

Cornerstone 50'th Anniversary De Moines

by John Cliff

The sermon highlights the necessity of humility and recognition of our unworthiness to fully experience God's grace and salvation.

Duration: 38:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 2:1-3

Topics: "Anniversary"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the state of humanity as described in the Bible. He highlights seven aspects of our condition: being dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the ways of the world, influenced by the power of the air, living in disobedience, following the desires of the flesh and mind, being children of wrath, and being like others in our fallen state. The preacher emphasizes that regardless of our background or upbringing, God wants to know if we appreciate His Son, Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that Jesus came to redeem and bless us, offering us salvation and a home in glory. The preacher encourages listeners to trust in Jesus and receive Him as their Savior, emphasizing the greatness of God's love and the eternal blessings that await those who believe.

Transcript

Our conference, as we always like to have, is one really new voice. We've had it. We really have had it.

Our brother Charlie has never been at Omaha Conference before, and I'm sure I know that we all agree that his presence, the Lord has certainly used him, both in speaking to us Christians and now to the unsafe. We began this conference, our brother Howard spoke in this very building in the prayer meeting, on Ephesians 3. Will you turn there just a glance? Ephesians 3, the last part of the third chapter. Remember how he commented on that wonderful prayer of the Apostle? One of the finest prayers in the Bible, and therefore anywhere.

We'll not read it all, but you'll notice toward the end the special part that our brother Howard dwelt on. Verse 19, "...and to know the love of Christ, which hath this knowledge, that ye may be filled with or into all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

Amen." We began at a very high point in this conference, and I wonder if we didn't feel somehow, we Christians, that if we could somehow work up to that point through the conference, we Christians could be able to say, well, there I am now, I've learned that much of this conference, and I think I'm beginning to be filled with all the fulness of God. I think perhaps we may have had the idea that we'd be pretty big. We'd be pretty big Christians, pretty fine Christians.

Are you big enough? Are you small enough? That's the point. Are you small enough? Through the conference from that moment, from that first meeting, we've been learning, at least we should have been learning, how nothing we are, how small we are, and yet that the Lord picks up that which is nothing and nobody, and bestows upon us his grace, and there's no limit to what he has for us. That, at least I think, is the key, is the current of the conference.

And I'm not talking only to Christians just now. I'm talking to the unsaved and going right on, because that's what the unsaved need to learn. That's what our brother Howard's been telling us.

It isn't that we gradually earn our way and make ourselves ready so that God can save us, but we have to come down to the place of nothing and nobody and empty and helpless and give up, as Charlie did. Then we get saved. These verses are the end.

From there on, we move on to the epistle. From that point, we come to the second half of the epistle, which is an entirely different subject. It's how Christians should live and may live.

But the first three chapters are a unit by themselves, professional, and what God does. And look at the first of it, chapter 2. The first chapter, as we might already say, is God's purpose. It's all through the first chapter.

He, He, His, His grace, His purpose, and so on, His glory. But coming down now to see what He's doing with us according to those purposes, look at chapter 2, verse 1. And you have to meet a life when you're dead in trespasses and sin. Can you get further down than that? Can you get further down into nothingness and emptiness and unworthiness and unfitness for glory and for the fullness than that? That's where God begins.

That's what God tells about ourselves, that we are in His sight. There are seven things in these first three verses describing the way we are in our unsafe state. Dead in trespasses and sin, walking according to the course of this world, walking according to the tincts of the power of the air.

The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, hath a manner of life and time past and left of all flesh, fulfilling desires of the flesh and of the mind, and by nature the children of wrath, even as others, even as others. I think those three words are so important, those last three, because some of us might think, well, I've been brought up in a Christian home. My brother said that he had, and so had I. But some of you haven't.

But whether you had that privilege or not, even as others, children of disobedience, dead in trespasses and sin, helpless, lost and guilty. Now, you'll never get saved until you face those facts. And Christians, you'll never know what it is to be filled with all the fulness of God until you realize you don't deserve anything and come to realize that God deals with those who are nothing and nobody, and His gentleness makes us great.

His condescension makes us great. Nothing in ourselves at all. In Kansas City there's a blind man.

I'm going to speak about Brother Howard mentioned blindness, and I'm going to mention it again, too. We have a wonderful blind brother in Kansas City. The Pattersons know him so well, and so do I. A brother of a person.

He used to come to our Christian canteen in Kansas City during the World War II days. He's not able to get out much anymore, but he did in those days about once a week. And some Christian boys liked to meet him, and two of them went out to the house and had a real visit with him.

And when they were about to leave, these two young officers, one of them said, You don't have to open that door. I can go out through the keyhole. So small until in the presence of that man of God, a blind man, a man who read the Bible, read the Bible with his tongue, but a man who in a very, very quiet way could speak of the Lord and how he knew Him, how he'd known Him all those years.

That young man had a great growth. His growth was greatly enhanced when he was able to say, I feel so small I feel like I could go out through that keyhole. That was the greatness of soul developed in that young man in an hour's visit.

My Christian friends here tonight, haven't we learned in this conference that where we are nothing, and when we see we're nothing, then we have a great Savior and He's everything to us. And we can just go forth from this place and abide in Him, and be occupied with Him, and think of Him, and speak to Him, and we say everything to Him, spend more time with Him in prayer than we've had it before, spend our days in service for Him, not just to be doing it to get a name, but because He has purchased us with His precious blood. Turn to the 9th chapter of John, please.

I promised to talk to you about a blind man. I had a godly father, too. Willard, Margie, and I, all here tonight.

Our father wasn't a preacher, but I heard him preach one sermon, and this was his text. Far as I know, the only sermon he ever preached, he may have, otherwise, other times, but this is the one that I heard him preach when I was still on faith. John 9. As Jesus passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle. And he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation sin.

He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came to see him. Verse 37. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him.

He thought he was a blind man. He was quite a blind man. Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. Beauty for ashes.

You know, the funeral service used to be dust to dust, and ash to ashes. But our brother has shown us that it isn't ashes to ashes with the Christian. It's ashes to beauty, and here we see it's mud to worship.

This man had mud in his eyes. The Lord Jesus had to put it there. The Lord Jesus had to rub it into that man that he was blind.

And my dear unsaved friend, you have to have it rubbed into you that you're blind. Now, there's nothing said about this man's character. And that's a very important point here tonight, I believe.

There's nothing said about this man being a sinner or a bad man. He's just a blind man. And you, young person or older person here tonight, you may not be bad in the sense of any kind of wickedness.

Your character may be above reproach. And you may say, all that talk about sin goes over my head. It doesn't seem to fit me at all, and therefore I don't feel it.

But you're blind. That's your trouble. You're blind.

You see no beauty in the word of God. You have no enjoyment in prayer. You can't see what we Christians are enjoying so much these days in conference.

You're blind. That's your trouble. You're blind.

You've been born blind. Born blind. Blind to the beauties of Christ, blind to the things of God.

You have to be born again to have those capacities. You have to receive sight from the Lord. That's your trouble.

And my friend, just as you can have beauty for ashes, you can become a worshipper instead of a blind man with dirt in your eyes. The Lord could do that. But you notice he did two things to that man.

First of all, he put the mud in his eyes, the clay, and then he told him where to go. Now, those two things have had to be done tonight. Again, let me say, you're blind.

That man might have said, well, when the Lord would have told him to go to wash in the pool of Siloam, he might have said, no, I always wash before I come out to bed. I don't need to wash my face. But with mud in his eyes, he had to wash.

Or that man didn't realize how bad blindness was. He hadn't lost his sight in an accident or a sickness. He'd been blind all his life.

He was used to it. And we're used to being sinners. We're just accustomed to it.

We don't realize what an awful thing sin is. We're sinners and all around us are sinners. We can just take it.

South Omaha over here, our packing town, it doesn't smell very good, but some people live over there and eat their meals right in the midst of all that odor. They're used to it. And we're used to the sights and sounds of sin and profanity, such as we've heard about.

It doesn't seem to hurt us very much, because while we don't use it, we're used to it. You have to have it. That man had to have it rubbed in.

And so the Lord put the mud in his eyes and, oh yes, I feel my blindness now. These eyes of mine, they're blind. And then he had the good word.

Go to a pool whose name means S-E-N-T, sent. Go to a special pool. Not go home and wash, not go to some other part of Jerusalem, but there's one place for you.

A sent one, a sent one. My friends, that is the title of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of his numerous titles is the sent one of God.

The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Very, very I say unto you, he said, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life. Sent me.

Our friends, the Lord Jesus Christ was sent from heaven all the way down to us in our blindness, in our deadness. How far did he have to come to reach us? He had to come right down to sin itself. He had to come down to Calvary where sin was concentrated.

And isn't it strange that we have to make the people realize that they must come down and meet him there. The kids make haste to come down. People are not ready to receive the Savior because they're not low enough.

They're up here thinking they're pretty good. Pretty good. Oh, friends, the Lord Jesus Christ came down where you are and you don't know you're there.

And we have to, so to speak, rub you in, rub it in on you that that's where you are. You're blind. You're dead.

You're guilty. You're lost. You deserve to go to hell.

But our friends, won't you go to the sent one tonight? Won't you come to the sent one? You don't have to go anyplace. You don't have to move from where you're sitting. Forty-eight years ago, not exactly tonight, but in the closing meeting of the Omaha Conference, I came to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I think it was eight years later, my brother-in-law Roy Hinkle, in an Omaha Conference, got saved. Closing meeting of an Omaha Conference. And I think it was that year or the year after or before that Mrs. Olbert back there, at the closing meeting of an Omaha Conference, got saved.

So I see three of us here that are sort of celebrating an anniversary tonight. It was November, the Sunday after Thanksgiving, in both of those cases, in all of those cases. But it was an anniversary, and we're celebrating it now.

It was Omaha Conference. Closing gospel meeting. Are we glad? Indeed we are.

Oh, how glad we are. Well, how did we get saved? Just like Charlie Howard did. We had to come to the end of our self.

We had to come and see that we couldn't save ourselves. We couldn't do anything about it. We were just helpless.

Guilty? Yes, we knew that. Lost? We knew that. Well, I'll tell you the detail of my salvation.

At the close of the meeting, after hearing two good men preach the gospel, they gave out a closing hymn. Maybe they say we're sometimes given out for the psychological effect of the music and so on, but it wasn't that to me that night. Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of none but blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot.

Oh, the lamb was gone, and I did. I didn't move. I was sitting right at the door, at least as close to the door as one could get, the nearest seat to the door.

I always drew my seat in those days. Whenever I did go to meetings, I was there so that I could be the first one out. And by habit, I was there.

Look, as that song was sung, I wasn't singing it, but I was paying close attention to it. And it became the very language of my heart. Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of none but blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot.

Oh, the lamb was gone, and I did. You can come to him without moving. He's closer to you than that person sitting beside you.

He knows just how you feel. He knows how your heart is throbbing, perhaps, with the thoughts of these things. He knows all about it.

And he says, come to me. All you that labor in the heavy laden, I died for you. I finished it all.

It's all settled for as it was. Why aren't you reconciled? God was in Christ on that cross, and Christ was on that cross. God was there reconciling the world unto himself, and God was reconciled.

God was satisfied. Now, are you satisfied? If God was satisfied, then he's the one that would have to be satisfied. Who are you to wait for something else? Who are you to be hesitating? I close with a little story that may perhaps illustrate what's in my mind.

I've told this story before. You've all heard it, I think. A story that I love very much.

There was a family that was dying out. There were only three members left. A well-to-do family, a father, mother, and a little boy, five years of age.

Very much devoted to each other. But the little boy contracted one of these diseases of childhood, polio or something like that, and died. It broke the mother's heart, and she died after a while.

Not very long after him. And the father just gave up. No more interest.

That boy had been his pride and joy and his hope for the future, to carry on his name. He just simply gave up, and had no interest in life, and in a year or so he died, too. But he lived long enough to do something about it.

You may be surprised to hear. Anyway, the family was gone. No relatives.

And there was quite an estate, and it became a problem to the authorities. What to do with this estate? So, in methodical legal clockwork, things began to move very slowly. They decided, first of all, to sell off the furniture in that home.

And then to sell the property, and then dispose of the stocks and bonds and so on, and they didn't know of anything else to do with it but to put it in the public treasury. However, in the ring of things that might happen, they took these things slowly, and they turned the matter of the sale of the furniture over to an auctioneer. The auctioneer advertised it.

The home was known to be one of the very best in the city, and it attracted that type of people, the better class. And the auctioneer ushered them into the great living room downstairs, great parlors, and began to sell the things there. Oh, what an interest there was.

No one seemed to notice very much. There was a little old lady in black that wasn't buying anything, and she wasn't seeming to act like a clerk. I suppose some thought, well, she's probably been the housekeeper, and she was tagging along.

Every move they went to do, she went along. Well, they finally sold off all the things, everything in all the rooms downstairs. Went up the grand staircase to the second floor, the master bedroom, proceeding to sell off everything there, other bedrooms.

Finally came to a small room, a little smaller than some of the rest, and as the auctioneer came in, some folks stayed out, didn't go in. He says, this is the nursery. Might have a few things here of interest.

And he sold beds and dresses and tables and so on. And finally, when the place was nearly sold out, he took down what he called a picture frame. Here's a nice picture frame, and maybe you'd like to buy this.

How much am I bidding for the picture frame? And the only one that bid was that little old woman. One dollar. Nobody bid against her.

Going, going, going, gone. And that little old woman got the picture, not the picture frame. Picture.

She was that little boy's nurse. She had been the one who loved that boy and cared for him day by day. It was his picture.

She didn't care for anything more in that house. She went straight home to her little apartment, looked around and chose the choicest place on the walls. That's where that picture's going to be hung.

Oh, as she looked into the face of that little boy, how she loved to look at that picture. And then she said, well, before I hang it, I'm going to clean it up completely. A little dusty inside.

So she removed the tape from the back, got down to the picture itself. But as she was doing so, she found something that seemed strange to her. A sort of a legal-looking thing.

An envelope. She didn't know anything about those things, so she said, well, next time we're downtown, I'll take it back to the auctioneer. Nothing for me, anyway.

And she was satisfied there was the picture in its place of honor. Well, some days later she did take that envelope down to the auctioneer. And when she came in, she seemed surprised to see her, had forgotten really who she was or where she'd seen her before.

She said, I brought this piece of paper, this envelope, which I found back of that picture that I bought at the sale. Oh, yeah, she bought that picture from you. In the nursery, didn't she? Yes, she said, and this was it.

Well, he said, I don't know what it is, but what's your name? So he took down her name and address, and she was gone and forgot all about it. Every day occupied with that picture. Two or three weeks later, she received a very long, legal-looking envelope addressed to herself this time.

And it was a summons to an attorney's office downtown. She was rather quivered with some anxiety. Didn't enjoy the idea of going into an attorney's office, but anyway, it was a summons.

She was to be there. And exactly on the time set, she was there. And when that little old lady came into that attorney's office, everyone in the office rose to their feet.

And a special chair was for her. A man behind a big desk rose and said, I'm now about to read the will of the late Mr. So-and-so. The little old lady didn't understand very much.

All she got out of him was something like this. I will and bequeath all my property, my real estate and property of every description, to the one who thought enough of my darling boy to purchase his picture at the sale. My friends, God wants to know if you appreciate his son.

That's what God wants to know. He doesn't want to know how bad you are, how good you are. He knows all about that.

And he told you in his word that there's just no words to describe how dead and blind and worthless you are. The utmost is two of you, a whole human race, and we're all in one sack. But such a race, such a people as the human race is the object of God's wonderful, wonderful love.

And if some come down from heaven and die on that cross of shame to redeem us and give us a home in glory, and God says, if you appreciate what my son has done for you and you'll trust him, you can have everything, you can have heaven and all. And in this life you can have all the fullness of the Godhead in that person. I mean, that's the conference, friends.

My unsaved friends, you can come in on it tonight, right now. My unsaved friends, why don't you come in on these joys that we Christians are just beginning to learn a little bit about? Why still is one a follower that goes on and on? Every conference seems to be better than the last one. That's the way we Christians talk.

We say, oh, this is the best of all. Every time we have a conference, we say, well, this is better. It's the best of all, and it is, because the last one's always the best.

It's just better and better. Still there's more to follow, on and on into eternal glory. And dear unsaved friends, you can come into the blessing now, just now, just now, as a poor, guilty, dead, flying sinner.

Come, receive the Lord Jesus Christ. He'll save you, and he'll bless you, and he'll give you a home in glory. You'll be a child of God, a child of God.

Heaven will be your home. All God's people will be your brothers and sisters. Instead of having the curse and judgment hanging over your head like a sword of Damocles, it'll be glory awaiting you.

But wouldn't you like to be saved? Yes, you'd say, that's just what I want. All right. Do you know what Brother Smith said to Charlie Howard? Isn't the word of God enough for you? Believe God.

Believe the Lord Jesus Christ when he says, Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will rest you. I'll rest you. That troubled soul of yours can be at rest in believing.

I will rest you. But the day of vengeance soon will pass, the day of grace. Who knows but what this night is the last night of God's day of grace.

And so, friend, do avail yourself of the opportunity now to accept the Lord Jesus and receive him to your heart. Oh, I was thinking of that chorus, Room for Jesus. Who is he? King of glory.

He is crowned with glory and honor, and only kings are crowned. And so he is the king of glory, isn't he? He is crowned with glory and honor. And think of it, that he deigns to come, and he wants acceptance in that heart of yours.

My, what a privilege to receive him. Think of what it will mean for him as well as for yourself. All right.

Room for Jesus. We do thank thee. We thank thee that thou art indeed able to give beauty.

And we thank thee for each of us who have learned our own worthlessness in thy sight. And we bless thee for all that we found in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee for him who came full of grace and truth.

And we praise thee, blessed Lord, for each of us in thy presence who have embraced him as Savior. And we ask for those, O God, who may be here tonight, not yet saved, that they may not let this opportunity pass without receiving him. Thou dismisest us with thy blessing, O God, all our life.

Precious word we pray thee, get the glory and honor unto thine ears. And we do indeed commit us to thee, as those who travel, go to their homes, take them there safely. Remember us on the morrow, and remember the meetings going on here in Omaha.

Blessed thy servant, Tom Westwood, in his visit here tomorrow night. And remember us, we pray thee, elsewhere, as we seek to carry on for thee.

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