to this church. And in the past 13 years that I've been pastoring this church, I cannot tell you how many people I have seen who have refused to allow God to bless them because they chose to live in their sin and refuse to confess it.

So many people, too many people. It's a sad, sad thing. It's not the way it's supposed to be.

It's not the way God intended you to live. If you're miserable today as a Christian, it's your fault. It's your fault because you've allowed sin to disqualify you from God's blessing.

You've allowed sin to set you outside of God's blessing and you won't turn away from your sin. You won't acknowledge your sin so God could come and bless you. You're making excuses for it.

You're blaming everybody else. It's somebody else's fault. As I mentioned a moment ago, I was just recently at a conference, pastor's conference.

And there at the pastor's conference, I was teaching on God's model for the church out of Acts chapter 2. And in the course of my teaching, I made this statement that a church that is following God's pattern and a church that God is working in is a church that's going to be growing. Acts chapter 2 makes that clear. There's a particular pastor at the conference he was attending and he heard me make that statement.

The night before, we were having a time of waiting upon the Lord, time of just seeking God. And God put on my heart as I was leading this time that we needed to have a time of confession. The man who had spoken before I got up to lead this time, Malcolm Wild, he had spoken on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

He'd spoken on the fullness of the Spirit, the power of God in our lives. And so we wanted to have a time to wait on the Lord that we might receive the power of God. And yet as I got up to lead this, the Lord spoke to me clearly and said, before I can fill you, there must be a cleansing.

And the Lord spoke to me and said that there are many and one man in particular that has grieved and quenched my spirit through bitterness, through jealousy, through envy and hatred toward his brothers. And so I shared that. I said, there's someone here tonight that God is dealing with.

And I felt really clear in my own mind as to who that person was, that God was dealing with them and that he wanted them to repent of their bitterness, of their hatred before he could bless them, before he could fill them. And so I shared it that night and many people responded, but that person did not. And the next day, as I shared on God's model for the church, many people responded positively, but his response was very

negative.

Oh, he says a church should be growing. Let him come to England and see if a church will grow. You know, making these disgruntled statements and just spewing out that kind of bitterness.

And, you know, I thought how sad 10 years ago, a man had a church of 60, 60 people in his church 10 years ago. He's got 10 people today. What a sad thing.

That's not the way it ought to be. But here's a person who's bound. They are in bondage to this bitterness and this envy and this jealousy and all.

And when the spirit of God is speaking to them, they can't see it. Oh, it couldn't be me. No, no, I'm, no, I'm not wrong.

I'm, it's not, it's not my fault. No, it's, it has nothing to do with my attitude that the church has gone from 60 to 10. No, it's, it's everybody else's fault.

The people in the church, they're the problem. The other pastors, they're the problem. You see, everybody else is the problem.

As long as everybody else is the problem, you will remain a miserable man or woman. That's the fact. But you see the moment you say, God, I'm wrong.

You become qualified to partake of the inheritance, to partake of the inheritance. That's what we're talking about. The blessing of God, the joy of the Christian life.

Are you missing it? Are you missing it today? Is it not part of your experience? Are you a miserable Christian? Are you grumbling wherever you go? Are you spreading bitterness every time you open your mouth? You see, here's, here's the tragedy. Non-Christian people, all they know is this. You say you're a Christian.

They don't know the dynamics of the Christian life. They don't know the finer workings. They don't understand that a person can actually be a Christian, but be in sin and get cut off from the blessing of God and be miserable.

So when you say you're a Christian and they noticed your misery to them, it's like, why would I ever want to be a Christian? Look at that person. Listen to what they say. Look at their attitude.

You see, you end up being miserable and you bring nothing but misery to others, but all you have to do is admit you're wrong. That's it. You just have to admit you're wrong.

You know, I was thinking about repentance and it's essentially this, it's an admission of being wrong to the core. It's coming to God and just forget the rest of the world. Forget there any other people on the planet.

It's, it's you coming to God and you saying, God, I'm wrong. I'm thoroughly wrong. I'm wrong from the tip of my head to the bottom of my toes and from finger to finger, God, I'm wrong.

My whole being is wrong. Make me right. That's what repentance is.

And that's what qualifies us to partake of the inheritance of the saints and the light. It's coming to God and admitting we are wrong, but all the stubbornness of man, the rebellion of man, the hardness of the human

heart, the resistance against that. It's amazing to me, the children of Israel, a prime example.

God calls this nation and he destines this nation for blessing. This is what they're raised up for. This nation has raised up to be a blessing.

God says, I'm going to make you the head of the nations. I'm going to make you the head. You're going to rule over the nations.

People are going to look to you. They're going to flock to you. You're going to be the light for me.

So God destines this nation for blessing, but they rebel. They disobey. They harden their hearts.

They live in sin. And so the Lord sends the prophets to them. Now the ministry of the prophet was simply to draw their attention to their sin and to plead with them to repent of it, to acknowledge it.

This is what the prophet spent their lives doing, but yet the people refused. And there came a point through Jeremiah. And let me remind you, Jeremiah was the last man to prophesy to Judah before they went into Babylonian captivity.

But one final appeal, God has been appealing to them for centuries to repent, to admit they're wrong, to turn back to him so he can bless them. They refuse to do it. The Northern kingdom's already been led away into Assyria.

Now here's Judah, the Southern kingdom, and they're on the verge of going into captivity to Babylon. And Jeremiah is calling upon them to repent, but they won't listen to him. And finally, the Lord says through Jeremiah, he said, if they would but admit that they're wrong, this is the problem.

They won't admit it. They won't take responsibility for it. They want to put the blame on everything and everyone but themselves.

And it's because of this that they will go into captivity. That that happened to the nation of Israel is happening to many Christian people today. It's just simply this, a refusal to admit that you are wrong, that keeps you out of the blessing of God, keeps you miserable, and sends you deeper and deeper into captivity.

How deep do you have to go? Oh, the Israelites were miserable. The people of Judah were miserable. Jeremiah was prophesying to them all.

They hated it. It was just adding to their misery and frustration, but they still weren't ready to admit they were wrong. It took Nebuchadnezzar, the destruction of their city, the annihilation of multitudes of them, and the carrying away of them into captivity before they finally said we're wrong.

How sad. You see, we serve a God of blessing. If you're not blessed, it's because you prevented that blessing.

It's because you've allowed yourself, having once been qualified, to become disqualified from the blessing of God because of sin. You see, that's the thing that disqualifies us. But Paul is rejoicing that he himself and these Colossians, as well as all the other believers, that we've been qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

God has qualified us, and he wants you to partake of it. You know what it means to partake, don't you? It means to participate in it, to enjoy it. The kingdom of God right here and now on the earth, there's the kingdom of God.

It's the life of God. It's the fullness of God. It's this promised land, if you will.

God wants you in it. He wants you right in the midst of that land flowing with milk and honey. Are you there? Are you on your way there? Or have you allowed something to disqualify you and to keep you from that place? Just admit it.

Just acknowledge it. Just take responsibility for it entirely and completely. Forget everybody else that was ever involved in your life.

Forget every other human that's ever lived. Forget everyone around you and just say, Lord God, I'm a sinner, and I'm wrong to the bone. I'm wrong to the core of my being, and you're right.

Have mercy on me and qualify me so I can come back and so I can know the fullness of your blessing upon my life. That inheritance, that inheritance, that life, that abundant life that Jesus spoke about, that's the inheritance, and God wants each of us to be participating in it. And now he says in verse 13 concerning God that he has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the son of his love.

See, this is what God's done. Going back now to considering our lives before Christ. Where were we? Well, we were disqualified because of our sin, and we were living under the power of darkness.

Did you know that outside of Christ men live under the power of darkness? Satan controls those who are not in Christ. He is their master. He has authority over them.

The Bible teaches that. The Bible teaches that very plainly. Paul referred to Satan in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 4 as the God of this age.

He's the God of this age. In other words, he rules over this age, and he rules over the people who refuse to be ruled over by Christ. We're told in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world lies in the grasp of the wicked one.

The whole world lies in the grasp of the wicked one. When Paul was writing to Timothy, his young assistant, he reminded him of how a servant of God was to behave, and he said, The servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all able to teach in humility, instructing those who are in opposition. If perhaps they could be recovered from the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

If you are not under the authority of Jesus Christ, you are under the authority of Satan. You're captive. You are his captive, and you are doing his will.

There are two forces that dominate mankind, sin and Satan. Both are more powerful than all of the energy that man can muster up collectively. Obviously, clearly more powerful than an individual man.

But those two things, they control humanity, sin and Satan. Satan operates off of sin. But this is how the devil controls people, through the power of sin.

Sin is a power that you do not have power over. You by yourself do not have power over sin. Sin has power over you.

The only way to be freed from that power of sin is to be freed from that power by Jesus Christ. He's the only one that can liberate us. He's the only one that can pull us out of the clutches of Satan.

We can't do it for ourselves. And that's what Paul is rejoicing in, that he has delivered us from the power of darkness. He's delivered us.

He's brought us out from under that authority that we could not get out from under. Oh, I remember trying to get out from under that authority. I remember those attempts on my part to be freed from the power of sin.

I knew sin wasn't good. Oh, it had its moments of pleasure, certainly, but the after effects, it was obvious that it wasn't good. And I knew what it was doing to me, and I knew what it was doing to those around me, and I knew the potential that was there for it to ultimately destroy me.

And there were those occasions having this knowledge that I would make an attempt to be liberated from it. I would determine I am never going to do this again. And shortly after that determination, I would find myself doing it again and being amazed that I did it again.

How did I do that again? I swore I'd never do it. And so I'd swear again. You know, this time I'd swear on a stack of Bibles instead of just one.

Oh, I swear on a stack of Bibles I'll never do that again. And I would find myself doing it again. What is the explanation of that? Was that my experience alone? No, that's the experience of every man, every woman in the world.

That's the common experience of all people. There is a power that controls us, that causes us to do the things we don't want to do and to not do the things that we want to do. And we know we ought to do.

Paul described it in Romans chapter seven. He said, that which I would not I do, and that which I want to do, I don't do. What is this? This is the power of sin.

And he drew that conclusion. He said, if I do that which I do not, and I do not that which I do, that which I want to do, then I conclude that it's no longer I who do it, but it's sin in me. It's sin dwelling in me.

But here's the thing. You have responsibility. You can't blame it on sin.

You can't blame it on the devil. Yes, sin holds you captive. Yes, you're in bondage to sin.

Yes, you're under the authority of the devil, but you know why you are? Because you've allowed yourself to be by refusing to be set free by the son of God. So the responsibility does come back on the individual man. You are bound in sin.

You're a captive of the devil, but you don't have to be because one came and died on the cross to set you free. And as you refuse to be set free by him, you remain in that bondage. You go deeper and deeper and deeper into it till finally it seems that there is absolutely no possible way out of it at all.

But there is a way out. There's only one way out though, and that's Jesus Christ. You see, what are we seeing going on today around us? We're seeing sin going to its extreme.

We're seeing manifestations of everything the Bible has always said. Now, you know, a hundred years ago in America, a hundred years ago in Europe, and especially in Britain, you know, society was much more pleasant than it is today. People were nice.

They had been under a nominal Christianity for quite some time that had tamed them. Man was tame. And so back then people would read the Bible and they would read these statements that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who could know it? Or they would read that there's none good, no, not one.

There is none that seeks after God, but their mouth is an open sepulcher, you know, with their tongues they've used deceit and they've backbitten. And, you know, these statements that the scripture makes about the depravity of man. And a hundred years ago, they would read this and they would say, oh, how wrong the Bible is.

Look at society. We don't see this going on. Look at these beautiful people all around us.

Oh, they're so pleasant. They're so kind. They're so polite.

They're so nice. And they mock the scriptures and they said the Bible isn't true. But you see, as time has gone on and that influence of Christianity has slowly but surely been being removed from society, it's becoming clearer and clearer that everything the Bible ever said about man is absolutely true.

And now we're wondering what is with these people? And in some cases we're saying these aren't people. These are animals. They're beast.

Look at the things they do. They're horrible. You see, that's what the Bible has always said about man.

That's the truth about man. Man is a sinner to his core and he's incurably wicked in the very most depth of his being. And the only way that that can be changed is by the power of God.

But the tragedy of modern man is that he still, although he's recognizing that there are some inconsistencies here, he's still not willing to accept God's explanation of what's going on. And so as we look at these kinds of people in society, there is a group that's saying, well, these people are sick. They're diseased.

They've got a problem and we need to heal them of their disease. It's not a physical ailment here, but it's, you know, it's something other than that, that, you know, and now we've got this new thing and we can counsel them. We can send them to therapy and we can rehabilitate them through this process of helping them to discover how wonderful they really are because their problem is that they don't think highly enough of themselves.

And so there's, there are those who look at the problems and the, and the things that are going on in society and they say, well, it's a result of disease. And so the things that used to be called sins and that are still called sins by the Bible are now labeled diseases. So now we have the disease of alcoholism.

We have the disease of kleptomania and we have the disease of, you know, a perpetually bad attitude and outburst of wrath and, you know, anger and violence and those kinds of things. They've been placed down

a new category, a category of disease. And there of course are the specialist and they are the psychotherapist in our culture and they're the ones who treat these kinds of diseases.

So this is one group. There's another group that says, no, no, this isn't disease. As a matter of fact, this group is probably even worse off.

They say, this isn't disease. This is normal. This is just their chemical reaction going on in their brain.

And this is the way they were made. And we can't say that what they're doing is wrong. This is just the way they were created.

These men were, you know, they were made to have lustful desires for little children. And these were just, you know, these men, their brain chemistry just tells them that, you know, violence and hatred and harming people. And, you know, that's just the way they are.

And, you know, we, we've got to help them channel, you know, I mean, the things they come up with are incredible. The two brothers that were just finally convicted. We don't want to execute them, they say, because they do have something to offer to society.

See, they've got something to offer. I don't know what more murder, more death. You see, it's that kind of mentality.

Oh, these people in the same sex relationships. Oh, you can, that's the way they were made. Didn't you know, they were born that way.

That's the kind of thing that's going on today. And that, that's the explanation for the perversions that we're seeing in our society today. The explanation is on the one hand, it's a disease.

And then there's that other school that says, Oh no, it's not a disease. It's not even a, it's not even aberrant. It's not even a problem.

Really. It's just, that's just the way it is. Some people are made this way.

Some people are that way. And we need to be tolerant, acceptable. We should never say that they're wrong.

That's the greatest sin of all. So that's where we're at today. Because of a refusal to believe the revelation of God, God has a better explanation.

God has the accurate explanation. The fact of the matter is this, it's sin. It's bondage to sin.

It's a power greater than any person is able to conquer and added to the power of sin is the devil himself who brings people into captivity because of their rebellion to God. And he uses them to serve him. And so they do those kinds of horrid things that people are doing today.

They murder their whole household. They go into a little school room in Scotland and they blow away a whole classroom full of five year olds. And these kinds of things, these are a result of sin and its power and Satan's captivity of man and man serving Satan and all of the effort, all of the time and the money and the resources and everything that's spent to try to undo this is to no avail.

There's no improvement. There is no possibility of improvement. You see, there's only one solution.

There's only one answer. And that is the answer that we are given right here. It's the answer that comes by being delivered from the power of darkness.

People need to be delivered from the power of darkness brought out from under the authority and the control of the devil. That's what's happening. But again, don't misunderstand me.

We can't blame it on the devil entirely. We can't blame it on sin entirely in the sense that these people are not responsible. Someone might say, well, if you're saying that they're captive to the devil and they're under the power of sin, then how can they be held responsible for their actions? As I said earlier, because of this one thing, because they refuse the deliverance that God offers them.

They refuse to believe that that is actually what the case is. They rebel against the Word of God and they refuse the solution of God, the deliverance that God has offered through Christ, and therefore they stand guilty because God has told them that these things are sin, that they're abominable to Him, that they will perish because of them, but that His Son was punished for all of those things and God expects them to respond to Him and to be set free. And as they refuse to do it, they only add more judgment to themselves.

Not only the judgment that will be meted out for their behavior, but the greater judgment that will be given to them for their refusal to receive the Savior. You see, that's what's going on in society today. Jesus Christ came into this world to deliver people from the power of darkness and to convey us into the kingdom of God.

That's why He came. That's what the gospel is all about. That's what the church is all about.

That's what the church is supposed to be doing. The church is supposed to be bringing this message to people. Paul the Apostle, when he was commissioned by Jesus on the road to Damascus, he said, I'm sending you to the Gentiles, these wicked nations, these nations of people who long ago forsook me and went into every vile practice imaginable.

Nations that I've destroyed historically, like the Canaanites. God destroyed their entire society because of their abominations. God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their abominations.

God destroyed the various kingdoms. You remember Jonah went into the city of Nineveh and said 40 days and comes judgment. Why? Because of the abominations of the Ninevites.

But now because Jesus has come and God is going to pour out His mercy, He says to Paul, I'm going to send you to these nations, these wicked, rebellious, idolatrous, sinful people to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the power of God. And that's what the Apostle went out to do. Now, here's a great fallacy.

A modern fallacy is that the world today and the things that are going on in the lives of people today cannot be treated with a biblical prescription because things are much different than they were 100 years ago, 500 years ago, 1000, 2000, 5000 years ago. They say that we can't possibly treat today's problems with the Bible because things are much more complicated today. Things are much different today.

That is not true. Things are no different. The only difference is technologically.

We have a technological difference, but man is essentially the same, has never changed. And you know what? You can open the book of Leviticus. You can open the book of Deuteronomy.

You can open the book of Judges. You can open up the prophets and you can read a description of society. And guess what? It's identical to the society that we live in today.

The abominable things that are going on in our world today are things that have been going on from generation to generation. This is what man does when he rebels against God and when that rebellion becomes complete. This is what man does.

So this absurd idea that the Bible isn't enough, the message of the gospel is not enough, we need more, is not an idea that you find in Scripture because man's problem is essentially the same. He's a sinner. He's a rebel against God.

He's fighting against God. And until he gives up and surrenders, he'll just go from bad to worse. That's the message of the Bible.

And Paul was sent out with that message to do what? To turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the power of God. How is a man delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the son of his love? He's delivered when he understands who Christ is and what he's done on the cross and he humbles himself before him and accepts it. That's how a man is delivered from all of these sins, these things that we call addictions, diseases, and now just alternative behaviors.

No, they're sins, they're abominations to God. But yet people say, well, they couldn't be wrong because it feels so natural and they don't have any control over it. No, your conscience is seared.

That's why it feels natural and you don't have any control over it because sin is greater than you and Satan is more powerful than you. You see, people have been deceived, but the tragedy of all tragedies is that the people who are supposed to know the truth, they're the ones who are deceived too. I believe that Satan's greatest modern assault on the church and on the gospel has come through introducing man's philosophy into Christianity and saying that we need all of this other information in order to really help people.

I believe that Satan rejoices on his throne as he sees man's philosophy permeating the church of God. Think about the apostle Paul. Jesus sends him to do what? As we mentioned, he sends him to turn them from darkness from the power of Satan to the power of God.

So what did Paul do? What was his understanding of what Jesus called him to do? Did he go set up clinics all over the world? Did he go set up places of therapy? Did Paul walk away from the Lord and say, okay, Lord, that's good. That's great. Let me go out and collect the available data.

Did Paul go out and gather together the works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, all of these different men and take out of there the good and leave the bad? And put this amalgamation of a message together and then go out and set up these, you know, clinics? I hate to tell you this, but you know, in the first century, people were dysfunctional back then too. Did you know that? And it wasn't because their computer crashed. It wasn't because, you know, they didn't catch their flight.

It was because they were sinners. But yet Paul, the apostle understood what Jesus called him to do. He didn't call him to go set up clinics, to go establish support groups, go get a support group going, Paul, you know, write up some self-help literature, add a few of my best sayings to it, and then, you know, throw in

these other guys too.

They had some insight. And then you can, you know, slowly help people. Oh, the Lord didn't commission him to do that.

When I was in London a few weeks back, a lady came up to me, sweet lady, precious lady from Australia. And she apparently went to a church in Australia where they, you know, had, you know, kind of just a hodgepodge. You know, they had Jesus in there.

He was there. He's part of it. And they had psychology.

That was part of it. And they had new age thought, and that was part of it. And, you know, they just kind of taken from all the different areas and put it all together.

And they had developed, you know, all their ministries and so forth. So anyway, the lady comes up to me after I had taught one night, and she says, Brian, what program does Calvary have for the drug addict? What program do you have for those with anorexia? What is your program for the homosexuals? Now, she just went on a list, sincerely, honestly asking me, you know, what are you going to do for these people? What program? What does Calvary have? That's what she kept saying. What does Calvary have for this? And, you know, what she was asking me, in essence, is when are you going to get these programs going? You know, I see this church thing at the Bible study going.

You're teaching the Bible. That's really great. But when are you going to get the programs going so we can get these dysfunctional people in and get them helped out? Precious lady.

I mean, she's just coming from what she knows. I'm not faulting her at all. It was a sincere question.

And I looked at her and I said, Calvary doesn't have a program. I'm sorry. We don't have programs here.

I said, we have a person. We have the Son of God. And we're going to introduce people to the Son of God.

And they're not going to need any program. She was a little bit startled by what I said, but she kind of stepped back and nodded her head and said, oh, I see. The tragedy is that the church and most people in it, they think that to really help a person, you need a program.

Jesus is OK to get you to heaven. I mean, you know, that's what his job is. His job is to get you to heaven.

But we got the program to help you live here on earth. I'm sorry, but that isn't it. That isn't it at all.

Jesus is it. He's going to get you to heaven. Yes.

But he is going to get you there by transforming your life here on earth and the process. We don't have a program for anybody. We have the Son of God.

And if you don't think the Son of God is sufficient to help you or others, then you are hopelessly helpless. You'll never be helped. If the Son of God can't help you, the sons of men certainly can't help you.

If the Son of God who said all power in heaven and earth is given to me, I have authority over all flesh. If that person cannot help you, you cannot be helped. But let me make this perfectly clear.

That person can help you. That person can do more than help you. He created you.

He died on the cross to redeem you. And he will transform you and make you into an entirely new person. That's the message of the gospel.

And the tragedy of all tragedies is that the church, the church that's supposed to be going about the commission that Jesus gave to Paul of turning people from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the power of God, that church doesn't understand what it is that it's been called to do. It's a sad, sad day in the history of the church when the church became a place of programs instead of the representative of a person, the Son of God. Jesus, He has delivered us from the power of darkness and He's conveyed us into the kingdom.

The Father has done it through what Christ did. He qualified us. He delivered us.

He conveyed us in how? Redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. This again is the issue. It's sin.

The issue is sin. And life will never change. Society will never improve.

People will never get better until they admit this one thing. We are sinners. We are wrong from the tip of our head to the tip of our toe.

God is right and we humble ourselves before Him and admit that. That's the only time that change will take place. Oh, you can get a pseudo change.

You can get a temporary fix. You can take an old car that's all beat up and you can get some body work done on it and it can look good. But under the hood, it's that same decrepit old thing that's about to die.

And that's how it is with man. We've got the self-help programs. You can take that.

You can apply that. You can use that. You can get a smile for a while.

But in the end, when you look under the hood, it's the same old thing. That incurably sick heart of man that only Jesus can fix through his blood. The blood of the son of God cleanses us from all sin.

It's forgiveness of sin. We were disqualified. He qualified us how? By redeeming us by his blood from our sins.

Have you been redeemed? Have you been delivered? Have you been conveyed out of the kingdom of darkness? You know, the marvelous thing about this is it happens instantaneously. You know, there is no middle ground. There is no kingdom in between.

There's the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. There's nothing in the middle. There's not that, you know, kingdom of dusk or dawn.

You know, I'm in the kingdom of dawn. I'm coming out of the kingdom of darkness. No, you're in one or the other.

There's the kingdom of darkness. There's the kingdom of light. You're translated out of darkness into light.

It's instantaneous. It happens the moment you admit you're wrong and God is right. You humble yourself and you say, Jesus, forgive me for my sin that you died for.

Apply your blood to my life. Have you done that? Have you been translated? Many of you have. I know that.

I have. But there are some of you that have not. There are some of you that have not.

You're still living under the power of darkness. You're bound to sin. You're captive by Satan.

You're doing his will, and eventually you'll perish with him. If you continue in that path, you'll be held responsible for your sins eternally because Jesus died to set you free. And you said, I don't want to be set free.

So you'll be judged for your sins as well as the greater sin of rejecting God's mercy. Please, for your own soul's sake, turn today, humble yourself before God, admit that you're wrong and he's right, and let him deliver you from the power of darkness and translate you, convey you into the kingdom of the son of his love. For those that are there, rejoice.

Think about salvation and all that it means. Ask God to thrill your heart with all that he's done for you. And a final word for those of you who are Christians who are still part of the kingdom, but you've drifted back over to the border, and you're living in the shadow, if you will, of the kingdom of darkness.

You've disqualified yourself from the blessing of God because of your unwillingness to take responsibility for your sin. You're a miserable, miserable person, and you're a bad witness. God loves you, and he wants to bless you, but he can't until you let him.

And you can let him by admitting you're wrong and he's right. I pray that you would do that. I hope you'll do that.

As John said, there's no greater joy than to see your children walking in truth. That's something every pastor knows, and there's no greater grief than to see God's people walking in misery because of their sin. God wants you to walk in victory.

He wants you to walk in blessing. He wants to bless you. Turn to him today, humble yourself before it's too late, and let him begin to restore the years that the moth has eaten.

Let him begin to renew you. He's a God of blessing, and he'll do it.

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