

Cranbrook 1993 May the Lamb Receive His Reward (10-5-93 Tape 1)

by George Warnock

The sermon emphasizes the centrality of the cross in the Christian faith as the ultimate source of wisdom and power for believers.

Duration: 1:13:32

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Matthew 6:33, John 19:34, 1 Corinthians 1:17-19, 1 Corinthians 2:3

Topics: "Lamb Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the stumbling and falling of people when it comes to recognizing the ultimate sign of God's power, which is the death of Jesus on the cross. The Greeks pursued wisdom and considered the crucifixion to be foolishness. The speaker also shares the story of two young men who sold themselves as slaves in order to become missionaries on a remote island. The sermon emphasizes the significance of the cross and the victory it brings, as well as the importance of Christ receiving the full reward of His sufferings.

Transcript

I sketched it out here on the whiteboard, but it's just simply the way it's written. I sketched it out to see perhaps clearly what Paul is saying here. From verse 18.

Well, we better go back. Verse 17. For Christ sent me not to baptize, not that he didn't believe in baptism, but that wasn't necessarily his ministry.

Not that it wasn't important, but more important is the... Could you give us the verse again? Oh, I'm sorry. I said 1 Corinthians 2, did I say? 1. 1. Chapter 1. Not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross, which I believe says the word of the cross, is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Those who can argue it out, those who can prove a point, those who have got great reasoning powers.

Logically, you figure out things, which they try to do in religion. You do that in this world to bring forth the wisdom of man, but it doesn't apply to the gospel. If not God made foolish the wisdom of this world.

For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. I think, is that clear enough? After that, in God's wisdom, he let the world bring forth their wisdom. In God's wisdom, he let the world bring forth their wisdom to show its total bankruptcy.

After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified.

Unto the Jews, a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks, foolishness. Then which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. We'll just stop there for now.

Paul is telling us that the preaching of the cross is a message to all classes of humanity. To the wisdom seekers as well as to the power seekers. And basically that's what we have in the world.

Those who want power, whether it's through riches or athletic prowess or military prowess. Those who want power, political power. Oh, in the musical world, I mean, it's power that people are after.

And then there's the wisdom seekers. Those are the intellectuals who want to understand. And he's referring to the Greeks, but they were noted for their wisdom.

They had great philosophers whose names come down to this day as men of great wisdom. And so Paul says his message of the cross was to both classes of humanity. After that, God allowed the wisdom men to run its course.

And in all the great writings of the ancient wise men, they never found God. Never found God. Talked about Him.

They had many gods, some of them. They never found the true God. Paul confronted this class when he went to Athens.

Everywhere he went, there were idols to the gods. Then he came across one whom they, I guess they didn't want to leave out any. And yet they knew that in all their searching after wisdom, they realized there must have been all these many gods to have created the world as they saw it.

But they realized there was something lacking. And so they erected a sign, an idol to the unknown God. And so that gave Paul his text.

And when they invited him, having disputed with the men of wisdom in the marketplace, they appointed him a day and he went up to the mountain there at Athens and expounded this great message to the unknown God. He met them in their level. He came to them in their level.

You're men of wisdom. He came to them in their level. And he could do it.

And he did it. But there wasn't too much result from it all. I remember someone pointing that out.

He says a few claimed to him and mentioned one or two. And we don't despise that. But the fact is, it seems that his message where he met them in their level didn't seem to be that fruitful.

But from there he came to Corinth. And he says, I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

He realized he knew it, but somehow it seemed to have been emphasized to him again that the message is to be Christ and him crucified. And so he goes on to declare to the Corinthians that after that in God's wisdom he let the wisdom of man come forth from all these great philosophies of the ancients. And God allowed it to go on and on.

But after that was all over and they didn't find God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching. Not just the act of preaching, but the preaching, it says. The foolishness of the message of the cross.

It pleased God to save those that believed. For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom. The religious people require a sign.

They require that. And the wise people, they require wisdom. And Paul says the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews, a stumbling block unto the Greeks, foolishness. Those who were looking for a sign, the preaching of the cross became a stumbling block. They stumbled over it.

They tripped and fell. Because the sign that God gave in the ultimate, I know he did many miracles, but the ultimate sign was his death. And he said there shall no sign be given unto you but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

Jonas was three days, three nights in the heart of the earth. So shall the Son of Man be in the belly of the whale. So shall the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth.

That was the ultimate sign that God gave. And they stumbled on it. The cross, a sign of power, a sign of the power that this Messiah had.

If he was indeed the Messiah, they stumbled, they tripped, they fell. And the Greeks pursued wisdom. And to them, foolishness.

A man crucified on the cross, great teacher, had a lot of good things to say. And they don't mind accepting the name Christian perhaps because Christ was a good man, taught good things. But the cross, you mean to say that when he died on the cross, he bore the sins of mankind and foolishness.

But nevertheless, there's a meeting place for both. Whether it's the power seekers, the sign seekers, or those seeking after wisdom, there's a place where they can meet, where they can find God. And that's at the cross.

Unto them which are called, Paul said, those that are called. Out from amongst the Jews, out from amongst the sign seekers, out from amongst those who are reputed to have wisdom and intellectuals, if they come to the cross, they will find Christ to be the power of God if they're power seekers, the wisdom of God if they're wisdom seekers. They find it at the cross.

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. And the weakness of God is stronger than men. And so Paul came to Corinth, determined that this has to be the message.

Let's never lose sight of it. The only message is Christ and him crucified. That's the message of the gospel.

Didn't he rise from the dead? Yes, because he had finished the work. God raised him from the dead. Paul says, we preach Christ crucified.

I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Because it was there at the cross that God unveiled the greatest display of wisdom that this world has ever seen or will ever see. It was there at the cross that it happened.

It caught everybody off guard. It caught the Jews off guard. It caught the wise men off guard.

It caught his own disciples off guard. Because if he's the mighty king, the mighty conqueror, the mighty prince that was to come to establish the kingdom of God on the earth, oh, it doesn't add up. It doesn't add up.

He couldn't put it together. So the cross has remained ever since an instrument to confront mankind with God's foolishness and God's weakness. You say, I shouldn't say that.

I know, but Paul uses that expression. He says, the foolishness of God is wiser than men. And the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Paul says Christ was crucified in weakness. So you see, that's what Jesus meant when he said, If any man will be my disciple, let him come after me. Let him follow me and let him take up his cross.

Let him deny himself and let him take up his cross and follow me. And so the message that goes forth today is a watered-down version of the cross. Jesus died for me so I have no death to suffer.

He died to make me rich so I can be rich. Jesus became poor that we might be rich. Jesus became weak, yes, but he did it that I might be strong.

And it sounds logical. And there is truth in it. Because he did die that we might be strong.

He did die that we might have life. He did die that we might have riches. If we understand what the true riches are.

But what we fail to recognize so often, and especially those who embrace that teaching, is that there can be no real presentation of the truth of the cross of Christ except we walk in it. So Paul met them on the intellectual level there at Athens, but not at Corinth. When he came to Corinth, he said, I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

And with that pursuit, he came to Corinth weak, fearful, and with much trembling. It doesn't sound good to those who want to keep that strong, positive outlook. But Paul says, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, God had to weaken him.

God had to make him weaker. It was the fear of God that was upon him that caused him to go this way. Because the wisdom of God will produce a very godly fear.

And the wisdom of the cross will produce a godly fear because in the wisdom of the cross, it's required that those who preach it walk in it or their message is not too valid. That's why it might well be that a

person can go forth preaching the letter of the word concerning the cross and many hearts will be touched. But when this gospel of the kingdom goes forth, as Jesus said, it will go forth before the end.

And I emphasize, and I remember a certain teacher 45 years ago emphasizing this gospel of the kingdom, this gospel of the kingdom, this gospel of the kingdom. The gospel he preached and the gospel he lived. The gospel the apostles preached and the gospel the apostles lived.

It's this gospel. It's not just the word concerning the cross, but the cross that has been embraced which makes that word to be vital and meaningful and powerful. And Paul, having realized that, and the Lord having dealt with him, was able to come to Corinth in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

Fear. A godly fear. The fear of God.

Something that God must yet restore to the church. It's almost gone out the window. Fear of God.

We're not supposed to have fear. We're supposed to have love. And so, I don't care what scripture of truth one might bring forth.

If you want to, you can bring up a scripture that seems to be contradictory to it. But if you understand the way of truth and the pattern of truth, and you love the truth, it won't be contradictory. It will be something that speaks of another aspect of it altogether.

It won't contradict what God says in one place. So, God wants to bring back his fear to the church. It's not there.

And God wants it back in the church. And it will come back. As God deals with his people, that fear of God is going to come back.

When his presence comes back in reality, the fear of God will be there. I'm afraid there's not much of the fear of God in the midst of God's people. When they can bring in the most satanic music and display it from the pulpit and have people all thrilled and screaming about it, thinking that they're preaching the gospel because they sing about Jesus, bringing in the satanic music to preach Jesus, there's no fear of God there.

I read this article by a Russian minister. He says, I spent I think it was 12 years in prison for the faith here in Russia. And he says they'd feed us with rock music day and night.

He says it was the worst kind of persecution they could endure by being subjected to that kind of music. And now he says you're bringing it over from the States with a gospel troupe preaching it to the Russians. He says, stay home.

We don't want that kind of nonsense here. He says, we who have been in prison for the faith of the gospel, we sat under that in the prison house and it was torturous to us. And now you're bringing it over in the name of Christ.

It's just one little thing of what's going on in the name of Christ trying to preach the gospel to make it appealing to men instead of coming with the fear of God in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. God's perfecting a church in the earth and He's started in some of these countries. There's great things going on in China.

Some of them have very few Bibles. Some congregations don't have a Bible. But they know God and they walk in the fear of God.

And God is meeting them and many wonderful things are happening. And He's bringing forth a powerful church there. Now the doors are almost closed to Western evangelists and I think God's doing it.

He doesn't want a lot of that stuff that's going over there. God's closing the doors so that He can speak to them Himself and purify the church unto Himself. I remember 50 years ago when they were lamenting the closing of doors into China and the church was, oh, dismayed.

The doors are closed. What do we do now? Let's multiply our efforts in India. The doors are still open.

And God closed the doors that He might have a glorious church there. Doesn't Jesus have the keys of death and of hell? He can open and no man can close and He can close and no man will open. Anticipate that in these days.

Don't worry about closed doors. If you're in union with Him who has the key of David, He can open any door anywhere on the earth, anywhere in this country. He can open doors when He chooses to open it.

And He'll close doors when He chooses to close it. There's a path for wisdom. We'll only know the path of wisdom as we learn to walk in obedience.

There's a way of wisdom. Not something you can get from books even, the best of books. It's a way that you and I discover as we understand that we're to take up our cross and follow Him.

We'll discover the wisdom of God which in its ultimate is going to destroy the wisdom of this world. There is a path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. The lion's whelps have not trodden it nor the fierce lion pass by it.

He putteth forth His hand upon the rock. He overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks.

And His eye seeth every precious thing. He's trying to discover the path of wisdom. He bindeth the floods from overflowing and the thing that is hid bringeth He forth to light.

But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Think of the research that's going on. I mean, I didn't realize when I came here that this is the center, if not the center, one of the great centers of wisdom and research and understanding in this nation. And so much has been discovered.

It's fabulous. It's beyond our comprehension. But where shall wisdom be found, the real wisdom? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living.

The depths sayeth it is not in me. But they've got instruments to go down to the lowest depths in the ocean and come up with fabulous discoveries. But the depth replies, you haven't really found wisdom yet.

You've got instruments that have gone to far places in the universe and shot back photographs and information. One of your citizens here of America walked on the moon. I mean, it's fantastic when we think of it.

But they'd have to say, this is not wisdom. If they come to know the Lord, they say, no, that's far from being wisdom. It's not here.

It's not there on the moon. It's not in Saturn. It's not in Jupiter.

It's not there. And the further they reach out with their instruments of exploration, no matter how far they go, the answer comes back, wisdom, it's not here. It's not here.

The depths say that it is not in me. The seas say that it is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold.

Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir with the precious phonics or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of gold, fine gold.

And yet, with the gold and the silver, they're doing their best. They're putting lavish sums of money into the exploration of space thinking that it will bring us the wisdom we need to survive. And they don't seemingly care if this planet perishes.

And maybe they think it's going to perish and maybe we'll find a good planet out there where we can, you know, take up our habitation in some other planet because this one's wearing out. Instead of using the money to somehow keep this planet going, let's see if we can't find a better one out there. And to their dismay, they're not finding it.

Not finding it within reach. Maybe if it was in our solar system it would be of some value. But if they get out in other galaxies, take a lifetime to get there.

No good to us. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.

Neither shall it be valued with pure gold. I mean, it's valued now with currency that's just paper money, but even if you had pure gold to put into it, you're not discovering it with gold. Whence then comes wisdom? Where does it come from? Where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living and kept close from the fowls of the air.

Destruction and death say we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. God understands the way thereof and He knows the place thereof. And He revealed it in the process of time when His Son hung on a cross.

He revealed the totality of His wisdom unveiled in the mystery of the cross. For He looketh to the ends of the earth and seeth unto the whole heaven to make the weight for the wind and the weight of the waters by measure when He made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of thunder. Then did He see it and declare it.

He prepared it. Yea, and He searched it out and unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding.

The fear of the Lord, God says, is wisdom. And they missed it. They missed it.

And in their wisdom, instead of like the ancient Greeks trying to find God, our modern men of wisdom are trying to do away with God, trying to come to a place where they are their own God, where they don't need

the other God. That's what wisdom has come to. Trying to do away with God.

One man I remember, he's a scientist, and he says the ancients, they always had their gods because they couldn't explain something. So they had many gods. But original man only had one god.

And he says when the time comes when we can explain all these things, we won't need to even mention God anymore. We won't need Him. But we need Him now because there are still things that we can't figure out.

There was a time when mankind knew one God. He didn't start out with many gods. He started with one.

And the reason he got into many gods was reason number one. When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. Neither were thankful.

That started man's downward apostasy from knowing the one and only true God. Knowing the one and only true God as Adam did in his posterity for how many generations? I don't know. They knew God in that sense that they were aware of Him.

And even Cain could talk to God and God would answer him back. He had that kind of communication with the Almighty. But when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.

But neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like an incorruptible man, into birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. They didn't start worshiping those things.

They started knowing the one true and living God and they weren't thankful for what God had done and they didn't give Him His place as their Creator. And from that day on, humanity has been on the downward trend, not evolving, evolving, perhaps is a better word. Not evolving, but becoming more and more degraded.

So we won't go into that, but Romans 1. Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness. Therefore He gave them up to vile affections. Therefore He gave them up to a reprobate mind because they didn't want God in their thoughts.

Paul says, first they didn't glorify Him as God, and then he goes down at the end and he says, because they did not want God in their thoughts, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. That's where we are. They don't want God in their thinking because if God's in their thinking, it might trouble them.

They might begin considering, I've got to deal with God. But if somehow we can eradicate the thought of God's existence, we don't want God in our thoughts, then we can do the basest things without troubling our conscience. And that's what it's coming to.

Almost has come there because we don't want God in our thinking. God has given man over to a reprobate mind, which means a mind, as one notation said, one Bible I had, a mind that doesn't have moral discernment. He doesn't know the difference between good and evil.

He can't discern because God has given them over. They don't know the difference between right and wrong, between darkness and light, between good and evil. You know that's where we are.

Evil is good and good is evil. That's where we are, not only here but in our country. And it's fast going down to a place of such total depravity that there's only one solution and that's God coming on the scene and purging this earth with His mighty fire.

So He's preparing a people to be instruments in His hands for the great work that He will do by way of purging this planet. A people who are going to know the wisdom of God, which is the wisdom of the cross. Wisdom of the cross.

And when the fear of God comes back to man and they recognize that God is a holy, fearful God, then they're able to reach God once again as they simply bow there at the cross. It's that instrument of sacrifice where Christ died for the sins of the world. And so that is the Gospel.

But there's more to it than that. Nevertheless, I think we can confine the Gospel in just a few simple words. As long as they're preaching Christ, you know, and preaching the cross, it's all right.

Well, God will be glorified if there's a preaching of the cross regardless of the instruments or the methods they use. God may be glorified. But it's not pulling down the strongholds of the enemy which are keeping people in bondage unless there is an identification with that cross.

So there's a lot going on in the name of the Lord. And a lot of it is sidestepping the cross or embellishing it to make it look to be beautiful in the eyes of people. And the Gospel doesn't do that.

It reveals a man hanging on a cross for you and me, but it reveals something deeper than that. It reveals mankind hanging on that cross, crucified by God Almighty. It reveals God's estimation of the human mind and heart and actions.

The cross reveals that. So when Jesus went to the cross, we see the wisdom of God revealed in all the incidents concerning the crucifixion of Christ. Here is God Almighty clothed in human flesh.

And I like to say that. I know it is God's Son. But I like to point out that the Son of the Father was the Word of the Father made flesh.

The Word of the Father made flesh. And so in that sense, it wasn't like a friend of mine said, I love Jesus, but I couldn't love the Father because he saw two distinct beings. But it was the Father's Word that became flesh.

God's very heart was made flesh in Jesus. And so God the Father felt every nail in His hand. He felt the crown of thorns in His head.

To me, that's the most marvelous thing that the God of the universe who created man in His image condescended to take sinful man's image and suffer the agonies of Calvary. What a revelation of the cross of Christ! Not just that He stayed here secluded in the heavens and let the second person go down and do it. God Almighty clothed Himself in flesh and that flesh was called the Son of God.

That holy thing which shall be born of You, the angel said to Mary, shall be called holy, the Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Well, then isn't the Holy Spirit the Father of Jesus? He came to die. I know I'm repeating things that I mentioned before.

He came to die, but how would He die? Would He just come and stir up some kind of a mob so He'd be crucified? He came to express the heart of God. He came to reveal the Father. He came to reveal God's

wisdom, God's understanding, God's knowledge, God's love, God's truth.

Everything that was in the Father, He came to reveal the Father. And because He came to reveal the Father, He came up against the antagonism of a world that hated God. Light was confronting darkness.

Good was confronting evil. Truth was confronting the heresies of the people about Him. He who was the very Son of God, who was the very life and righteousness and wholeness of God was confronting an evil religious system that had become apostate.

Light was confronting darkness. There was confrontation. There was a clash.

The cross was inevitable. And so when Jesus hung on the cross, it was man's estimation. It was man dealing with God's wisdom, God's truth, God's knowledge, God's love.

It was man coming against all that was in the heart of God revealed in Jesus. But by the same token, it was God coming against everything that was in the hearts of men. Their evil, their hatred, their enmity, their foolishness, their wickedness, their depravity.

It was God coming against that. So Paul was able to say, having had that revelation, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world was crucified to me and I to the world. That's the implications of the cross.

That the world was crucified as far as I'm concerned. It was crucified at Calvary. That I am crucified as far as the world is concerned because I identify with Him who is love and truth and wisdom and knowledge and purity and holiness.

If I identify with that, I'll be crucified by the world. So I don't have to die because Jesus died. It means you might just as well say I don't have to live righteously.

I don't have to love God. I don't have to live in purity. I don't have to live righteously because Jesus did it for me.

Anyone who will live righteously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. It's inevitable. We're living in a world of darkness and sin and hatred.

You start letting the love of God flow through you, the life of Christ flow through you, the wisdom of God flow through you, the purity of Christ be revealed in your walk, you're going to be hated by the world. You say we don't get too much hatred and enmity from the world. I can tell you why.

There is not that testimony of Jesus in the church. We can take in just about anything the world has, give it a Christian name, polish up the music a little, put a few words in it about heaven and Jesus, use the same principles that they use in the world to run a business, all in the name of prospering for the sake of God. You can go on and on.

Bring in their books of philosophy. The church is getting filled with hurting people. God intended the church to be the balm of Gilead for hurting people.

But the masses come into the church devastated, lives devastated, homes devastated. And in many, many, many cases, they're teaching them the wisdom of the philosophers who with all their wisdom didn't find God. When I was young, they never thought of having counselors, hired counselors, who had studied

philosophy to come in and help God's people.

Go to the church. Go to the pastor. Go to some godly woman.

Go to some godly man and use the Lord and pour out their heart. And that's all they need. And that's all they need today.

Now they're bringing in the psychologies of the ancients. You say, no, this book was written by a Christian philosopher. And that's the one we're using.

And you trace it on back. And those Christian philosophies, many of them are in embracing the philosophies of the ancients who didn't know God. But they embellish it up with some Christian philosophies.

And people are exhorted to go to these counselors for help. I'm not saying if he's a godly man and sincere that God won't use him. I'm saying by and large it's not solving the problem.

But the church is filling up more and more and more with devastated people. And to solve the problem, they're hiring more and more counselors. It's become another ministry in the church.

It's not mentioned in the Scriptures except that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon the Lord Jesus. The seventh old Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

And as the Spirit of God causes these qualities to come into his people, you'll have the only word of counsel that any man in need requires. It's doing so much harm. Friends of ours, go to a Christian counselor.

And so he digs up. He tries to dig up what about your father? What about your mother? What about your grandparents? He'll dig up something. And oh yes, maybe my father did do something wrong.

Yeah, maybe my mother didn't really treat me right. And this happens. It happens.

I'm talking about a case I know about. And so the counselor, the Christian counselor, says you better cut yourself off from your parents. That's your trouble.

Devastating them. We all make mistakes. We're all in Adam.

Instead of telling them you've got to learn forgiveness. You've got to know how to forgive. Yeah, but I was hurt so much.

I know, but I can't forgive. If you knew what a terrible thing my father did, you'd know I couldn't forgive. I know.

And there's been some horrible things that have happened in families because of the wrongdoing of parents. I'm not denying that. But the healing that you need is the healing that comes from the cross, which enables you and I to forgive.

Because there at the cross, you see one totally rejected, crucified with sinners, rejected by the religious mob, rejected by the Roman Empire, rejected by the soldiers, rejected by the religious crowd, crucified between two thieves. But because he was going there in the will of God and because of the love that he

had, because of this righteous and wonderful good work that he was performing on the cross, because he walked in total obedience to the Heavenly Father, when he hung there on the cross, he was destroying the evil that put him there. He was destroying it.

As he hung on the cross, he was destroying it and making it possible for the essential ministration of the cross to accomplish in us those virtues which were in him which caused him to go there. Love, mercy, truth, forgiveness, patience, long-suffering, kindness. It was that which drove him to the cross because the world hated all those things and crucified him.

And in being crucified, he was able to manifest those virtues in the people who bow at the cross. Hurting people? Come to the cross. Don't stoop down there at the waters of Marah and drink and drink and drink until you're sick.

God leads you to your Marah. God led the children of Israel. One of the first places they came to when they came out of Egypt was to Marah, the pool of bitter waters.

And they sought it at a distance. They'd gone, I think, three days without water. And they ran to it hoping to refresh themselves and to reveal what's in our hearts and lives by birth, by nature, and by practice as we proceed and continue on in it.

Blaming God for it. Moses cried unto the Lord and the Lord showed him a tree and He threw it into the waters and the waters were healed. The cross that heals the bitter waters.

You cut it down and throw it in and the bitterness will go. Oh, how many Christians are nursing bitterness. I think we all go through it in one way or another as you know what's going on.

I'm bitter and I know I shouldn't be. Ask the Lord to show you that tree. It's there.

It's there. Forgive. Pray for them.

If you can't forgive, ask God to help you how to forgive. Whatever. I don't know, God, how He might lead you.

But as you find the tree and throw it into the waters, it will be the tree of the cross applied in your life. God wants to apply the cross in our lives. That's the only way we're going to come into the likeness of Jesus.

To know the rejection He went through. To know the hatred of others. To know the loneliness.

Showing mercy and being rejected for it. Doing deeds of kindness and not being appreciated. Doing your best to follow God and rejected by the religious crowd.

Brings about your cross. So you don't go around looking for your cross. You just do the will of God.

And make that to be a passion. Lord, I want to know Your will. I want to do Your will.

And you'll find yourself following the Lamb whether it's wherever He goes. And that's what's said also in the book of Revelation. We follow the Lamb.

Why not following the Shepherd? He is the Shepherd. The Lamb is the Shepherd. But you follow the Lamb because in following Him, you go in His footsteps.

And the Lamb went to a cross, so we follow the Lamb whether it's wherever He goes. And then we too shall overcome as He overcame. And the Lamb, when John saw one sitting on the throne with a book in his hand, a book that contained the unfolding of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and God's mighty works in the earth.

To bring that about. Written there in a book. And the cry went forth, Who is worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof? For they all must have known what was in the book.

And everyone realized, I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy. Moses said, I can't go and take the book.

I'm not worthy. Joseph, the beloved of the Lord, said I'm not worthy to go take the book. Solomon wasn't worthy.

David wasn't worthy. And John wept because no one could say they were worthy. And the angel said, Weep not.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed. He's overcome and he'll come and take the book. Because he's the one that conquered.

And he looked to see the Lion and he saw a lamb as it had been slain. A bleeding lamb. Like it was freshly slain.

The thought is, like it was newly slain. And that was perhaps 60 years after he died on the cross. Not that he's still suffering.

But the efficacy of his sacrifice is just as fresh today as it was then. The efficacy of it is still fresh. He's still a newly slain lamb.

As far as our appropriation of him is concerned, it's still a bleeding lamb that we appropriate. Because our contact with the Lamb of God is through the blood of Christ. You say that was 2,000 years ago.

I know. But do you know what happened when Jesus died on the cross? It was the Spirit of God preparing that sacrifice. He wasn't alone.

The Spirit of God was there surrounding that sacrifice. In the darkness of that day, the Spirit of God was there. Because as the time came for him to suffer and he got on the cross, somewhere in there, darkness began to enshroud the cross.

Darkness was covering the cross. And you know what? Whenever there's thick darkness, God is there doing something. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving on the midst of the waters.

God was working in the darkness. God always works in the darkness to shine forth the light. But at His appointed time, He's working in the darkness.

Paul says, God commanded light to shine out of the darkness. The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness was shone on your heart. Why? Because you were in total darkness.

And God wanted to bring light. Somehow you don't understand it. You know you came to the cross.

That's all you know. But when you came to that place of great, dense darkness and bowed at the foot of the cross, light sprang out of the darkness into your heart. Calvary was a dark place, but in the midst of that darkness, the Spirit of God was offering up the supreme sacrifice.

Why can I say that? Because the Apostle Paul said, it's the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer that sanctify unto the cleanest of the flesh. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Who through the eternal Spirit was offering Himself without blemish unto God was a sacrifice.

Through the eternal Spirit, He was offering a sacrifice without blemish unto God. And if the blood of bulls and goats would sanctify in the Old Testament, how much more that the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. There's a purging for God's church that we haven't known because we haven't walked in the way of wisdom, the pathway which no vulture has seen, that pathway which only God knows but which He revealed in Christ.

God turned to mankind after all His searching and wisdom and says, Here is wisdom. The fear of the Lord is wisdom. And to depart from evil is understanding.

Further revealed by the Apostle Paul when he tells us that it is there in the cross that God defeated evil and sin and death and everything that pertains to the realms of Satan while He hung on the cross. We've got to see that. We've got to realize that Calvary, that God was destroying sin in the flesh.

And when God quickens that truth, I've prayed He's even doing it, but we know there must become a greater impact of the truth of the cross in our lives. We're going to walk totally free from sin. If not, we might just as well have the blood of bulls and goats.

If it would give that sinning Israelite a certain sense of relief and comfort and they could go home with a clear conscience because they'd offered a bullock or a sin offering, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? So when soldiers put a crown of thorns in His head, He was being crowned king. God was saying, you're conquering in this. You're overcoming the vain imaginations of mankind.

You're defeating it. They thought they were defeating Him, making fun of Him, ridiculing Him, and they were. But all the while they were doing it, God was bearing the penalty of the fall of man's carnal mind.

They put nails in His hands. They thought they had Him secure in the cross, and they did for a moment. But God was crucifying the works of My hands.

He's saying, you can't serve Me with your hands. You can't serve Me. I crucify your hands.

I nail them to the cross. When they drove a spike through His heel, He was bruising the serpent's head as His heel was bruised. God was dealing a death blow to the serpent of sin and death and crucifying our feet so that we might know we can't walk in paths of righteousness until we walk in the wisdom of the cross.

And the soldier took a spear, thrust it into His side, and out flowed blood and water. I used to wonder and wonder why John took such special note of that and said this one bore witness. I bore witness and I saw it.

I saw the blood and water. And then I realized that the Spirit of God who inspired John to write that was emphasizing something else. That the Spirit of God was saying through John, it was the Spirit of God saying, I bear witness to the blood and the water.

I saw the blood and the water flow from Jesus' side. I saw the blood and the water flow from Jesus' side. The Spirit bore witness to it.

And that's why John was able to say there are three that bear witness. The water and the blood and the Spirit. The Spirit beareth witness because the Spirit is truth.

So we must have the witness of the Spirit in our midst. The testimony of Jesus must be here in the midst of His people. And in the proclamation of truth there must be the testimony of Jesus, which is the testimony of the Spirit of God.

And the Spirit of God says, I saw the blood. I saw the water. I saw the blood.

I saw the water. I saw the cleansing that's in the blood and it's for you. I saw the cleansing that's in the water of the Word and that's in Jesus.

And then I saw why there's so much bondage in God's people, in our own individual lives. Such a conflict to overcome the carnal nature and sin. It's because the Spirit of God, we're not hearing Him because He's not being given His Lordship in the midst of His people.

We come together with our program all laid out to have a good service, a little entertainment, a few prayers, a good sermon, where the Spirit of God wants to be hovering over that congregation in total Lordship over the meeting. And when He's in Lordship over our gatherings together in His name, He's going to bear witness to the truth because the Spirit is truth. And He's going to bear witness to the water and the blood.

And He'll speak to God's people. You're free from an evil conscience. You're free from that old life.

You're free from those things of the past. And there's a cleansing and the ministration of truth because the Spirit is truth. But if the Spirit isn't given His Lordship and it's all under the control of man, there isn't that cleansing going forth because the cleansing is in the blood and the Spirit was there offering that sacrifice so that the efficacy of the blood of Christ is now in the realms of the Spirit of God Just as truly as for the cleansing of the leper, they took these two birds alive and clean.

Took some fresh water. The Bible says living water. And they took a basin of it and they slew the one bird over that vessel of living water and the blood dripped into the water until it was water and blood.

And that became the water of cleansing. So that for the cleansing of the leper, he was purged with this holy water and blood. Just a faint picture of what happens.

What happened when Jesus died. All that blood, though He shed it I know, but it was absorbed in the Spirit of God. And the Spirit whom we receive is the Spirit of cleansing who bears witness to the blood because He was there when Jesus died on the cross and retained in His own person the efficacy of the blood of Christ so that that blood is just as fresh and real today as it was 2,000 years ago.

But only the Spirit of God can make it to be effectual in our hearts and lives. Only He can apply it. Only He can cause us to bathe in it, to be washed in it, to walk in it as we give Him His Lordship.

And I know when the Spirit of God comes back to the place where He is recognized as the Lord in our midst, there will be liberty. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Not liberty to do anything you want.

Liberty to do what the Spirit wants you to do. Freedom to walk in ways of righteousness and truth, bringing to our hearts the awesomeness of God's presence so that the fear of God overshadows everyone in the congregation. Paul says, I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling because He knew these things.

He knew what took place at the cross. And he knew that as he embraced that cross and walked in it, the fear of God came upon him. A trembling came upon him.

I stand before your people, God. I can't just entertain them and give them some nice clangy music to entertain their carnal flesh. I stand here before God to minister the truth of the blood and of the water to God's people.

The truth of the cross, which was responsible in bringing it forth. See, what's the difference between the cross and the blood? The cross was that place where God dealt with sin, where God condemned sin in the flesh. And the blood is the life that flowed that might impart that life to you and I. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. He was condemning sin. He was condemning Satan.

He was condemning death. He was condemning all the evil of the Adamic nature there in the flesh of Jesus who was made sin for us and you know sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The victory of the cross remains to be manifest in the earth in fullness. I know there have been many, many times in the history of the church where the victory of the cross has been manifest in measure, but it must be manifest in full measure that Christ the Lamb might receive the full reward of His sufferings. Understand that was sort of a slogan of the early Moravians.

May the Lamb receive the reward of His sufferings. That was what they were concerned about, just that the Lamb receive the reward of His sufferings. The story is told of these two young men whom the Lord put in their hearts to go and lay down their lives upon a little island out somewhere there, I think in the Atlantic, that belonged to a rich slave owner.

He owned it. It was his. Nobody, no government had any authority over him.

It belonged to him. He did what he wanted. Missionaries weren't allowed.

And God put it into the hearts of these two young men to go to that place. The only way they could go would be to sell themselves to the slave owner. And they did it.

No glamorous thing for those young men to go on a missionary tour. They made contact somehow and agreed that they would become the slaves of this plantation owner out on this little island. And they came

to the boat that was to take them there.

We would take them to the island, drop them off, never to be seen again back home. The relatives were there, father, mother, brothers, sisters, the saints of God, crying and weeping as the boat pulled out. And they heard one of them shout on its way as it left its moorings the slogan of the Moravians, May the Lamb receive the reward of His sufferings.

The Lamb is going to receive the reward of His sufferings. Because these overcoming people, God so joins them together that they become one body, one church, to be joined unto Him as the Bride of Christ. And God is preparing that Bride.

And He will be very diligent that the Bride is compatible with His Son. Because the Father is giving the Bride to His Son who conquered. The conquering Lamb, the Lamb that laid down His life in obedience to the Father.

The Father is preparing a Bride for His beloved Son. And you know how diligent Abraham was that the Bride he got for Isaac would be compatible, a virgin, with the character of humility and love and devotion. He didn't know how to find that Bride, the servant.

But Abraham says, You just go there to the land of my fathers and God will be faithful. And He'll bring her. And you know the story.

He said at the well, He said, Father, the one whom You've prepared for my master's son, let her come here and draw water and give me a drink and water my camels. And so she came. And sure enough, it was the one.

He knew it and looked on in wonder as she gave him a drink and drew water for his camels. He took out gifts, put a ring in her finger and adorned her with all manner of gifts. The thing I want to point out is this.

Her one vision, her one anticipation and hope was to see Isaac. God has been so graciously pouring out His gifts upon His church. Gifts of words of wisdom and knowledge.

Gifts of healing and miracles and discernment and tongues and interpretation of tongues and prophecy. What's the attitude of God's people? God's doing that because He's preparing me to be the bride of Jesus. Or is it, Oh, I've got this great gift.

That man's got a greater gift. I wish I had more of the gifts. Comparing gifts with each other and forgetting the purpose for which God is giving these gifts is to prepare a people for His glory.

To prepare the bride of Christ. What are the gifts for? It didn't belong to Eliezer. He just had something to distribute to the bride.

Paul said that what God had given him was a stewardship. He just had to reveal the secrets of God to God's people. His purpose was to give these graces and blessings and truths to God's people because God was exceedingly jealous over His people.

And Paul, having touched the heart of God and having walked in the ways of God and having known the identification with the cross, came to that place as a true priest where his only desire was for God's people. His only reason for living was for God's people, not for himself. Saying something like Moses said, I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake.

If somehow I could bring about their salvation, God, let me be accursed. He said to the Corinthian church, I am jealous over you with God's own jealousy, with a godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

But a fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve in his guile, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ Jesus. Paul had that godly fear. And with that godly fear, he was determined he would present the cross, as God enabled him to do it, as our way of life and to seek to get God's people to walk in the way of the cross.

That in walking in the way of the cross, the virtues of the cross might be imparted to them. That in spite of their background, thieves, murderers, adulterers, sinners of all kinds, by the cleansing of the blood, when they stand before the throne of God by the cleansing of the blood, they are just as pure as Jesus is pure, just as holy as God is holy, not by any virtue in them, but by the cleansing of the blood, by the virtues that flow from Calvary. That the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus might perform in us the very antithesis of what the law of sin and death did.

Is it not more powerful than the law of sin and death? Under the law of sin and death, you sin, you do all sorts of bad things, you're corrupt. You know in your own heart what you've done. That's beside the point.

You did all these things because of a law of sin and death. Is not the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus more powerful than that old law? Yeah, I know. It sounds right, but why isn't it happening? Because we haven't given room to the Spirit of God to make real in the midst of His people the virtue and the wealth and the value and the power of the blood and of the water.

God's doing it. He's going to do it. And He'll continue doing it until this bride is holy and without blemish.

God said so. That when the Lord Jesus received this holy bride, He'd say, Father, there's nothing in heaven and earth I desire more than this. It's worth all the sufferings of the cross.

May the Lamb receive the reward of His sacrifice.

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