

# The Key to Understanding Righteousness

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson emphasizes that true righteousness comes through faith in Christ, not through human effort or legalism.*

**Duration:** 55:59

**Scripture:** Psalm 40:7-8, Psalm 136:26, Isaiah 42:6, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:38-39, Philippians 3:2, Hebrews 12:6

**Topics:** "Righteousness By Faith", "Gods Loving Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker warns the audience to 'beware of dogs' based on Philippians 3:2. He emphasizes that when Christians sin, they will be chastened by God, but it will be a rod of love. The speaker reassures the audience that God will never cast them away, no matter what they have done, as long as they trust Him and return to His love. He highlights the incredible covenant that Jesus made on behalf of believers, fulfilling the law and offering a better promise for their lifetime.

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## Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WORLDCHALLENGE PO BOX 260 LINDALE, TEXAS 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted, and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. My message this morning, beware of dogs. Beware of dogs.

Will you go with me to Philippians, please? Third chapter, Philippians. Start with verse two. Doesn't take me long to get into the message here.

First three words. Repeat them with me, please. Beware of dogs.

All right. That's enough. I'll read the rest.

Beware of evil workers. Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

We have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee, concerning

zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

For what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but done, that I may win Christ, be found in him not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by him, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death. Heavenly Father, teach us this morning your ways.

Teach us what it means to have righteousness of God by faith and not by works of man's flesh. Lord, we pray for the opening of our eyes and our understanding. Spirit of the Lord, I yield my body, mind, soul, and spirit to you.

Control me, possess me, that the truth of the Lord may flow freely. I honor you, Lord, in giving this word because you have blessed me with it. And I pray, Lord, that you do a special work of changing us to the power of the gospel.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Now, Paul stands before the whole body of Christ and he cries out, Beware of dogs.

Now, we know Paul's a kind, tender teacher, church. There's not a vicious bone in this man's body. And he's not given to senseless name-calling.

But when it comes to defending the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ, he spared no words, he had no qualms about rebuking anyone who twisted the gospel. No one in Paul's presence could pervert the gospel without his rising up and rebuking it. He withstood Peter to his face and Barnabas and certain Jews that came from Jerusalem down to Antioch because he said they dissembled.

He said they were out of order. And according to Paul, they were separating themselves from Christian Gentiles, refusing to eat to them. And when Paul saw that, now Peter, when the Jews from Jerusalem were not there, he was eating and worshiping with the Gentile Christians.

But when the Jews came down, who still considered Gentiles dogs, who still wouldn't eat or worship with him, Paul spoke bluntly because Peter went off and dissembled with them, and the Jews ate separately in the same room but separate tables. And Paul said bluntly, You are not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. You're going back to justification by works, is what he's saying.

You have moved away from justification by faith. You are frustrating the grace of God. And he says, Gentlemen, you're in error.

Now, Paul loved Peter. He loved Barnabas. He respected his Jewish brethren that had come from Jerusalem.

But he says there's one issue that the church cannot compromise on. He said there is one truth that we cannot give up on, and he said, I stake my life on it, and we dare not give in on this one issue. And that issue is that the gospel is simply this, that the unrighteous are justified before God by faith alone in the victory of the cross of Jesus.

They are not justified. They are not accepted by God through any human effort, through the works of the flesh of the law. And Paul said, I'm set for the defense of the gospel.

And it was in this context of his determination to defend this truth with such passion, because he said this is the heart of the gospel. This is the very heart of it. You give up on this point, you have no gospel left.

And he says it was in defense of the gospel that he said, I will fight any deviation from the heart of this gospel. I will stand up against anyone trying to lure my believers, those who I've taught I will not allow you to come here in my territory and lure these new converts into some fleshly effort to save oneself by your own abilities, by going back to the law, doing this and not doing that. He said, you're not going to bring that gospel here.

I love you, but I tell you, you cannot bring that gospel in here to Antioch. Paul added, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. Now, concision was a contemptuous Hebrew word that stood for mutilator or cutter.

He said, you're mutilators. You're trying to mutilate the flesh. You're trying to beat it down with all your rules and regulations.

You're trying to beat down the lust. You're trying to beat down by your works and your human effort and your striving, your sweating. You're trying to mutilate your flesh.

You're trying to come to God after you've cleansed your own flesh. He said, you're trying to work out your own salvation through your own ability, through your own laws, your rules and regulations. And then he says, the gospel then is a gospel of debt and not of grace.

You could come to the Heavenly Father then and say, why do I need Christ? Why would I need grace? I have justified myself. And then he said, it's not by grace. And then Paul the Apostle said, the problem with this idea of working out your own salvation, beating down your flesh, mutilating yourself, trying, trying, trying to be holy, the problem with that, when you do achieve a certain amount of victory, it's going to turn you into a proud boaster.

And he said, it is by faith that no man may boast in his presence. By grace alone, lest any man boast. This is the problem with Christians today who say, if I just try a little harder, if I can just dig down deep into my innermost and find some kind of inner strength that I've not yet found, if I can just go down deep inside my guts and pull some kind of strength out of my own being, I can lick this thing.

And the problem is, even if you conquered every lust in your flesh, if, ushers, will you deal with the gentleman? That's fine. This must really be the word for this morning. Only in New York City.

Even if you could conquer every lust of your flesh, so that you could stand before a mirror and say, I have no lust, I have no temptation that I have not been able to conquer, my thoughts are clean, and you could stand honestly and say, I'm clean. God would not accept it. And you would be boasting, and you become very proud and judgmental.

That's what always happens when man wins it in his own power, or thinks he's won it, and sin is still lying at the door. You can be sure you're going to fall again anyhow. Because suddenly, being on that merry-go-round, sin confess, sin confess, and that little short victory you got by your own willpower made you feel great and made you judge everybody around you.

Why don't you have the power I have? Paul despised the hypocrisy of this perverted gospel. The Jews from Judea went everywhere teaching, except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you can't be saved. Now, they are believers.

They believe in Jesus Christ, but they're saying, you have to add the law, you have to add circumcision or you can't be saved. It's Jesus plus circumcision. They were mostly converted Pharisees, the Bible said, which believed, and they taught it was necessary to circumcise and to command them to keep the law.

And you know what the law, he's not talking just about the moral law, he's talking about the ceremonial law of Moses. The washing of hands, you dare not eat. I'll tell you, you'll grieve God if you didn't wash your hands before you ate.

You wash every pot, you wash every pan. Over 400 rules and regulations, and they're saying, yes, you're saved by faith, but then after you're saved by faith, you have to work this out. You come back under the law, and all these do's, all these don'ts, that you may please God.

And Paul preached that all believers are purified one way only, and that is by faith, that through grace, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, but not by the works of the flesh. And Paul says, you're preaching another gospel. That is not the gospel of Christ.

He said, I marveled that you're so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to this other gospel. Then he added these words, you have perverted the gospel of Christ, Galatians 1.7. Believe me, folks, any gospel that promotes confidence in the flesh is another gospel. It's not the gospel of Jesus Christ whatsoever.

Any gospel that yokes you to a burden of striving to please God is not the gospel. It's another gospel. It's a perversion of the gospel of grace.

Now, Paul looked these Judaizers in the eye, and in essence, this is what he's saying. He said, you claim to be born again by the Spirit of God. You call him Lord, you testify that you're clean in Christ, and still you call the Gentiles dogs.

He said, your legalism has robbed you of all love for hurting people. And folks, that's the problem with legalism. It is so judgmental.

There's no love to it. There's no love whatsoever. And this is the problem with these people, these Judaizers who are coming from Jerusalem, trying to conform, trying to glory in the flesh of these people.

And Paul said, you call my Gentile friends dogs. You won't eat with them. You won't even worship with them.

And yet you're trying to come down here and conform them to your perverted gospel. He said, you're like hound dogs, is what he's saying, because the word in Hebrew is hound. He said, you hear of a new convert, and you take off after him, and you hound him.

You're trying to bring him under subjection to all your rules and regulations, say, yes, you're safe. And I'll tell you what, if you sat and listened to these Pharisees, most of them were converted Pharisees, and if you listened to them teach, you would have heard a gospel of Jesus. You would have heard about Christ died on the cross.

They would tell you about His resurrection. They would tell you about how they walk with Him, about intimacy. They would tell you all of these things.

They could tell you all about Christ. But then came the mixture. Then suddenly came the perversion.

Yes, you're saved by faith, but once you're saved by faith, then God expects you to come in now, and you have got to get victory over your flesh. This is an incredible thing. Paul was a loving man.

He's a forgiving man. In fact, he wrote to the Galatians, Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore this man in the spirit of meekness. Now, this is a loving man.

He said, I can put up with any man's fault. I can put up with any man who has failed me, or even the body. I can forgive a man who has repented of adultery, fornication.

He said, I'll restore that man in meekness. He said, that's what we're called. That's the gospel.

But he said, on this issue, no. On this issue of holding fast to justification by faith alone, and not by human works and human ability. I will withstand you.

I don't care if your name is Peter. I don't care if it's Barnabas. I don't know who it is.

I love you, but your gospel is wrong. He said, I'll not bend. I'm not going to show mercy on this one issue, this gospel of grace.

He said, beware of these hounds. Beware if anybody comes to you trying to put a burden on you, that you have to do something to get saved, other than believing on Jesus Christ. They'll come to you and say, well, you can't be saved if you, if you are not going to cut your hair a certain way, and if you're going to wear those things under your ears, and if you're going to have some paint on your face, and if you're going to wear, you're a woman and you're wearing trousers, they're going to come in.

Now, I don't, I don't like to see women all looking like street people. And I believe that when you have the Holy Ghost and you really trust Jesus, you get into the word and the Holy Ghost begins to teach you. These things begin to drop off.

But you see, that has nothing to do with your salvation. Paul preached, we who worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, we have no confidence in the flesh. No confidence in the flesh.

And Paul goes on and says, no man tried in the flesh to please God more than I did. Nobody. He said, there's not a man alive today in my generation that hasn't put forth more effort in my flesh to try to get to God than I have.

This man of God could look in the eye of every circumcised Jew, every converted Hebrew, every believing Pharisee, every Jewish convert who's struggling and striving to please God by the deeds of the law, and he could say, I've been there, I've done that. He could say, go ahead and tell me about your burning desire to please God. Tell me about all the promises you made to God that you wouldn't do that evil thing again and you failed and went back and did it.

Tell me about your zeal to please God with your long hours of study, your forced discipline, your repetitious prayers. Tell me about the hypocrisy of looking wholly on the outside but knowing personally inside that there's wickedness. Tell me about all your hopeless efforts, how you sweat, trying to be

righteous and good on your own power and strength.

Tell me about all the fears, the failures, the struggles, the useless efforts. Tell me all about it, Paul says, and I'll tell you that I've tried harder than you did. I've been through the circumcision route, he says.

I tried to no avail to cut off my lust, all the evil thoughts. I've been down the Benjamin Hebrew pride road. He said, I'm a Benjamite from the root of Israel.

He said, I'm the real proud thing, I'm the Benjamite. I've been down that proud route that I can do it in my own strength. He said, I'm that proud Hebrew.

I know what independence is and self-pride. I know what it is to boast, I can do it, I can put my mind to it, I'll change my ways. He said, I've been down the Pharisee path, that strict discipline, studying the Scripture to try to cleanse yourself without trusting in Jesus.

He said, all these things I have done, I was totally blameless concerning the law and keeping all the do's and don'ts, but I missed Christ. In spite of my efforts, I missed Him. And no wonder Paul now tells us that I've determined to know nothing among you but to save Jesus, Christ did Him crucify.

He said, I've tried it all. There's nothing as pathetic as the flesh trying to be holy. The devil's behind it.

And he's back there cheering, he's saying, try harder. And when you fail, he said, you know your problem? You didn't try hard enough. Now get back in there, grit your teeth, go at it again.

And he's back there laughing at your foolishness. Pathetic. The devil knows that walking in the Spirit is walking in total dependence on the Lord, trusting the Spirit of God to produce the righteousness of Christ in us.

So he tries to go about and abort this process. And he's going to try to get you to fight your own temptations in the power of your flesh, independent of the work of the Holy Spirit. And he's going to try to tell you that walking in the Spirit is simply doing your best not to sin.

And that's not walking in the Spirit. Paul said, as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh.

You know what Paul's saying? He said, these people who come around and tell you that you can kill and mortify your own flesh if you just try hard enough. He said, they've tried and tried, and what they're trying to tell you to do, they haven't done. He said, they don't have victory in their life.

They still have these lusts and sins in their life. They've not mortified the flesh. They've been circumcised in their flesh, but their hearts have not been circumcised.

He said, they're preaching something they don't practice. They want you to think they are holy, but they're fighting a battle you know nothing about. Paul gives us his secret to knowing and winning Christ.

Look at chapter 3 again, Philippians, verse 7 and 8. But what things were gained to me, those I counted lost for Christ. Yet doubtless I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things and do count them but done that I may win Christ. He's not talking about boats and ships and food and houses and lands.

He's not talking about that loss. No, no, no, no, no. He said, all these things that are done, all these things that I have given up is the striving of the flesh.

I'm giving up my Benjamin Pride. I'm giving up my Hebrew efforts. I'm giving up all of these things that I've outlined that I did in my flesh.

I have given up on the flesh. I have once and for all for my lifetime given up any hope of pleasing God in my flesh. I've suffered the loss of that.

I've given up on it. And folks, that's the beginning. You cannot know Christ in fullness and intimacy until you once and for all give up this concept that you can dig in and try harder and get the victory of your sin.

You can't do it. It's not in you. God will not accept your flesh even if you can accomplish it.

He won't accept it because he said the flesh cannot please God. It's enmity toward God. Oh, praise God.

Paul knew that he'd never know Christ until he got rid of this hindrance. And that hindrance that had to go, he said, all this flesh stuff is going. I can never know Christ intimately until I repudiate my human gifts, all my human abilities, all my self-righteousness, my strivings to please God.

I can't. All these fleshly things is dung. They're garbage.

Where are you on this matter? If you suffered the loss of all your confidence in your flesh, if you come to this place like Paul came to where you say, I repudiate, I will no longer try to work my fingers to the bone to try to get God's favor. I'm fighting lust in my own strength. I'm fighting sin in my own strength.

I'm fighting a battle in my home and my marriage in my own strength and it's not working. Until you've come, you have to give up the hope of ever improving your flesh. It's impossible to improve your flesh.

It has to be crucified with Christ. I tell you again, your flesh cannot be improved. Flesh will always be flesh.

That's why I've told you once, I'm never surprised by my flesh. An evil thought comes, that's my flesh. You've been that way ever since I came into accountability.

You'll be that way until I die. I'll be 99 years old and you'll still be talking like that. You're flesh.

Are you surprised by your flesh? You shouldn't be. Oh, I know that it embarrasses you and I know it condemns you, but it's still flesh. Paul says this hindrance has to go.

I give up trying to improve my flesh for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, they're going about to establish their own righteousness, having not submitted to the righteousness of God. And the first step to submitting to the righteousness of God by faith is to quit trying to produce your own. I can't produce my own righteousness.

And that's where you begin. You submit then to the righteousness of God by faith. Hallelujah.

Now the apostle can say, now that I've repudiated my flesh, I have no confidence in my flesh to please God. Now I want to be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is God by faith. Now, folks, I want to talk to you about this righteousness of God, which is by faith.

Are you tired of sinning, confessing, sinning, confessing, sinning, confessing, the merry-go-round? Are you tired of it? Well, we've got a few honest people here. If you're tired of temporary deliverance, the despair of always giving in to a besetting sin, tired of living with fear and guilt and condemnation, I've got good news for you. Before I go into that, let me tell you about some of the battles that people fight.

Just a couple of letters from the many thousands that were received. Dear Pastor Dave, I was once so in love with Jesus about three and a half years ago. God was working in me so wonderfully.

I lived in sweet communion for about a year. I got so popular in our church for being close to God. They even asked me to preach.

Time after time, I preached, and I preached the love of God, but my sermons went unheeded. Nobody was listening, so I stopped preaching. And something happened to me.

I lost communion. I want to seek God so bad now, and I'm going crazy. About two years ago, the presence of God diminished in me.

Ten thousand times, I've asked myself why, and I don't know. I got tempted by a sex sin, and I gave in. I hate it so much, but when I'm alone, it's like I kind of love it.

Yet often, I do hate it. I've bawled like a baby when I'm doing it, asking God to help me not to do it anymore. I trust in God to deliver me, just like Paul says in Romans 7, and I love God with all my heart.

Yet I feel like somehow I'm doing everything all wrong. Maybe I'm not trying hard enough or something. I've contemplated suicide, but I know that won't end my torment.

All the while, everybody at the church has no idea what grace and mercy is about. They condemn the one who's having a problem, and they look favorably on people with willpower. He said, I can't escape the fact that I--the Holy Ghost.

I hate it that the Holy Ghost doesn't come to me anymore, and I don't like what's happening to me. He said, I'm in desperate straits. Here's a letter from a married woman.

She said, Pastor Weeks, I fell in love with a man that's been a friend for years. We used to go to church together, with him and his wife and children. And he backslid when his wife went wild and abandoned him and his children.

I've always been there for him and helped him and prayed for him. And his marriage ended in divorce. We were shocked and couldn't believe it.

But then it went from shock to an involvement. We got involved. He told me that he loves me very much and he's never seen me do anything wrong and always seen me do right.

And he knows he's going to hell, but he doesn't want me to go to hell, because he knows I'm a Christian. And he knows it bothers me going to church and then trying to do right, trying so hard to please God. I pray for deliverance now.

I've repented over and to go over. I've asked God for strength and I've made vows to God to be strong. But then when I see him, I fall right back down to this thing.

She said, I read your newsletters on sex, sins, and pornography. It scares me terribly. And I repent again and again.

I keep rededicating my life to God. I even prayed, cast out demons that might be in me because of this sexual thing. I feel so doomed.

All the scriptures I've heard race through my head. You're a reprobate. People can pray and then there's no hope.

Once God's Spirit leaves you, you backslide and then you can't get back. Willful sin cuts you off. Because Saul lost God's Spirit, didn't he? Didn't it say that the sword never left David's house because of the wages of sin and spiritual death? Oh, Brother Dave, I brought this on myself.

I'm so full of guilt and fear and panic and disgust. I'm so doomed, so alone. I'm so detached from life.

What you fear does come upon you, doesn't it? How people knew God one time, but they wouldn't retain it. The Bible says, so God turned over a reprobate mind. Maybe that's my problem.

I read my Bible and I ask God to help me. And I go to a prayer line to be prayed for. I desire so much to get to God.

I feel so lost. I'm so alone. I'm cut off.

For the past two months, it's like a bad dream. My head's in turmoil. It's in a fog.

People notice I can't even function at home or with my children. I'm irritable and scared. There's nothing left for me.

Brother Dave, please, please help. I'm desperate. Oh, the struggles we hear from people all over the United States and around the world, feeling that because sin has entered their life, even though they've loved the Lord, even though they're Christians, I can't get victory and I'm so doomed.

And then they'll go to church and they'll hear these messages just come thundering down about sin and they come under a blanket of guilt and fear and condemnation. Folks, I want to take you on a trip that should absolutely once and for all erase from your mind any idea that when, as a Christian, you fail God, that he's going to give up on you. I want to show you something from the Scripture today that is really my answer to these and others who write to us because they'll be getting this in the newsletter.

I hear people say, Pastor Dave, yes, you say it's by faith. I am made righteousness by faith in the finished work of Jesus. But I have gone that route.

I believe the Lord the best I know how. I've trusted him. I honestly love him.

I pray, I seek the Lord at the best of my ability. I'm walking by faith, but I'm still failing. And I feel so doomed because if faith is the only way, and I've tried faith and it didn't work, then what hope is there? I'm near giving up because I've tried the faith route.

Otherwise, faith is so complicated I don't understand it. Folks, I've been that route. There are times in my past life, especially when I was a younger man, I tried to pump up faith to please God because it says it's by faith, so I kept pumping it and pumping it until my pumping of faith became a more work of the flesh

than if I'd tried to do it on my own.

Pumping faith became a work of the flesh. Do you understand that? You can try so hard to produce a faith that you think will be pleasing to God that you've settled back into the law and back into works, and then your effort to pump up faith becomes a sweating, striving thing. I want to give you the key to understanding righteousness by faith.

I'm going to try to do this the next 15, 20 minutes. Fasten your seatbelts. Oh, hallelujah.

Thank God for the new covenant. The old covenant says, if you do what is right, shall you not be accepted? If you do what is right, will God not accept you? That's the old covenant. The new covenant is not that new covenant.

God comes to you in your troubles and trials and sin and says, I will, I will, I will do it. And I'm going to show that to you now. Let me try to explain the new covenant to you, because you and I are under a new covenant, a new agreement.

I don't know when this happened. It could have happened from the foundation of earth. It could have happened just prior to Christ agreeing to become mediator and come in the flesh.

But God and his own son, Jesus, made an agreement. They made a covenant. And the covenant was made.

In fact, the scripture makes it clear that Christ was given as our covenant. Jesus made an agreement with the father. In fact, the father presented this to his son.

He said, if you will go and you become a mediator, you come in the flesh and take on human flesh. God says, I make an agreement with you. I covenant with you that I will hold you by the hand and I will carry you through.

I'll never allow Satan to touch you. I will deliver you and I will hold you by the hand and I will keep you. Jesus, on the other hand, said, I will go, father.

And this was his side of the agreement or the covenant. I will go, heavenly father. And I will not do anything except what I see and hear from you.

I will not do anything in my own human flesh. I will obey you exclusively. I will put my life, I will come, I'll take on human nature, but then I'm going to give that human nature back to you.

And I'm going to put every confidence. I won't do anything. I'll go anywhere, including the cross.

If you lead me, I will not do anything except what I see and hear you do. But Jesus said, is it part of this agreement? I'm going to obey you fully. I'm going to fulfill the law, every command of the law.

I'm going to obey you perfectly. And I can only do that if you are holding my hand. And if you have, I have in me this promise from you, heavenly father.

This covenant agreement that you will be with me and you will hold my hand. He said, the only condition, and this is the condition by which Christ accepted this, that not only do you hold my hand, not only do you carry me through all the powers of hell and darkness, but my seed goes with me. All my children get the

same privilege.

My obedience is going to be their obedience, not their own. My obedience will be offered to you for my whole seed. You understand why Jesus said to his disciples, I can do nothing on my own.

He's under covenant. Folks, when you begin to see what the cross is about, when you understand this new covenant, you can never again be afraid of the devil. You can never again be afraid of sin.

This covenant, I hear many Bible teachers say that started the cross. No, no, no, it started in the manger. Because it had to do with his obedience.

This had to do with his whole life. It was in the very manger itself when he came, born in human flesh. Now you say, I find that hard to believe.

All right, let's go to it. Here's the exact wording of God's agreement with his son. Go to Isaiah 42.

I want you, we're going to go to the scripture now, and I want to prove this to you. And if you, if you can't leave this church this morning, absolutely changed by the word, your ears are closed. Ask God to give you an open ear now, and an open heart, and give you eyes to see.

Isaiah 42, verse 6. I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness. This is speaking of Christ. And will hold thine hand, and I will keep you.

This is the covenant God is making with his own son. He said, if you go in human flesh, you become the mediator for man. He said, I, the Lord, will hold thee in righteousness.

I'm going to call you in righteousness. I'll hold your hand. I will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, bring out the prisoners from the prison, them that sit in darkness and out of the prison house.

Hallelujah to God. This is the covenant God made with his son. You go, I'll hold you.

I'll keep you. Glory be to God. He said, God said to his son, if you go, I'll be responsible for you, to keep you, and bring you back to glory.

The whole time you're gone, I'm responsible for you. I'll take full responsibility. No power in heaven or hell can touch you.

And then he says, I'll do the same for your seed. You don't believe that? Folks, you know what the seed is? The children of faith. You are the seed.

I am the seed. By faith in Christ Jesus. You told everybody you belong to Jesus, didn't you? You sit here saying and believing in your heart, I'm a child of God.

I am the seed. Oh, hallelujah. Turn to Psalm 89.

Here's where it gets real good. Starting verse 27. I'll wait till the leaves stop rustling.

You have it? Psalms 89 verse 27, begin to read. Also, I will make him my firstborn higher than the kings of the earth. That's the father.

I'm going to make you higher than all the kings of the earth. When you take on this, this call, my mercy will I keep for him forevermore. And my covenant shall stand fast with him.

His seed also will I make to endure forever. And his throne is the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, I will visit their transgression with the rod, their iniquity with stripes.

Nevertheless, this is for you and me. This is this promise to the seed. He's making this to his son.

He's saying to his son, Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the thing that's gone out of my lips. Glory be to God.

Folks, the Bible said we're to lay hold of the covenant, lay hold of the promises of God, whereby we're made partakers of his divine nature. Let this jump into the stream and flow with it right now, because this is the word of the living God. God said to his own son, I make a covenant with you.

I will make you higher than all the kings of the earth. If my children sin against me, I'll put the rod to them. I'll chasten them.

And that's what happens. Even Paul introduces the concept of destruction to the flesh, that the soul may be saved. Oh, yes, Christian, when you sin, you'll be chastened.

It'll be the rod of God, but it'll be a rod of love. He said, I will never, no matter what you've done, if you will trust me, if you'll come back to my love, I will never cast you away, never. Never.

I can say to this woman who wrote this letter, with all of your problems, her 17-year-old daughter's been raped, her 16-year-old daughter's run off with a married man, she has all kinds of problems, her own husband's a drug addict, and I can say, hold on, sister, he'll never take away his loving kindness from you, never. You see, you win the victory over the devil when you get rid of the fear. It's the fear that has the torment.

Not only will I hold your hand, my son, as long as you're in human flesh, not only will I keep you from Satan and all of his devices, I make the same promise to every believer who trusts in you, I will count them as one party to this covenant. And folks, he doesn't make the covenant with me except as I am in Christ. It's a covenant between two partners only, between God and his son, and when I'm in his son, this is a corporate body, then I am in the covenant.

I am in the covenant because I'm in Christ. He made it with Christ. He didn't make it with me, he made it with Christ, but he made it with me because I am now in Christ.

And everything in the covenant is now mine. I am in the covenant. Boy, I'll get chasing with a rod, and some of you have been chasing now.

I've known some young Christian young men and women who fell back into homosexuality, and they picked up AIDS. And I have buried a few in this church. Fine young men, loving Jesus, went out, repentant, but went out in victory because they came back to the loving kindness of Jesus Christ, but they paid the price, because the wages of sin is death.

It doesn't say the wages of sin is hell alone, because you see, when you come back to the covenant, you come back to the mercy and the grace of God, and repent before him, you find out he's never left you, he's always there. For his part, Christ promised the Father perfect obedience, first on his own behalf. I want you to go to Psalms 40 now.

Turn left to Psalms 40. Now it gets even better. Psalms 40.

Folks, look this way, please. I want to show you now that Jesus says, first of all, I am going to be obedient to you. Father, I'm going to be obedient.

He's talking now here in this passage about his own personal obedience to the Heavenly Father. Verses 7 and 8 of Psalm 40. Then said I, Lo, I come in the volume of the book that is written of me.

I delight to do thy will. Oh, my God, yea, thy law is within my heart. I preach righteousness to the great congregation and not refrain my lips.

But it says, then said I, Lo, I come in the volume of the book that is written. I delight to do thy will, O God. Now look at me, please.

This is God's pledge. This is Christ's pledge. This is his part of the covenant, his part of the agreement.

He said, I pledge to you, Father, my Father. I, then promised I. It is written of me. He's talking about himself.

Now, I am going to be totally obedient. Now, folks, this is exactly what happened. Jesus totally obeyed his Father's will.

It always has to do with the heart and the will. He said, I have completely surrendered my will. It's written of me.

I am going to obey you, Heavenly Father. And he gave the Father perfect obedience. In fact, in John, well, let's hold up there for just a minute.

But then, here's the wonderful part. When God began to open this to me and I saw it, I just broke down and wept. And I've had this inner weeping with joy ever since.

Folks, it's only the revelation of his word that can hold you in these days. I want you to get a hold of it. I want you to stop for just a minute and ask the Holy Ghost to open your eyes on this.

Because it can't be done except by the Holy Spirit. You have to see it by the Spirit of God. Folks, I've been praying since I was 22 years old that God would show me the covenant.

It's taken years. And I'm only beginning to see glimpses of it now. But you have to see this.

That the Lord Jesus makes a pledge of total, absolute obedience. This fulfills the law. Every command has been fulfilled.

Everything that God required of his law, that's all fulfilled now in Christ Jesus. But then he goes on to cover you and I our whole lifetime. He makes such an incredible deal for you and me.

What an agreement he made on our behalf. What a deal. What a covenant.

It's a better covenant than the old covenant. Made on better promises. And here's that better promise.

Psalms 16. Are you turning? Listen to me. I'm going to make a statement now that on the first hearing you'll think it's error.

You'll say it's too good to be true. I can't believe it. Now, folks, when Jesus was born in the manger, what did they sing? Glad tidings.

Glad tidings. This is glad tidings. God says, not only, Father, am I going to obey, but I'm going to engage not only for my obedience, but for the obedience of all my seed.

All my seed. I'm engaging myself not only to fulfill obedience, not only will I be totally obedient to you, but I am going to engage now for all my children. Look at chapter 16, verses 2 and 3. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my goodness extended not to thee.

What he's saying, Lord, this obedience, this goodness, it's coming to you not just on my behalf alone. It's not just for me that I'm obedient. Next verse.

But to the saints that are in the earth and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. Jesus said, I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified. He's saying from now on, Lord, I am providing for the obedience of all my family.

Now hold still, folks. Don't get excited about or don't get upset that I'm preaching error. Not at all.

Remember what Jesus said to you and to me and to all his disciples? You can do nothing on your own. He said, without me, you can't do anything. But with me, you can do all things.

He said, get into the covenant. Depend wholly on me. You just trust in me and you trust in my obedience that I've given to the Father.

It was a perfect obedience. You can never present to him a perfect obedience in your own. Come simply by faith now and say, Jesus, you have promised no matter what I'm going through, I'm under covenant.

You said you would take me by the hand. Father, I'm in trouble. Father, I've got a lust I can't handle.

Father, I've got problems in my home. The Lord said, reach out your hand. Put out your hand.

I'll hold your hand. He said, I will put my fear into your hearts that you shall not depart from me because you're under covenant. I'll put my fear in your heart.

Don't try to produce it. You just put your hand in mine. You trust my obedience.

You trust my righteousness. You just believe. Accept my promise.

Reach out your hand. Lay hold of the covenant. And he said, I'll put my fear in your hearts.

I will remember your sin no more. I'll write my law in your hearts. I will make you to know me as from the greatest even unto the least.

God's saying, I know what you're going through, but I made an agreement to be responsible for you. He said, and my son ratified that covenant with his own blood. He can't break it because the one who made

the covenant with the Father is already at the right hand of the Father.

It's all finished. He can't lie. Can't you get a hold of this now in your spirit? And hold this up before all the forces of hell and say, devil, I am in covenant.

I have not yet arrived. I am still working. I know that if I sin, I'm going to be held responsible because he's going to put a rod to my back.

He's going to do it in love though. Many, many times I spanked my children, but then I hugged them and I spanked them because I loved them. Your very best obedience to the flesh is not acceptable to God.

But faith gets you into the covenant. And once you're in covenant, you obey God not to be accepted, but because you're accepted. And then the obedience you offer to him is a gift of love because you're in covenant.

He said, if you love me, you'll obey me. How can you not love a father who looks at your failure and your sin and your battle? He doesn't come to beat you down or cast you under the law. He said, I've made an agreement.

It's everlasting. I cannot lie. I made an oath to my son.

And when you're in Christ, I can no longer, I can no more cast you aside than I could cast my own son aside who sits at my right hand. It's that sure. It's that sure.

Now you go to him and say, father, this is, this is what my despair brought me to in the first place. I just gave up and said, you see, you either give up and run back to the old life because trying is going to get you into despair and you're going to give up. But folks, that's where Lord was.

He wants you to just give up instead of running into him. He said, just reach out your hand. Now, take me, take my eye.

He said, I will hold you by your hand and I will keep you. I will be responsible for you. And that's why Jesus died.

And he went into hell. And Lord said, it's covenant time. I made my son a promise that no devil, no demon, nothing of sin or lust can destroy him.

And he sent the Holy Ghost in and the Holy Ghost pulled him out of hell, out of the grave. God kept covenant with his son. And you know, when you come by faith, you see, Jesus is in glory.

Now the covenant has been fulfilled. He's fulfilled his part of the covenant. But now you and I are seated with Christ in heavenly places.

That means clearly that he is keeping covenant with you and me, the seat of Christ. I thank God. He's not going to let you go.

I don't care what you're going through. Saul, murderer, persecutor. The Lord says, no, I'm not going to let you go.

I'm going to get a hold of you. And once I get a hold of you, Paul, I'll never let go. Stand.

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