

# Who Is the Idiot?

by Jack Hyles

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*The concept of an 'idiot' is redefined in the Bible as someone who trusts in their own righteousness, rather than God's plan of salvation.*

**Duration:** 37:01

**Scripture:** Proverbs 28:26, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:49, Romans 10:1-3, Ephesians 2:8-9

**Topics:** "Salvation Plan", "Faith In Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells a story about an old man who has painted and cleaned his house in hopes of selling it. However, when potential buyers come, they reveal that they actually plan to tear down the house and build a new one. The preacher uses this story to illustrate how people often misunderstand God's plan for salvation. He emphasizes that God has already paid for our salvation through Jesus' death on the cross, and all we need to do is trust in Him. The preacher encourages the listeners to focus on the needs of others and the work of Christ, rather than being self-centered.

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## Transcript

The other day I was out preaching in a western state, and it seems like that's the only place I've been lately, however, I go east tomorrow. But a very refined looking fellow called me off to the side. He said, Dr. Hiles, I'd like to ask you some questions.

And he put some questions to me, the like of which I have never heard before. He got me out in front of the church in a Lincoln Continental. A fellow out somewhere, I was at, not long ago, asked another fellow if he had eye trouble, and he said, well, do you have cataract? He said, no, I have a Lincoln Continental, is what I have.

But he said, he got me out in a Lincoln Continental, a beautiful car. And the fellow had a diamond stud on his tire that must have been two or three carats. Very, very distinguished looking fellow.

He said, Dr. Hiles, can I ask you a question, too? I said, what is it? He said, I've heard some things about you. Is it true that your rich uncle offered you a partnership in his business that would have been worth \$250,000 to you? I said, that's true. He said, is it true that you turned it down? I said, that's true.

He shook his head. He said, is it true that a businessman offered you an apartment building that's worth \$100,000? I said, that's true. He said, is it true that you turned it down? I said, that's true.

He shook his head. He said, Dr. Hiles, I understand that your salary is \$8,450 a year, plus a place to live and bills. Is that true? I said, that's true.

He said, is it true that your deacons have tried to pay you \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year for a number of years? Is that true? I said, that's true. He shook his head. He said, is it true that you work every day? I said, that's true.

He looked at me, and I've never had anybody say this to me exactly like this before. He said, if you don't mind me saying this, I'd like to make one comment. I said, what is it? He said, you're an idiot.

So I got his teeth out between my fists, wiped the blood off. But he said that. He just looked at me and said, you are an idiot.

He said, what retirement plan do you have? I said, it's called a non-retirement plan. I don't plan to retire. He said, do you have any money? Now what he said, I hear you give it all away when you've got as little as I've got.

It's not a great sacrifice. But I went back to my room, and I got to thinking, am I an idiot? It's true. Honestly, this is true.

Now honestly, this is not bragging. In fact, maybe I am an idiot. But I could be if God let me live.

I could be right now without having done anything. I've taken everything that's been offered to me and taken the profits off my books, which have now passed the three million mark in circulation, sales. If I had taken just the profits off my books and just what's been offered me, I could be a millionaire today.

And I got to thinking, he told me I was an idiot. By the way, nobody had ever told me that before. Now thousands of folks have told other people.

But nobody ever said, you're an idiot. And if he hadn't been so rich, I'd have hit him. But I thought maybe he might have given me something.

But anyway, I never had really thought. And so I went back to my room, and I got to thinking. Now really, it does look sort of stupid, doesn't it? I mean, I have no money saved for a rainy day.

I mean, a sprinkle would really ruin me. A cloudy day would hurt some. And if I were to have a stroke and couldn't speak, I'd be in trouble.

As humanly speaking, I'd be in trouble. Then I got to thinking about Brother Vineyard. When I thought about idiots, that's the first person that popped in my mind.

I got to thinking about it. You know, you stop and think now. Now, you don't know this fellow like I do.

And that's to your advantage. But really, this guy could make \$200,000 a year in the world. No joke.

I mean, he could run most any company of any size. Now, here he is pushing old buses off to bring a bunch of kids to Sunday school so they can write dirty words on our walls. Think about that for a minute.

You are an idiot. I mean, humanly speaking, it sounds like it, doesn't it? Then I got to thinking about Dr. Billings. I'm sure you understand how that applies.

The truth is, all of my staff members came before me immediately. And I thought of the word idiot. I thought of Dr. Billings.

Here's a fellow. This morning, for example, he stood seven feet tall. You folks that weren't in here, when Max Palmer was introduced, Billings came walking out on stilts with long trousers, measured over seven feet tall, I'm sure.

But there's no doubt in anybody's mind but that this man could be making a couple hundred thousand dollars a year in the world. He plays 14 musical instruments. I mean, a jug, French harp, a saw, and 11 others.

But you stop and think about it. Here these fellows are. You take Brother Fisk.

Let's take Brother Colston. Either one of them, if they were out in the world, could make half what they're making now. There are circuses, you know.

But now, honestly, I got to thinking. So I decided that I'd look up the word idiot in the Bible and find out, really, who the idiot is. So I got my great New Testament.

I don't know much about it. But I have one because it looks good on the shelf. I got my Greek New Testament out and I started tracing the word idiot.

There was a Greek word, originally, pronounced, we'd call it, idia. I-D-I-A, idia. It meant one's own things.

One's own things. In other words, if I said, these are mine, they'd be my idia. My own things is what the word meant.

From that word came the word idios, or idios, or idios, we'd better say, idios. Which means one's own. And then from that word came the word idiotus.

We'd pronounce it idiotus, or idiotus. Which was a word that became, a word that described a private kind of person. A person that didn't mix and mingle a great deal.

That didn't mind the affairs of anybody but himself. He was only concerned about his own affairs. You know people like that.

They're a private kind of person. You know people, they want to be alone. They want to take care of their own things.

And you leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone. And they called that kind of person an idiotus. A private person.

One who lives for himself. But now listen carefully. A trend was noticed.

A trend was noticed. That this word idia, which means one's own things. Or idios, which means one's own.

Became the word idiotus, which means a private kind of person. One who lives for himself and nobody else. He wants to help nobody.

He wants nobody to help him. He wants to be around nobody. He just lives for his own things.

Lives for his own self. A trend was noticed. And that is that these people who were idiots.

Now by the way, the word idiotus in those days, or idiot, had nothing to do with somebody that was wrong up here. Except they began to notice a tendency. That the people that went wrong up here, came almost exclusively from the crowd that minded only their own things.

Consequently, when a person would start minding his own things, folks became concerned about him. They said, if you don't watch out, you're going to be an idiot. And that's where the word came from.

Idiot. Idiot. Which means a person minds his own things.

And when you do mind your own things, neurosis, emotional disturbances. Listen. Everybody who walks in my office having mental problems, talks just like that.

About nobody but himself. Body's there. Brother Brown, you know this is true in your counseling.

They walk in, have a problem. Yes, I have an emotional disturbance. Well, what is it? And boy, that's it.

Unless you interrupt, that's all you'll say. And for as long as they're there, it's, I feel this way. I feel so and so.

This happened to me. This is how I feel. And they go from one psychiatrist, to another psychiatrist, to another preacher, to a pastor, to a counselor.

Just telling each one what's wrong with themselves. And so, they noticed a trend. That people that minded their own business.

And I don't mean non-meddlers now. I mean folks that live for themselves. How much can I get? And what's in it for me? And how am I doing? And what will I get? And what do they think about me? They found that almost exclusively people that had mental problems came from that crowd of people.

And they began to call them idiots. And so, at idiotes, which is a person who only cares for himself. From that crowd, folks lose their mind and become idiots.

So, I began to look up the word. And I decided, well, I'll find it in the Bible. Who's called an idiot? What, where, where is this word idios, or idia, or idiotes, or idiot used in the Bible? And I found one place that it was used.

It was in the scripture that John led us to reading a while ago. Romans chapter 10. It says, Oh brethren, my prayer to God and harsh desire for Israel is that they might be saved.

Now follow me. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant.

Are you listening? For they being ignorant of their own righteousness. I'm sorry, being ignorant of God's righteousness. Going about to establish their own righteousness.

Have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. And when it says their own righteousness, the word idios is used. Which means that the kind of person who says, I'm saved by my own righteousness.

God says, he's an idiot. He's an idiot. Here's a person, are you saved? Yeah, I live a pretty good life.

God says, you're an idiot. Are you saved? Well, yeah, yeah. I'm a good neighbor, a good husband.

I'm a good friend. I, I pay my bills. God says, you're an idiot.

The person who tries to win his, save himself by his own goodness. Or trust his own goodness. Or church membership.

Or Lord's supper. Or communion. Or new leave.

Or good works. Or good deeds. To take him to heaven.

Is a fool. The Bible says. Who's the idiot? The idiot's not the person that's born again.

That gives his life to God. Then tries to serve God. The foolish person.

The idiot person. As God sees it. Is that one who trusts the church to save him.

Or trusts the ordinances to save him. Or trusts his own goodness to save him. Or trusts his own merit to save him.

Again and again the Bible says, it is not by works of righteousness. Not of works, lest any man should boast. There's nothing man can do to save himself.

If he tries to save himself by his own righteousness. His own goodness. The Bible says.

He's an idiot. I thought of a story that you've heard. I'm sure.

And I've told many times. I'm not sure I've told it here. Maybe I have.

Such a beautiful illustration of what I'm trying to say. In a big city down south once. There was an old man who was a real filthy fellow.

He was personally dirty. I mean he didn't brush his teeth. Or wash his hair.

Take a bath. Or wash his clothes. He was an obnoxious person to be around.

He lived in a shack. In an exclusive section of town. And all around him.

There was built. Beautiful homes. I mean.

We would call them today. Fifty, sixty thousand dollar homes. He lived in an old beat up shack.

You've seen them. You've seen folks like this. Probably an old car out in the back.

Without any wheels on it. And tires all around. And the yards grown up.

If you're ever driven by the Helton's house. You know what I'm talking about. And just a shack of a place.

And so the neighbors got together. And they decided they were going to do something about this. Well they went and knocked on the fellow's door.

And the fellow said. May I help you. And they said yes.

They said look. You're running down our property value. In fact our entire neighborhood is marred.

Because of the condition of your property. Now we as your neighbors request. That you do something about it.

Nothing was done. Nothing at all was done. Finally they tried again.

The third time they got together. They decided. They'd get enough money to buy his place.

They went down. Knocked on the door. Committee of people said.

We'd like to offer you. And they gave a big price. We'll just say.

Forty thousand dollars. I'm not sure if that's right or not. We'd like to offer it to you for your house.

And your Indian property. Please take the baby to the nursery. Just as quickly as you can.

So folks can hear. That's the reason we have these rules. Is because of this.

We don't have much time to preach. So. What happened was this.

The fellow. They knocked on his door. And they said.

Look. We'll give you thirty thousand dollars for your place. Well the man was amazed.

But he said. No. I won't take it.

And they quickly. Please. Usher's help the lady.

Would you please. Just help her to the stairs. If you would.

Right quickly. That's good. I'm sure you understand.

There is a reason why we ask. For folks to put their babies in the nursery. And that is the reason.

Yes. I'm sure. Thank you so much.

That's a good boy. That's a good boy. Now he can get over there.

Everybody else is crying. He won't feel so bad. And.

So. They said. We'll give you thirty five thousand.

And the old man said. No. I'm sorry.

I won't take thirty five thousand. Forty thousand. And.

Finally. The price got so high. That he had to.

He had to sell. And he said. Okay.

I'll take it. Well. Can you feature an old shack.

In a beat up lot. Run down. Forty thousand dollars.  
For it. By the way. That's about what we paid.  
That's exactly what we paid. For a house. He said.  
Right here. And it was worse shape. Than this old man's.  
But. Anyway. Finally.  
The day came. They got an attorney. He drew the papers up.  
And the rich men came out. And they walked. They walked up the place.  
And do you know. The fellow had cleaned up the yard. He had never cleaned his yard before.  
You know. He had taken some paint. And painted the outside.  
Of those old. Rickety boards. And the people couldn't believe it.  
It still didn't look like much. But I mean. At least it painted the outside.  
And you could see through the. Through the. Cracks in the wall.  
They walked inside. He had taken some old. Wallpaper.  
He had gotten some. Second hand wallpaper. Two of the different kinds.  
And it papered. The inside of the house. And no room had one.  
Color paper. All the way through the house. But it was papered.  
And he had gotten. Different kinds of paint. Couldn't afford.  
All the same color. Of course. He had painted.  
Different colors of paint. All over the house. And so.  
The folks came in. And the old man said. Come on in.  
And they looked around. And said. We've come to close the deal.  
And the attorney said. Would you sign right here? And the old man said. Well.  
Wait a minute. First. Have you noticed anything? And they said.  
We've noticed. That we have the papers here. For you to sign.  
Now. Just sign right here. And we'll give you \$40,000.  
And it's your house. And the old man said. But.  
Wait a minute. Before I sign. He said.

Have you looked around? They looked around. Okay. Now.  
Sign right here. And the old man said. But.  
Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Look.  
Did you notice? I papered the walls. I painted. The house.  
Inside and out. I even took the junk. Out of the.  
Yard. I wanted you to get a good deal. Look.  
And the attorney looked at him. And said. Sir.  
You don't understand it all. We're not buying your house. Because we want the house.  
We're not buying it. Because. Someone wants to live here.  
We're going to tear this whole house down. We're going to put a new one in its place. We bought it.  
So we could remake it. And rebuild it. And the old man began to cry.  
And said. Oh. I thought you liked my house.  
And they said. Of course not. Nobody in the neighborhood liked your house.  
Nobody wants to live in this house. We bought it. To remake it.  
And that's exactly what the average person does to God. God comes and says. I paid for your salvation.  
I bought your home in heaven. I have redeemed you. I died for you on the cross.  
And we say. Lord. Have you noticed anything? Lord says.  
If you'll trust me. I'll save you. But Lord.  
Hey. Hey. Have you noticed anything? I quit drinking.  
I quit drinking. The Lord says. Look.  
Receive Jesus. Hey. Lord.  
Smell. Smell what? Smell good. I quit smoking.  
And the Lord says. So what? Trust Jesus. But you say.  
Lord. Have you noticed anything? I got a skirt down to my knees. That'll help by the way.  
You don't get saved. I got a. I quit wearing hot pants. By the way.  
Most of you ladies that wear them. They're just barely warm. Anyhow.  
And. The way. How often you look.

But. I quit wearing hot pants. I quit testing.

And the Lord says. You don't understand. I didn't come to take you because you're pretty.

Or because you quit this or quit that. I came to rebuild you. I came to make you a new creature.

You see. The average person has the idea. They come to God and say.

Dear God. Here I am. I've begun this.

And now. I'm good enough. To get to heaven.

Ladies and gentlemen. If you wait to go to get saved. So you're good enough.

Not a one of us will ever go to heaven. The truth is. A man that says.

I'm good enough to go to heaven. I'm saved because I joined the church. I'm saved because I've been baptized.

I'm saved because I've taken communion. I'm saved because I've turned over a new leaf. I'm saved because I've quit this or started this.

The Bible says. Our own righteousness is idiotic. That's the person.

That's the true idiot. But there's a second word. I noticed.

As I checked up. I was thinking in my room. Who's the idiot? I checked up.

Another word. Recall the story of our Lord. When he was in Jerusalem with his parents.

And they left to go back to Nazareth. And they missed him for a day. And for three days.

They saw him and found him in the temple asking questions of the learned doctors. And Mary said. Your father and I have sought thee.

And Jesus said. Wish thee not that I must be about my father's business. Anytime in the Bible the word.

Own business. Often times. The word.

Idiots. Idiotes. Is mentioned concerning our own business.

This fellow said to me. He said. Do you know what? By the way.

He had heard also. That years ago. Oh my.

I was 28 years of age. I've been offered \$100,000 a year. To head up a religious company.

That was a lending company. A money raising company. For churches.

He said. I understand you were offered \$100,000 a year. And you could stay in the ministry.

And I said. Yes. That's true.

Well. He said. Look.

That's still the Lord's business. He said. Let me tell you.

Well. God. Take help.

Those who help themselves. Boy. That's a wonderful lie.

God helps those who help themselves. God helps those. Who help others.

They spend their lives in his business. Oh. There's nothing.

Any. Any. Cuter a lie.

Than for. Somebody said. Well.

The Lord helps those who help themselves. Brother. Let me tell you something.

We're not supposed to help ourselves. We're supposed to give ourselves to his business. We're supposed to spend ourselves in his work.

We're supposed to give ourselves for others. And the person who takes care of his own business. The Lord says.

He's an idiot. And I got thinking. You know.

I've been an idiot all my life. Doc. Everywhere.

I've ever been. I've been a nut. Really.

When I was in. In junior high school. I was elected president of the senior class.

And Mrs. Kerr came up to me. And we'll forget it. She was a. K. E. R. R. She was the head of the.

Activities for the school. And she got me. One day.

Science class. And I was. I was standing at the lab.

And she got. I put her arms around me. I was a junior high kid.

And she took me off. And began to. Dance with me.

I never danced. I'm not sure that's the way you do. But.

She began to dance. And she said. Jack.

Jack. Oh. But anyway.

I. I. She said. You got to learn to dance. I said.

Why? She said. Because you're president of the senior class. And the senior class president.

Is supposed to lead. The conga line. In the.

Senior dance. She said. I said.

No ma'am. Not me. She said.

But. Hey. You're president of the senior class.

It's traditional. I said. Not me.

I try to get out of it easily. And finally. I said.

Mrs. Kerr. I just can't do it. She said.

Oh. You can. You can.

You can. If I can learn to dance. Now come on.

And I said. Mrs. Kerr. I think dancing is wrong.

And I do not think Jesus Christ. Wants me to dance. She said.

Are you a nut? I didn't answer. But. I got to thinking.

I've always been sort of a nut. I was a nut in high school. I was a nut in the army.

I wouldn't drink. They got me down one day. A bunch of them.

And they gave me a coke cola. Told me it was a coke. And I would drink it.

And smell like it smelled of wine. And a bunch of guys got me down. And tried to pour wine down my throat.

And every time. They said. Hey.

Jack's going to stay home and knit. While we go out and have a good time. I was a nut there.

I went to college. I was a nut. Christian college.

Pardon me. Quote. Christian.

End quote. I was a nut. They had a play on our campus called.

Cigarettes. Whiskey. And Wild Wild Women.

On a Christian college campus. I went to president. And spoke my piece.

Of what I thought about him. I was a nut. And.

Ever since I've been preaching. I've just. Been a nut.

But you know. I found out in the Bible. I'm not the nut.

I mean. I'm like little Johnny. I'm going to one in step.

Everybody else out of step but me. I found out the fellow. Who spends his life in the world.

Is the nut. I found out the fellow. Who spends his life in sensuality.

Is the nut. I found out the person. That doesn't mind.

God's business. Is the nut. I. Listen.

The person. Who all he lives for. Is make some more money.

Get a bigger house. Drive a bigger car. Get nicer clothes.

He's the fool. The person who gives his life for God. And says I only have one life to live.

And I'm going to live it for God. That's the person. That God says is wise.

Who's the idiot? Who's the idiot? The person who makes his own righteousness. What else? The person that minds his own business. Who else? I found also.

I don't have time to go into it. I find that a person. Who does his own will.

Idiot is used for him. Who does his own will. You know what the word self-will in the Bible is.

In the Greek. The word self-will. Comes from two words.

One is Altos. Which means self. And the other is Hades.

And actually. The word for self-will. In the Bible.

Is Althades. Are. Self.

Hell. Automatic hell. That's what it means.

Automatic hell. You know who lives in hell? The person that lives a life for himself. According to his own will.

You know who lives in heaven on earth? The person that lives according to the will of God. And serves God. And lets God have his life.

You only have one life to live. Only one. And if you say.

Dear God. I want you to have it. Whatever talent I have.

It's yours. Whatever money I have. It's yours.

Whatever gifts I have. They're yours. Whatever prestige I have.

It's yours. Whatever success I have. It's yours.

Whatever work I do. It's yours. Whatever praise I get.

It's yours. That kind of person. Is the wise person.

But the person that says. I'm going to live for me. I'm going to live for me.

Are they coming to my office? All the time. I'm sure I've told you this. The little lady.

I'm sure she's here this morning. Came to my office one day. And she was.

Feeling like that. And I have ladies coming to my office. Feeling like that quite often.

You know. And I said. What's the trouble? She said.

I'm just about to crack up. About to crack up. Well.

I said. What do you mean? Well. I'm about to have a nervous breakdown.

Now listen to me. Now listen to me. There's no need.

For you ladies. To have nervous breakdowns. Men.

Yes. Yes. But not ladies.

I've often said. Every lady I know. Is either having a nervous breakdown.

Just gotten over one. Or has one planned. As soon as she can find the time.

To put it in her busy schedule. And. But so happened.

This lady came in. And she said. I'm about to have a nervous breakdown.

About to crack up. And. So.

Now I'm not talking about you folks. If you're physically sick. And something physical causes it.

Like hardening of the arteries. Or something. Or senility.

Because of that. I'm talking about these people. That just don't trust the Lord enough to.

And so she said. I'm about to crack up. She said.

Can you help me? I said. Yes I can. And she said.

What can you do? And I said. I think the first thing to do. Is go home and bake a cake.

Bake a cake? Yeah bake a cake. Why? I said. Take it over to Martha Hartman.

Give it to her this afternoon. That's our blind lady in our church. I said.

Tomorrow. Bake some cookies. She said.

Why? I said. Take them to some deaf people in our church. And just write a note.

I love you. On the note. And give it to them.

I said. Day after tomorrow. Go down to the florist.

And buy a dozen roses. And take it to St. Margaret's Hospital. And walk down the hall.

And every time you see anybody in visiting hours. That has no visitors. Go in.

Give them a rose. Tell them you love them. And have a prayer with them.

And I said. Every day. Do something like that.

And come back and tell me in a few weeks. How you feel. So.

She didn't come back. She was avoiding me. I could tell.

I'd walk down the aisle here. And she'd walk down the aisle over here. She'd come down the center aisle.

And I'd be walking. And she'd walk down this aisle over here. So finally one day.

After a month. I called her. And I said.

Hey. Hey. I want to talk to you.

She said. Okay. I got a little sheepish laugh.

And I said. I said. How about that nervous breakdown? Oh.

She said. I got so busy. I had to call it off.

You know what? She had learned that it's hell. To mind your own business. Idiot.

The person that lives for himself. Idiot. The person that won't tithe.

Idiot. The person that stacks his money up. And doesn't give to God.

Idiot. The person concerned about his own success. Idiot.

Who is the idiot? The person that bathes himself. In his own life. His own desires.

His own wishes. His own business. Get outside yourself.

Forget about yourself. And think about somebody else. Oh.

I got a headache today. I know folks haven't got a head. Thank God you got a headache.

Well. I got a cord on my foot. Well.

I got an old ear on my foot. But I know folks haven't got a foot. Well.

Nobody appreciates me. Well. I don't blame them.

Well. Nobody loves me. Well.

Get in love with them. Get in love with them. Good night.

All right. Listen. Our world is dying today because nobody much cares about anybody else.

What has it been for me? Very idea of firemen going on strike and letting the whole town be unprotected. Very idea of school teachers going on strike and letting the kids go ignorant. Very idea of nurses going on strike and letting people almost die.

Very idea of living for yourself. How little is the person? How idiotic is the person? How foolish is the person who spends his life thinking only about himself? Lord, let me live from day to day in such a

self-forgetful way that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, Lord.

Yes, others. Let this my motto be. Lord, let me live for others that I may live like thee.

I was in a taxi cab a few days ago. Driving. Oh.

Somebody had to meet me at the airport so I took a cab and went around to the motel room. Talked to the driver. Well, you go to church.

Don't go. Do you know if you died today you'd go to heaven? Don't believe in heaven. Well, listen.

I said, man, if you don't get saved, you're going to go to hell. He said, don't believe in hell. I said, what did the Bible say? And he said what so many have said to me.

He said, mister, I believe hell's here. I believe you have your hell on earth. He said, I believe right here on earth we have our hell and this is what the Bible talks about.

And I said, you know, you're right. You're right. I said, the truth is you are having your hell here.

But I said, you could have heaven here if you wanted. You can have heaven here if you wanted. Did you know the same Greek word for heaven is the word for abide? The Bible says abide in Christ.

The same root word of the word heaven. It means that if a person comes to Christ and receives Christ and gives his life to God, he can have a little foretaste of heaven here on earth. But a person that lives his life for himself, that's really what hell is all about.

Hell is the self-life, the selfish life, the I-life, the me-life. What is it in it for me? My business. That's hell.

That's idiot. And who's the idiot? You know, I got on my knees in the motel room and I said, dear Lord, if I had another life to live, I'd want to live it just like this one. Had another life, had another 46 years to live.

I had my first 46 years to live. I'd want to live it, not accumulate. And I went back to that little restaurant down in Dallas, Texas, in the Mercantile National Bank building, in the little booth there at noon.

My uncle looked across the table at me. And he said, if you'll do so and so, I'll let you in my business. We're worth \$250,000 to you.

I'd say no once again. Or that deed I've got in my drawer in my office, \$100,000 apartment building. It's mine.

Anytime I want to sign the papers for it, I'd say no again. The man that tried to give me that cried when I told him. He said, I want you to take it.

I want you to have it. I want to do something for you. I'd turn it down again.

And if I had the deacon's meetings to relive, I'd turn down the \$25,000. I recall one night we're having a deacon's meeting, and we're discussing the church budget. And Russell Levy stood up and said, I want to make a motion we pay the pastor \$20,000 a year.

And Ed Rouse said, no use in you saying that. He won't take it. And I said, Ed, let him talk.

Ed's deacon chairman. I said, let him talk. He said, you mean you'll take it? I said, no, I won't take it.

But I said, we have a right to talk for that little while. And one by one, those good men stood up, and they said, Pastor, we'll give you anything, anything you want. One night they voted to give me that parsonage for relive on Greenwood.

I'm sure it's worth \$55,000. They voted to give it to me. I didn't take it.

Those good men stood up one at a time and said, thank God for you. And I said, I'd rather have that than the raise. How do they have that than the raise? Let me say this, and I'll close.

Ladies and gentlemen, there's one thing I'd like to do for my people. If I could do one thing for you and one thing only, I wish I could get you out of yourselves. I wish I could get you thinking about the needs of others and the work of Christ.

It won't be long till all of us are gone. I'm 46. In four years, I'll be 50.

Isn't that amazing, a fellow who looks as young as I do? What are you laughing about? Do you know that in 14 years, I'll be 60, and in 16 years, in 16 years, I can draw Social Security? Do you know I've been pastor of this church going on 14 years? Do you know with the time I've been here, as long as I've been here, in the 14 years, I'll be singing, when that old-age pension check comes to our door, we won't have to have chicken and dumplings anymore. Remember that? It's an old hymn we used to sing down in Texas. We don't have long to be here.

Do you know who the fool is this morning? Do you know who the idiot is? It's the person that builds his life for himself, the person that tries to save himself by his own righteousness, and the person that tries to live his life doing his own business. Do you know who the happy person is? Huh? The person that lives for somebody else. It doesn't matter about me.

It doesn't matter about me. There's a needy world, a needy world. People who need help, people that need food, people that need clothes, people that need a warm handshake, people that need a pat on the back, somebody that needs help.

I got a letter the other day from a fellow who said, I've been his friend for years. He said, If it hadn't been for you this year, it'd be a mighty bleak Christmas for us. You'd be surprised who it is.

It'd be a mighty bleak Christmas for us. Oh, listen, I've not done all I ought to have done for others, but every once in a while I reach out to the heavenly manna of unselfishness, and I taste it, and it's so sweet. And as I digest it, I say, Dear Lord, why didn't I give more? Why didn't I give more? Say, I'm an idiot.

I'm an idiot. I'm the nut. I'm the fool.

I'm the fellow, when I go to trade somewhere in a store in town, they say, Where have I seen you before? And I say, I'm brother Hiles, pastor of First Baptist Church. Oh, yes. That's me.

I'm the screwball. I'm the nut. I'm the one they write letters to the Hammond Times about.

I'm the one they call in on the call-in programs and curse. I'm the nut. But if I had to do it all over again, I'd be a nut again.

Let us pray.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18879.mp3>  
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