

# Southern Salt Morning 1

by David Ravenhill

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*David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the cross in relation to God's original intent for humanity and the journey of spiritual maturity.*

**Duration:** 1:11:16

**Scripture:** 1 John 2:12

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "Spiritual Maturity", "The Cross"

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## Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the profound significance of the cross, arguing that many Christians misunderstand its purpose. He explains that Jesus died not only to forgive sins but to reclaim humanity for God, restoring the original intent of creation. Ravenhill outlines three stages of spiritual maturity--children, young men, and fathers--highlighting the importance of understanding our identity in Christ and living for His purposes. He challenges the audience to recognize that they are not their own but have been bought with a price, urging them to surrender their lives fully to God. The sermon concludes with a call to respond to God's call and purpose in their lives.

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## Transcript

And so if I fall asleep, have compassion on me, let me just sleep for a while, then I'll be refreshed and then come back now. Pray anyway that God will just grace me during this time. I want to share with you concerning the cross this morning.

If you have your Bibles, we're going to be looking at a number of scriptures. I am convinced that we know very, very little about why Jesus Christ died. In fact, I'm going to go as far as to say that one of the major flaws, I believe, in our presentation of the gospel lies in our misunderstanding of the cross.

And I want to bring a fresh understanding of the reason that Jesus Christ died. And I trust that you'll bear with me if you disagree, at least as we progress on. I will give you enough scriptures to change your mind, so don't start throwing anything at me until you've heard the end of the case, all right? And I want to begin in 1 John, the epistle of John, 1 John chapter 2, reading from verse 12.

And he says, I'm writing to you, little children, because your sins have forgiven you for his name's sake. I've written to you, fathers, because you know him that is from the beginning. I'm writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.

I've written to you, children, because you know the Father. I've written to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I've written to you, young men, because you're strong, the word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the evil one.

John is addressing here three spiritual levels, three levels of spiritual maturity. He's not writing to the Sunday school department. He's not writing to the youth.

He's not writing to the sort of the golden oldies here. He's addressing three levels of spiritual maturity. We begin the Christian life the way we begin the natural life.

We begin as children. How many here, you know, came out of the womb speaking fluent American, if there is such a thing, and, you know, fully grown, understanding everything that you needed to understand. No, we all began as children.

My father used to tell the story of the American tourist that jumped off a bus in England on these quaint little villages with its cobblestone streets and thatched-roofed houses, and here's this guy with all these camcorders and things dangling around his neck, and there's an old man there sitting on a park bench reading the newspaper, and he is interested in getting a little bit of a history about this particular village, and so he goes up to the man, and he says, Sir, could you tell me were there any famous people born in this village? The old man doesn't even look up. He said, No, sir, only babies. You see, we all begin as children, and so John says, I write to you children because your sins have forgiven you.

That's the wonderful beginning of the Christian life, to know that your sins are forgiven, to know that they're under the sea or in the sea of God's forgetfulness. If we confess our sin, the Bible says that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and a baby, you know, has no past. We talk about sleeping like a baby.

A baby doesn't toss and turn because of all the guilt of the previous week. A baby, you know, has no past, and thank God that it's possible for us to begin all over again. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creature.

All things have passed away, and all things have become new, and then John goes on, and he addresses the young man, and he says, I write unto you young men because, he says, you've overcome the evil one. He elaborates a little bit more in verse 14. He says, I write to you young men because you're strong.

The Word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the evil one. I think if I were to put that in a more logical order, I would say, I write unto you young men because the Word of God abides in you. Because the Word of God abides in you, you're strong.

Because you're strong, you can overcome the evil one. How many of you know it's not long before we realize, after we're saved, that we are now beginning to grow, and there is a spiritual battle going on. There is an adversary.

The Bible says your adversary, not the person on the left of you, the person on the right of you, your adversary, the devil, goes around seeking whom he may devour. And the only way we can overcome the adversary, the enemy, again, is to know the Word of God. We have to be strong.

And he's not talking here about physical strength, because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they're mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. And the only way we become strong is by having the Word of God abide in us. And so, again, we have another level of spiritual maturity.

If I were to take one word to describe each of these, I would use the word regeneration, writing to the children. I don't use the word salvation, although we use it that way. The word salvation is an all-inclusive term, meaning from the moment you get saved to the day that you stand before the Lord in your glorified body.

But the word regeneration, then for the young men, the word maturation. They've begun to grow, they've begun to develop, they've begun to sort of flex their spiritual muscle a little bit. And then he says, I write to you fathers.

And when he writes to the fathers, he says this about them, because you know him that he's from the beginning. And for a long time, I puzzled over the significance of that statement. It doesn't seem to really say very much.

You know, you've got an understanding of children, your sins have forgiven you, you know the father, it says. Then I write to you young men, again, the word of God abides in you, you're strong, you've overcome the evil one. And then you would have thought he'd have said something concerning fathers to have the, if you like, the epitome of spiritual maturity about them, that he'd have said something of major significance.

You know, you understand Daniel and Revelation, you exercise all nine gifts of the Spirit, you fasted, you know, at least three times on a 40-day fast, and you know, something that seems to have a little bit more oomph to it than just you know him that he's from the beginning. Because after all, what is the difference between knowing him that he's from the beginning, and when he writes to children, he says, you know the father. What's the difference between knowing the father and knowing him that he's from the beginning? There doesn't seem to be a great deal of difference.

Well, those of you who've got children, most of you don't yet. My wife and I have got three daughters. I'm an expert, I'm surrounded by women, so if you have any questions.

Our oldest girl is just on her way back to China in a couple of days. She's been there for about six years. And then we have a married daughter in Colorado Springs, and another daughter in Kansas City.

But when they were smaller, father existed for their sake. In fact, father still exists for their sake. It's daddy do this, and daddy do that, and you know the toys just get more and more expensive.

Instead of dolls now, dad I need a Honda, I'm off to college. And so really, I exist in a sense from their perspective. It's a very selfish perspective.

It's daddy, I need you for this, I need you for that. But when he writes to the fathers, he says, you know him that he's from the beginning. And the word that I would use here is the word consummation.

The bringing together, the tying together of everything. In other words, the big picture. A father sees the big picture.

He sees all the pieces in place. Children, they live for the present. They live for the moment.

They're selfish. They're caught up with their own needs. It's me and my, and daddy do this, and daddy do that.

But God wants to bring us into the place where we understand the big picture. And the key word here, obviously, is the word beginning. John, more than any other writer, talks about the beginning of things.

And his gospel in the was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. Writing this epistle, what was from the beginning, what we've seen and heard, and our hands have handled concerning the word of truth, that's what we declare unto you, he says. Revelation, he talks about the alpha, the omega, the beginning and the ending.

The one who is, the one who was, the one who is to come. And John uses this expression, the beginning, something like 30 times at least in his writings. Now, the beginning of things is important.

We will never understand the cross until we understand the beginning of things. You see, the cross is God's answer to man's problem, man's selfishness, man's rebellion, man's independence. The cross is the answer to that.

It's God's answer to sin, to, again, man's apostasy and rebellion against him. And so, we need to know what was in the mind of God from the beginning. That's so important.

If we are going to restore something, let's take an old car. Let's say that we discover a 19, what, 1925 Ford lying out in the woods here somewhere, and somebody's taken the wheels and they've taken the headlights and a few other parts are missing, but the body's reasonably intact and the engine's still in reasonably good shape, and we decide we're going to restore that car. Now, assuming that none of us were around in 1925, I wasn't, it may look like I was, but I was not around in 1925, we begin to restore that car.

Now, if we restore that car according to our present mentality, we are going to do a terrible job because we have got a 1998 perspective on what a car should look like. And so, for instance, we need to get some headlights for this car, and we go down to the local car parts place, and we come back with little square halogen headlights. After all, you know, square lights are the, you know, the latest fad, and so we get these square lights fitted to this car.

We then need some wheels for this car and some tires, and so we go down to Goodyear or Firestone just to give equal opportunity here, and, you know, we get some mag wheels, beautiful mag wheels, and great big fat so tires. And again, we get these wheels and tires fitted to this car, and then we get the engine totally stripped down, rebuilt, you know, give it about five or ten coats of lacquer, and here is this car now. It's all beautifully restored, at least in our mind it's restored, and we take it out down the street, you know, after hours and hours of restoration and thousands and thousands of dollars.

We're driving down the road, and here's an old man, and the old man stares at us, and, you know, eyes sort of popping out of his head, and we pull up, and I say to my friend, hey, stop, back up. This old guy's obviously been overcome with nostalgia, and so we slow down, we back up, and the old guy looks at it, and of course we're very proud of our achievement. We think we've done a tremendous job of restoring this car, and we say to the guy, well, what do you think of it? And he immediately says, well, what is it? And we're shattered.

I mean, you know, we're devastated. We've spent hundreds of hours now, thousands of dollars restoring this car, and the guy has the audacity to say to us, what is it? And we say, how old are you? He said, well, I'll be, you know, 102 next week. I say, well, you mean you don't recognize a 1925 Ford when you see it?

And he says, boys, you've got it all wrong.

The headlights should be about this big. They should be round, not little square ones. The tires on that thing should be about this wide.

You know, it should have wooden spoke wheels, not those mag wheels that you've got on it, and he begins to show us all the things that are wrong in that car. Now, you see, if we're going to restore that car properly, we need to know what it looked like originally. We need to contact the manufacturer of that car, in this case, the Ford Motor Company.

We need to get a manual. We need to get a photograph, and we need to begin to restore that car back to its original look, its original order. Now, we will never understand the cross until we understand the beginning of things.

The beginning of things is so important. In other words, what did God intend you and I to look like originally? What was God's plan for man originally? Because the cross answers that. The cross is to bring us back to that place.

So the beginning of things is absolutely essential. You recall that there was an occasion when Jesus was confronted by the scribes and the Pharisees concerning the issue of divorce, and the big debate in those days, and it's still raging, of course, is, you know, what school are you on? The liberal school or the very orthodox strict school? One school of thought was that you can divorce your wife for any reason whatsoever. She puts on a few pounds, she gets a few wrinkles, a few of her hair starts turning white, and trade her in and get two twenties for, you know, your 40-year-old wife.

I mean, that was one school. If she burns a toast for any reason whatsoever, any disfavor whatsoever. The other, of course, was under very strict circumstances.

And so they come to Jesus and say, listen, where do you stand in this debate? And what does Jesus do? He takes it out of the present setting, and he goes back to the beginning, and he says, in the beginning it was not so. You understand now the beginning of things is so important. Now, if you have your Bible, turn with me over into the book of Genesis.

Genesis chapter 2. And this is a man, as God originally created him, before man sinned, before man rebelled, before he lost his headlights and his wheels, so to speak. And it says in verse 15, and the Lord God took the man, and he placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it. Now, the three things that are mentioned there, first of all, the word submission, the word location, the word vocation.

Notice, the Lord God took the man. Man was under the lordship of God himself. He was under God's sovereignty.

And God was able to reach into the man that he created without any objection on man's part, without any resistance on man's part. We don't have Adam, in this case, digging in his heels and saying, God, I'm not going to go that way. God has got total and complete control over Adam.

And he takes him and he places him in the geographical place of his choosing. He never consults Adam. He doesn't say to Adam, Adam, where would you like to live? I mean, do you like a, you know, warm climate, moderate, all four seasons, you know, let's reason together.

No. God says, listen, this is where I want you, right here. And then in that place, God reveals why he's placed him there.

Adam, I place you there to do my will, to do my bidding. And so again, these three words, submission, man is totally submissive to God. He's in the location that God chose.

He's doing the vocation that God gave him. Now, I'm convinced that God is wanting to restore that to each and every life. In other words, that God is wanting to reach into your life and my life without any objection, without any resistance on your part or my part.

And God wants to take us and place us in the geographical place of his choosing. And in that place, he wants to reveal why he's placed us there. I place you there, David or Mary or Tom or Joe, whatever.

I place you there in order for you to do my bidding. This is my will for your life. That's what happened with man originally.

Now, of course, man didn't stay in that place. Man rebelled. Man basically did his own thing.

Isaiah 53 verse 6 summarizes man's condition where it says, all we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned each one to his own way. In other words, we say, God, I don't want to go your way.

I don't want to serve you. I don't want to be involved with you and your purposes. I want to do my own thing.

And he basically rebelled against God, chose to live his own life, a life of independence from God. And the essence really of sin is selfishness, living for yourself. That's why when Jesus challenged people to follow him, he does not list, you know, two or 300 sins that you've got to be prepared to give up.

He takes the axe and he lays it at the root. And he says, if any man come after me, he's got to die to self. He's got to die to self.

And then he's got to take up his cross and he's got to turn from his own way, turn back to me, and he's got to follow me. I'm going to lead. I'm going to direct.

I'm going to be in charge. And he is going to be subservient to me. I'm going to make the choices he's got to follow.

That's basically obviously the essence of discipleship. Now, let me give you some other scriptures before we move on concerning the beginning of things. First of all, in the book of Colossians, I want to make sure you've got this as a foundation.

Colossians 1 and verse 16. It says, for by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible, invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by him. Let's just pause there for a moment.

I trust you don't have a problem with that, that all things were created by God. I don't have any problem with the fact that the earth may be 10 billion years of age or 100 billion years of age or whatever. I believe God can create something with vintage.

How many of you believe that? I believe God can create something right now that is 100 million years of age, right? After all, he made, you know, wine at Cana of Galilee, created man with vintage, and so why can't he create the earth with vintage? So I don't have any problems with the fact that, you know, the earth may be a lot older than we think it is. But the Bible goes on to say, all things have not only been created by him, but all things have been created for him. And that's the clincher right there, that you and I were created specifically not only by God, but you and I were created for God.

When God created man, he had something in mind. He wasn't just creating something saying, boy, isn't that neat? You know, I've created a giraffe yesterday, and this is a sort of neat sort of a thing that I've created today, you know, and just sort of turned him loose and, you know, no, there's a purpose that you and I exist for, and that purpose is for God himself. We were created by him, we were created for him.

Revelation chapter 4 and verse 11 says, Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things. So again, God is attributed with being the creator of all things, and then it says, and because of thy will, they existed and were created. Or the King James says, and for thy pleasure, they were created.

So notice again, God created everything, but he created everything for himself. For his pleasure, for his will, they existed, and they were created. Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 10.

Now all these verses, again, just bringing out this one, this one thought. Somebody stole Hebrews from my Bible. All right, Hebrews 2, verse 10, For it was fitting for him, from whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory.

Notice that little phrase, it was fitting for him, speaking of Christ, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things. If we put it in the order of the other verses, through whom are all things, and for whom are all things. In other words, God created us, but he created us for himself.

Romans 11, verse 32, sorry, verse 36. It says, For from him, and through him, and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever.

Amen. Now, Paul is giving to the Romans here a very powerful verse. He says, from him are all things.

Everything that you see is ultimately from God. Through him are all things. In other words, in him we live, we move, and have our being.

Therefore, everything deserves to go back to him. It has its origin in God. And we have, of course, a terrible chapter division here.

One of my pet peeves is chapter divisions. You know that they were not inspired, and this one certainly wasn't. So let me read it the way Paul wrote it.

For from him, and through him, and to him are all things. To him be the glory. Therefore, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

In other words, because everything is from God, and everything is sustained by God, therefore everything belongs back to God. He says, therefore, I beseech you, brethren, give back to God that which is from him, that which is through him, and therefore that which deserves to go back to him. And Paul

understands, again, the mind of God concerning man as it relates to the beginning of things.

1 Corinthians chapter 6, oh, chapter 8, and verse 6. Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for him, one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through him. Notice those words, again, they're in a different order, but the word from, the word through, and the word for or to. Everything is from him.

We exist through him. Therefore, we exist for him. Now, this is going back now to the beginning.

This is getting into the mind of God prior to man's creation, if you like, and it's understanding God's mind. When I create man, I'm going to create man for myself. I'm going to create man for my pleasure.

I'm going to create man for my purposes. All these verses lay that down, again, as a very firm, solid foundation. All right, let's look at the cross then.

Why did Jesus Christ die? That may sound like a very basic question. Most of us, if you've been raised in church at all, you can shoot up your hand and say, well, I know obviously why Jesus Christ died. Jesus Christ died to take away my sin.

I've known that since I was two or three years of age. Well, that's only a partial truth, and it is that premise, if you like, that I want to adjust a little bit during the remainder of our time. Let me give you another illustration.

My daughters were always getting after me for using car illustrations, but I'll use another one. Let's suppose my wife and I have only been married for a year. We've actually just celebrated in August our 34th year of marriage.

But let's say we've been married for a year, and we started that year with a number of debts. We have now paid off those debts, and we have accumulated \$1,000. We're both working hard.

We've, you know, been very astute in the way in which we've used our money, and so we have now got a surplus. And I say to my wife, because during this year we have not had transport. We've relied upon local transport.

We've relied upon our friends to get us around. And I say to my wife, honey, we need to get our own transport. We've got a thousand dollars now.

Let's pray that God will give us a car for a thousand dollars. And so she says, okay darling, I'll pray, and you go out looking. And so I take the thousand dollars.

I go out. I scour all the various car yards. Eventually I find a car for a thousand dollars.

This car is 15 years old. It's obviously got high mileage on it, but the engine seems to be still in reasonably good condition. And I buy the car.

Now let's also say by way of illustration that my wife and I are known in the community where we've lived for the last year as Mr. and Mrs. Clean. Everything about us is immaculate. Our house is immaculate.

The windows are always clean. You walk into the garden, you know, there's not a weed anywhere. The lawns are beautifully manicured.

You step into the house and everything's in place. I mean, you know, everything is perfect. And so I drive home with this car.

And I drive as fast as I can, come swinging around the corner of the house, pull it in at the back of the house because I'm embarrassed because of this, the condition of this car. It does not reflect who I am or who my wife is. After all, we're known as Mr. and Mrs. Clean.

Here's this filthy old bum of a car. And so I drive it around the back of the car and I begin to wash that car. I spend hours washing that car.

I take some solvent and I remove all the tar and grease and everything else. I cut and I polish that car. I restore it to its former luster.

The paintwork now begins to shine. It looks like a brand new car. I blacken the wheels.

I do all the chrome in the car. This is the day when they use chrome. And I clean the inside of that car.

I take the seats out, shampoo all the carpets. I windex the thing. You know, I armor all the dash.

I mean, by the time I'm through, there is not a single trace of dirt anywhere in that car. I mean, you can inspect it. You can run your finger anywhere in that car.

It is absolutely spotless. I then walk into the house and I have in one hand a bag of absolutely filthy rags. I've got a bucket of absolutely filthy water.

I mean, it's almost like paste. It's so thick with dirt. I got the vacuum cleaner with all the stuff that I vacuumed out of the car.

And I proceed into the kitchen and I dump on the kitchen table this pile of dirt. All these filthy rags, the contents of the vacuum cleaner, this bucket of water. And here's this mound of filth.

And I call my wife from prayer and I said, darling, look what we got for a thousand dollars. What an incredible deal. I mean, all our hard work, all our effort over the last six months, look what we've got for it.

This is incredible, isn't it? Now, obviously, she's going to take my temperature and, you know, put me to bed or something and say, listen, you're sick, you know, in more ways than one. And what do you mean? You spend a thousand dollars for all this filth? Are you crazy or something? Now, obviously, I would never do that. You see, the reason that I spent the thousand dollars, the reason I spent my life savings, if you like, or gave my life for that car was not because I was interested in the dirt.

It was because I had need of the car. It's a big difference, isn't it? I'm not in the business of collecting dirt. In fact, my entire reputation is anti-dirt.

I'm known as Mr., we are known as Mr. and Mrs. Clean. Now, if you want, we could translate that to righteousness or holiness, and we could say, you know, that we are holy. Therefore, this car is going to be an expression of who I am.

It's going to be an extension of my nature, my character. Therefore, I have to bring it up to the standard that I represent. It has to be holy as I am holy.

It has to be as righteous as I am. But you see, what I am after, I'm after the car itself and not the dirt. The dirt, the washing of the car, in a sense, was a sort of a byproduct.

I take that with a grain of salt. I'll give you some verses. I mean, don't throw your rocks here.

You see, the real objective of the cost that I paid was not the sin. It was the car that I was after. Now, let's look at some scriptures.

Romans chapter 14. Now, all these verses deal with the reason that Jesus Christ died. Romans chapter 14 and verses 7 through 9. For not one of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself.

If we live, we live for the Lord. If we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

In other words, we belong to him. For to this end, or for this reason, verse 9, Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of the dead and the living. Now, why did Jesus Christ die? According to that verse, for this reason Jesus Christ died, to re-establish his lordship over our life.

Not just to be savior, that's wonderful, but he wanted to be Lord. He wanted to be master. He wanted to rule.

He wanted to reign over us. We sang, I think it was the very first song, something about re-establishing God's reign in our life. Over in the book of Titus, Titus chapter 2, verse 14, he gave himself for us, speaking again of the death of Christ, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed.

Let's just stop there for a moment. There are two sides to the cross. There is man's side and there is God's side.

Titus begins by dealing with man's side. It says that he gave himself for us. In other words, he gave himself as an offering for sin, that he might redeem us or cleanse us or free us from every lawless deed, every sin flag.

Thank God for that. Thou shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sin. So that is a legitimate reason that Jesus Christ came, to free us, redeem us from every lawless deed.

That is man's side. In other words, man does benefit. Man is washed, he's cleansed, he's forgiven, he's brought into the family of God, he has a new name, a new nature, a new family, a new destiny.

All of those things are true. But it doesn't stop there. It says, and, and this is God's side, and purify for himself a people zealous for good works or zealous for good deeds.

And notice, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds. That's God's side. You see, God's intention was that when his son died, not only were we forgiven and cleansed and so on, but God reclaimed that which he lost.

We are now his possession. We now belong to him, a people, not sin. It was a people that God was after.

And you are the people. I'm one of those people that Jesus Christ was after, that we might become now God's possession. What does it mean to be God's possession? It means that God owns us.

All of you have got possessions here. I could start on the front row here and go to my brother and say, listen, you know, give me that watch. He says, no, I bought it.

I paid for it. That, that's my watch. It's his possession.

And I could say to my sister here, can I have your Bible? No, that's my Bible. I paid for it. It was a gift.

It's her possession. We all have possessions. God is wanting to possess us.

He's wanting to have total and absolute control over our lives. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 15. I think this is the, possibly the best single verse in the Bible that describes why Jesus Christ died.

I spent about seven years right in the very early years of my ministry with Youthful Mission. Youthful Mission, when I first met Lauren Cunningham, had about 10 people in it. And they had one office and that was in the back seat of his car.

He had a few brochures in a suitcase. That was YWAM. Now they've got something like 15,000 workers around the world and bases all over.

But I have knocked on doors all across America from Nova Scotia to San Francisco, Chinatown, San Francisco, all the way down in the Caribbean, the various islands of the Caribbean, throughout the South Pacific, Fiji and Tonga, New Caledonia, New Zealand, those other places. And you know, invariably when you knock on somebody's door and introduce yourself and say, you know, we're here to share with you about Jesus Christ, you know, the door either closes or the statement is, who do you think we are, heathen or something? We believe in God. Now, believing in God obviously is not enough.

But here is a good verse. Let's give John 3.16 a little bit of a break for a while. Wonderful verse, but it's sort of been so, sort of misused in a sense.

Whoever believes, the word believe has been so watered down, everybody believes today. You know, according to the polls, what is it, 80% of Americans believe in God. Well, it doesn't tell us a thing really, does it? But here's a good verse if you want to substitute John 3.16. And it's verse 15.

It says, he died for all, the day who live should no longer live for themselves. And notice the reason that Jesus Christ died. He died for everybody.

It's John 3.16 already. The day who live, that's most of you, a few of you are just in the death throes right now. But the day who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf.

In other words, the cross is to radically change your whole perspective in life. So you are no longer motivated by selfishness and self-interest. So it's no longer your goals and your purposes, but it is now the purpose of God and the will of God.

There's been a radical change. You're no longer living for yourself. You are living totally and completely for him who died and rose again on your behalf.

Then over into Revelation. Revelation chapter 5. And verse 9. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb, each one of them having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song saying, worthy art

thou to take the book and to break its seals for thou was slain.

Now they are singing about the death of Christ. They're singing about the fact that he is worthy to take the book because you were the one that was slain. And then it says, for thou was slain and it's purchased for God with thy blood sin.

How many have got a translation that says that? Not one. That's amazing, isn't it? Let me read again. For thou was slain and it's purchased for God with thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and thou hast made them to be kings and priests.

You see, what was it that God was after? When his son died, he went to purchase something. And it was not that God was interested in sin. He was interested in people.

He was interested in you. He was interested in me. God does not have a sin collection.

You know, some people have stamp collection, coin collections, and so on. God doesn't have a sin collection. If he did, he'd have the world's best.

You know, he doesn't, you know, when it's sort of cold and miserable like it is right now outside, he doesn't sort of call in a few of his cherubim and, you know, seraphim and a few archangels and say, you know, it's been a while since I've showed you my sin collection. And, you know, in fact, have I ever showed you my sin collection? Very carefully, you know, he takes this big leather volume down, one of many out of his library and he opens it up very carefully and he says, you know, did I ever show you this one? You know, this is the world's rarest sin and I'm the only one that's got it. You know, it's trading right now on the market for, you know.

No, God is not interested in sin. The Bible says when he gets a hold of your sin, he removes it, what, as far as the east is from the west. So far as he removed our transgressions from us.

One of the minor prophets says he's taken our sins and he's buried it in the depths of the sea. It was Corrie Ten Boone that used to say, and he's put up a little sign, no fishing. Thank God for that.

But God is not interested in your sin. He hates sin. What is he interested? He's interested in redeeming you for himself.

Why? Because he created you for himself. And so here in Revelation we have an understanding of that. Thou was slain and it's purchased for God with your blood men.

That was the objective of the atonement. It was to redeem men and women back to God so that God would once again have men to use for his purposes. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 19.

And while you're turning to this, let me just give you a very brief word of testimony. I was born in a Christian home. My father died about four years ago at age 87.

He was 70 years in the ministry. And I grew up listening to my father, who had a very powerful ministry. And when he spoke about hell, I mean you needed an asbestos suit if you're on the first four or five rows.

And so I knew that there was a hell to shun. I knew that there was a very real place called hell and I was not wanting to go there. And yet I did not accept Christ until I was 18 years of age.

I knew I was a sinner. I knew that I was doomed to a Christless eternity. There's no question about that.

My father had made that very real. The Word of God had made it very real to me. And yet the issue for me was over this matter of lordship.

Who is going to be lord of my life? I had one ability in life. I had two brothers, an older one and a younger one. I was in the middle.

Both were brilliant. My younger brother became world famous. Unfortunately passed away about a year ago now, just suddenly.

But he was world famous in his particular field, worked at the Smithsonian Institute, was an expert in African art, traveled extensively around the world, setting up museum exhibits, trading with the Rockefellers and various other people. My older brother was equally as bright, gave himself to the ministry, but they were straight-A students. And I was one that struggled all the way through school.

My mother sat up with me night after night after night and we graduated together. It was wonderful. But I had one ability and that was in the field of graphics.

And I wanted to go into the field of fine art. It was something my brothers couldn't do. I mean, they could hardly draw water.

And I could, you know, I could do just about anything. And that was where I was going. I wanted to go into the field of advertising and art.

And it was my identity. It was something that I could do. I could do it well.

At least I thought I could. And it gave me a sense of value. My brothers were bright academically.

I was gifted in this area. And that's what I was pursuing. And from the age of about 13 to the age of 18, I battled with God over this issue.

I mean, it didn't matter what meeting I was in, whether there was a handful of people or hundreds of people, I would literally shake under conviction of sin. I could not even hold a hymn book. It would just shake like this.

Knowing that God was wanting to draw me to himself and yet refusing on the grounds that I did not want him ruling over my life. I wanted freedom. I wanted to know that I had peace with God.

I wanted to know that my sins were forgiven. I wanted to be cleansed. I wanted all of that.

But I did not want him taking away or interfering with what I wanted to do with my life. And that was the issue for four years or five years. I battled that.

Finally, at the age of 18, I surrendered my life to Christ. I remember coming forward in a meeting somewhat like this, about this size of congregation, kneeling at the front of that church. And my prayer was something basically like this, God, I don't only give you my sin, but I give you myself.

All that I am, all that I have, my future, everything belongs to you. From tonight on, I renounce all self-interest and I will live to your glory, whatever it is that you want me to do. And that was the essence of my prayer.

And at that time, God gave me this verse here in 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19 and 20. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.

Now notice what Jesus Christ bought with His blood. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price, not your sin.

It's you that He was after. You see, that's why I say the cleansing from sin in one sense, take it with a grain of salt, is sort of a byproduct. In other words, God had to put us through the car wash to cleanse us and bring us up to His standard, but it was the car that He was after.

It was you that He was after. You are not your own. You've been bought with a price.

The price again, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this verse became my life first. David, you're not your own.

You have no rights. You've been bought. The word bought there is literally the word that we would use to buy something.

There's a legal transaction that takes place whereby something becomes your property. I bought it, it is mine. God says, I bought you, you are mine.

You're no longer your own. When Paul wrote this, you could go down to any given marketplace in any major city, and you could buy yourself a slave. Along with the various other things that you picked up for the week, your groceries and so on.

If your slave happened to drop dead, then you replaced him or her, and you bid on that slave. And once that bidding reached a certain point, if you were the one that gave the highest bid, that man or that woman became yours. You could take that slave home, starve that slave to death, beat that slave to death, work that slave to death, love that slave to death, do whatever you wanted.

That slave had no rights. That slave, when he woke up in the morning, he was there for one reason and one reason only. His entire existence was to serve his master.

Whatever his master's will was. It may have been a cold day, and he felt like just snuggling down in his sleeping bag for an extra hour and saying, boy, you know, I just, I think I'll sleep in. He couldn't do that.

You see, he had no rights. He had to serve his master. And Paul understood this because Paul's favorite reference to himself, about himself, is Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ.

I am a slave, he says. I am a debtor. And you and I need to recognize we're not our own.

We're bought with a price. We have no rights whatsoever. We are here on this earth for one reason and one reason alone, as believers, no longer to live for ourselves, but for him who died and rose again on our behalf.

Let me close because I know it's getting, well, we're okay. Let's go to 2 Peter. We're getting near to the end.

2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 1. It says, false prophets arose among the people. Now, even my grammar was good enough to understand that that's past tense. False prophets arose.

Paul, Peter, rather, is saying we have had a problem with false prophets in the church, in the past. They've arisen. And then he says, just as there will be, talking about the future, false teachers among you.

We've had a problem in the past with false prophets, and he makes a prophetic statement. There is coming a day when false teaching will come into the church. Peter says it will come in secretly, and they will introduce destructive heresies or damnable doctrines, the King James says.

Now, when something is done in secret, we are unaware that it takes place. Isn't that right? It was done secretly. My wife and I were missionaries in New Guinea for several years, and I remember one morning waking up and walking from our bedroom down a short hallway, passageway, into our living room.

And as soon as I got into the living room, I noticed the front door was open. And in New Guinea, you lock everything that is lockable. We'd had a number of bad situations on the street where we live.

One lady had been raped, and there'd be another, a couple of houses had been broken into. And so, every single night, I would make sure everything was locked. Here, I walk into the room, the door is open, I'm convinced that I've locked it the night before.

But anyway, I close the door, I proceed into the kitchen, and the kitchen door is open. Then I know we've had problems. Somebody had cut through the mosquito netting, removed all the louvered windows, come into the house, and stolen a number of our things.

They'd actually gone down the hallway into our bedroom, unplugged the tape recorder from my wife's side of the bed, gone around to my side of the bed, and taken my wallet. And when we woke up, again, these things were missing. It was all done secretly.

I had no idea that it had taken place. Everything was done in secret. And Peter is saying that he's going to come into the church teaching.

And this teaching will come in secretly, we won't even be aware that it's taking place. And with it will come damnable doctrines or destructive heresies. You can put in brackets, I think, to the purpose of God.

And then notice what he says, even. This is how extreme this teaching will go. It says, even denying the who bought them.

Now hear it, and hear it well. We are living in the fulfillment of that prophetic statement that was given 2,000 years ago. We have now a brand of Christianity that accepts Christ as Savior, that embraces forgiveness and eternal life, but basically denies the master the right to our life.

Denying the master who what? Bought them. Not just sin. You.

Isn't it amazing that we now have a Christianity that is so watered down, the discipleship aspect has been taken out, the cost aspect has been taken out. It is now everything that Jesus Christ can do for you. Peace, joy, happiness, eternal life.

If you want that, come forward. There's no cost involved. There's no laying down your life.

There's no taking up your cross. And yet if you go back to the New Testament, this was the Christianity of the New Testament. There was a cost involved.

It cost you everything. You have to deny yourself. You have to crucify.

You've got to be crucified with Christ. You've got to die to self. You're under new management, new ownership.

You belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. He bought you. You are his possession according to Titus.

That we may become his own possession, zealous for good works. Why was Jesus Christ crucified from man's point of view? There is a parable that Jesus told about a certain owner that went away, went to get a kingdom, came back, and after he left, the owners of that place said, we will not have this man to what? Rule over us. Depending on the translation, we'll not have this man reign over us.

We'll not have this man rule over us. So let's plan on killing him. You see, from man's perspective, that's why Jesus Christ was crucified.

Not from gods, but from man's. We don't want this man to rule over us. Isn't it amazing now that we have a brand of Christianity that says that we will accept this man as our savior.

We will accept his forgiveness. We will accept his cleansing. We'll accept his pardon.

We'll accept his peace. We'll accept his happiness. We'll accept heaven, but we will not have him reign over us.

He will not reign over our time. He will not reign over our talents. He will not reign over our lives.

He will not interfere with our goals, and our plans, and our ambitions. I want to be born again, but I want to do my own thing. And so Peter says again, even denying the master who bought them.

Then over into the book of James. James chapter 4 and verse 13. It says, come now you who say today or tomorrow we shall go into such and such a city, spend a year there, engage in business, and make a profit.

Now the thing I like about the book of James is James doesn't need a great deal of interpretation. When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask the Lord why on earth he had Paul write the book of Romans instead of, you know, James. We'd have all been able to understand it a lot easily.

But anyway, James is saying here, there are some of you, he says, that are making plans. You're saying today or tomorrow we shall go into such and such a city. In other words, we'll leave where we are.

We'll go into such and such a city, engage in business, and make a profit. Now this basically summarizes most of our lives. Most of us between the age of, you know, hopefully 10 and 20, we make up our mind what we'll do with our life.

You know, dad, I'm going to go to the University of Louisiana, Alabama, wherever it may be. So on, I'm going to get a degree in business, or, you know, computers, or whatever it is. In other words, we've already made up our mind.

I'll be a school teacher, I'll be a doctor, I'll be a dentist, I'll be a lawyer. And our brother shared about that this morning, how he wanted to be a lawyer and got apprehended him. But we've got plans.

And we say, listen, I'm going to leave here, I'm going to go to that city, and ultimately I'm going to be involved in business and make a profit. And the reason we get our degrees, the reason we get our education, is so that we can make more of a profit than the person that doesn't go to college. I mean, that's basically the essence of it, isn't it? Because otherwise you'll end up at five dollars an hour flipping burgers and McDonald's the rest of your life, unless you've got some sort of degree.

And so the whole motivation in getting a degree is so that somehow you get a better job, so you can have a better house, and a better car, and better vacation package, better retirement, and so on. That's what it's all about. Now, there's nothing sinful about this decision that is being made.

In other words, James doesn't talk about the fact that they're going down to Columbia to join the cartel and really make some money. He's not talking about the fact that, you know, they're going to go to Chicago and join the mob and, you know, make money that way. He's not talking about going out to Vegas and opening up some sort of lewd place and making money that way.

I mean, this is a legitimate thing that all of us have done. We've made a decision what we'll do with our life. I'm going to leave where I am, I'm going to go to such and such a place, such and such a university, or such and such a city or country, engage in business and make a profit.

And James says this, verse 14, you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You're just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. In other words, James says, listen, let me, before you do anything else, let me put this in perspective.

Your life is a vapor that before you know it's going to be gone. We need to see the brevity of life. Your life, he says, is just a vapor that it just evaporates.

You're going to look back at the age of 50 or 60 or 70 and say, man, I can't believe. Seemed like just the other day I was sitting there in that salt conference, you know, listening to the Word of God. I can't believe 20 years have gone by or 30 years have gone by.

I can't believe I've got, you know, kids graduating from high school or getting married or whatever. And believe me, that is the way life is. Instead, he says, verse 15, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.

In other words, James says, listen, you guys have no right to make plans unless those plans are based on the will of God. After all, he's writing to believers. You don't have any right to say, I'm going to live here.

I'm going to live there. I'm going to go into this sort of business and make a profit. Your life is too short to mess with.

You better find out, is this God's will? Do you have a mandate from God? Do you have clear instruction from God that what you're doing is, in fact, the will and the purpose of God? As it is, he says, you boast in your arrogance and all that boasting is evil. In other words, they were bragging about what they were going to do. And James says, listen, can't you understand I'm looking right through all of this? You are arrogant.

You're making your own decisions independently of God. You've never considered the will and the purpose of God for your life. What sort of arrogance is that? To tell God that he has no right to interfere.

Therefore, to the one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it's sin. You see what sin is? Sin is basically living for yourself. Sin is, once again, living that independent lifestyle.

And the tragedy is that I would say that 80 percent, and I'm being conservative, but I would say at least 80 percent of the average church lives for itself. Is it any wonder then the world is in the condition it's in? Any wonder why we still have something like 1,200 people groups that don't have the gospel? Two thousand years after the Lord Jesus Christ died, something's wrong, isn't it? Something's wrong with the church. Something's wrong with our message, that we have no longer a passion to take Christ to the nations of the earth or to take him to our next door neighbor and so on.

Why? Because we're already preoccupied with ourselves. It's me and mine. When the apostle Paul was converted, the very first words out of his mouth were these words, Lord, what will you have me to do? Not, Savior, thank you for taking away my sin.

It feels wonderful. Now, obviously, that was part of the package. But Paul recognized there was something that happened to him that moment that he had that divine encounter with the living God.

And he kneels down there on that Damascus road, basically, and he says, Lord, what will you have me to do? The voice of God speaks to him. He says, get off your feet, Paul, go into such and such a city, and I will tell you why I've appeared unto you. I've appeared unto you for this reason, to anoint you and to appoint you again as an ambassador that you might proclaim the gospel.

You see, I'm convinced that every single person in this room, and I mean every single person in this room, has got a calling of God upon their life. The Bible says he has saved us and called us with a holy calling. And I can't tell you what that calling is.

I can tell you you're called. God has got a purpose for your life. We need to find out what is it, Lord.

And it begins by relinquishing my plans, my goals, my desires, kneeling at the foot of the cross and saying, God, I give you now the very thing that you've been after all of these years, not just my sin, I give you myself. God can't do anything with sin. All he can do with sin is bury it in the sea of his forgetfulness.

God can do something with your life. If he can get a hold of a vessel and fill that vessel with his glory, fill that vessel again with his spirit, and use that vessel, set that vessel on fire like John the Baptist, he was a bright and a shining light. Then God can accomplish his purpose.

And it only happens when we come and we present ourself before him and say, Lord, here I am. I give you my life, my future, my goals, my plans, all of those things. I lay them at your feet.

I'm not my own. I'm bought with a price. I want you to speak to me.

I want you to show me. I want you to begin to lay upon my heart your purpose. Maybe that God says, listen, I'm going to use you and what you're doing, but I want you to know now that instead of you being a doctor and earning, you know, a hundred thousand dollars a year and living in the suburbs and so on, I'm going to send you again.

I've given you a mind. I've given you an intellect. I put that burden on your heart to be a doctor.

You've looked at it selfishly, but I want to use you now. I'm going to take you to Africa. I'm going to take you to Indonesia, the Philippines, or some other place.

Some of you maybe want to be a school teacher and God says, listen, I've got plans. I'm going to use you in that capacity, but not where you think. I'm going to put you in the inner city there.

I'm going to make you a light or you've had dreams of this place and that place. See, I don't know what God's plan is. I simply know this.

You're not your own. You're bought with a price. And he's looking for those that will respond and say, Lord, here am I. Send me.

That's close. Let's just take a moment to allow God to speak to us as the worship team comes up. We've still got a couple of minutes.

I'm going to ask you to respond. And you're not responding to me. You're responding to the Lord.

And if you understand what God is after and if you're prepared to truly embrace again the message of the cross, I simply ask you to stand where you are. That doesn't mean that you understand again the future and everything that God's going to do with you. So like standing at the front when you get married and you say, I do for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer.

You don't know where you're going to be five years from now or 10 years from now, how many children you're going to have and what sort of an income and so on. All you know is that today I'm marrying this person. And I'm going to ask you to marry in that sense into the will and the purpose of God.

I say, Lord, I stand right now in total surrender to you. And I'm asking you, Lord, to take my life. Use me for your glory.

If God has spoken to you, if you're in that place where you're ready, I'm going to just stand right where you are. I'm not going to have you come forward because of time. Because you're not doing it for my sake.

You're not doing it for this conference sake. You're doing it because God has given you an understanding of what it really means to be born again of the Spirit of God. Father, I thank you right now for the dozens, if not hundreds, that have stood.

Father, we ask that, Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that, Lord, you would seal in a special way this moment. Lord, seal it in each and every heart. Seal it, Lord, for eternity.

That, Lord, on that great day when we stand before you, that, Lord, one of us will be able to say it was in that meeting that I came to that place of full and complete surrender. My life was changed. I took you as Lord and Master.

Lord, I've served you all of these years. Father, I ask, Lord, lead them in the joy and the thrill of serving you. Father, give them an excitement in the Spirit, Lord, of what it means to be a laborer together with you.

What it means, Lord, to be led by the Spirit of God. Lord, open up again a vast, Lord, arena to them. Father, take them and thrust them, Lord, even to the ends of the earth to nations, Lord, that right now are off limits in the natural, Lord.

Use them, Lord, to break down those barriers, to gain a foothold, Lord, to establish a testimony in the nations that right now are in bondage and darkness. Father, take some of them into the inner city. Take some of them into, Lord, the islands of the sea.

Father, use them, I pray, for your glory. Lord, let your anointing just rest upon them. Father, let it not be that which is done in the sense of, Lord, duty, but, Lord, true devotion.

Father, your Son said, I delight to do thy will, O Lord. And I pray, Lord, put a true delight within them, Lord, a delight to do the will and the purpose of God, a joy, Lord, in serving you of knowing that, Lord, this is the true destiny that you have for each and every person. Father, we release your anointing.

We release your blessing now, in Jesus' name. Amen. May the Lord bless you.

I know that our time is up. You know, if you need prayer or you just feel that you're in a place where you need, maybe, a little bit of counsel or something, I'm sure that there's going to be a while going through the line if you want to come. And we have various men and women here that are trained.

If you want to just stand here, we'll be glad to pray with you and counsel you. So, the Lord bless you as you go. Maybe just quietly make your way out and just, again, allow the God to be God as we just take this moment.

Amen. This is my desire to honor you. Lord, with all my heart, I worship you.

Lord, I give you my heart. I give you my soul. Every moment I'm awake, I give you my soul.

Every breath that I take, Lord, I give you my heart. I give you my soul. This is my desire to honor you.

Lord, with all my heart, I worship you. With all I have within me, I give you my soul. Is it in you? Lord, I give you my heart.

I give you my soul. Every moment I'm awake, I have your way in me. Lord, I give you my heart.

I give you my soul. I live for you alone. Every breath that I take, Lord, I give you my heart.

I give you my soul. There's nowhere else that I'd rather be than dancing with you as you sing over me. There's nothing else that I'd rather do, Lord, than worship you.

There's nowhere else that I'd rather be than dancing with you as you sing over me. There's nothing else that I'd rather do, Lord, than to worship you. Rejoice, be glad, your father and your friend is the Lord, your God, whose rule will never end.

Rejoice, my God reigns. Rejoice, be glad, rejoice, oh my God reigns. Worship without shame, my God reigns.

And I dance the dance of praise, my God reigns. So I will rejoice, my God reigns. There's nowhere else that I'd rather be than dancing with you as you sing over me.

There's nothing else that I'd rather do, Lord, than to worship you. So rejoice, be glad, your father and your friend is the Lord, whose rule will never end. Rejoice, my God reigns.

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