

Moral Collapse

by David Gardner

David Gardner's sermon emphasizes the need for heart transformation through the gospel to address the moral collapse in society.

Duration: 48:27

Scripture: Romans 1:16

Topics: "Morality"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel as the means to bring about true transformation in people's lives. He contrasts the lifeless atmosphere of a church service without the power of the Holy Spirit to the vibrant worship that follows a sermon preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. The speaker highlights that it is through the preaching of the gospel that individuals are changed at their core. He explains that the gospel has two sides: what Jesus did to save humanity and the need for individuals to be changed. The speaker calls for a return to the biblical pattern of preaching the gospel and emphasizes that this is the only answer to the national and global situation.

Transcript

I want, if I may, to read again Romans chapter 1, verses 16 and 17 of the authorised version. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed, not a righteousness, the righteousness of God.

My dear friends, Britain has a problem, a real problem. She is being confronted with a crime rate of unprecedented proportion. Furthermore, she is experiencing a moral collapse in pretty well every section of her society, in a way as perhaps never before.

We are even being told now that Britain, who once was known throughout the world as Christian, is now being described on the continent as the barbarian centre of Europe. We are living at a time when it is becoming increasingly true, for instance, that folk are afraid to go out after dark or answer any knock on the door during the evening. Robbery, rape, vandalism, brutality, violence is everywhere.

We live at a time also when dishonest dealings, shady practices, financial corruption, every kind of swindling and fiddling is going on in every department of life. You name the place and it is there. We live at a time also when football thugs, hooligans have to be arrested in their beds before a football match is due to take place.

And the government is getting extremely concerned about all this. And they are getting extremely concerned because the electors are getting very restless. So all kinds of suggestions have been made at government level to combat all this.

These include a determined effort to increase the police force, to build more prisons, to send more youngsters to remand homes and the like. Mr Heard, as Home Secretary, called on the churches and on the bishops to give a strong moral lead. And just a week ago the government said it was launching the biggest yet advertising campaign against crime at a cost of £11,500,000, which is to carry the slogan, together we will crack it.

Together we can do something about it, said the Home Secretary in a television broadcast. Then last week also we were told by the Prime Minister that the government is to provide £2.3 million this year to help fund certain programmes to tackle crime under what has been described as a Safe Cities Plan. The priorities that are to be attended to, it was suggested, were to reduce the opportunity for crime by fitting door and window locks, by fitting phone entry systems, by talking to architects about designing crime out of buildings and out of housing estates, and so on.

And to divert the young from crime and from vandalism by sports and recreation projects. Meanwhile, the London Underground system is intending to spend literally millions of pounds, I haven't got the precise figure at the moment, to make the London Underground system safer from muggings, violent attacks, rape, and so on, by fitting more closed circuit television cameras on trains and on platforms, press button alarms, and a multitude of other new technological devices. And no doubt Manchester, Liverpool, and all other cities are having to do the same.

All this is well and good. But none of these things, or all of them put together, even begin to get to the real heart of the problem. They don't even begin to get to the root cause of what is wrong, let alone even begin to get down to the cure.

For you see, the heart of the matter, the root cause of the problem, is that man, every man, every person, every boy, every girl, that means, is wrong at the centre. All of us are biased to go the wrong way. All of us are biased to go the wrong way, even in fact when we try to go the right way.

And the truth of the matter is that until a person is put right at the centre, he can never live right. Thank you. In other words, the root of the trouble is in the heart of a man, or a boy, or of a girl, or of a woman.

That is where the real trouble lies. As the scripture says, we err, E-R-R, we err in our heart. Jesus said, out of the heart.

Proceed. Evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are the things which defile a man, said Jesus.

Matthew 15, 18, 20, and they come out from the heart. And today Jesus would have added vandalism, graffiti, rape, terrorism, brutality, mugging. It all comes from the heart.

And because every person is wrong at the centre, he or she needs to be changed at the centre. And only Jesus can do that. This can be illustrated by what happened when I was speaking all day at a meeting in Winslow, Buckinghamshire, a few weekends ago.

During that meeting, the mayor of Winslow came in. And he was introduced to me by his son-in-law during an interval. I had met his son-in-law on the previous evening and had discovered that his son-in-law was a Christian.

A radiant Christian, in fact. But the son-in-law had told me the previous evening that the mayor, his father-in-law, wasn't a Christian. And that he, the son-in-law, was praying for his father-in-law's salvation.

So the mayor began to talk to me. And he was telling me how he was spending a lot of time with certain young people in the area who were unemployed. And who, in consequence, had very little hope.

And who also, in consequence, were getting into all sorts of trouble which landed them up in police hands and so they were beginning to get anti-police. And the mayor was explaining that he was spending time with some of these youngsters trying to win their confidence and then trying to help them. So I said to him, you know the real problem is here, in the heart.

They are wrong at the centre. What needs to happen is that their hearts need to be changed. And only Jesus can do that.

He said immediately, you've got a point there. So I went on to say to him, when Jesus has changed their hearts, they begin to have a real purpose in life. They begin to have something to live for.

Then they have hope. And God can even find them a job, even at a time of low employment. Because nothing is impossible with God.

I said, you know John Wesley, when he was preaching all over this country for no less than 50 years on horseback, used to say, I know of thousands and thousands and thousands of people who know a Jesus Christ who is outside of themselves. But what needs to happen is that they need to have Jesus Christ inside of themselves in order to become Christians. And I said that is the truth that needs to be driven home today.

He became extremely moved. He had another appointment to fulfil. And he went out to fulfil that appointment in a very thoughtful frame of mind indeed.

And I related this conversation to his son-in-law afterwards. And it was not until then that I discovered that the mayor's name was Hart. His son-in-law told me it was for the first time.

No wonder the mayor was so moved and said, you've got a point there. A heart needs to be changed. You see his own heart needed to be changed in order that he could help these youngsters and get their hearts changed.

So what I'm saying so far is this, that spending millions of pounds doing this and that and the other thing in order to try to combat crime and the moral collapse is all very well and good, but it doesn't even begin to get at the root of the trouble. It is the heart that needs to be changed and only the gospel can do that. Only Jesus, in other words, can do that under the power of the Holy Spirit.

So the answer lies right here in Romans chapter 1, 15 and 16. Paul said, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome. And he'd say that in Stockport today.

I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are in Rome or wherever also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. And the authorised version describes it accurately.

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Other verses say I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Did you know that about a hundred years ago somebody issued a genuine prophecy? He said the day is coming when the church and preachers are going to produce a Christianity without Jesus Christ.

It's happening my friend. I picked up a magazine the other day that had banner headlines across it. As in such, a magazine about whole Christian standards.

And I read through that magazine the name of Jesus Christ wasn't once mentioned, the name of God wasn't once mentioned, the Bible wasn't once mentioned. Christianity without Jesus Christ. So the authorised version says I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

For it, it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. So salvation is not in increasing the police force. Salvation is not in building more prisons.

Salvation is not in spending millions of taxpayers' money on projects and schemes to make our cities, our homes, our railways, our underground systems more safe. Because all these things leave people exactly as they were before. It's people that need to be changed.

Can you see that? Salvation is in this gospel and in no other direction whatsoever. And the sooner that is realised and the sooner the country and the government and the churches spend millions of pounds to ensure that this gospel is proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit to the 56 million inhabitants of these islands by means of television, radio and all other means of communication which are at the country's disposal, the sooner we shall begin to get somewhere. It will result in changed lives all over the place.

And changed lives all over the place could turn the tide. In our country, God would. Friends, thank you for so many nods of assent.

But listen, if this gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and it is, if this gospel is the salvation of Britain, or if it is to be the salvation of Britain, what really is this gospel? Well, the answer lies in the title of this morning's address, or sermon. This gospel is God's way of making people righteous. That's what it is.

Not man's way of putting things right, or of trying to put things right. It is not even man's way of getting people to be right. Such as by calling for a strong moral lead, for instance, or for calling for a return to Christian standards.

The only way the country can return to Christian standards, my dear friends, is to have more Christians. And that only comes about by the preaching of this gospel. So this gospel is God's way of putting people right.

You see, it begins with God. The gospel begins with God. It doesn't even begin with Jesus Christ.

It begins with God, God the Creator. It is something which God does to people. And the Bible says, the thing which God does shall be forever.

You see, you can only be good if you are made good, children. And only Jesus Christ can make you good, children. But praise God, Jesus Christ can do that.

He can make you good, whatever your name is. And he can make people good. And he does it by means of this gospel.

And he does it through the preaching of this gospel. That is the means that he employs. Are you listening? This is the means by which he does it.

That is why he said to his disciples in the first place, go into all the world and preach the gospel. That is why we find the Apostle Peter saying in the Acts of the Apostles, he commanded us to preach to the people. Acts 10 verse 42.

He didn't say, go into worship and then you will have renewal, which is what is happening in so many fellowships and churches these days. An hour and three quarters of so-called songs and the repeating of choruses ad infinitum with maybe a five or ten minute word packed on the end. No real preaching.

Preaching has been pushed almost right out, he says. They say, we don't want preaching anymore. The way to renewal, they say, is to bring worship right to the forefront.

So preaching is pushed right into the background, even if it's in the background now. My dear friends, this is sheer disobedience. It's sheer disobedience to the commandment of the Lord.

Do you hear me? Most churches, fellowship groups, shepherding churches, charismatic groups, all you have gone into renewal so-called, whatever that may mean. Are you listening? If this is going out on tape, he commanded us to preach to the people. And he didn't say sheer.

That's what they talk about these days. Sheer. It changed all the biblical phraseology, you see.

He didn't say sheer, he said preach. Furthermore, he commanded what to preach. That God is going to judge the world by Jesus Christ.

Therefore, they need to repent of their sins and believe this gospel. That is why we read in the epistle to the Corinthians, it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 1 Corinthians 1.21 Souls are saved by the preaching of the word of God, friends.

They are born again by the word of truth. That is why we read in the epistle to the Romans, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. It goes on to say, How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be saved? Romans 10.13-15 Furthermore, people once they are saved are built up, my dear friends, by the word of God.

The apostle Paul said on one occasion, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up. The word of God builds people up, friends. Not umpteen choruses that very often say nothing.

That was from Acts 20 verse 32. That is why the apostle said to Timothy also, Preach the word. It is preaching which needs to be right at the forefront.

And it's preaching that we find to be right at the forefront throughout all the pages of the New Testament. Not worship. Preaching.

And preaching needs to be brought back right to the very forefront today with 56 million people in this country going to hell. And I'll tell you this. It is preaching when under the unction and power of the Holy Spirit that results in real worship, my dear friends.

Not the other way round. Not the other way round. I was in a church in London not very long ago and they had this time of worship, so called, at the beginning of the Sabbath.

And it was dead and it was lifeless and they tried to work things out and it didn't happen and so forth. And they had a visiting preacher. Oh boy, he preached in the power of the Holy Spirit for at least an hour and then they had a hymn, my dear friends, the singing raised the roof.

Very nearly. What was preached that led into inspired and real worship. Why don't we get back to the biblical pattern of doing things God's way.

Of doing things. So what I have been saying all along this morning is that it is by the preaching of this gospel that men, women, boys and girls are changed at the centre and are going to be changed at the centre. Nothing else will do it.

So what is this gospel? Well, let me explain very briefly in the next few moments. To put it at its simplest, there are two sides to it. I'm simplifying.

The first side has to do with what most churchgoers know at least something about. Most evangelical churchgoers do. Anyway.

And that has to do with what Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary. We've been reminded of that at the Lord's table this morning. The Bible says Christ died for our sins in order to bring us to God.

To bring us to God while we are here on earth, that means in terms of bringing us into a right relationship with God. And then to bring us to God in heaven ultimately. The Bible says we are made near to God by the blood of Christ.

I didn't know when I prepared this address that that was what Derek was going to read from Ephesians this morning. We are brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ, which he shed on the cross of Calvary, Ephesians 2, 13. Because on the cross Jesus shed his blood so that by that blood he might wash all our sins away, children as well as adults.

Because it is our sins, you see, which cause us to be separated from God and to be far off from God. So the book of the Revelation, chapter 1, verse 5 says, unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Not as one of the modern mistranslations renders it, unto him that loved us and released us from our sins, washed us, my dear friend.

If the mattress dog is chained up and been running in one of the parks and become splattered with mud, I can release Jeff from his lead. He's still filthy because of the mud. Not released! Unto him that has loved us and washed us, washed us! You've got to wash Jeff if he's muddy.

Give him a good bath before ever he becomes clean. Unto him that has loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. And it is on the basis of what Jesus did for us on the cross of Calvary that God can

forgive us all our sins, my dear friend.

And on that basis alone the one John 1, verse 9 says, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And verse 7 of that same chapter says, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin. For you see, God is just in forgiving us all our sins because on the cross Jesus made himself responsible for our sins and paid the penalty of them.

So when Jesus cried out in triumph on the cross, Tetelestai! It is finished! What those words really mean in the Greek is, account paid in full. Alleluia. Do you know it is the equivalent of having an account book which says you are heavily in debt, stamped with a rubber stamp, fully paid.

Fully paid. Because somebody else has paid the debt for you. What has happened is that Jesus has blotted out your sins in his own blood so the page of your record can now be absolutely white and absolutely clean.

Paid clean by Jesus' blood. This is what Jesus was talking about in one of his resurrection appearances to his disciples in Luke 24, 46 and 47 when he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behove Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance on the one hand and remission of sins could be preached in his name among all nations. There you have it again you see, that repentance and remission of sins could be preached.

Preached, not mimed. Nothing about drama. Preached.

Repentance because we should repent of our sins first and then confess them to God and then remission of sins will be granted on the basis of what Jesus did when he suffered. To remit means to cancel out. Remission of sins is to have them cancelled out.

To have the debt cancelled out. Wiped out. Furthermore it means to cancel out all punishment that was due to them also because Jesus has been punished in our place and God never punishes twice.

So that deals with the debit side as it were, that first side. But this gospel has not only to do with the forgiveness of sins it has to do with far more than that for there is the second side to this gospel and that is the credit side. And this side of the gospel for some reason or another very rarely gets preached.

I don't know why. But it always used to be preached. May I explain it in this way.

Supposing you have an account book open. On this left hand page you have the debit side. The amount by which you were in debt.

But as I have been explaining God has cancelled out that debt. He has even cancelled out all punishment due to it. So that debit side is now clear.

But on the right hand page you have the credit side. And so having cancelled out that debt by Jesus' blood God now places on the credit side his own righteousness. He places on the credit side his own righteousness for all eternity friends.

So that you are now by God's righteousness eternally in credit and forever more. It is called in Romans chapter 5 verse 17 the gift of righteousness. It is a gift.

It is referred to in Romans chapter 3 verse 22 as the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God, not a righteousness of God, the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe. Alleluia. It is spoken of in Romans chapter 10 verse 3 as God's righteousness.

And in Romans chapter 9 verse 30 as the righteousness which is of faith. Jesus thy blood and righteousness my beauty are my glorious dress. With flaming worlds in these arrayed with joy shall I lift up my head.

All shall I stand in that great day of judgment for who ought that means anything to my charge shall learn. Fully absolved through these I am from sin and fear, from guilt and shame. When from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the skies even this shall then be all my plea.

Jesus has lived and died for me. And listen friends, when the righteousness of God has been placed to your eternal credit forevermore who can find fault with God's righteousness? Satan cannot. Your school chum cannot.

Your daddy and mummy cannot. Not even God can find fault with his own righteousness. My dear friends, this then is God's way of making people righteous.

Not just of forgiving them their sins. God's way of making people righteous. Do you know it was when Jonathan Edwards began to preach this second side of the gospel in the United States of America in the last century that revival broke out wherever he went? Did you know that? This gospel proved to be the power of God unto salvation then.

It turned the tide in America. That was the saving factor in America then. And it can be the saving factor in Britain today.

But listen again, that verse from Romans chapter 1 that I quoted at the beginning of this address does not stop there. It does not just say I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation. Children, are you listening? This message is for you.

This one is for all the grown-ups. It goes on to say it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. So it is to everyone that believes.

The righteousness of God is to everyone that believes. Salvation is to everyone that believes. That is what we find running throughout the whole of scripture.

Consider very quickly just these two verses for instance. I have already quoted some of them. 1 Corinthians 1 21 for instance, It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save.

Save who? Them that believe. Or them that make decisions for Christ. To save them that believe.

It is to them that believe who are saved you see. All that believed were together and had all things in common. It says in Acts 2 verse 44.

Again, the multitude of them that believe were of one heart and of one soul etc. Acts 4 verse 32. Or again, they of the circumcision which believe.

Acts 10 45. Or yet again, and by him that is Jesus, by Jesus all that believe. Are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Acts 13 39. Or even yet again in Acts 13 48. And as many as were ordained to eternal life believe.

Notice nowhere does it say all that made decisions for Christ. Nowhere. People who talk about making decisions for Christ have got far away from the teaching of the New Testament.

Salvation is to all them that believe. That's what God says in his word. And I believe God.

This is what you find running right through John's gospel. I'll put one or two examples. In chapter 1 verse 12 we read for instance.

As many as received him, Jesus, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. Even to them that believe. On his name.

1 John 3 14 and 15. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Even so must the son of man be lifted up.

That whosoever believeth in him. Should not perish. But have eternal life.

Whosoever believed again you see. Or in John 3 16 again. For God so loved the world.

That he gave his only begotten son. That whosoever believeth. Whosoever believeth.

Salvation is to whosoever believeth. That whosoever believeth in him. Should not perish.

But should have everlasting life. In fact did you know that at the end of John's gospel. The apostle John makes it plain.

That this is the very reason why he had written this gospel. For he said in John 20 verse 31. These things are written.

That you might believe. I repeat these things are written. That you might believe.

That Jesus is the Christ. The son of God. And that believing.

You might have life. Through his name. Then in his first epistle.

John says to those who are now Christians. Because they have believed. These things in my epistle.

Have I written unto you that believe. I have written them unto you that believe. On the name of the son of God.

That you might know. That you have. Eternal life.

The gospel of John is written. In order that you might believe. And so might have.

Eternal life. And the epistle is written. To those who have believed.

That they may know. That they have. Eternal life.

That's the glorious gospel of assurance of salvation. Friends that would take a whole sermon. So he refers to Christians.

As you that believe. Salvation is unquestionably. Therefore to everyone that believes.

I am not ashamed. Of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God.
Unto salvation. To everyone that believes. Fifty six million people.
In the British Isles. Are you listening? Friends this is the answer. Not increasing the police force.
Not building more prisons. Not making cities safe. It's people.
That need to be changed at the centre. And only God can do that. I guarantee therefore that if this gospel.
Were proclaimed. In the full power of the spirit. All over the British Isles.
By means of television. Radio. National newspapers.
Local newspapers. Magazines. Christian newspapers.
And by every means of communication. At our disposal. As well as from our pulpits.
It would prove to be such a power. Of God. Unto salvation.
That the tide would be turned. In our country. Almost overnight.
Because under it's power. So many lives would be. Changed at the centre.
That the effect on our country. And on our society. Would be.
Indescribable. It would be. Immeasurable.
God grant. That the way may be open to do this. While there is still time.
May we pray. Oh God our Father we thank you and praise you. That you have the answer.
And that this is the answer. And that there is no other answer. This that is called in the pages of your word.
The gospel of God. This is the answer. This is God's work.
Of making people righteous. And of making people righteous forever. As the last words.
Of our last hymn. Put it. Rest in his righteousness alone.
Hopeless. I'll stand. Before his throne.
Oh God we pray that the eyes. Of your people. In particular.
May be opened wide. So that they can see that this. And this only is the answer.
To our national situation. We pray. And may that answer be.
Put into practice. Applied. Increasingly.
All over the United Kingdom. In fact all over the world. Which is hastening fast towards the day of
judgment.
While there is still time we pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23996.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-gardner/moral-collapse/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net