

The Foundation of the Cross

by David Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the true purpose of the cross and the foundation of our faith. It delves into the significance of surrendering our lives completely to God, not just seeking forgiveness for sins but also acknowledging Him as Lord and Master. The speaker highlights the need to shift from a self-centered approach to a God-centered one, focusing on glorifying God in all aspects of life.

Scripture: Romans 14:7, Titus 2:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Revelation 5:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Peter 2:1

Topics: "Purpose of the Cross", "Surrendering to God"

Description

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Transcript

Amen. You may be seated for the next three hours. You should be glad that Josh is leading the worship and not me.

I do not have a musical bone in my body. Somebody heard me singing many years ago and informed me at the end of my singing that I had a prison. I was a prison singer.

I made the mistake of asking what a prison singer was and they said somebody who's behind a few bars and missing the key. Any more prison singers here? We can make a trio. But I appreciate those that can lead us in worship.

What a great, wonderful time. I've traveled around the nation, around the world, and it's rare to really get into true worship. It really is where you feel like you just want to bask in the presence of God and sometimes you don't want it to end.

Well, I don't know what God is up to that he puts two British or three British speakers here. I trust you can understand my accent. My father used to say the redeeming thing about Americans is that while they don't speak English, at least they understand it.

Keep in mind that there will be a ministry time at the end and I don't want to gloss over in any way what has already been shared. I know many of you have come with needs and a burden and I believe God will meet you this weekend. I want to shift gears a little bit tonight and talk to you about a foundation.

How many of you have ever taken a picture of a foundation? You've been to New York City, the Empire State Building, or the Twin Towers. They're not there anymore, but the new Twin Towers. You know, everybody takes a picture of the building.

Nobody ever admires the foundation because the foundation is not seen and yet it is vital to the overall structure of that building. Jesus talked about the foundations obviously there at the end of Matthew chapter 7, where he talked about the two men. One built his house on the sand, the other built his house on the rock, and consequently it was the foundation that gave way and therefore no matter how great the house may have appeared to the neighbors and so on and so forth, it all came crashing down.

I want to speak about a foundation. I want to speak to you about the cross and the purpose of the cross. My wife and I will celebrate in August our 57th wedding anniversary.

We've been in ministry. We went straight from Bible school into full-time ministry, and I'm convinced over those last 57 years that one of the failures, one of the great failures of the church is that we have not presented the cross the way God intended the cross to be presented. I believe it's the major theme, obviously, of the Word of God.

It's the very core, the very foundation, the very crux, the very center of everything that we believe, again, is based on the cross. Paul says, I preach Christ and Him crucified as of first importance. Not second, third, fourth, that's a minor thing where the lady should wear hats and all this sort of stuff, but he said, I preach Christ as of first importance, and we need to understand the cross, and I feel we failed miserably when it comes to a true presentation of the cross.

The cross really is God's remedy for man's sickness. If I were to wake up in the morning with aches and pains, a runny nose and diarrhea and all the other things, and I go to the doctor and he prescribes medication, take this three times a day for the next 10 days and then check back in. At the end of that period, if those aches and pains and all of those things are still there, there is something wrong with the medication.

Isn't that right? It's either an import from China or something, or the doctor is not very good at his diagnosis. But if the medication takes effect and somebody says to you, David, how are you feeling? I say, you know, I feel back to my old self. My energy is back, my mind is clear, my nose is not running anymore, and so on and so forth.

And so the cross really is to bring us back to God's original purpose, God's original intention. You can't restore something until you know what it looked like originally. Imagine, I don't know how many car buffs there are here, but imagine you are in the process of restoring old cars and you stumble across, you're 20 years of age, and you stumble across a 1920 Ford in some farmer's backyard, and you decide that you're going to have your first restoration.

The body of that car is reasonably good, Nick. The engine is intact, but the headlights are missing, the wheels are missing, and a few other things. But over a period of many months, you get the engine running smoothly, you get all the rust taken out of that car, you give it 20 coats of hand-rubbed lacquer, the whole

thing, and so on.

But then you think, if I'm going to drive this thing down the road, I need wheels. And so you go down to Goodyear or some other tire place, and you get mag wheels and great big fat soles that go on the back wheels, and then narrow wheels on the front or tires on the front. If you're going to drive it at nighttime, you need headlights.

And so you go down to O'Reilly's and you pick up some nice square halogen headlights, get those mounted. If you're going to protect your investment, then you need a bumper. And so you go down to the wreckers yard and you get an old 57 Cadillac bumper, and you get that thing fitted on.

It looks a little awkward and so on. But now your car is intact, and you take it out on its maiden voyage. Here you are, 20 years of age, very proud of your achievement, and you're driving down Main Street.

Here's an old codger on the corner, and he looks at you coming down, and his eyes are bugging out a little bit. And so you slow down. You obviously think he's being overcome with nostalgia.

And so you stop, and you say, hey, what do you look? What do you think? And he says, what is it? And immediately you're deflated somewhat. And you said, well, how old are you? He says, well, I'll be 100 next week. Well, don't you recognize this is a 1920 Ford? He says, hey, sonny, that's not a 1920 Ford.

And he begins to point out all the things that are wrong with that car. He said that the tires should be about this wide, and instead of mag wheels, they should be wooden wheels. The headlights should be great big round headlights.

The chrome strip should be just a little piece of narrow chrome at the front, not that monstrosity that you've got on there, and so on. He begins to point out. I rather think if the apostle Paul met an average Christian today, he'd say, what are you? You know, there is something wrong.

A real Christian should be, and he would rattle off all the things, the hallmarks, if you like. You see, somehow we've tried to restore the car or our spiritual lives, but not according to God's manual. And so we need to go back, and we need to understand again what it is.

I'm going to cut this message short a little bit so that I will save you a little bit of time, but let me take you to Genesis chapter 2. Obviously, if I use the analogy of the car, if I'm going to restore that car, I need to contact the maker of that car, in this case, the Ford Motor Company. I need to ask them if they could send me some of those specifications of a 1920 Ford, and then I need to painstakingly look at those specifications and restore that car according to the book, if you like, the owner's manual. This is our owner's manual, and there's been a lot of rust, if you like.

We can call it sin that has come in, but we need to go back to the original, if you like, the first car to roll off God's assembly line, if I can use that analogy. So let's go back to the book of beginnings, Genesis. Now, this is before there was any sin, before the enemy came in and deceived man that he should do his own thing and so on and so forth.

This is man in his pristine condition. This is God's original intention. I'm a firm believer in the beginning of things.

One of the old way of teaching was to look at the law of first mention. When something is mentioned for the very first time, it gives you a precedent as to how that is mentioned throughout the Word of God. I don't want to step on anybody's toes.

That's not my intention tonight, but you recall that when the Pharisees, who were always trying to trip Jesus up with something, asked Him about the matter of divorce, and they said, well, what do you say about divorce, basically? And they said, you know, Moses said, of course, Moses was the ultimate authority to the Pharisee. Moses said that we can divorce our wives. So what say you? Thinking, boy, we've got Him this time.

And Jesus said, well, He said that because you were unable to say, I'm sorry, honey. I'm translating, because of the hardness of your heart. But He said in the beginning, it was not so.

The beginning gives us God's original intention, and we need to go and understand the beginning of things. We will never understand the cross until we understand the beginning of things. So here we are in Genesis chapter 2, verse 15, and the Lord, God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it.

Let me break that down into three words here. The word submission, the word location, the word vocation. First of all, the Lord God, not just simply God, but God as Lord, as Master, as Creator, the Lord God took the man.

It doesn't say that man objected. It doesn't say that man resisted. Man was totally subservient, totally compliant.

He was submitted to God as Lord, as Master. And so God had authority over his life to take him and place him in a location. In this case, it was the Garden of Eden.

God says, this is where I want you. If you are here, you're in my will. He doesn't give man a personality test.

He doesn't say, listen, you know, if you got a green farm, I've just completed this incredible garden. And, you know, you can, it's a horticultural delight and so on. If you're a little more artistic, you know, I've got this villa down on the beach and incredible sunsets.

I'll give you some oil paints. You know, he doesn't give man a personality test. He says, this is where I want you.

This is my location for you. And then in that location, he reveals his vocation. I want you to do something for me.

I want you to cultivate and keep the garden. Now, I'm convinced if we understand the cross, that God wants to have access to your life as Lord. In other words, where you are totally subservient to his will and his purpose, so that he can take you and place you wherever that location may be, Africa, India, China, wherever, even Indiana.

And then in that place reveal why he's placed you there. You're here to serve my purpose. This is what I want you to do.

So that, again, was the beginning of things before the enemy came in and messed everything up and so on. We're going to look at a number of scriptures now. And I want you to get into the mind of God as it pertains to the beginning of things.

In other words, what was God's original intention? What was God's original purpose? Colossians chapter one, we'll be jumping around. If you want to just listen, that's fine. But Colossians chapter one, verse 16, for by him all things were created, both in the heavens on earth, visible, invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things are being created by him.

Let me pause there for a moment. Most of us, I hope, don't have a problem with the fact that God is the creator. We did not emerge as some sort of slime ball millions and billions of years ago and so on and so forth.

God created us. And we all readily accept that. But notice what Paul goes on to say, all things were created by him and for him.

Again, we're getting into the mind of God from the beginning. You were created specifically for God's purpose. That's why you were created.

You were created not only by him, we can readily accept that, you were created for him. Revelation chapter four, verse 11, worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things. Once again, a declaration that God is the creator.

And because of thy will, they existed and were created. The King James says, and for your pleasure they were created. So in other words, there is a destiny for your life.

You were created for God's will. You were created for God's pleasure. You were created for God's purpose.

Again, we're getting into the mind of God as it pertains to the beginning of things. Then back into Hebrews chapter two and verse 10, for it was fitting for him, speaking of Christ, for whom are all things and through whom are all things. Let me put that in the order of the other verses, for it was fitting for him through whom are all things.

In other words, he created all things and then for whom are all things. So not only were we created by God, we were created for God. Romans chapter 11.

How many of you know Romans 12 and verse 1? I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice. How many of you know the verse before that? This is one of the worst chapter divisions in the Bible, I might add. Romans 11 verse 36, for from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever. Amen. And because there was an amen there, whoever was divvying up the Bible into chapters at that stage decided to take a coffee break, come back and start another chapter.

These were not chapter divisions when Paul wrote them. They were letters and it was a continuation. There were obviously certain breaks there, but this is not one of them.

Paul again is laying a foundation. Everything comes from God. He is the source of everything.

Everything is not only from him, it is through him. In him we live, we move, we have our very being. He holds all things together by the word of his power.

So it is from him, through him, and then ultimately to him. He's not only the originator of all things, but he is the consummator of all things. Therefore, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God to give back to God that which is from him, that which is through him, that which belongs to him as your reasonable offering of worship.

In other words, he's laying a foundation. If we get to this, this is the greatest revelation I believe that Paul ever received, is this particular thing. Everything comes from God.

Everything is sustained by God. Everything finds its culmination in God. He mentions again over in Corinthians.

I'm going to get me the extra, 1 Corinthians 8. He puts it slightly different, and there's another Scripture as well, but let's look at this one. Yet for us, verse 6, there is 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.

He changes around a little bit, but notice it is from him, it is through him, and it is for him. I believe this revelation influenced everything that Paul did. Does it come from God? Is it sustained by God? Does it find its climax in God? In fact, you can analyze any modern teaching through this prism, if you like.

Is it from God? Is it through God? Is it to God? You take the prosperity message that has taken over in America. Is it from God? Riches and honor come from thee. He's blessed us with every spiritual blessing, all the promises of yea and amen.

Is it from God? Is it through God? Yes. Is it to God? No. It terminates in man.

Isn't that right? Unless you have the last part of that triangle, there is something wrong. My father used to tell the story of the man that was a multimillionaire, and he had a testimony of when he was a young boy during the Depression years. He had saved up, I think it was like two dollars, which today would be worth a couple of hundred dollars, I guess, and he went to church.

There happened to be a missionary there talking about all the needs on the mission field, little children with extended stomachs and so on, and began taking an offering. The little boy felt, boy, I've got all this money, and here is this need, and so he came under conviction. He took 25 cents, put in the offering.

Problem is, the missionary didn't stop. Kept on with his stories and so on, little boy, you know, fidgeting around, not wanting to part with his money, but finally took another 25 cents, put it in the offering. I'll cut a long story short.

He finally gave every penny that he had, and he said, I want you to know, as a little boy, seven or eight years of age, I gave everything I had to God, and today I am worth millions and millions. Of course, the place erupted. People started clapping and whistling and hollering and so on.

There was a little old lady on the front row. She wasn't quite as impressed or taken by everybody else, and in a whisper that everybody could hear, she said, I dare you to do it again. From him, through him, to him are all things.

Okay, we've tried for a brief period there to get into the mind of God as it pertains to the beginning of things. Why did God create man? Obviously, then the enemy came in, the fly in the ointment, if you like. In this case, the serpent in the garden deceived man into believing that he would be better off doing his own thing, making up his own plans, and sin came into the world, and the problem is that sin, the essence of sin, is selfishness.

The reason we do all the things we do is self-gratification. The reason we steal, because I can get something cheap. The reason I do this, it's all about self, isn't it? From the moment you and I are born, self occupies the throne of our life.

Even a little baby that comes out of the womb, within a matter of hours, that hard drive begins to program. It comes out. Let's say it's a home birth.

Let's say grandma and grandpa have flown in, and maybe there's some other siblings. Mother goes into labor. They hear a scream, and they realize the baby's born.

Daddy comes running out. It's a boy or a girl, whatever. Everybody's rejoicing, and as soon as that baby's cleaned up, everybody wants a piece of the baby.

Let me hold him. Oh, isn't he cute? And that little hard drive begins to register. You know, it's all about me.

Everybody wants a piece of me. Everybody thinks I'm pretty. Everybody thinks I'm handsome.

Everybody, you know, and so on and so forth. After a while, the baby gets handled around and falls, gets tired. Mother wraps that little one up, puts it down in the back room, turns off the light.

An hour goes by, two if you're lucky, and that baby wakes up, thinks, how did I get back in the womb? It's all black, and here was my fan club. Lets out a bellow. Rings the bell.

Mother comes running in. The light goes on. The glider rocker starts.

The musical boxes all begin. Everybody rushes in again. Oh, isn't he cute? A little hard drive.

It's now the middle of the night, two o'clock in the morning. Baby's not wet. Baby's not hungry.

It's just missing all the attention, but by now it's learned something. All I've got to do is ring the bell. Mother comes running in.

Train up a mother in the way she should go, and when she's old, she'll not depart from it. And that baby learns, and we've all done it. We learn to get our own way.

We learn to blame our siblings. We learn to get the biggest piece of cake. It wasn't me, Mom.

It was, you know. The problem with all that is that when we hear about the cross, what's in it for me? And that becomes the major message of the cross. Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away my sin.

Really? Yes or no? That's a very selfish way of looking at it. We need to understand that there was a far greater reason than that. Let me use an illustration, then I will back it up with Scripture.

This is purely an illustration, but let's assume my wife and I have only been married a year, and let's assume that when we got married, we had numerous debts, and so we've made an agreement, packed

together, that we will not splurge. We will not go out and eat. We will not buy any fancy items.

We will live a pretty spartan life, if you like, until all of our debts are paid off. The end of the first year, we have managed to pay off all of our debts. We've both worked hard.

I've had some second jobs or whatever, and we go out to celebrate. Not only have we paid off all of our debts, but we have now one thousand dollars in debt, I mean, sorry, in the bank, and we are celebrating at McDonald's to keep our lifestyle the way it has been. And I say to my wife as we're chatting, isn't it wonderful that we don't have that weight, that burden anymore? Thank God, but we've got a thousand dollars in the bank.

But you know, darling, one of the things that I miss is having our own car. Wouldn't it be great, you know, we wouldn't have to rely on the Joneses to pick us up and take us to church and so on and so forth. Wouldn't it be great to have our own car? We could, you know, do so much.

And she looks at me, she said, darling, you promised me we would not go back into debt. I said, but we've got a thousand dollars in the bank. She smiles.

She said, are you crazy? You think you can buy a car for a thousand dollars? I said, well, it won't be a new one. But I said, I think we could. She said, really? I said, yeah.

She said, okay, as long as we don't go into debt, you can spend everything we have. I said, okay, this is my department, you pray, and I'll go looking for a car. Now, let's also assume by way of illustration that in the year that we've been married, we've established in the community where we live a reputation.

The reputation is we are nicknamed or called Mr. and Mrs. Clean, because our house is absolutely immaculate. We may not have fancy furniture and so on, but the moment you step inside, it's immaculate. I keep the outside, the lawns are beautifully manicured and so on.

And so this reputation goes around the neighborhood. You know, there's the clean people, Mr. and Mrs. Clean. I'm now out looking around all the car yards, and after a long morning or afternoon, I stumbled across a car.

It's 25 years of age. The engine seems to be running pretty good. The body's in pretty good nick.

It's filthy, but I can get it for less than \$1,000. I buy the car. I have \$5 over, put a gallon of gas in it, prophetic, or pathetic, I guess, and I drive it home.

Now, the problem is as soon as I drive that car home, my reputation is at stake. This car is filthy. And so I take it around the back of the apartment there or the house, and I spend the next three or four hours cleaning that car.

I mean, I take a huge five-gallon pail of water. I wash that car two or three times. I get some solvents to remove all the grease and grime.

I cut and polish that car. I blacken the wheels. I take all the upholstery out of that car.

I steam clean, again, the carpets and do the upholstery, windex the windows, armor all the dash. I clean out the trunk of that car, vacuum it out, steam clean the engine. By the time I get through, there is not a trace of dirt anywhere on that car.

And then I take all the cleaning material, all the filthy rags and everything else. I go into the kitchen. I pile it all on the kitchen table.

I mean, there's rags, there's sponges, there's all sorts of things that I've used to clean that car. I shred the contents of the vacuum cleaner, and I shake out all the dust. Here is a humongous pile of filthy rags and dust and dirt and so on.

A bucket of absolutely filthy, greasy, brown water. And then I call my wife. I said, darling, come here quick, quick, quick.

She emerges from prayer. She said, darling, I've been praying for you. You know, what? And she comes out.

I said, look what we got for a thousand bucks. I mean, darling, I bet you never dreamed I would be this successful. I mean, there's got to be two or three feet of dirt here, darling.

Look, I mean, this is amazing. And she looks at me, and she said, I thought you went to buy a car. Why did Jesus Christ die, and what did he get out of it? You see, God is not interested in your sin.

It has no value to him whatsoever. In fact, the Bible says he's of pure eyes and to even look at it. My Bible tells me when God gets a hold of your sin, he buries it in the depths of the sea.

It was Corrie ten Boone that says, and he puts up a little sign, no fishing here. Your sin can't testify. Your sin has absolutely no value to God.

God does not have a sin collection in heaven. He doesn't gather around every once in a while with his cherubim and seraphim and bring one of these big letter volumes down out of his vast library and said, you know, this is my sin collection here. I'm very proud of it.

See this one here? Only two of these in the whole world. I've got both of them. This one here, this is the rarest sin.

It's only one of a kind committed back in the 15th century by an old man up in the mountains of Tibet. And this one here just got it the other night on eBay. God does not collect sin.

He's not interested in your sin. He's not interested in my sin. What he wants back is what he created.

Now let's look at some scriptures then. Let's go to Romans chapter 14. We're going to look at these verses that all deal with the atonement of the cross.

Romans chapter 14, verse 7, not one of us lives for himself. 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. For to this end, notice this now, for to this end, Christ died and lived again for this reason, that he might be your Savior.

No, that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. He died to re-establish lordship. Yes, he's our Savior, but he is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's look at another one, Titus chapter 2. For those not familiar with Titus, he's the next-door neighbor to Timothy. Titus 2, verse 14, he gave himself for us, speaking again of Christ and the cross, that he might

redeem us from every lawless deed. Let me pause there.

This is the side of the cross that we are familiar with. Let's look at the cross here for a moment. There's man's side of the cross, and there's God's side of the cross.

God's side of the cross we don't hear too much about, because it doesn't really appeal to my selfishness. This is the side of the cross I'm interested in. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us or free us or cleanse us from every lawless deed.

The Bible describes sin as a transgression of the law. On this side of the cross, I meet Jesus Christ. On this side of the cross, I'm transferred from the kingdom of darkness in the kingdom of God's dear Son.

God becomes my Father. I'm born again. I have peace with God.

I have the peace of God and so on. We're familiar with this side of the cross. I come as a sinner.

But notice what it says here in Titus. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works. You see what the blood cleanses on this side of the cross, the blood claims on this side of the cross.

You can't have it any other way. What the blood cleanses, the blood claims. It says that he was on the cross to get the car, not the dirt, that he might redeem for himself a people, back to God's original intention, God's original purpose.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 15. Again, all of these verses pertaining to why Christ died. Verse 15, he died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves.

Prior to the cross, Isaiah says, all we like sheep, all of us. I like sheep. We've gone astray.

We talked about sheep. I happen to have lived in New Zealand for 15 years, and we have the Welsh beaten down there, because we have 4 million people and 75 million sheep. But all we like sheep have gone astray.

We've turned and we've done our own thing. That's who we were, every single one of us. Why did Jesus Christ die? To change that.

He died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him. In other words, the cross is to redirect your life radically, totally, completely, so we're no longer motivated by selfishness. We're motivated by one thing.

Am I pleasing to the Lord? Is what I'm doing pleasing to God? Paul says, I have as my ambition, whether at home or abroad, to be pleasing to the Lord. Too many people are basking in the fact that God loves them. But the book of Malachi begins, I love you, and a few verses later it says, but I'm not pleased with you.

It's a totally different kettle of fish. We bask, oh yeah, God loves me. It doesn't matter what I do.

Sleep with my boyfriend, girlfriend, you know. Am I pleasing to him? This is my beloved Son in whom I want, well pleased. I do only do, again, the things that please the Father.

And so the cross, again, is to radically change our life. Revelation 5 and verse 9. If I haven't convinced you so far, this one will, I hope. Revelation chapter 5, we have the Lamb standing as if slain, and then all of heaven erupts with a new song saying, in verse 9, worthy art thou to take the book and to break its seals, for thou was slain, speaking of the cross, and its purchase, now notice, for God, with thy blood, men.

Not sin. That's a byproduct. You see, God is Mr. Clean.

His reputation is at stake. If you're messing around with sin, there goes his reputation. And so he cleanses you.

But ultimately, Jesus Christ came for God's sake. The cross is for God's sake more than your sake. Father, I will go, and I will find a way of bringing back all those prodigals that were deceived into believing that in the far country they'd be happy.

And I'll lay down my life, Father, and I'll bring them back. I'll buy, I'll purchase, I'll redeem them with my own blood so that you can have back what you originally intended. Let me read it again.

For thou was slain, and its purchase for God, with thy blood, men, for every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and thou hast made them to be a kingdom of priests. 1 Corinthians chapter 6. While you're turning to this, let me give you a brief testimony. I am one of three Ravenhill children.

I'm the middle one, an older brother, a younger brother, and both my brothers were brilliant. My older brother was always the top of his class. My younger brother was always the top of his class, and I was the foundation.

God placed me in the Ravenhill family to bring about humility. I brought home F's on my report card on a regular basis. I thought it meant fantastic, but I hated school.

We moved around a lot from England to Ireland to America, and the only thing I was good at was art, and I had one passion in life, to go into the field of graphics. I could draw. I could paint.

My brothers couldn't do any of those things. My younger brother became one of the curators at the Smithsonian Institute, traveled with National Geographic, wrote books for Oxford Press, and so on. Died a number of years ago now.

My older brother's been a missionary in Argentina most of his life, a married life, but I was the one that struggled all the way through school. One thing I was deadly afraid of was that God would ask me to give up my Isaac, and my Isaac was my art. It was the only thing that gave me any sense of value, the only thing where I could have at least some sort of comparison to my two brothers.

Around the age of 13, 14, I may have accepted Christ as a child. I don't remember, and I'm not diminishing the fact that you can know God as a child, but I have a very poor memory of my early years for whatever reason, but when I became of age, so to speak, I knew that God was after me. We moved to America when I was about 15, lived at a Bible school in Minneapolis, and we were constantly in meetings.

It didn't matter who the teacher was or preacher. When the closing hymn was given, I would literally shake under conviction of sin, knowing God was trying to draw me to himself and yet refusing to go forward. Was I a sinner? Yes.

I was a good sinner. You know, I'm the old school, we were talking about it at lunchtime, never had a drink in my life, apart from tea and coffee type thing, never been to a dance in my life, never smoked a cigarette in my life, never slept with anybody outside of marriage. I've applied for Guinness Book of Records, but no.

But I was a sinner. I knew I was a sinner. My father dangled me over hell more than once.

I knew. I knew there was a hell. We don't preach much about hell anymore.

We've sort of eradicated that, haven't we? But I knew what it was, and yet I refused to go forward because I was not willing to give up one area of my life. Finally, at the age of 18, I came to the altar, something like this. I knelt down before anybody came to pray for me.

My prayer was something like this, Lord, you know I'm a sinner. I rattled off whatever sins I could think of. But I said, Lord, I'm not here to give you my sin.

I'm here to give you my life. I'm convinced that in most evangelical, Pentecostal, charismatic, whatever churches, 90 percent of the people have given God their sin, and possibly less than 10 percent have given God their life. God is not interested in your sin.

It's you that He wants. I went home the next morning. I think it was at least within a couple of days.

I picked up my Bible, began reading. This has become my life verse now, 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19 and 20. Do you not know that your body is a 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. Notice what He died for, your body, you, the car, not your sin. You are the object of His suffering.

You were bought with a price. You have to bear with me. I sinned last night and ate something with malt in it, and I have a small funny allergy with malt, and it takes away my voice a little bit.

So, if it happens, just bear with me. But you'll notice again the emphasis here is your body. That's what God is interested in.

He wants that body to become His habitation, His dwelling place where He has total and complete control over your life, not simply as your Savior, but as your Lord and Master. Let me ask you a question. Why did they put Jesus Christ on the cross? We know from God's point of view that God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son, but why did man put Jesus Christ on the cross? Jesus tells us why.

He said there was a certain king referring to himself that went to establish a kingdom, and after setting that thing up, he departed for a while, and the inhabitants got together, and they said, what? We will not have this man rule over us. We will not have him rule over us. We won't have him telling us what to do.

In fact, they tried to get Pilate to change the lettering over the cross. He says he is the king, and Pilate says, what I've written, I've written. He is the king.

Isn't it interesting? Here I am a sinner. I come to the realization that only the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse me, and I cry out. I say, God, I want you to save me.

I want you to forgive me. I want you to, you know, break off the yoke of bondage and everything else, the drugs, the swearing, or all the other things. Wash me.

Cleanse me. Come into my life, but let's get one thing straight, Lord. I will not have you rule over me.

We don't say it in so many words. We just very conveniently lift, leave that side of the cross out of the equation, because all I'm interested in is getting to heaven when I die. That's my goal.

Make sure that I get through the pearly gates, and it's one of the greatest tragedies in Christianity that we have robbed God of that side of the cross. Turn with me, if you will, to 2 Peter. We'll draw this to a close here in a moment.

2 Peter chapter 2, verse 1. False prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. Peter here is saying we've had a problem in the past. This is past tense with false prophets, but then he makes a prophetic statement.

There is going to come into the church false teaching, speaking about the future, and he said these false teachers will come in secretly. In other words, they will be hard to detect. They will be that gradual frog, you know, the heat being turned up incrementally, and they will introduce destructive heresies, damnable doctrines, the King James says.

Then notice, even denying the master who bought them, even denying the master, not the Savior who saved them, the master who wants to own them. This false teaching will come in, and it will come in so gradually, but the end result will be no to the lordship of God. Sound familiar? Every televangelist, every world-class evangelist, so to speak, have denied the master who bought them.

They presented very much a man-centered gospel, and they've robbed God of the very joy that was to be set before Him. There isn't a mother here that would go through childbirth again if all you got at the end of it was the placenta. You would not go through all the suffering and all the pain and agony of childbirth if there wasn't a baby at the end of it, and yet we've put Jesus Christ through the most agonizing death imaginable, and all He gets is a pile of dirt.

Isaiah 53 says, He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Is He satisfied with what He's got from your life? Does He have the car, or does He have the dirt? You see, I think a lot of our problems result from a faulty foundation. We're trying to play a game, but not according to God's rules.

We're making it up as we go along, and it's only when we truly surrender, I mean absolute surrender, where we say, God, I'll do anything You want me to do. I'll go anywhere You want me to go. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee, that then we begin to understand what it means to really know God.

When our problems then don't become that big, I think many times we're suffering because there's a faulty foundation. We've got to come back to this understanding. Again, my time is gone, but tonight may be the night where you say, listen, I've never consciously given God my life.

Oh, I've sung some of the songs and so on, but I can't look back to a time when I gave God my life. If you're married here, you know there was a time when you were united with your spouse, and we should be able to look back. I can look back to a time and a place and know it was on that particular day when I gave my life to Christ.

Yes, He took my sin. Yes, He's my Savior, but He's also my Lord and my Master. The very first thing out of the Apostle Paul's mouth was not Savior feels so good to be free from the law, feels so good to be washed and clean.

Very first thing out of his mouth, Lord, what will you have me to do? He recognized that Jesus Christ is Lord, and the moment he recognizes God as his Lord, he says, listen, you're the boss. Tell me what to do, and if you've never got to that place, your Christian life will never, ever, ever make sense. Because if you seek to save your life, you're going to lose it, and it's only when you let it go that you'll really find it.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cITqIG1zw64.mp4>

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