

We Ourselves Are They Who Are Wretched

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our spiritual wretchedness, the need for true humility, and the call to earnestly seek God in prayer and repentance.

Duration: 34:05

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21, Isaiah 40:30, Acts 2:4, Revelation 3:14, Revelation 3:16-18

Topics: "Wretched"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and relying on Him in times of difficulty. He uses the analogy of a ship sailing through treacherous seas to illustrate the challenges we face in life. The preacher encourages the audience to trust in God's plan and to continue moving forward, even when hope seems lost. He also highlights the need to prioritize our time and use it wisely, reminding the listeners of the eternal rewards that await those who follow God's path.

Transcript

Our next stop will be the Valley of Humiliation, perhaps, like you read in Pilgrim's Progress. They said, now you're going to catch many a slip going down that hill. It's harder going down than coming up.

And maybe that's so, but something that will help us very, very greatly, I believe, is found in the book that we have studied. You don't need to turn to it unless you want to. It's in the third chapter, and it's very well-known scripture, Revelation 3. And the fourteenth verse, And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write these things saith he, Amen.

I like these names that are given to Jesus. Amen. O Jesus, you're truly wonderful, and to think that you're coming so close to us, and that you call us by name, and that you offer us yourself, and that you make us feel the touch of your hand, and that you yourself open the heavens and pour out your power upon us.

And O God, we do love these epistles of Christ. Thus saith he, Amen. The faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold

tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.

And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. And anoint thine eyes with thy salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chaste, and be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. We used to think that this text was written for sinners, and I suppose many, many an evangelist has used it to preach to sinners. And it is applicable of course.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. But I think it will be very helpful to us if we can get this great truth into our hearts, that every time we go to prayer, and we have purpose to pray more, haven't we? We have made up our minds now to spend a certain time every day alone with God. Why you cannot possibly be a Christian without living a life of prayer.

But to think, my what a hard job it is to spend an hour a day, unless you realize that you're not seeking him, but he's seeking you. You're receiving a great king. You are receiving someone that comes with unsearchable riches, who desires very greatly that you should be delivered from the deception of your own heart.

There is no deception like the spiritual deception that makes us advertise our goodness and our religiousness and our strength. Oh, how terrible is this religious pride. And we used to think, you know, that God was talking here to the so-called dead churches.

Beloved is talking to us. Let's face it. We are the people that think we're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.

If we didn't, we'd do something about it. Isn't it strange that people don't begin really to seek the Lord until they get into real trouble. Then they begin to seek the Lord.

I read of a man recently, happened not long ago, who was desperately ill. And he called for his pastor and the pastor talked to him about salvation. And the man was really in earnest.

The doctor told him there was no hope. He didn't have very long to live. And so now this man began to seek the Lord with all his heart to pray and pray and pray.

And every day he wanted to visit from the pastor. Every day he wanted the pastor to talk to him and to pray with him. And of course, the pastor was only too glad to do it.

And then one day the pastor got notice from him, he didn't have to come anymore, that the fellow got better and now he didn't need to pray anymore. Isn't it strange that we've got to get into real trouble. Sister Wally and I were in a place recently where some people whom we have known all our lives are in real trouble and they don't know what to do.

They're people that have said we're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. And Wally said, you see what happens to people if they don't prepare for the evil day. Then when the evil day comes

and when the inevitable happens and when the flood beat upon that house, it isn't founded upon a rock.

How very helpful it is then if we go from this place to know that every day and every moment of the day Jesus Christ offers himself to us. Himself. He does not want us to fool ourselves and to think that we're ready for the marriage of the Lamb when we're not.

They that were ready went in. And then God says, now you're right. Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Right, for these are the true sayings of God. It must be a wonderful thing what we've been talking about in every meeting. In every testimony we've been talking about being ready for the coming of the Lord.

Do we realize what it means? Really to be ready for the marriage of the Lamb. To be ready for the Lord. Oh, how wonderful then that he himself comes to make us ready if we allow him to.

And that every day and in this country we've got so much time. There was a time when I chafed when God awakened me to the wonder of Jesus. I sought him, not because I needed him, but because I wanted him.

Because he seemed so lovely. Oh, praise God, he had shown into this heart of mine in such a way that I fell head over heels in love with him. But I had to work 10 or 12 hours a day.

And on Saturday too, and sometimes on Sunday. I said to my brother I'm going to quit my job because I want to get to God. I want to know Jesus.

I want to get filled with the Holy Ghost. I want to know him and the power of his resurrection. And so I had to utilize all the time that was given me.

When I went to work, sometimes I walked home. It took me an hour to get home just so I'd get more time to pray. And sometimes I'd ask the boss to give me a day off.

Please give me a day off. And then I'd get to my room and spend all day calling on the Lord, opening my heart to him. And I didn't know what this scripture says.

I didn't realize how graciously Jesus Christ was there to give himself to me, but he did it anyway. And then sometimes when I found out that somebody went on a vacation I asked them whether I couldn't occupy their house. I remember one time my brother-in-law went away with his family.

I said, could I occupy your house while you're gone? He says, you can if you take care of my chicks. He had 20 chicks, told me what to do, how to feed them. When he came home, they were all dead.

And this little girl says, you dyed them, didn't you? But you know, I'll never forget those two weeks. God never forgets those two weeks because he saw the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. What does he want? Why, we run away from him.

We haven't got any time for God. We've got time to take care of this carcass of ours. Oh, how much time we spend.

And now we go on a strike because we don't want to work five days a week. We want only two days a week. And that's what communism is promising the people.

And what do you do with the extra day? What do you do with Saturday? Oh, heavens, what do you do with Sunday? What do you do with the time that almighty God gives you? What does he say here else? Beauty out of my mouth, unless. Beloved, there's something to buy. There's something from heaven that has come down from heaven that is so unsearchably wonderful that the angels desire to look into.

We're not all going to sit here in this camp very much longer. We're going to be like Jesus. Glory to God, we're going to shine in his beauty if he has his way.

That's what he's talking about, and he's talking to all of us, and he says you're fooling yourself unless you buy the thing that I've got to give you. What have you got to give me, my Lord? Why, he tells us here, himself. I stand at the door and knock.

I like to think of my prayer time like that. It's hard for the flesh. The carnal man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God doesn't lead you into a moving picture house or into a Cooney Island affair or some place like that to pamper your flesh, but he'll crucify the flesh with the affections and lust. As many as I love, I rebuke and chase him. And we don't like rebuke.

We don't like God to come to us and tell us, you're fooling yourself. You think you're rich and increased with goods. You're a white sepulcher.

You don't know what's in your heart. You don't realize what vermin dwells in your heart like we heard a while ago. All of a sudden, that little worm that you've been nursing has turned into a dragon.

It swallows you up. How many times we've seen that, and as our brother said, it's true. It doesn't come suddenly.

You've played with it. You've trifled with it. You have not heeded the warning of God.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chase him. Oh, I said many times, my God, please let me die rather than sin against you. Oh, Jesus Christ, please don't take me off the wheel.

My God, I pray thee, don't remove your strokes. And one time when I got the worst beating that I ever got, my father used to beat me. The Bible finally gave me light about that and says he did it for his own pleasure.

I always suspected that. But my heavenly father, when he got ready to give me a beating, I tell you, I said, my God, I needed every stroke. I thank you.

I thank you, my God, because in great mercy thou hast afflicted me. Beloved, he says to fathers on this earth, don't spare the rod. For his crying, you'll save him from hell.

Some time ago, a fellow was electrocuted in Sing Sing. He was only, I don't think he was 20 years old. And his last wish was to see his mother.

And when his mother came, he jumped at him like a cat or a mouse and bit off her tongue, her nose. It was a gruesome sight. And then he cursed his mother.

He said, mother, you're to blame. I'm here burning to cinders today because you didn't chastise me when I was a kid. When I was five years old and came home having stolen an egg from the neighbor's chicken coop, you laughed and you said, you're a smart kid.

Oh, but my heavenly father is faithful. Hallelujah. He is going to sanctify you wholly, your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it if I let him. And here is on the job. And when he rebukes me and he tells me you're fooling yourself, you're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

What shall I do? Why he does that in order to offer me his riches. He says that you might be rich. I have gold tried in the fire.

What is he talking about? Why does he say I have to buy gold tried in the fire? What do we do when we buy? We exchange value for value. And here is something that you can exchange. You can exchange your vile nature for his divine nature.

You can pray. Oh, that's what gives prayer its mighty power. And when you pray, don't be like the Pharisees and the scribes.

Don't read it out of a book. Go into your closet. God Almighty is there.

Oh, tell me, is your prayer life a holy price with God, with Jesus Christ? I stand at the door. I'm here offering myself to you. And have you ever taken a week off to be alone with God? Have you ever responded to his chastening? Have you ever realized how conceited you are and how that stuff has gripped you and is part of you? Have you ever awakened to the fact that lust has you by the neck and you can't shake it off? Beloved, none of us can.

There is no human being that can deliver themselves, but here's one that can. Everyone that asketh receiveth. Here the king himself has come to give it to me.

And when I pray, he says, your father who is in secret is there to reward you openly. Have you ever had the experience of praying through? Has God ever convicted you? Oh, that's the grace of my God. Beloved, it's an awful thing when conviction ceases to trouble you.

It's an awful thing when the Spirit of God does not convict you anymore and you don't feel the sting of that sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. It's a dreadful thing. St. Augustine says, it's a mark of God's highest pleasure when he allows a man to be hardened in sin.

Oh, blessed is the man that feareth always. And when this when that Word of God comes, which is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, we have been face to face with it time and again. How many times have we been face to face with it? I've sat in meetings like these and I thought my hair would stand on end.

And oh, I thought, God, I thank God for convicting me. I said, my God, that's what I need. That's the reason I never got saved in the Baptist church.

I mean really saved, because the Word did not come forth like that. But when I got in touch with Holy Ghost preaching, how it went in, how it found me where I live, how it showed me my wretchedness, my natural wretchedness. Thank God, He dug right in and He showed me the depths of my fall and He

showed me the impurity of my heart and of my thoughts.

And I knew outwardly everything was okay. Everybody thought I was a top-notch Christian. I had learned to have a form of godliness, but I didn't know the power thereof.

And in my heart, all the works of the flesh had their inception. There were all these things that the Bible names, pride, impurity, self-seeking, sensitiveness, dumps, and whatever comes of the flesh, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these. And when I saw my need, I cried to God and said, oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Jesus says, I stand at the door.

If you'll hear my voice, if you'll open the door, beloved, it means like we heard a while ago, a change of occupation. It means a change of master, a change of kingship. It means that where sin formerly reigned and self-reigned, another one takes over.

Oh, that's true humility. Absolute and true humility. I am meek and lowly in heart.

Learn of me, he said. All things are delivered unto me of my father. And now he says, learn of me, for I am meek and I am lowly in heart.

Take my yoke upon you. Beloved, here alone is true humility. It's to submit myself to this king of glory.

It's to come to him and to buy from him gold tried in the fire. How will I get it? Here it is. Thy word is purified like silver seven times.

Oh, how pure is the word of God. How pure are these promises. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

I remember when God awakened me to the sins of my tongue. I went through the whole Bible and found all the scriptures that talk about the tongue. Isn't it strange that we don't do that? Isn't it strange that we're not convicted? Isn't it a strange thing? I went to see an old time saint, a mother in Israel, she called herself.

Wonderful woman, spoke in tongues. For a half an hour she entertained me, gossiping about everybody in our church. She knew something bad about everybody in that place.

And when she was through, all I had to do was listen. She said, you know what's the worst thing in our assembly? It's the gossip. Tell me, how can we be so blind? Rich and increased with goods.

Mothers in Israel, saints of God, we can preach like a house of fire and still have a tongue that's inspired by hell. How is it possible? Jesus says, I'll spew it out of my mouth. But here's gold fried in the fire.

A perfect tongue. And when I got through studying in the Bible, I was surprised, he said, life and death are in the power of the tongue. Oh, until, he says, until God Almighty bridles my tongue, it will not be bridled.

It will still be set on fire of hell. He says we, we muzzle dogs and we muzzle animals and we tame them. But the tongue can no man tame.

Did you ever try it? Honest to goodness, did you ever try it, beloved? That's what he's talking about. Rich and increased with, you're wretched. You're miserable, you're poor, you're blind, you're naked.

I'm thinking now of another man that I've told of. He used to come after me. He had a mission in New York.

He called me up every other day and said, I want you to come and pastorize my mission. Well, that was some neat talk. Like your pastorized spouse.

But anyway, he was a preacher, and he wouldn't stand for anybody come there. I used to go there. Elder Brooks went.

My brother went. Others went. And every time somebody went, the church was filled with people.

And then he got so jealous and then he began to lambaste us and think that we were trying to take the thing out of his hand and we were only trying to help him. And one day when Mrs. Judd was with us, he came to see me. I'd invited him.

And he came very early. And I don't know for how long. It was more than an hour, I'm sure.

He kept kicking and complaining. God's complaining about everybody, about all the Pentecostal people. He was the only truly Pentecostal person now.

He was rich and increased with goods, and the rest of them were all backslidden. The only time he stopped was when he came up for air. And I was so glad after a while when I could say, come on, it's time to go to meeting.

So we went to meeting. And that day, the Lord spoke over the lips of Mrs. Judd in the word of wisdom about the sins of the tongue. You know, it went in like oil.

It certainly did something for me. I didn't think of him at all. I thought only of myself and of my own need.

But when we went out at that meeting, he said, oh, I'm sorry I came. I thought I was going to hear something new. Rich and increased with goods.

Wrecked, miserable, poor, blind, naked. I counsel thee that you buy of me. Jesus Christ, if I come to you, you are going to see whether that gold is tried in the fire.

I'm going to be tested. And there's no assembly on earth where there are not both classes of people. There are those that gossip and those that talk.

And then there are those that keep their garments unspotted. He is talking about white garments, pure and white. Oh, Jesus, when you come, when you come, what excuse am I going to give to you if my garment is defiled by the things of the world and the flesh and the devil and I have not opened my heart to you? I suppose all of us have let him in.

And, beloved, do we know what he has come to bring to us and why he says, he that overcometh, I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame. There's something to overcome. That's how we buy gold tried in the fire.

Beloved, here in this meeting, Jesus Christ offers himself so wonderfully. We're going to talk about it a long time, maybe a whole year, and you're already wishing for next year's time when you can come to camp. But what did God do for us? Why, he's given us a taste of himself, of his presence, of his unction.

And now he says, my little children, abide in him. Do you pay the price to abide in that unction, to walk with God every day? In the morning when I wake up, here is Jesus Christ already waking for me. In fact, he wakes me with the kiss of his lips, with his loving gesture, with his great unction from heaven.

And did you read in the Bread of Life? Maybe you haven't seen it yet. An article by Mrs. Robinson. Beautiful.

Sell it every morning that you belong to him and that you're going to live for him that day. Oh, this wonderful gold tried in the fire is ready for every one of us, but it costs something. It costs your life.

It's the exchange of this natural life for his divine life. I wonder how many pursued that wonderful article by Madam Guyon. I wonder, I have wondered ever since I got acquainted with it, why Pentecost has not taken to a short and easy method of prayer.

It's the most classical, the most spiritual declaration of Almighty God, of what prayer means. Prayer has a beginning. It's the call of Jesus.

I stand at the door and knock. And if you get stuck there, you'll never get into heaven. It's to hear his voice.

It's to meditate there day and night. It's to let this wonderful word of Jesus Christ be planted in your heart. The godly man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.

And that fruit is love. The love of God. The joy that never fades.

The peace of God that passes all understanding, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law. Jesus Christ.

It's wonderful you put that in the Bible. Did you really mean to put that in my heart? Really? Why did you write this Bible, I used to say? I don't see anybody living it when I was a boy in the Baptist church. But when I came into Pentecost, I found men and women that lived it.

They actually lived it. You could actually feel rivers of life flow from them. What had happened to them? They had made the exchange.

They had heard the voice of Jesus Christ. And thank God in those days they didn't have that doctrine about Acts 2, 4 being the only evidence of the baptism. They didn't think of tongues or anything.

They thought of Jesus. Youth shall faint and be weary. What consumptive creatures are we? Young people that ought to prophesy.

That ought to be mighty through God like Joseph, like Daniel, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Defying the world and all its lust, like Moses, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. And instead of that, we have to pamper our youth.

We have to have young people's meetings. Thank God for them. All our meetings are young people's meetings.

After all, they want young people's meetings so the boy can meet the girl. Just flesh. What a lot of imps we raise.

Instead of strong soldiers. Beloved, it's time we repented of our sin. It's time we put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man.

Let God burn up our churches. Let God break loose among us. It is time for judgment to begin at the house of God.

Beloved, we're wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. And here's the king of glory with a load of gold tried in the fire, with an overcoming life that laughs at all our foes, that defeats all hell. But we don't pay the price.

Why, when the Son of Man comes, shall he find faith upon this earth? We have developed a method of evangelism that, thank God for all these evangelists. We pray for them all the time. Thank God.

But as Billy Graham said, this is not it. It isn't. He said, until we come to the place where Phine was, when people were smitten with conviction and when they were willing to be crucified with Christ.

And I know that that revival is going on silently in all churches. I know in this meeting there are people that are now ready to give themselves wholeheartedly to God. But I know he's dealing with some that are on the fence.

We need a revival of repentance, beloved child of God. Don't think you'll get there without really paying the price. And you young people, turn your youth into prayer.

Let your young prowess and strength be spent in prayer and in living for God. Give yourself to God and don't give yourself to the world any more than you positively have to. Oh, that's the privilege young people have.

Instead of burning up a youthful infatuation, they call that a love affair, beloved. It's a trap of the devil in many cases. And I don't suppose anybody rejoices more to see young people really fall in love when God brings them together.

Then something happens for the glory of God. But oh, how many broken lives I've seen. How many have said to me, young girl, a pretty girl in Chicago weeping, said, why don't you preachers go through land, up and down and warn the girl not to be rash in accepting fellows.

I said, what good would it do? She was already divorced. And then she laughed through her tears. She said, that's true.

As many as I love, oh, here's the bright groom of heaven. Let him have first chance at your heart. Let him have the first chance at your time, at your day.

And he won't fool you. He will make you rich with something very real. He'll give you beauty for ashes.

The oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness. He'll give you holiness for your uncleanness. And he'll give you real character for that spineless thing that you're ashamed of and would be ashamed of if people knew how you live.

God will make men and women after God's own heart. And if God calls upon you to have a companion through life, let him do the proposing and it'll come out wonderful. What you sow on earth will redound to the glory of God in eternity.

Oh, Jesus, I stand at the door and knock. But when the Son of Man cometh, Jesus Christ, do I have that little faith that I don't pray through? Oh, beloved, to get after God and really, really take this book, these exceeding great and precious promises and get to God. Why does God make these promises? Because he must have a people that are ready for the marriage of the Lamb.

He is going to have those tables filled. Hallelujah. He's gone to prepare a place for us.

And, oh, that house which is from heaven is soon coming down. And all heaven will be wrapped in hallelujahs, in shouts of glory. And we shall shout with them, beloved, if here on earth we have not only made a decision here at camp, but we take it down to the city.

And we turn it into action. And really get to God in real earnest. Oh, how many times I've gone to God and felt as if everything was lost.

There was no hope at all, but I had his word. Oh, beloved, that word is a lamp unto my feet. Glory to God.

And God needs people today who will sell everything for this wonderful glory of the Son of God and for the kingdom of God, who will press into it. Look what the people of this world do in order to gain their objectives. And look what they suffer.

Behind him lay the great Azores, behind the gate of Hercules. Before him not the ghost of shores, before him only shoreless seas. The stout maid said, now must we pray for lo, the very stars are gone.

Brave hat not speak, what shall I say? He said, Ceylon. Ceylon, my men grow mutinous day by day. My men grow ghastly when and weak.

The stout maid thought the home and the sweetheart. A spray of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek. Brave hat not speak, what shall I say? If we sight not but sees at dawn.

Why you shall say at break of day, Ceylon. Ceylon, Ceylon, Ceylon. They sailed, they sailed.

As winds might blow until at last the blanched maid said, why now not even God would know if I and all my men fall dead. These very winds forget their way for God from these dread seas is gone. Brave hat not speak, what shall I say? He said, Ceylon.

They sailed, they sailed. Then said the maid, this mad sea shows his teeth tonight. He curls his lip, he lies in wait with lifted teeth as if to bite.

Brave hat not speak, but one good word. What shall we do when hope is gone? The word leapt like a leaping sword. Ceylon, Ceylon, Ceylon and on.

Then pale and worn he kept his deck and peered through darkness. Ah, that night of all dark nights. And then his speck.

Alight, alight, alight. It grew. A starlit flag unfurled.

It grew to be time's first of dawn. He gained the world. He gave that world its grandest lesson.

On, sail on and you and I will not only gain the world, but heaven and all its glory.

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