

Life & Times of Jesus #09

by Jack Hibbs

The gospel is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes, and it is the only solution to the sinner's condition.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: Joshua 1:8-9, Romans 1:13, Romans 15:23, 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, Galatians 1:16, Colossians 2:9

Topics: "Biblical Authority", "Gospel Centrality"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of getting one's theology from the Bible rather than relying on other sources. He emphasizes that God's revealed word is the ultimate truth and should be the foundation of our beliefs. The speaker also highlights the priority of the gospel, stating that it is our only remedy and should take precedence over other activities or forms of entertainment in church. He concludes by referencing biblical figures like Samuel, Jesus, and Joshua to illustrate the importance of staying focused on God's word and being courageous in our faith.

Transcript

If you grab your Bibles and turn this morning to what has been the theme, and you can just jot this down or turn there if you like, Colossians chapter 2, verse 9. As we come through the series of the life and times of Jesus Christ, we come now this morning to Christ and the sinner. And I want you to listen carefully to this study because it may determine the eternal outcome of your life. Christ and the sinner.

Colossians 2, verse 9 says, For in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form. So if you'll jot that down in your notes, and by now you certainly have it memorized as we've been going through this study together. I'd like you to carefully consider the text that we have before us regarding Christ and the sinner.

And if you'll mark your Bible or turn to Romans chapter 1, verse 13. We'll start there. Because if you're going to talk about Christ and his relationship to the sinner, we'll explain what sinner means in a moment.

So don't leave the building. In fact, ushers, lock the doors. No one leaves, no one moves until I have a chance to describe or give definition to the word sinner.

You might be sitting here and say, you know what, this is not enough fluff for me already. I want to warn you this morning, there will be no fluff in the message. It's a fluffless message.

This is the most important, perhaps, message that we'll ever hear in our lives. That Jesus Christ died to save sinners. There's no other message that we have in this world to give.

It is a popular message. I say popular in that it may be pleasant to some ears. We certainly know that it's not pleasant to other ears.

But it's a popular message because the gospel message goes forward and decisions are made. It's one of the very few, if possibly, I think, maybe the only message where you can make a decision and it will determine the living of your life. You might say, well, I don't know if I agree with that.

I made a decision to be a CPA or a banker or a homemaker or whatever and it's done me quite well. Or you might say it's done me quite ruin. I'm not talking about, listen, temporal decisions like that that we make in this life.

I'm talking about a decision that every human being is confronted with in this world and that is to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Romans chapter 1 verse 13. The wonderful Apostle Paul, he says, I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you, but I have been prevented from doing so until now, in order that I might have a harvest among you.

Just as I have heard among the other Gentiles or have had among the other Gentiles. I am obligated both to the Greeks and to the non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome or Chino Hills or Norco or even Rubidoux, wherever you might be from.

I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes. First for the Jew and then for the Gentile. For in the gospel of righteousness from God is revealed a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, the righteous will live by faith.

Paul's announcement concerning the gospel. If you don't mind, if you'll turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul speaks about this gospel to the church at Corinth, to the believers that are there. And he's talking about this message, this thing called the gospel.

The word gospel means good news. Yet why in the world when we give the gospel, if we truly give the gospel, do people reject it and get offended and upset with it? It is good news to all those who will listen. It is good news to all those who will receive it.

But this same gospel that can bring you eternal life and set you free and is in fact free, but don't call it cheap. It's cost God all that he has. This very same gospel can lead to the eternal damnation of the soul who rejects.

The responsibility is not upon the preacher this morning as this will be evangelistic. Preaching is for evangelism. Teaching is for the church.

This is a both teaching I would say, but a strong emphasis on preaching this morning. The gospel of God, which Paul says is the power to salvation. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives us the definition of what the gospel is.

It's not a convenient compartmentalized little sermonette for Christianettes. It's a life changing message. You know when the gospel is preached, support groups are not necessary.

Care groups are not really that important. Counseling, dare I say, I can't believe I just said this. Counseling is not important.

If the word of God is taught and received and believed on, lives are changed radically. In fact the person who was dependent upon counseling now becomes the counselor to those who don't know the word of God. Look in your own life and what God has done in your life.

God has changed you. And you've gone out and through the power of the Holy Spirit changed the lives of others. How does that happen? By the preaching of the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul says, Moreover brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I have preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I received. That's how the gospel is propagated.

You receive it, then you pass it on. He says, I first of all have passed on to you that which I have received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. The Bible.

The gospel. Paul says, The greatest thing that we could ever do, and Paul says, The thing that I've learned from Christ myself, I have been faithful to pass on to you, and that is the preaching of the gospel. It has been said concerning the delivery of the gospel, the message of the gospel.

And listen, I know some of you are going to tune this right out this morning. You're not interested. I wouldn't say... Actually, this is first service.

Every one of you are interested. It's second and third. Pray for them.

It's been said that preaching the gospel is an impossible task. And it is absolutely impossible. If we are going to hold true to the gospel of God, which demands that mankind be identifying himself as a sinner, you've got to admit in worldly wisdom, that it doesn't start off quite on the right foot.

You would think according to human logic and reason, that the gospel would come in with velvet. That the gospel would come into like the football game. I was at Western Christians football game last night.

Their homecoming game. And every time they would make a touchdown, and they made quite a few last night. You know, they played two... It was two Christian football teams.

I don't know what happened. The other team, they're Christian. They didn't score one point.

The other Christian team, sad to say, partisan, our team, scored 39 points. Who prayed the longest? Is the moral of the... No, I'm kidding. No, can you imagine? I was saying, that's a long ride home for Hesperia last night.

That was terrible. But every time somebody would make a touchdown for a Western Christian, the cheerleaders would throw candy into the stands. And if you were looking or not, you got candy.

Maybe we should give them candy to receive the gospel. Maybe that the gospel is so offensive. And I don't mean in a bad way.

I mean that it says in the face of the sinner, you need Christ and you need to come to Him and have your sins exchanged for saintly hood that only God can do. He gives that to you freely. If we don't do that, then what lies ahead of us is a Christless eternity.

That message is not palatable unless the Holy Spirit... Listen, you see, I win. You may write me a letter later and say, I don't like you now. That's okay.

The thing is, I win. Because if I'm, like Billy Graham says, faithful to preach the gospel, he says, decisions will be made. Some will be yes, some will be no.

And when the gospel is preached, the saint is encouraged and strengthened and says, thank you, Jesus, for dying for me and setting me free. And the one who is stiff-necked and rebellious says, I hate this message. I'm going to go, because I have this hunger to be religious, to some other church, to some other place.

And that's sad. Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. It's not my voice.

It's not the voice of the singers. An impossible task. It is an impossible task.

Preaching the gospel is a silly thing unless the Spirit of God is at work. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 17, Paul says this. He says, for Christ did not send me to baptize.

That upsets Baptists. People say, well, you must be baptized to get into the kingdom of heaven. It doesn't say that in the Bible.

Should you be baptized? Absolutely. Do we baptize? Absolutely. Paul says, though, I didn't come to be baptized.

I mean, to baptize people. That's not my calling. What is his calling? What's the great apostle's calling? He says, but to preach the gospel.

The good news. That Jesus came and died. He says, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

So we know now immediately that the gospel and the cross cannot be separated. I would venture to say, certainly in our Christian bookstore, that we sell more crosses than any other jewelry item. I wouldn't doubt if there are more crosses sold than any other type of jewelry item that goes about the neck.

But do people know what the cross means? Whatever the cross means, it's inseparable from the gospel. Whatever the gospel in its power provides cannot come without the cross. Paul says, God called me to preach the gospel, not with words of wisdom, lest the cross of Christ should become ineffective.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But to those who are being saved, it's the power of God. The cross.

What is the significance of the cross? Has it become so maybe archaic in our thinking as Christians? Do we not meditate on the cross? And on the power of the cross, John Stott wrote a great book, *The Cross*. You ought to buy that book. Every Christian should have that book.

The Cross. We're coming up in the not too distant future on Easter. And you're going to hear and have available all of these books to buy by Max Licato and others on the cross.

Great reading. But if the cross is not effective in our lives, listen Christian, if the cross is not effective in our lives, we are losing our Christian witness and our advancement as Christ, as Christ soldiers in this world. We're losing.

Because if the gospel is not in our message, then we're lying to our friends. If we're not telling our grandmothers, our grandfathers, our children, Jesus died for you. He died on the cross to set sinners free.

Do you realize that if you mention the word sinner, people get upset unless they know it. I want to give you a very quick example. I can say this because she's a long way from here right now.

My sister, nearly three years ago, I was teaching at a college, got a phone call on my cell phone. Your sister is dying. She has six months to live.

They just found this out. She had no idea. On the way home from the college, I altered my course home.

I went straight to her home. And I had given her the gospel though she didn't remember or she didn't understand or she made fun of it at the time. Many, many times before, both my brother and I, over the course of years, she wouldn't listen.

It's foolishness. And we didn't talk much anymore. We didn't have much in common anymore.

But that's not the point. The point is, did I love my sister enough to tell her that if she didn't bow her knee to the King of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, who hung on a cross, that she would spend a Christless eternity in hell? I pulled up to her house and I sat down as she was awaiting my arrival out on her porch. And I said, first thing to her, I've heard the news.

And for the next few moments, I didn't know it would be three hours, for the next few moments, I'm gonna ask you to forget the fact that I'm your brother. And I want you to listen to everything I'm gonna show you in the Bible. And I went to Exodus chapter 20 with the Ten Commandments and started right there.

And by the end of that moment, or that time together, her heart broke. And she didn't have to be convinced of her sin. She knew she was a sinner.

And she said, what do I do? What do I do about this news? You might say, this is ridiculous and you're a little emotional about it. You know what? You bet I am. Without the cross, there's no heaven.

Without the cross, there's no sinner being converted to a saint. Without the cross, there's no eternity for us in His presence. And churches by and large in our age don't want to mention the cross.

And yet without the preaching of the cross, there's no salvation. There's no hope for mankind. How is it that coming to the understanding of what the sinner can experience can set you free.

And you, again, maybe here this morning and you're uncomfortable and you're wondering, okay, isn't it like, you know, it's 8.30, aren't you gonna stop? It's time to go home, don't you think? I know you might be anxious. I heard a song by, of all people, or all groups, Depeche Mode. And this band said, I can feel the discomfort in your feet or in your seat.

He says, you've got shackles around your feet. They said, I can feel the discomfort that's in your seat and it's even in your heart. And you wear your guilt like a halo in reverse.

Interesting words, don't you think? From some pagan rock group. What are they speaking about? Mankind, as we'll see in a moment, is under the shadow of guilt. Is that to destroy you? Or is there a God that's been reaching out to you and this guilt that you've been trying to appease and put away and hide? Is God trying to convert that guilt for you to look in the mirror and say, Oh, Lord, what must I do to be saved? And my friend, if you've experienced salvation, it only comes through the embracing of the cross.

And to those in this room who have embraced the cross, they've been set free. And we know why we wear it around our neck if in fact we do. Those of you who are into jewelry stuff, you know why you wear a cross.

Unlike Madonna who says there's something sexy about a naked man hanging on a cross. How sick! But the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. May God save Madonna.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? May God save them all. So before I give you the first point, I want to give you the point that means the most to me and God's pointing to me straight in my face in preparing this, is that I feel like I have an impossible task. And I've already weighed the balance out to see if this is going to be popular or not or good for church growth.

Do you realize the moment that temptation enters my mind, I'm sinning? Well, how's the body going to take this? The body of Christ will take it fine. It's the people who want to play church that's not going to take it fine. Joshua, God says to Joshua, and you guys are an expert in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 1, verse 8, This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, and that you may observe to do all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you, Joshua, be strong? Why? Because he wasn't strong.

Be of good courage. Why? He didn't have any courage. Do not be afraid.

Why? He was scared to death. Do not be dismayed. Why? He was made.

He was dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Paul, the apostle, he writes to the church in Rome.

He says, I'm coming. I'm coming to you, and I can't wait. I'm going to preach the gospel in Rome.

This church, you guys, are convicting to me and to many people because you are evangelistic maniacs. You're preachers. On Thursdays and Tuesdays and other nights of the week, many of you, many of you, by week's end, over a hundred of you go out every week and go door to door and give out the truth what the cults are willing to do to go door to door to give out the lie.

And we see anywhere from 5 to 20 people a week on the streets, in their homes, at their doors, making decisions for Christ. Because you go out. Why? You've got something to say.

And that is Christ Jesus died on the cross. First thing we see this morning, and we'll go through these quickly, and you say, oh, Jack, you're lying to us. You're lying.

No, I'm not. We'll go quickly. Christ and the sinner.

The sinner's condition. The sinner's condition. We'll look at three of them.

The first thing that we're going to realize, though, first of all, before we look, is that spiritually the sinner's hopeless. Before you head out of the building, jot this down. It's hopeless.

The sinner's condition is hopeless spiritually. The word sinner, as you've been told before, it's an Olympic term. We get all bent out of shape.

Words like, in fact, last night we came home from that football game, and I forgot that we had our alarm on, and I opened the door, and I set it to instant, you know. So when the alarm goes, as soon as you just jar the door, the woo-woo-woo-woo, you know, and the phone's ringing, and should we, you know, should we call the, should we send the police? You know, and you got to give them the code, you know. And so the phone rings, and you turn the alarm off, the phone rings, and yes, this is the alarm company, and what's the code? What's the special code? You know, if you have an alarm in your home, you have a special code.

And our special code is repent. And so the alarm went off, the phone rings, and the guy says, what's the code? And I said repent, and he goes, ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. Well, what's the deal about repent? Well, it's so, it's such an old term.

I've heard it maybe once on Little House on the Prairie. Nobody uses that word, yet it's the first word of the gospel. Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Repent from what? Repent from our condition. The word sinner, the Olympic term, means to pull back the arrow, let it fly, and to miss the bullseye. That's what the word sinner means.

In the Olympics in Grecian days, the guy would say, let fly! And if the guy missed, the judge would yell back at the archer's stand, sinner! That guy didn't throw down his bow and arrow and say, you hurt my feelings! He wasn't offended. Christians won't mention the word sinner to other people anymore because we're going to offend them. So we pat them on the back and comfort them and never tell them the truth even if they'd be on their deathbed until they slip into a Christless eternity.

And then we come to church and wonder why we feel so bad because we didn't tell them the truth. And all of us, as Paul says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Why did he say that? Because he's tempted to be ashamed of the gospel.

Paul is just like you, just like me. He fought that temptation. And he says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

There comes a point when you're so convinced. Paul says, I can't wait to get to Rome. Can you imagine? Caesar, scoot over! I've got something to say.

The spiritual condition of mankind is hopeless. You say, Jack, I don't know if I'd like to hear this. Then why did Jesus Christ come? Why did God send Himself and His Son like this to die for mankind? Why didn't He just send a good man? Why didn't He just use Gandhi? Because it had to be God.

No man could die for the salvation of mankind. It had to be the God-man, Jesus Christ. Why? Because mankind's condition, the sinner's condition is hopeless spiritually.

There's a spiritual hopelessness. Paul said earlier, as we read, I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you. But I've been prevented from doing so until now in order that I may have a harvest among you.

A harvest meaning somethings to be gathered in, somethings to be redeemed from the earth. That's who we are. We're not gonna be redeemed by the things that we own or the people that we know.

I love what someone has said. You know, you can't get a good job these days unless you know somebody. Because so many people, praise the Lord, so many people are so skilled.

And so, you know, for that one job, there are a thousand people pursuing that one job. I heard of a job opening for one position. And they narrowed it down to two thousand applicants.

True story. One man got it. So many people qualified.

There's no qualifications that the human soul, that the human spirit has that warrants us acceptance before God. Except that we come to Him and say, Lord, I am helplessly lost as a sinner. I have missed the target in my life.

I am not perfect. And I need You. In Luke chapter 4 verse 42, the Bible says, Now when it was day, Jesus departed and went into a deserted place.

And the crowd sought Him and came to Him. Isn't that what every preacher would want to have happen? The crowd sought Him. Obviously Luke saw this.

He wrote it down. The crowd is following us and seeking Jesus. And it says, And they tried to keep Him from leaving, but He said to them, Listen, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also because for this purpose I have been sent.

And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee. Preaching. Why? Because man's spiritual condition is hopeless without the preaching of the gospel message that Jesus came and died and rose again from the dead.

We're lost. Christ and the sinner, the message is this. He has come to give us life and that more abundantly.

But as a Christian, we don't tell people straight up always on this. The second thing we see is that the sinner's condition is consciously guilty. Listen everyone, this is very important.

Every human deals with this. As a Christian, let me just talk to the Christian this morning. When we tell people about Christ, know something.

That that person that you're talking to, they're under guilt. They may hide it. They may disguise it, put makeup on it.

They may drink to keep it from showing. They may do a line of coke to keep it from appearing. They may have relationships to keep it from... Listen, know this.

When Paul, the little scrawny man that he was when he went to Rome or when he went anywhere. He says, I didn't come to you with wisdom and power of words. He came with the power of the gospel of

Christ.

Why? According to church history, as you know, if we would see Paul today, we'd laugh at him. He'd be a geek. Par excellence.

Little tiny, little weaselly looking man. He didn't even have great speaking skills. Remember, Apollos was known for speaking.

But they said, boy is Paul mighty in letter. And then he shows up and they go, who are you? I'm Paul. I remember when David Hawking was in this pulpit.

It's pretty intimidating to preach after David Hawking teaches, you know. His voice sounds like God's voice. He's about the size of God, I would imagine.

Don't you think, Paul, God would select a man like Paul or a man unlike Paul? Big, big, big, boisterous guy. Samuel thought, surely the Lord is picking this son of Jesse. No.

He says, Jesse, don't you have any more kids? God said, not every one of these boys. Big strapping, strong. You know, these guys, who know, you know, they're contractors, they're, you know.

Nope. Well, something's wrong here. God sent him in a mission.

He goes, well, I've got one more boy, but he's out in the field tending sheep. He's a little boy. He's the baby of the family.

He's just a runt. Bring him here. And the moment he showed up, God said to Samuel, He said, Samuel, you anoint this kid here.

I don't judge according to the outward appearance of men. I judge according to the heart. That's the guy that I have anointed.

Jesus says, when the crowd's pressing. It's funny, because you see these things on TV. Oh, there's a crowd coming.

Rent the stadium another night. There's a crowd coming. Keep the TV rolling.

There's a crowd coming. Get more chairs. There's a crowd coming.

Jesus says, let's get out of here. Why? Because I've come into this world for one reason. To preach the gospel.

And I've got to do it. And for a Christian, you and I, we're to tell people about Christ. What's our purpose for living? I thought it was to give my life to DuPont or IBM or Cisco or whoever you're working for.

Raising these kids. I'm so... That is the greatest evangelistic field. I tell you, if you can win your kids to Christ, you can win the world to Christ.

I'm serious. Your kids see you every day. And they're smart enough to know what a hypocrite looks like, you know.

What a great calling we have. Consciously, man's guilty. And man knows it.

And you as a Christian, I want you to know that they know that they're guilty. You used to feel guilty until Christ set you free. That's why we go to them with compassion.

We don't knock on their door. Hi. You wretch.

You poor, lonely, lost sinner. You. No, man.

Our heart's weeping before we even knock on their door. We know that if they're rejecting us, they're not rejecting us. They're rejecting Christ.

Have you accepted Christ? Have you said, yes, you know what? Man, this is convicting. It's convicting to me first. I want you to know that.

But if it's convicting, it's just the Lord put in approval to the fact that number one, you're a Christian. Number two, there's not much time left. We need to tell people.

And they really want and need to be told, Jesus loves you, and He knows you're a sinner. I know you're trying to hide it. He knows you're a sinner.

Consciously, man walks around in the condemnation. If that were not true, there'd be no drug problem. If that were not true, there'd be very, very, or I should say, much less sin in the world than there is now, if man was not guilty.

I was watching, as I'm a documentary addict, on World War II. And they're interviewing this Navy gunner. And he was talking about how many Japanese planes he had shot down.

And the reporter asked him, an old man now, he asked him, how do you feel about that? And he said, well, it was war. And I had to do this. The reporter acknowledged that.

And there's no other question asked. It was silent for a moment. And then that gunner said, I do everything I can to not think about where I sent those men that I shot down.

Even though he was fighting and God, don't email me about this. Read your Bible. God sanctions war.

He doesn't approve of it. He sanctions it. He knows how goofed up we are and we go to war with each other.

He's allowed that in his book because of man's depravity. He doesn't like it. Here's a man who's under the sanction of war, shoots down other men and yet he goes to bed at night at ease.

We've talked to men in the streets of Russia who killed people in Afghanistan. And they're tormented. People who've had affairs, people who've cheated, people who've defrauded their children or whatever it is, whatever the case might be, guilt.

You see, that's why the Ten Commandments, by the way, is so powerful to the self-righteous. The Ten Commandments just whittles them away. To the person who's already broken by the holiness of God, you don't throw them the Ten Commandments.

You might hit them in the head. You give them the grace of God because they're already broken. They know that they're a sinner.

But mankind by and large, the witnesses in their head, I'm guilty, I'm guilty, I'm guilty. You'll ask them, are you guilty? I'm not guilty. I'm fine.

Let's just be real and honest. Mankind is guilty until they come to Jesus Christ. That's why when you come to Christ, you just, my gosh, what is this? It's gone.

You're free. You're free. Amazing.

Continuing on. The sinner's condition, spiritually hopeless, consciously guilty, and physically condemned. When I say physically condemned, I mean body, soul, and spirit.

I mean the whole nine yards. Everything. The Bible says that there'll be a resurrection of both the damned and the redeemed.

The Bible says in the book of Daniel chapter 12 and John chapter 5, beginning in verse 28, that all mankind will live forever. Did you know that? All of mankind will live forever. Some will be resurrected to everlasting damnation, and some will be resurrected to everlasting life.

Where will you be in eternity? Let me ask you this question. Assuming we're all Christians this morning, you are in the church where there's schools of evangelism taking place here weekly. Do you know how to lead someone to Jesus Christ? Or do you say to them, you know what? Listen, listen.

Do you know what? Can you just admit that Jesus is real? Yeah, sure, Jesus is real. Can you say that He's God and Lord? Yeah, sure, He's God and Lord. That He rose from the dead? Listen, yeah, He rose from the dead.

Can you say that He's coming back? Yeah, He's coming back. Do you believe it? Yeah, sure, I believe it. Do you know you can almost give a perfect presentation, but if you leave out the fact that they're sinners, they will be illegitimate children still when you're done with them? Because unless they come to the feet of Jesus and grab hold of His ankles and say, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, they're lost.

And you say, well, that's a little bit of legalism. It's pure gospel. There's no legalism in it at all.

You see, the church in the 20th and on the brink of the 21st century is so pathetic and so weak that we'd rather have larger numbers than tell people the truth. And the fact of the matter is that we will stand before the Lord and He's going to say, what did you tell people about my son? Moving on quickly to this second point. This morning, the sinner's responsibility.

The sinner's responsibility is to count the cost. Jesus never, never, never coerced people into the kingdom. In fact, I bet you if we were traveling with Christ, we would have been a little bit upset.

Check it out. Jesus is walking on the road and there comes one running to Him. Listen, running, kneeling down and crying out.

Not crying out loud, but crying out. He didn't come kneeling and running and Jesus says, for crying out loud, who's this guy? He came crying. We know from Matthew, Mark and Luke, He's the rich young ruler.

He comes running. He's heard about Jesus. He comes running up.

Falls. Good master. What must I do to inherit? That's all He's into, is inheriting things.

Rich young ruler. How can I get some of this eternal life stuff you're talking about? Jesus knew exactly what to do. He didn't say, the grace of God has been shed abroad.

Jesus says, you know the law. You're Jewish. And Jesus went immediately to the first commandment.

That's what led Him to the Christ. The first thing that is being said in that conversation is the commandments of the ten that lead to man's dealing with man. That's why He said, as Jesus was talking to Him, He says, all these things I've kept from my youth.

Then Jesus goes to the very first commandment and it shot Him down. Because this rich young ruler had gods in front of God. Now, I don't know, if I would have been Peter, I would have said, Lord, I mean, cut him some slack, will you? Maybe in a couple of weeks he'll catch on.

Let's visit him again. Let's get his phone number. Let's get his address.

Jesus said to him, listen, go sell everything that you have. Is everybody awake right now? I'm going to ask you a question. I'm excited about this.

Because this sets me free. Jesus, why in the world did Jesus say to him, go sell all that you have and come and follow me. Is that the gospel? That is not the gospel.

If you sell everything that you have, is that how you get into heaven? No. What was Jesus digging at? He had gods in His life. Things.

Toys. Maybe He had a donkey for every day of the week. Different color.

He was rich. He had His youth. He had authority.

He was a ruler. Jesus says, go sell all that you have and come and follow me. And it says that the man went away sorrowful.

And it says Jesus too was also sorry and sad. Our commander didn't pipe up and say, can you lower the standard, Jesus, a little. Come on, cut the man some slack.

No, Jesus is saying, come up here. Come up here. Come on.

Jesus this morning is saying to you, you finally, you must make the decision for me. You've trafficked around Christianity. You've played the game.

Come on. Make the commitment. But I'm not going to play with you.

My goodness, He said, He would say perhaps if you could see what's on the other side of this veil of temporal life. There is a world of angels rooting for you and trying to convince you and protect you as I try to reach out to you by my Holy Spirit. And there's a host of hellish demons reaching and clawing and screaming.

And like Jesus said to Peter, it's amazing to me, Jesus said to Peter, Peter, Satan came to me and he asked me about you by name. He wants you to sift you. He wants to sift you like wheat.

You know what that means? To be sifted like wheat in Israel and Palestine throughout that area. They take a log and they ram nails into the log and they strap it to a donkey or an ox and they pull it all around

the grain. The blades are spinning.

The nails are churning into the crop until all the thing is broken up. That's the word Jesus used. He said, hey Peter, Satan came and he asked me.

He asked me about you personally by name. If he could sift you like wheat. And Jesus, you said no way, right? And the gospel says, Jesus says, when you come back around, strengthen your brethren.

Wow. Count the cost. Jesus says, pick up your cross and follow me.

Pick up the cross and follow me, he says. The sinner's responsibility is to make a decision. Count the cost.

And then be a man, will you? Be a woman. Be an intelligent listener. And decide.

No more be in the fence. Jesus says, I am the way. Definite article in front each time.

The way, the truth, the life. There is no other way to the Father but through me. Well, I'm just going to take a little neutral stand.

In the 90s, I can do that. The Bible says, you're a fool. Well, maybe after I die, I'll decide.

The Bible says, it's too late. Make a decision. Thirdly, the sinner's responsibility is to turn to the truth.

God knows that we're able to come to the truth. He knows that we're able to respond. And we as Christians both being encouraged by this message, I hope, and being challenged to go out and tell people.

But maybe they're the non-Christian this morning. God has given you the ability to make the choice about it all. To turn to the truth.

I found a perfect example in the mailbox. Magazine, recently, again, on evolution. Oh, evolution.

Evolution is true. Even all the experts you saw a couple of weeks ago are saying it's not true. And then, Adam and Eve showed up in your mailbox.

Did you see them? I think it's US News and World Report. New discoveries about the Bible. And, you know, it's just... They're starting earlier every year.

Usually, they start attacking the Bible like around Christmas. A couple of weeks before Christmas and Easter. They're starting a little early.

I just warn you, don't get your theology from magazines. I don't care if the guy is the professor of religion from Harvard. That means diddly.

And diddly in Hebrew means nada. Nothing. That's a joke.

Get your theology from the Bible. But turn to the truth. Make the decision.

What makes truth? God's revealed word is truth. This book does not contain truth. It is, in fact, truth.

Every moment of it. Turn to it. It's reasonable.

It's responsible. According to Romans chapter 12 verses 1 and 2, it's the only smart thing to do. You have nothing smarter and more intelligent to do.

For sure. Certainly. Third, the gospel's priority.

And we'll be done with this. The gospel's priority. The first thing that we see is that it's our only remedy.

The gospel priority. Listen. Not skits at church.

Or even skits on the street. Not some ragtime band. Not video presentation.

Not stage lighting. The gospel is the only remedy of man's soul. Christ in the center.

He loves us and has loved us so much that he came himself. He sent no one to take his place. He came and did it himself.

Don't you appreciate that? Have you ever had something really big pending and an assistant shows up? What is this? Well, you know, I'm acting on behalf of the corporation and... Well, what does Fred Flintstone say about this? Well, you know, I talked to him a couple of weeks ago and... Oh, Jesus says, angels, step back. Move out of the way. And he crawls through Mary's womb.

Into the world. For us. The gospel.

Let's give them the gospel. 1 Corinthians 15. As we saw verses 1 through 4. Jesus Christ came from heaven.

He died. He rose again from the dead. He came to set sinners free.

To save them. To save them from their sins. Listen.

It's our only power. It is our only power, says the scripture. It's our only remedy.

It's the only power. 2 Corinthians chapter 6. We're almost done. Quickly.

2 Corinthians chapter 6. Bible says, verse 1. As God's fellow workers, we urge you to receive the grace or not to receive the grace of God in vain. Listen carefully, he's saying. For he says, in the time of my favor, I've heard you.

And in the day of salvation, I've helped you. I tell you. Now is the time of God's favor.

And today is the day of salvation. Well, you know, I think about it tomorrow. I'm sure that's one of Satan's greatest tricks.

Jesus said in John 1.11. He says, he came to his own, and his own received him not. But to as many as received him. To he gave them power to be called children of God to all those who believe in him.

Paul the apostle said concerning this great power. He says, woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. I like to say this.

Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel. If you're a Christian in here, the Bible applies to us. Woe unto us if we preach not the gospel.

What are we doing? What are we doing? If we're not preaching the gospel. It's the only remedy. It's the only power.

It's the only message. What are we going to tell them? We can fill churches with shows. We can fill churches with all kinds of things.

What's the message? The message is the cross. If the Christian today or professing Christian today cannot answer the question. On what basis are you saved? I have serious grave doubts of their position in Christ.

Why? On what basis are you saved? It's the cross. It's the cross. And I want to end with this.

Listen. The scripture says that the preaching of the cross is foolishness. To those who are perishing.

But it is the power of God unto salvation to all those who believe. To the Jew first and to the Gentile. That means there's only one way for the Jew and the Gentile.

Regardless of some stuff you've heard on TV recently. There's a couple ways to get saved. No.

Turn that guy off. The cross. Without it, there's no salvation.

When you and I are witnessing to people. You start to get dry in your mouth. And get a little tensed up.

Because you hear in your head the Holy Spirit saying. Get to the cross. To the cross.

Tell them. You know this is true. If you're just going to tell them little sweet lies.

Nice lies. Oh. You look so nice today.

Oh you're so sweet. You're so good. Do you believe in God? Yes.

Oh praise the Lord sister. Hallelujah. What does that mean? Are you a sinner? The person who is ready for the kingdom will say.

Yes I am. Or the Christian who knows will say. I am a sinner.

But Christ Jesus died for my sins on the cross. If you're lost. You'll say.

I'll have nothing to do with this message. I wish you would shut it now. And I'm going to in about 35 seconds.

But you know what? I pray not. But in eternity. God may remind you of this message.

My hands will be cleared. The gospel will have gone out. And you will have decided.

Jesus said. You're either for me. Or you're against me.

No man put in his hand the plow. And looking back. Is fit for the kingdom of God.

You know why? When you look back. Holding a plow. I don't hold a plow.

But. You ever look back. When you're driving your car on the freeway.

At 150 miles an hour. We're in Germany. You can look back on our little freeways here.
But you go to Germany. And look back at 150. And you're in some other country.
You look back. And the wheel goes like this. Don't look back.
Are you freed? To the Christian this morning. That's like. Yes.
To those of you who are in the balances. It's tragic news today. Christ in the center.
He's come to set us free. And all those who will put their trust in him. Shall not be ashamed.
Let's pray. Holy Father. Awesome God.
We ask you that you would descend upon our souls. And Lord. In the hearing of this.
Via the sanctuary. Or by radio. Or by tape.
That wherever. A man. A woman.
A child. Maybe. That you would.
Like. A police officer. Arrest.
Their. Soul. And stop them.
In their tracks. And say. What will you do.
With my son. Jesus. Died on the cross.
To. Save mankind. From their sin.
And rebellion. Of which we were all guilty. And by faith.
In him. And his work. Alone.
Can we experience. The liberation. Of the tyranny.
And tragedy. Of sin. In the chain.
And the ball. Of the grave. This morning.
We ask you Lord. That you might touch the heart. Of those who are in the balance.
Who are not sure. Who are trusting maybe in their own performance. Or work.
Other membership of some church. Other performance in some act. And how you would say as you said
to Paul.
At the church. At Galatia. How you have fallen from grace.
You. Who seek to go about to establish your own righteousness. Lord free us.
Father I pray for the heart and for the soul. That does not yet know you. That they would not rest this night.

That in your wonderful. Loving and incredible embrace. You would embrace them tonight.

In such a way. That they would not sleep. Until they say Jesus.

I give up. I quit. And I come to you.

Thank you Lord. For the power. Of our salvation.

Which is the gospel. Founded upon. And rooted in the cross.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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