

The Cost of a More Abundant Life

by Dan Augsburg

Dan Augsburg's sermon explores the cost of living a more abundant life through surrendering pride and control to God.

Duration: 55:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 7:18, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 1:21

Topics: "Abundant Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing gratitude for the timeless message of God's word that has transformed lives throughout history. He shares the story of Hudson Taylor, who had a life-changing encounter with the gospel and went on to do great work for God. The speaker emphasizes that the true gospel is not about material prosperity, but about the finished work of Christ. He highlights the temptation to take control of our lives instead of relying on the hope found in the cross. The sermon also explores the encounter between Jesus and a young man who claimed to have kept all the commandments. Jesus challenges him to sell everything he has, revealing the one thing he lacks.

Transcript

Father in Heaven, I'm grateful that we have the opportunity to gather together this afternoon. I'm grateful that the message that you have there in your Word for us today is one that you have been giving for thousands of years. You shared the message to the people of the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and down through the years of the early church and later the Dark Ages and the more modern times, Reformation and since, it has still come through.

And there have been people who have found new life, changed lives. I pray that you'll send the Holy Spirit into our room this afternoon so that the Spirit would be teaching through me. Please forgive me of everything that might hinder that communication.

And do the same work for my brothers and sisters here, Lord, because it's not what I say that counts, but it's what you say through me that will count. Might you make me nothing that you might be everything, I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

This morning I mentioned John Newton, and we've all sung that hymn, Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound, That Saved a Wretch Like Me. I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see. I was mentioning to someone earlier that I teach the history of Christian spirituality and one of the things that I

love to do is learn about great Christians and find out what books they read, you know, and then you work back and you discover what I refer to as spiritual trees.

Some person that you've probably all heard of is George Mueller. He was the man in Bristol, England, who, as a result of prayer alone, had an orphanage which, in 1874, he was able to feed 2,100 people without asking anyone specifically for money. Supported, I think, over 180 missionaries personally.

Sent 10,000 pounds. Published, he said, four million tracts that year. Thousands of Bibles.

Personally supported 9,000 children in day schools in 1874. Can you imagine how much that would have cost all by prayer alone? He said there were three books that changed his life. One was a book called *An Authentic Work*, the autobiography of John Newton.

He said, in that book, I learned that God can save anyone. If God could save John Newton, certainly he can change me because George Mueller had a fairly rough beginning like many great Christians. He was wont to take advantage of every situation, when his father gave him money to pay for his first communion, he kept most of it for himself and gave the priest only a little bit of it.

He had the habit of suggesting trips and offering to generously take care of the purse so that the rest of the group could pay most of the expenses. One time he went to a hotel and he flipped away before he paid, and the next time he was caught and he ended up in jail. Now it's interesting that George Mueller's father wanted his son to be a minister, wanted his son to be converted, but he didn't want a lot of that religion for himself, unfortunately.

And so he kept sending his son off to spiritual schools and eventually his son became a Christian. George became a Christian, I think one of the greatest Christians that ever lived. So he said John Newton's book told him that God could save anyone.

Another book that he read was the *Life and Times of George Whitefield*. He was one of the great, great preachers in England. And he said from George Whitefield I learned how to have my daily devotional life, where he literally talks about how he would read and pray on his knees.

And Mueller said that when I discovered that he said I gained more in a short amount of time than I had in months before. And that became his habit. And the third book, which I think a lot of you have probably heard of George Whitefield, or maybe some of you, but the third book that so changed his life was a book by a man named August Franck.

He lived in Halle, Germany. And back in 1690, the same way, by faith alone, he began an orphanage as well. Then she had a publishing ministry, a medical dispensary, all kinds of things.

And 150 years later, George Mueller went to his school and there for the first time saw a Christian kneel in prayer. He was so fascinated that he came back to see it for himself. And he became a genuine Christian as a result of seeing that person kneel.

But in reading the biography of this person by the name of August Franck, who is virtually unknown, maybe because most of what he wrote was in German, Mueller got the idea of having the orphanages. And it's pretty much just a mirror. Franck began with a little box to receive donations for his work and for his life.

And Mueller would do the same thing later when he lived in the 1860s into the 1890s when he did his main ministry. God has done amazing work. And it's interesting that for all of these people, it always began with knowing Jesus as their personal savior.

Earlier, we talked about the fact that we discuss whether we really need this more abundant life. And I gave three reasons. Number one, God has called us to that life.

God has called us to that life. We have been called and words are used such as holy and blameless and perfect. The Bible writers had no problem with that, even though we do, I believe because we tend to view those things as things that we must do on our own.

And I tried to point out that Ellen White herself says that, you know, God has made complete provision, but we are what? Utterly what? Unable in and of ourselves. We forget that sometimes, you know, she's made full. God has made full provision in his son.

And as we cooperate with his son, that which is impossible for us becomes possible. And I shared a quotation how God is able to give us a transfusion of himself that will cause us to choose his will and to act out his character. And I can't speak for you, but I can't imagine any more good news than that, that God is willing to give us a transfusion of himself and that that will bring about a complete change in our lives.

Too many of us are fighting the battle where the battle isn't OK. Our part is to make sure we're in connection with Jesus and making the choices that he wants us to make to do our part that will then allow him to do his part. And there's a fairly famous little booklet published by the Review and Herald by W.W. Prescott called Victory in Christ.

Has anyone read that book? Morris Vanden refers to it. There's a chapter where it begins and says, for a long time, I tried. And then he talks about how he tried to do, you know, the work that only God could do that only, you know, God hadn't asked him to do instead of doing his part that would then allow God to do his part.

We've had a problem with that all along. W.W. Prescott was a contemporary of Ellen White, an early pioneer within the church. Well, the first reason is that God has called us to a better life.

The second reason is that if we don't lead that better kind of life, as was pointed out by Jeffrey, there are others that will be negatively influenced by our example. So that's the second reason. And the third reason, as we read about in the marriage supper parable, is that if we get to the marriage supper, but we don't have that garment of righteousness, which I believe is not only something that is applied, you know, legally, people like to use that kind of terminology, but also in terms of a changed life.

It says there that someone will come along and say, how did you get here? And the Bible uses the word that the man was speechless because he had no excuse. Okay, there was no reason for him to arrive there without that garment of righteousness. Okay, I believe not only in being justified by faith, but I believe in being changed by faith.

Okay, and so when we're talking here this afternoon, we're not talking about, you know, just pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, but we're talking about what God can do when people surrender their lives fully to Him. So we talked about the need. The second thing we talked about was how if we are not under the control of God, who are we under the control of? Satan.

And would you agree with me that if we have not made the choice for God by default, we are under whose control? Under Satan's control. So it's not like there are three choices. You know, my choice, and I can choose for God, or I can choose for myself, or I can choose for Satan.

It's if we do not make a choice for God, Satan has the upper hand. And though he doesn't wave a flag and say, I'm about to take you down the garden pathway and get you into all kinds of trouble, that is his plan. And he does it in many clever ways.

At your age, you know, he may get you enticed with a career path that is outside of his will and often outside of the way you have been wired. Okay. I think of my dad.

He taught at Andrews for 60 years. Started in 1941. Taught until he was 82.

And told me just, you know, close to the time he died, he said, I never worked a day of my life. I only had fun. And there's some of you who took classes from him here in this room.

Mentioned it to me. He truly loved going to work every day. You know, he couldn't think of anything better than going to work.

He loved it. And I think that when we are fully following God's will, God will lead us in ways that is appropriate and right to the way that he's wired us and developed us. And he'll give us those experiences that will make it possible.

Another trap that the devil leads us down is in terms of relationships. You know, there's nothing he would rather do is have you linked by way of marriage with someone who has a different agenda. Okay.

Because the devil knows that the person you are married to will factor more in terms of God's being able to use you or not use you than anything else. Absolutely. If you marry your choice, I hate to say it, but the devil may have a lot to do with that.

And I mean, you know, it can be very difficult to have the freedom to serve God. But if you look at great Christians, George Mueller, for example, married twice. Both were ideal.

You know, you look at Adoniram Judson, who married, I can't remember her name right off, but we heard about it from Jeffrey last night. She was ideal. I mean, he translated the Bible into Burmese.

She translated the Bible into Thai. And God brought people into his life that were truly ideal for what he called them to. So, you know, part of the decisions we have to make is that we want God to have the upper hand from beginning to end.

And if you want to be encouraged and learn many, many principles on that subject, I don't know if you've read the book Quest for Love, Q-U-E-S-T, Quest for Love by Elizabeth Elliot. It's actually the stories of great Christians and how they found their spouses. It's an absolutely wonderful book that you'll see, you know, everything from God guiding George Mueller so directly to Hudson Taylor, who's intended that a governess was totally opposed to their being married, but others didn't feel she had the right.

And so others secretly brought them together and they decided to get married regardless. And her parents were back in England and were unaware of it, said, oh, they would have blessed it from the beginning. So it's a marvelous book if you want to learn about God's guidance in that respect.

But I told you that this session we want to talk about the cost. You know, is it, you know, what kind of cost, what kind of price do we have to pay to obtain this more abundant life? If I could have a little bit of help, if someone doesn't have this syllabus, people have been walking by, could someone get it? If you don't have it, raise your hand. Oh, my, I actually have a cousin down here.

We speak in tongues occasionally, we speak in French occasionally. I'm told in heaven, we're going to speak in French, so we may as well learn it here, right? Just kidding. But I do like the French language a great deal.

Anyway, we wanted to talk about the price this afternoon of this more abundant life. And I'd like to suggest that there are two costs. One is our pride.

And the other one is control. Control in our own lives. The first is pride.

The second one is control. If you would look at page 13. Line 10.

It says there, the thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God is a precious thought. The enemy of God in man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented, for he knows that if the people receive it fully, what will happen? His power will be broken. OK, the thought that the rights of Christ is imputed.

In other words, it is applied to our lives, to our characters. That realization breaks the devil's power. I'd like to suggest a reason why if you're turning your Bibles to Romans chapter seven, verse 11, Romans chapter seven, verse 11.

It says there, for sin taking occasion. I think that King James says for sin finding opportunity. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceive me and kill me.

OK, in other words, in our desire to obey God and keep the commandments. The devil is very happy for us to do it, as long as we're trying to do it on our own. The devil says work hard because as long as we're, we're still looking to ourselves.

He can play games with us and causes to fall. OK, and so when somehow we realize that it's what Jesus did and it's all about Jesus power. It has a way of transforming us and he doesn't want us to know that.

And there's been many a person whose life has been changed. I think of Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission. He was raised in a family with a pastor and he tried very hard to be a strong Christian, but nothing seemed to be working.

And so he finally gave up on it in his teenage years. And it was, of course, a matter of great concern to his parents. But he tried.

And instead of knowing victory, he only knew defeat and failure. And so that was his situation. But one day his mom said, I'm going to pray for Hudson.

Until he becomes a Christian. And so he began. She began praying.

She wasn't at home at the time. And on that particular afternoon, Hudson Taylor wandered into his father's study and found a pamphlet and said, I will read the pamphlet because the pamphlet. Be sure and pick up a study guide there in the back as you're going by.

Oh, as he said, I'm going to read this pamphlet and I'm going to enjoy the story because, you know, spiritual literature always has a good story, but I'll pass on the scriptures but in doing that reading, he read about the finished work of Christ, the finished work of Christ. And in a moment he saw the gospel and he began rejoicing in Jesus. And he went on to do a marvelous work.

If you if you can read the book Retrospect, his autobiography, a wonderful, wonderful book. But anyway, off where she was praying, God impressed her that her prayer had been answered as well. But it was that that completed work, that finished work of Christ that changed his life.

Let's go to line 22 now on page 13. I put lines so that people know where I'm at. It says there, this is a quotation from Meade McGuire, an Adventist writer, says we can never appreciate the wonders of atoning grace unless we understand the awful nature and ravages of the evil which made the atonement necessary.

He later states to learn that I'm all bad and that there is no good thing in me is one of the greatest steps towards appreciation of the atonement of Christ. OK, to realize that we're all bad, that we can't do it. He says this is one of the great things that we need to come to to appreciate and understand the atonement of Christ.

And that is really true. That is really true. And I'll share my experience in a few moments.

Let's see what the Bible says about our condition. Let's turn to Isaiah 6, verse 5. Isaiah 6, verse 5. This is Isaiah. He was a prophet, no less.

He knew God probably better than the rest of us. But he says, woe is me when he came into God's presence and said, woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. He says, woe is me.

He said, when I actually saw God the way He wants to be seen, I realized that I'm a man, you know, that is undone. I'm a man that is undone. Look at Isaiah 64, verse 6. Isaiah 64, verse 6. It says, but we all are like an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are like what? Filthy rags.

Now, please help me. What is a filthy rag? It's something disgusting. If you've been cleaning your house and dusting your house, you know, and you collected dust at some point, is it something you want to use? You hardly want to use it.

Even, I remember once I had some filthy rags and someone put the filthy rags in with my clothes and I was wearing them a few days later and I just turned into one great big hive and I thought I was going to die. It never happened before. And someone said, Dan, I think I know what this is.

It's a topical kind of thing. So, filthy rags are not very nice. I know about filthy rags.

It says that even our best efforts are as filthy rags. Now, I have a question for you. If all of our best efforts are as filthy rags, why do we compare ourselves to other people? Is it because we prefer our filthy rags compared to theirs? Have you ever thought about that? Let's look at another verse in our condition.

Job chapter 14 verse 4. Job chapter 14 verse 4. It says there, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one, okay? Job says, it says there, it's not something that can be done. Look at Jeremiah chapter 13 verse 23. Jeremiah 13 verse 23.

It says, Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Have you ever been to the zoo and seen the sign that says, see the leopard with stripes? Have you? Never, of course not. Well, the question is asked there, Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? So can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil? Okay. It says, As impossible as it is for that to change, we face the same impossibility, and I'm going to add a word there, in and of ourselves.

Okay. You must always include that word when reading those verses. We can't, but God can.

The problem is, is that we need to be convinced of our inability, really at a very profound level, because it's really hard to admit you can't. Really hard. I mean, even in day to day, how often do you find yourself calling someone and saying, I'm struggling? Why don't you? It goes against your pride, right? Goes against your pride.

Goes against my pride too. Look at Romans chapter 8, verse 7 and 8. Romans chapter 8, verse 7 and 8. It says there, we'll start with verse 6. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. The carnal mind is not subject to God.

And Paul says, it can't be, okay? There is just something that is so anti-God in the way that we're naturally made as a result of the effects of sin, that we can't just on our own turn that around. But what is the good news? Turn to Romans chapter 5. Turn to Romans chapter 5, verse 1. It says, Therefore, having been justified, how? By faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the, that's the verse that got Martin Luther off his knees, climbing up the Santa Scala there in Italy, you know, and he said, the just shall live by faith. It changed his life. Look at 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21.

2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. It says there, For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. He made him who knew no sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That is God's gift to us, that Jesus took upon himself our mistakes, that we might take upon ourselves the virtue of his perfect life. Let me share with you now some quotations. Look at page 14 now.

Line 14, page 14, line 14. This is our condition. It says our condition is helpless and hopeless unless infinite mercy is granted us daily.

OK, that's our condition. Helpless and hopeless unless infinite mercy is granted us daily and pardon is written against our names in the heavenly records. Those only who see and feel their spiritual necessities will go to Jesus for that help, which they need so much and which he only can give.

He alone can cleanse us from all sin. He alone can place upon us that robe of righteousness. Now, the key there, those only who see and feel their spiritual necessities will go to Jesus for the help which they need so much and which he only can give.

OK, this is all about Jesus from the beginning. And this is about Jesus in and of ourselves. Our situation is helpless and hopeless.

And speaking of the prodigal son, I think I can give you the quotation says when we come to Jesus, just as we are weak, helpless and despairing. Weak, we understand the word, right? Helpless, what we've come to realize, despairing because we don't see any hope. Suddenly in Jesus, that which we are striving here, there and everywhere finally becomes ours.

Line 25, same page. It is impossible for us of ourselves. There's that phrase again.

It is impossible for us of ourselves to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil and we cannot change them. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? The carnal mind is empty against God for it is not subject to the law of God.

Neither indeed can be. Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere. But here they are what? Here they are powerless, okay? Nothing wrong with education, nothing wrong with culture, nothing wrong with the exercise of the will, and they have their proper sphere.

But here they are powerless in terms of helping us to escape from the pit of sin. So if you're doing all those things and not getting anywhere, don't be surprised, neither be discouraged, okay? They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart. They cannot purify the springs of life.

There must be a power working from within, a new life from above before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul and attract it to God and to holiness, okay? We've tried hard, haven't we, to improve our behavior, but somehow we know that sometimes there's still something percolating inside, right? That has a way of coming out.

Welcome at the wrong moments. And so we need help. Now, going to line 36.

Here's this matter of pride I talked about. What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, in doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

Okay, so what is justification? It's when our glory look at what I've done, is laid in the dust. When we come to see our... What's the word there? Nothingness. Now, what does that mean? Our nothingness.

How much nothing is... I mean, how much is there in nothing? Nothing, right? When we come to see our nothingness, that's why Newton could say, you know, amazing grace has saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. You know, His grace.

You know, nothing. Nothing in our hands. We cling completely to the cross of Christ.

That's Charles Wesley. Excuse me. But anyway, so that's justification by faith.

It's the laying of the glory of man in the dust. And it's very, very hard to admit how much we need the Lord Jesus. Line 40.

It was possible for Adam before the fall to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law, but he failed to do this. And because of his sin, our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous since we are sinful, unholy. We cannot perfectly obey the law, the holy law.

We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet.

He lived a sinless life. He died for us. And now he offers to take our sins and give us his righteousness.

That's what he wants to. He wants to give us, take our sins and give us his righteousness. If you give yourself to him and accept him as your savior, then sinful as your life may have been, for his sake, you are accounted righteous.

Christ's character stands in place of your character and you are accepted before God just as if you had never sinned. How about that? God treats us as if we had never made a single mistake. And I don't understand that.

Do you? Absolutely not. Now, here's an intriguing question. If God treats us as if we never made a mistake, why can't we treat each other the same way? Would that not bring a radical change in our church? I'm not talking about saying anything goes at all.

But there's something about, you know, Jesus could see in people who the rest of society had said, there's no way they're going to go anywhere and saw them as prime candidates for the gospel. Think of the woman at the well, you know, coming during the middle of the day because everyone was talking about her. She was well known in the community.

They would have talked about her in our day. Just imagine that day. But Jesus somehow had to let her know that she was completely accepted.

And her testimony wasn't, man, I heard the greatest theology. Her testimony was, come meet the man who knows all about me. What did he know about all of her mistakes? But it was because he still loved her in spite of that that her life changed.

And when we find that God loves us in spite of what we've done, and, in fact, has credited to us his righteousness, our lives are changed. Our lives are absolutely changed. I love this next one.

Line 51. Grace is an attribute of God shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it, but it was sent in search of us.

God rejoices to bestow his grace upon everyone who hungers for it. To everyone he presents terms of mercy, not because we are worthy, but because we are so what? Utterly unworthy. OK? It's not our worthiness that makes us worthy to God.

It's our unworthiness. Someone wrote and said, God loves us not because we're good, but in order to make us good. OK? We love people because they're good, right? God loves us, you know, in order to make us good.

God does his math completely different than we do. And I hope we can extend that love and caring and forgiveness and acceptance to others, because that is how heaven begins here. And if I read my Bible correctly, somehow when we relate in godly ways to other people, God puts in their hearts the desire to be like Jesus and their lives change.

Not by beating them. You know, if you want to grow plants, do you pour pesticides on the plants to get them to grow well? No, sunshine and water, right? And sometimes we think pesticides will work in helping people develop spiritual growth. I don't think so.

I don't think so. But I'm not saying we close our eyes or we want to get into all kinds of compromise. But there's something about passionately seeking to live obediently for yourself and encouraging others that somehow there's engendered the desire for the same thing.

Notice line 10 on page 15. Now, the world's redeemer was treated as we deserve to be treated in order that we might be treated as he deserved to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins upon his own divine soul that we might receive his imputed righteousness.

He was condemned for our sins in which he had no share, that we might be justified by his righteousness in which we had no share. The world's redeemer gave himself for us who was he? The majesty of heaven pouring out his blood upon the altar of justice for the sins of guilty man. I could read much more, but I just want to share a testimony.

When I was in college, my junior and senior year, I was the head of religious activities on campus. That meant that I was an easily identified Christian because I was the one doing Friday Night Vesper talks and other, you know, I was always up front. But let me tell you, I only found Jesus as my personal savior between my junior and my senior year.

It went like this. Someone shared with me the little book during my junior year, *The Life of Victory* by Maine McGuire. Has anyone read the book, by the way? See? One person has.

You can find it online at maranathamedia.com. That's down in Australia. They have it online. Or on my website.

I have it, pathtoprayer.com. It's a study of the book *Steps to Christ in Romans*. It's probably one of the best books ever written on victory. Sadly, for the most part, out of print, I think.

I'm not sure. Maybe it's available through Teach Services now. A marvelous book.

And the more I read about victory, the more I realized I didn't know what that victory was about. I remember on a Wednesday evening in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, I know that, I know it's September 6, 1977. My folks went off to pray for me.

I said, I need to work on the first Vespers talk of the year because I want to speak on victory. But I knew I didn't know anything about it. And I remember getting to a knee and said, Lord, I love you very much, but apparently I'm too bad to go to heaven.

You know, I've tried hard. I don't understand this, but I must be too bad. And then God put some words in my heart.

Except Jesus came and lived a perfect life and said, Dan, claim the virtue of my life is yours. And I'll take your mistakes on me. And you know, in a moment, when I'd come to the end of my rope, I saw Jesus in a whole new way.

And I've been singing his praises ever since. And that life is available to you as much. Not because you're so worthy and because you're so good, but because you realize that apart from him, you have nothing.

OK, when we see our what? Our nothingness. That's when we're prepared to accept. OK.

Before that, it was kind of Jesus plus Dan. But when it came to my really being honest with God about my true condition, I realized it was all about him. All about him.

Anyway, so God does a great work. And one of the costs we must pay is the cost to our pride. It's not easy to admit that we have failed.

OK, not just our failing, but but fail. But when we really want to see Jesus for who he is, it's when we have, in effect, become spiritually bankrupt in some ways in our efforts. And we realize, oh, when Jesus said that, he really meant it.

And we suddenly claim it for ourself. Now, here's the question as we transition. Has anyone beside me ever ended up in a traffic court? I've only been stopped a few times, but I have to admit there's a few other honest souls here.

Men mainly here. I'm sure there's maybe a few. Oh, even one woman.

Thank you. I mean, you all need the experience. It's not the worst thing in life.

You don't need it. I'll take that back lest I be quoted. But you learn spiritual lessons.

You learn spiritual lessons. Anyway, the spiritual lesson I'd like to call your attention to is that as you're standing there and the judge is pointing out to you that, you know, you were exceeding the speed limit by by X amount. And he asks you, you know, what is your response? And you assure him at that moment that you're never going to see the speed limit again, you know, because you have every desire.

And, you know, and then you either pay the fine or he lets you off the hook. If you're lucky, it's never happened to me, but I'm told it happens to some people. Anyway, you go out and for a while you drive.

You're truly more careful, aren't you? Or whatever it was. It was a parking ticket or whatever. But has your behavior really changed? Now, in the eyes of the court, they've given you mercy, right? But there's still something in you that if you're late, you may hurry, right? The same thing happens spiritually, even though before God.

OK, the rights of Jesus has been applied to our lives. There's still another work that needs to take place to change our behavior. And for many, this comes as new information because the assumption is if I've been, if I've received the rights of Christ, my life will be changed.

But that's not really true. And so I want to talk about the second cost. And that is the cost of control.

When we have received the rights of Jesus, you know, we've claimed it. Does that mean there's no longer temptation in our lives? No. Now, it's interesting that sanctification, justification is what? A work of a moment.

It's imputed, right? Etcetera. Has to do with our standing before God. But sanctification is the work of what? A lifetime.

And it has to do with our fitness. And it's imparted, right? And I'm glad that we understand things properly. You know, in the early days, we're talking about the the days shortly after the early church and, you know, the first thousand years.

B.C. There was the idea out there that you could only be forgiven one time after you were baptized. And if you blew up more than the one time, you were in trouble. And so many people chose to be baptized as they were on the point of death to make sure that they got into heaven.

We don't believe that, do we? You know, God will forgive us. But I believe that he wants to change our lives. To where we are more and more like Jesus, because remember, we learned early on that he calls us to a high standard of living.

He uses words like holy and perfect and blameless. And I believe with all my heart that if the Bible talks about it, we should believe it, right? We should believe it. I have no problems with that at all.

And Jesus said in John 10, 10, I have come that they might have life and what? Have it more abundantly. And how can we truly experience a more abundant life if we find we are continually stumbling and never making progress? No, I think God wants us to to have more. Now, there was a time when a young man came to Jesus.

Look, if you would, in your Bibles, in Luke chapter 18, Luke chapter 18, starting in verse 18, says now a certain ruler asked him, saying, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? So Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good, but one that is God. You know the commandments. Do not commit adultery.

Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

Honor your father and your mother. And a young man respond. He said, all of these things I have kept from my youth.

Now, it's interesting that when he came asking the question, Jesus gave him a list of things. And he responds that all of these things I've kept from my youth. And Jesus doesn't get on his case after that about anything, right? In fact, we know that Jesus loved him.

We know that Jesus saw great potential in him. Jesus said, you only lack one thing. And I can almost imagine saying, oh, one thing, just one thing.

What is it? What is it? And then he said, he kind of, you know, delivered a bombshell. He said, just sell everything you have, give it to the poor and come follow me. And as that young man kind of thought about what Jesus was saying, the Bible says he turned away sorrowing.

Because you see, the price was too high so far as he was concerned to have that experience that he was asking about. And to all of us, after we discover, you know, the cost, the price cost for justification, there comes the cost of truly surrendering everything to the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes people find that cost too high.

But that is the doorway. That is the doorway to the more abundant life. There is no life without surrender.

There's no life, and I'm going to use a new word I haven't used so far. There is no abundant life apart from accepting and believing in the need to die to self. OK, it's not something taught and talked much about in our church.

But it's absolutely foundational, and you'll see that before we're done. Absolutely foundational. Let me share what F.B. Meyer wrote in verse 18, line 12.

He was actually a pastor, not an Adventist pastor. He lived in the 1800s in England. He said the following.

He said the most bitter experience with most believers is the presence and power of sin in their lives. They long to walk through this grimy world with pure hearts and stainless garments. But when they would do good, evil is present with them.

They consent that God's law is good. They approve it. They delight in it.

They endeavor to keep it. Notwithstanding all of this, they seem as helpless to perform God's law as a man whose brain has been spent with paralysis is helpless to walk straight. There is a desire, but somehow they just are unable.

And he follows. He says, surely our God must have provided for all this. It would not have been like him to fill us with hatred for sin and longings for holiness if there were no escape from the tyranny of the one, no possibility of attaining the other.

In other words, God has put in our hearts a desire for that higher kind of life. And F.B. Meyer says it would be cruel of God to put that desire in our hearts if he didn't have the intention of also making it possible. Now, coming back to me, McGuire line 22.

He says there's a great deal of modern preaching, which presents as a remedy for sin, love, social regeneration, culture, self-development, etc. According to scriptures, the only way to deal with sin is to begin with death. Undoubtedly, the great difficulty with the majority believers is that they are trying to live Christ's life without first having died or having died Christ's death.

It is much more popular these days to talk about life and death, but not more necessary, for death is the way into life. Many have not seen or understood the necessity of this death, and others, having seen it, are afraid or unwilling to die. That's the cost part.

It is the daily dying of self that makes room for the living of Christ. Okay? It's the daily dying of self that makes room for the living of Christ. Welcome.

See, here's the problem. And I don't have any props. I always forget about props.

So you'll just have to imagine my props. Imagine I had two glasses here in front of me. They're both half filled with a liquid, right? And in the one liquid is white grape juice.

I happen to love white grape juice. In the other one, it's half full with hydrochloric acid. Okay? We'd be tempted to drink the one and we would be very afraid of drinking from the other.

Correct? Now, let's imagine we said, you know, I want to make the hydrochloric acid a little bit better than it is. And I want to add some of the grape juice to the hydrochloric acid. And I offered it to my sister here.

Would you drink it? No, you wouldn't. What if I added more? What if I dumped all of the white grape juice in? You wouldn't want to drink it, would you? What if I started with just a tiny bit of hydrochloric acid in the bottom and I added all that white grape juice? Would you drink it? Even if it was diluted down? Of course not. You see, many of us think that by mixing our best intentions, our efforts with what we have naturally, we can have something that is good.

And yet any of the taint of the old gets in the way, right? And you see, the world mainly sees the old because they kind of see through us and they see us at our weak moments. And often their response is, I'm as good as those people. You know, why should I bother to change? And you know, some of us have the idea that to be a good Christian is to be patient and to be kind and to be loving and to be all those kinds of things.

But someone rightly pointed out that anything that a non-believer can duplicate is not a criteria to determine your godliness. In other words, if a non-believer can say, I'm patient, I'm loving, I'm kind, then please, he says, you mustn't use that as your definition of godliness. He said godliness is an awe of God and of who He is that changes every moment of your day all the day through.

It's not just particular, you know, characteristics, but it's actually, it's a God taking over your whole life and people will see it and will know that you have been with Jesus. I have a friend up in Canada who is a godly man, a godly man, and I mean, he has the most amazing answers to prayer and he tells me how, how, you know, he's been into the banks and people come up to him and said, that God's in you, isn't He? I mean, people just see it in him and I believe it. Ben, he suffers a great deal.

He's older, he has pernicious anemia. For you, for those of you that are vegans, take your vitamin B12. He didn't and he suffers the consequences.

But a godly man, a godly man, and people can tell that Jesus is living within him. Well, I want us to have that. Now, in terms of learning what happens when a person dies, if we were to go to a cemetery, what would we learn about what it means to be dead? What do we learn from a cemetery about what it means to be dead so far as the person in the grave is concerned? What can we learn at a cemetery about what it means to be dead? Every answer is right, by the way.

I'm a good teacher. I give high notes. Okay, there's a decay.

What else? Unresponsive. Okay. Can the person do anything for themselves? Absolutely not.

Do they worry about anything? They don't worry about anything, do they? They're completely dependent upon other people to lead them, etc. And if you go to a funeral, who's the last person to know that they're dead? The dead person. The dead person doesn't even know he's dead.

I bring this to spiritual things. When we have died to self, we have come to a mode of living where we're depending completely on the Lord Jesus Christ. We've come to a place where we no longer worry because we know that there's someone who is big enough, strong enough, wise enough to do the worrying for us.

But like the dead person, we're not running around saying, by the way, I'm dead. Did you know that I'm dead? Because we're still in that relationship and we're still trusting God. And we still fear in our own way.

And so it's not a life that people go around parading and talking about. Look at some verses now. Luke chapter nine, verse 23.

Luke chapter nine, verse 23. It says there, then he said to them, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. Why did Jesus talk about taking up the cross and taking it up daily to the people that he was speaking to? What did this represent? It represented death, right? If you saw a man carrying a cross, it meant it was the end of that person, right? Yes.

Ellen White actually says that Jesus could not have asked for a greater level of surrender than when he called them to that. Because it was the cross was the most shameful death. It was the most complete death too.

It was like they were just being called to something that was just way out of their control and way out of their comfort zone. He was the most complete death. He was asking them to make the ultimate surrender.

Now, it's interesting that to the rich young ruler, Jesus said, sell everything you have and come follow me because Jesus knew that it was those things that stood between him and being completely surrendered. We don't find actually that kind of statement, you know, that Jesus makes anyone else because he had that problem to a poor fisherman being told everything you have and come follow me was not a problem, was it? But Peter and the disciples did have a concern about how they were viewed by other people and about wanting to be, you know, on his right hand and doing things. And so when Jesus, you know, made the appeal to them, it was like, if you want to follow, you have to take up the cross and you know what that's all about.

And do it how often? Every day. Because it's something that has to be renewed every single day. And he said, as a result of that, come follow me.

You see, we can't really follow if we haven't first died. Let's look at some more. Look at John chapter 5, verse 30.

Let's look at how Jesus learned to obey. John chapter 5, verse 30. John 5, verse 30.

He said, I can of myself do nothing as I hear, as I judge, and my judgment is righteous because I do not seek my own will. But what? The will of my father. You see, Jesus was always wanting to do the will of his father.

Look at Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 to 9. There are more verses there that we could look up, but we're going to go to Philippians chapter 2. There Paul says, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant and coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and of those in heaven and those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. See, Jesus was willing to humble himself and be obedient to the point of what? Literally, taking up his cross, okay? And it wasn't a wood cross, first and foremost, it was the cross of his Father's will.

The willingness to die, to having his own way, and to having control over what he wanted, and trusting and following and wanting whatever God wanted. God is calling us to that same kind of thing. Now, in Matthew chapter 27, Matthew chapter 27, it says there, verse 39, it says, And those who pass by blaspheming him, wagging their heads and saying, You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Likewise, the chief priest, also mocking with the scribes and elders said, He saved others himself, he cannot save if he is the King of Israel. Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God.

Let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, I am the Son of God. You see, in this pathway of dying to self, there's often this sense that if we really were strong Christians, we wouldn't have these problems. And there's a whole theology out there that if God is blessing you, you will be prosperous, you'll have cars, you'll have lands, all this kind of thing.

You can hear that spoken of on your television sets with some of the televangelists that are out there. But that's not the gospel that I believe we're called to in the Bible. Okay? It's not the gospel that we are called to in the Bible.

And we are always tempted to bring ourselves back down from the cross in order to take control because we don't feel we can stand the pressure any longer. Okay? There's always that temptation. There's always that tendency.

But that's where hope is. Look at, if you would, Philippians chapter 1. Philippians chapter 1. It says there, verse 21. We will.

We will. It finishes at 40? 30. Oh, I didn't know that.

I'm sorry. One verse and then we'll take a break. Okay? It says, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Paul said, For me to live is Christ and dying was gain. And we're going to continue with this theme in a few moments as I've been told we need to take a break.

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