

More Than Conquerors - Part 1

by Leonard Ravenhill

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the transformative power of Christ's love, illustrating how believers can achieve spiritual victory as 'more than conquerors'.

Duration: 57:33

Scripture: Daniel 6:22, Romans 7:14, Romans 8:37, Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 11:24-25, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Victorious Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Romans chapter 8, specifically verse 37, which states that believers are more than conquerors through Christ's love. The preacher explains that this statement may seem illogical, but it can be understood in three ways: as the words of an ignorant person, a super optimist, or someone expressing their personal experience. The preacher emphasizes that Romans 7 represents a state of spiritual loss, while Romans 8 represents a state of spiritual victory. The sermon concludes by highlighting the contrast between intellectual advancement and spiritual emptiness, and reminding listeners that through Christ, believers have the assurance of eternal life.

Transcript

And the book says, because he lives, we shall live also. Okay, thank you, be seated. The scripture text tonight is in the epistle of Paul to the Romans, chapter eight.

Romans, chapter eight, and the 37th verse. Name all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Name all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Now I guess you say that that kind of a statement goes beyond the bounds of logic, and it surely does. There are three simple ways that we could approach this text. One is to say that it's a statement by some ignorant and irresponsible person, or you could say it's the statement by a kind of a super optimist, or you could say it's a person making an expression, the expression of experience.

If it's the word of a philosopher, well, treat it with caution. If it's the word of a novice, if it's the word of a philosopher, treat it with contempt. If it's the word of a novice, treat it with caution.

If it's the voice of experience, treat it with confidence. The great writer, you've read some of his works, I'm sure, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, said the most profound thing that was ever written was the epistle of Paul to the Romans. J Wilbur Smith, who for many years was the most, I suppose, severe critic of, well, most

books, particularly modern books, said that the epistle to the Romans is not only the most profound thing ever written, but the eighth chapter is the most profound thing in the midst of a profound thing.

Just like someone said the gospel of the Gospels, the gospel recorded by John. Coffman, Dr. Coffman calls John, the apostle, the Plato of the New Testament. Ninety-two percent of what John says in his gospel is his own, he does not copy from Matthew, Mark and Luke.

And yet Coffman said, well, that is the most profound thing ever written, as far as he was concerned. The seventeenth chapter is the very core of the book, which is the core of the gospel. You have the same thing here said by somebody else, viewing it from another standpoint, I guess.

We are more than conquerors in all these things. Well, what's he talking about? Well, really, there he's talking about a kind of a bunch of miscellaneous things. There's no logical connection in them, except that all enemies, foes of the spiritual life.

The wonderful thing about this text, this text is more than conqueror, because there's only about one of the modern translators that dares to alter it. And that's J.B. Phillips, and he doesn't do too good a job, I think. They have to leave it alone.

I mean, this is a superb thing. You know, when I think of the Apostle Paul, I always rejoice in it because, and not because he had a colossal intellect, not because he out-prayed everybody, not because he out-preached everybody. But, you know, when I consider the input of this man, and then I consider the output, that this one man gave birth to 14 epistles, if you include Hebrews, which I'm perfectly persuaded in my own mind he wrote, that he established all these churches through Asia Minor, that he out-sacrificed everybody, out-suffered everybody, and yet, you know, through all his life, there's a total absence of professionalism and commercialism.

Preaching is not a profession, it's a passion. This man doesn't hesitate to tell you what kind of a man he was. When I think of his life, he began in the ancient capital of the world, Tarsus.

He finished up in the military capital of the world, Rome. In between, he went to the religious capital of the world, which was Jerusalem. He went to the immoral capital of the world and established a church.

And he went to the intellectual capital of the world, Athens. In the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you'll find that amazing man, and he's dealing with demons in the 16th chapter, and you know what? He won the battle there, too. He cast the devil out of the woman.

In the next chapter, these were a different breed of men altogether, people who worshipped the intellect. They watched this little hunchback man, as tradition says, he marched up the hill there. And I remember Paul Rees saying, after he had done a tour of the Holy Land and various places, the most thrilling moment was to stand on Mars Hill, and try to imagine where Paul had his feet, and then read the 17th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and visualize him with, you know, the modern men of the day, not the original Socrates and Plato, but their scholarly offspring.

And Paul is at home with them, with the poets and Epicureans and Stoics and philosophers, and they discovered that he knew everything. But it says in that chapter that when he went down the street in Athens, now, in the sleepy Elizabethan English it says, that when he went down the street, his spirit, verse 16 of the 17th chapter says, when Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him. That's sleepy Elizabethan English.

I'm not very fond of new translations, but I do like them where they agree with me. And the Amplified agrees with me, because the Amplified says, that when he saw these people totally tied up in idolatry, he was angry in his spirit. J.B. Phillips translates it this way, that when he went and saw these people totally given up to idolatry, that his soul was stirred to exasperation.

When he saw their fidelity to their gods, the sacrifices they made. Do we get stirred about that? Not on your life. Or we say, the Jehovah's Witnesses down there have built up a beautiful building.

Have you noticed it? Isn't it nice? I'm not quite sure what it is. I think it's maybe colonial. Other people pass it, because it's not as interesting as McDonald's.

And you go and see another place to some other strange god of these days. Did that make your soul sweat? I've got a note here from a friend of mine. He edits this little paper in England.

He says, in just 23 years in England, the Mohammedans have raised 300 mosques. There wasn't a mosque in England when I left it in 1958. And now there are 300 mosques.

And in the same period, 650 of the churches of England have gone into oblivion. The Church of England claims to be in the apostolic succession. And as I said to you last night, you can bring all the theology you like, and your theories, and all the other junk if you want.

There's only one way to prove you're in the apostolic succession, and that is have apostolic success over the world, the flesh and the devil. And Paul had it. 650 Anglican churches have closed down in the last 23 years.

300 mosques to a strange god have been erected. My friend says, throughout a basement comes official news from London, that the largest Hindu temple outside of America is going to be put up in England at the cost of 2 million pounds, which is 5 million dollars. Oh, I guess some of you in your unregenerate days read books by Tom Robbins, eh? I don't know he has an official title, but I'll give him one tonight.

He's the King of Slut. This is from the New York Times book review, which I take every week because he's given to me. But I enjoy reading the book reviews.

He says, soon after Horton Miffin published Tom Robbins' book, Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, there was a hullabaloo about it. One of the leading men on the board of that printing company says, if I'd read the manuscript, it would never have been published. Now, here's the comment.

If the higher-up felt that way about Sissy Hankshaw, the hitching hero of the cowgirls, imagine how he would have reacted, listen to this blasphemy, from Mr. Robbins' earlier book, which is called Another Roadside Attraction, in which he says, this is not in Russia, it's not coming out of a pagan temple, it's coming out of one of the super-modern young intellectuals, you know, built his own throne out of straw, and made himself a crown out of a newspaper, and got a toothpick for a sword. This shriveled-up soul says this, he says in his new book, in his other book, Roadside Attraction, he speaks of the mummified body of Jesus Christ, which was discovered adorning a roadside zoo and a hot dog stand. Would you think a book that says we found the mummified body of Jesus at the side of the road, at a hot dog stand, would sell in millions? What kind of garbage do we read these days? This man is one of the most prolific writers, almost all his books get into millions.

And maybe you'd like to check your daughter's bedroom, or your son, and see what junk they have. For I stayed in a Christian home not long ago, of a millionaire, and they said, you're sleeping in our daughter's bedroom, and I saw titles that shocked me, and I looked in, and they were all four-letter words, and different expressions of sex, and you'd have thought they'd come from some prostitute. You see, Paul, he's not embarrassed to say, when he testifies there on the, for the third time, in the 24th of Acts, he testifies before Felix, and in the 25th chapter, he testifies before Festus, and in the 26th chapter, he talks before King Agrippa.

And he says, listen, King Agrippa, you think I was always like this? I'm the man that went down the Damascus Road, breathing out threatenings. No sooner was the infant Christ born than Herod said he'd liquidate him. No sooner was the church born than Paul says, and I'll liquidate the infant church.

And he carried inside of his coat, his toga, he carried a document that was signed, and sealed, and settled, and bore an official title for him, that he could be the executor of the church of Jesus Christ. And he reckoned on everything except one thing, he never reckoned that Jesus would slip off his throne and meet him on the road, but he did. And he says, there shone round about me and them that journeyed with me a light from heaven, but I heard a voice.

Daniel says the same thing. Others saw the light, I heard a voice. You may all hear a voice tonight, you may all see the light tonight.

You say, I never saw that verse like that, or that scripture like that. And maybe God convened this meeting that one man may hear his voice. And I don't shoot for any higher stakes than that.

If you get a life-transforming experience like the Apostle Paul, thank God he didn't meet a preacher on the Damascus Road, he might have messed him up. Thank God nobody asked him if he'd read the four laws, and nod your head and you're in the kingdom either. Paul did a deal on that Damascus Road, he says later on that Damascus Road, God revealed himself to me, and then later he says, God revealed himself in me.

There's nothing superficial about it. Paul didn't give Jesus his lousy sins, he gave Jesus his life. Here's a man with a colossal intellect, here's a man with acres of culture.

Here's a man who could have been wiser and was wiser than Gamaliel. And if he'd known it, he would have sung George Matteson's hymn, I lay in dust, life's glory dead. And from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.

If God hadn't have intercepted him on that Damascus Road, he would have been listed with Pharaoh, he would have been listed with Hitler. He doesn't hesitate about it, he says, I went down that Damascus Road, I was going to Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, I had received authority from who? The Romans? No, the chief priests! And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them off in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme.

Now listen, listen, this is his testimony, he knows right, nobody's guessing here, and he says, being exceedingly mad against them. I was furious! You mean the man they crucified died and rose again? You mean that all our sacrifices are in vain? You mean that that priest there is really a hypocrite, he has no authority? You mean a bunch of unlearned ignorant men doing miracles? Casting out demons, raising the dead? Going into cities and shaking whole cities? You mean that they're the anointed of God, he couldn't

bear it? And he says, I brought families up, I persecuted them into strange cities. But then God came, and he says, when he was fallen to the earth, and then he tells you how he got his preacher's license.

I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister. And I tell you before God, only the Spirit of God can make you a minister. A college may make you a preacher.

But there's an ordination no money can give. There's an authority you can never buy. You can't earn it intellectually.

If Jesus had said, tarry until ye be endued with brains in the upper room, there'd be a line from Nacogdoches to New Orleans or New Zealand. He didn't say ye should receive brains, he said you should receive power. And he didn't mean merely to do physical miracle either.

He says, rise and stand upon thy feet, I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister. And a witness, both of the things which thou hast seen, and the things in which I will appear unto thee. This man had the vision we mentioned last night.

Caught up into the third heaven, and then God sealed his lips and said, you never, never share what I've revealed to you. I'm sure the Lord would never have put such bondage onto a woman, but he said, you're never to speak about this. And do you know what? He never did.

And I believe every time they lashed him to a pillar there and they skinned his back. Of the Jews received I forty stripes, save one, that's thirty-nine. Five times over, which is a hundred and ninety-five.

And when he hung on a piece of wood in the Mediterranean for a day and a half, and when he's in weariness and fastings and painfulness and tribulation and distress and famine and peril and nakedness and so on, the vision is there. He's saying, you think I'm going to, I'm going to back out of this to save the skin off my back, or to get my belly filled, or to make it easy? I sometimes think only Isaac Watts, who wrote the hymn, and the Apostle Paul should sing when I survey the wondrous cross. Dr. Tozer said to me one day, Len, Christians don't tell lies.

They just go to church and sing them. Were the whole realm of nature mine? Well, is it true? There's a lovely hymn. I nearly had you sing it tonight.

I love that hymn. Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my like that hymn. There's a phrase in there that tears me like a knife almost.

I ask, nor the sunshine and the sunshine of thy face. That's all I ask, he says. Is that true? You've sung it many times.

Is that true? You ask, nor the sunshine. You don't care whether they invite you to a party or people like you, or they discourage you, or they throw cold water. You don't care.

I ask, nor the sunshine. I've lived in some wretched hovels in other countries, and I lived in a castle for a month, and boy, that was great. But I'll tell you what, the castle isn't very much if my wife isn't with me.

I'd rather live in a castle or a hovel with my wife. I'd rather live in a hovel in a back alley somewhere, in the midst of a big, horrible city like Calcutta, than I'd live in a mansion with ten servants without her. She

makes my life outside of God.

I ask, nor the sunshine and the sunshine of thy face. We sang Charles Wesley's hymn tonight, Love Divine or Love Excelling, and oh, he wrote that other lovely hymn we don't sing too often. Jesus, you lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly.

And do you remember a phrase in that hymn when he says, Thou, O Christ, art all I want, and more than all in thee I find. I can't even contain you. Sometimes I want you to withhold yourself.

Your glory bowls me over. The riches that are laid up for me in eternity. The possibilities of grace that are for me even now in this lousy world.

Nobody explored the possibilities of grace like the Apostle Paul. I was tempted that we should sing tonight to praise him, praise him, Jesus, for our sins he suffered and bled and died. And this epistle of Paul to the Romans, it's so wonderful, because you see, in Romans he explains to us, as best we can understand it, justification by faith.

He died for our sins. He rose again for our justification. That's the theme of Romans.

The message in Corinthians is sanctification in Christ. The message in Galatians is freedom in Christ. The message in Ephesians is oneness in Christ.

In Philippians it's joy in Christ. In Colossians it's fullness in Christ. And in the Thessalonian epistle, it's glory in Christ.

Now, this chapter of Romans is some chapter. If I preach it all, you'll be home for lunch Tuesday. So I won't preach it all.

In all these things we are more than conquerors. Not by having a strong will, not by psychology, but through him that loved us. All that 7th chapter, so many people like to live in the 7th chapter.

They excuse their weakness and their failure. I think if Paul had known it when he was coming out of Romans 7 into Romans 8, he would have sung out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus I come. Romans 7 is a tomb.

Romans 8 is a triumph. Romans chapter 7 is a funeral march. Romans chapter 8 is a wedding march.

Romans chapter 7 is defeat. Romans chapter 8 is deliverance. Romans chapter 7 is a victim.

Romans chapter 8 is the victor. Romans chapter 7 is fettered. Romans chapter 8 is free.

Romans chapter 8 he has weights. 7 he has weights. Romans 8 he has wings.

Romans chapter 7, ah, he shows us what the law could do. And what could it do? Well, Romans chapter 7 could point out sin, but it couldn't cast out sin. I say again that the 7th chapter is a funeral march.

Romans 8 is a wedding march. Some of you, you know, have been to school, a few of you have. And you remember that Milton wrote a wonderful book called Paradise Lost.

Remember that? And he wrote another one, Paradise Regained. The strange thing is, ah, don't tie it too closely, but the strange thing is, you know, he wrote Paradise Lost after he got married. And he wrote

Paradise Regained after his wife died.

But it's true. Romans 7 is Paradise Lost. Romans 8 is Paradise Regained.

Again, it's the song of a soul set free. Wait a minute. You say this man says that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

That's what he said, didn't he? I just read it to you. Well, then you say maybe this man is a bit short-sighted. He doesn't quite understand the enormous complex personality that we have.

He doesn't understand the awfulness of sin and its real bondage. I mean, after all, there's no trace in Paul's life that he'd ever been an adulterer or a drunkard or a murderer or anything like that. No man that ever lived ever looked into the abyss of the human heart and saw in it what Paul saw.

Look at the first chapter of Romans, and he says in the first chapter and verse 24. He's talking about man. He's looking to the abyss of the human heart.

He's talking about the wrong that man has done, and this is how he summarizes it, verse 24. He says, Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, and they dishonored their own bodies between themselves. They were homosexuals and they were perverts.

And therefore, you can put a name on that. He's accusing them there in the 24th verse of wrong living. And in verse 26, he says, For this cause God gave them up to vile affections, wrong loving.

And then you come down to verse 28. Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, He gave them over to a reprobate mind. So that's wrong being.

Wrong living, wrong loving, wrong being. And then he brings 22 indictments against them. You say the man hasn't dropped a plumb line into the human heart.

Did you ever hear anybody else say this? Plato didn't say it, or Socrates, or some of the Greek philosophers. He's saying this by revelation, not speculation. Look at the human heart as he paints it here.

From verse 28, Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. I believe God's given most of America over to a reprobate mind. I believe right now there's hardly a demon left in hell or wherever they live.

They're abroad. I believe the lying spirits are abroad in the nation. If the Bible didn't say the number of a man is 666, I would think it was 666.

God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient. Now listen to the indictment against the human heart. They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whispering, backbiting, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, inventing evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful.

If that doesn't reveal the human heart as black as hell, as a place where all the sewers run through it, if that doesn't explain moral depravity, where in the world is there a picture of it? And yet it's that very man who has looked into the abyss of the human heart and says through Christ, His death, His resurrection, and the Holy Ghost, you can be more than conquerors. Just like that famous Greek whose name escapes

me, at least in mythology, where he was told he would die in the morning at 8 o'clock, unless he could clean all the stables of the king that hadn't been cleaned out for 2 or 3 months, and they were high with horse manure and filth. And the king went to bed quite sure that when he got up in the morning, his archenemy would be put to death.

And when he got up, those stables were so clean. What had he done? Had he got an army to come in and clean them? No. What he did, he stabbed a hole in the side of a bank of a river, and he turned the water through, and it flooded through the stables, and it put out all the impurity.

And the king said, I didn't believe that was possible. What's the problem in the world? I believe you could narrow it all down to one thing, of course. Theologically, we call it sin.

I believe the biggest problem in your life, in your home life, in your church life, in our national life, in the world's life, the biggest problem is the problem of human relationships. We can't get on with each other. And only God Almighty is able to cure that.

Again, I say, this man, you see, again, one of my clichés, I guess, as somebody told me the other day, you repeat yourself quite a bit, and I said, you know, I've got good news for you, I'm going to do more of it too. One of my clichés is this, that a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. If you've had the experience, so what? Are you afraid to meet a philosopher or some brilliant guy? Not so.

You say, listen, you're too late with your wheelbarrow. It actually happened in my life. Don't come trying to persuade me.

Paul with the heart of a murderer. You know, we say sometimes, everybody says so sweetly, John is the apostle of love. I like John, he's the apostle of love.

Is he? Well, as far as I know, the greatest thing that was ever written on love was written by the man who was going down the Damascus road, breathing out threatenings. And then he wrote that colossal chapter, 13 verses, in 1 Corinthians 13, where he says, if I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have no love, I'm sounding brass or as a tingling cymbal. And then when he said that, you know, love never faileth, love endures all things, it bears all things, it doesn't break down.

Why? You say, well, I'm a human being. Well, he's not talking about human beings. Is he talking about angels? No, he's not.

Not archangels either. He's talking about human beings who've lost their self-love and self-pity, and they're filled with the love of God, and since God never breaks down, I don't break down if I'm filled with his love. And then suddenly there's a bump in the story.

He suddenly breaks off from his love, his beautiful soliloquy on love, and he says, when I became a man. Now, what in the world has that got to do with the story of love? I believe there's a conscious entry into spiritual manhood. I don't believe you enter into any experience with God unconsciously or subconsciously.

When I became a man, on the Damascus Road, he revealed himself to me, that somewhere in the wilderness, he revealed himself in me. You don't hear Paul saying, I'm saved. You don't hear him say, I was baptized with the Holy Ghost.

He goes further than that. He says, Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.

I'm come hell or high water. I'm going to serve him right to the end, how bitter it is, and how much trial there is and adversity there is. So he's speaking here again with a voice of experience.

What did we read just a minute ago? All the filth and corruption in the human heart. Now look how he writes to these people in the eighth chapter. He's from a sin-centered personality.

Listen to the majesty of this. See if it fits in with your life, will you? Look what he says in verse nine. But ye are not in the flesh.

You see, people make excuses and say, well, Paul says that they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Right, he does in this very chapter. Well, there you are.

Isn't that a sufficient answer? No, it isn't. There are two Greek words. There's a word called sarx and another called soma.

And one means the fleshly nature that I described to you in Romans chapter one. The other means this kind of flesh. There were some people in the days of the apostle that said, this is flesh that's corrupting.

Sure, it's corrupting, it's going to die. But they said there's sin in this flesh. No, there isn't sin in the flesh.

Not this flesh, not this flesh that you can feel. If your flesh is sinful, you better watch you don't put too much weight on it. Because you'll be a bigger sinner if you weigh 250 pounds and the man next to you weighs 95.

It's got nothing to do with it. He's talking about the sin, he's talking about the flesh that indwells the heart. The cravings for the flesh, the animal life, the sexual life, the perversions that are possible.

They that are in the flesh cannot please God. But wait a minute, he gives the death sentence for that in verse nine. He says, ye are not in the flesh.

But in the spirit, if so be. Listen to this. Listen to this.

Is it true in your life? If so be the spirit of God dwelleth in you. And look at verse ten. And if Christ be in you.

And look at verse eleven. If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you. You can't find anything comparable to that in the Koran or the Vedas or any of the sacred books.

He says again, emphasize it. In verse nine, God dwells in you. In verse ten, Christ is in you.

In verse eleven, the spirit dwells in you. Somebody said to a very, very wise old sage as we say, an old Chinaman. One of these bearded fellows that does nothing but ponder and meditate and gives his life to philosophies and what have you got.

And they said to him, you've read the Koran, you've read the Vedas, you've read most of the sacred books in the world, haven't you? Yes, I have. Have you read the New Testament? Yes, I have. What do you think of it? Most wonderful thing ever, eh? By the way, are you a Christian? The man said, yes.

You're the most wonderful thing on this earth. Me? Oh no, we come up without apology. No, I'm just weak and sinful and frail and doubting and unbelieving and half backslidden half my life.

I mean, don't look on me. I'm not much, you know. We talk as though being sinful is humble.

It's the very opposite. Sinful is arrogance. What do you mean I'm the most wonderful thing in the world? Oh, I was reading in your book, not in the Koran, not in the Vedas.

I was reading in your book. What is that book called? Ephesians, chapter 2. Yeah, the Christian said, that's right, there is a second chapter, but he couldn't remember what was in it. The Chinaman said, I read that over and over again.

It is the most wonderful thing I have ever read. Right at the end of the second chapter. Don't look at it.

I'll tell you something that's interesting. What did it say? What does it say? It says, you are the habitation of God by the Spirit. You! Not Westminster Abbey.

Not even a glass palace somebody put up somewhere. I won't mention any names, but maybe the Lord's never got in it. Maybe never will get in the thing.

He doesn't dwell in buildings as beautiful as this. He dwells in human personality. We are the habitation of God.

The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. Do you wonder that Paul uses so many superlatives when he's talking? Sure, he doesn't fail to show us the enormity of sin, the enormity of guilt. But he doesn't fail to put the trumpet to his lips.

And sound a death sentence on sin. I wonder if we often ponder that word when I survey the wondrous cross. A neighbor of mine is selling some land.

And when I went out the other morning, I go to pray in the morning with a friend. And as I went out, the surveyors were there. And there they were with their theodolites, you know.

And they were this and giving signals and all the rest of it. And they were surveying. And that's what Mr. Isaac Watts says.

When I survey the wondrous cross. The cross that points to a topless heaven and a bottomless hell. The cross with two arms outstretched to save.

You see, we've amputated our hymns. And the last verse of that hymn says, Upon the cross of Jesus, but on the further side. The darkness of an awful grave that gapes both deep and wide.

And there between us stands the cross, two arms outstretched to save. Like a watchman set to guard the way to that eternal grave. You see, once this man was liberated from the bondage of sin.

He forgot all about his scholarship. He forgot about the acres of culture. He forgot that he was a free born man.

He forgot that he was born in one of the richest and greatest families in the world. He says, The day I met Jesus Christ, I became a bond servant. I became his slave.

I didn't say, Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. What a marvelous thing when we get to heaven. He says, Lord, here I am.

You've got my spirit, my soul, my body, my mind, my will. Here I am. I lay in dust, life's glory dead.

And he looked across the world. Oh, maybe he viewed it when he was going up there into the third heaven. Again, he's one of three men that I believe had a preview of eternity.

One of them a thousand years before Paul. Because it says of another great man. If you read the seventh of Acts, it will tell you a lot about Moses.

And it says there that one day he decided not to be the son of Pharaoh's daughters. That he endured as seeing him who is invisible. And he forsook the riches of Egypt.

And he didn't think much of them. Why? Why? What does it say? Because he what? He considered a crown in heaven greater than the crown of Egypt. It doesn't say that.

What does it say? It says he considered the reproach of Christ. The reproach. Being branded as an idiot.

Being branded as a fool. Not all the glory of eternity. That I can take the shame of the cross on myself.

Paul is so vast in his spiritual experience. He says, Lord, I want to fill up the sufferings of Christ. I'm not asking for an easy path.

I'm not asking for Pentecost with prosperity. I'm not asking for the baptism with a bank book like these boys have it in Dallas. He says, all I'm concerned about, I don't care a hill of beans about any riches.

All I want are those riches that are in Jesus Christ. That make me rich in my spirit. And rich in revelation.

And rich in authority over demons. His own testimony is, I'm poor. I have nothing but I possess all things.

Now God pitches the church as everything and possesses nothing. Isn't it amazing? Again, this man crosses and re-crosses the oceans there. He has at least three missionary journeys.

He writes 14 epistles. Dictated them maybe to an Immanuensis or a secretary. Sure didn't have a dictating machine.

Winky Pratt and he was showing me his new machine recently. He's got one of those things you type man alive. It's incredible and it's mystifying and almost terrifying to see it.

Another five years from now, we won't know we're born. Another five years now from now, we wonder where we've been. I don't think anybody will carry any cash.

No, not even a credit card. We'll just go to the counter. They flick it like that.

They'll show you a bank balance and they'll serve you. We won't need any money. We'll be a cashless society.

We'll be that before then because we'll be broke. But apart from that, we'll be a cashless society by scientific methods before very long. And yet all the time we get intellectually expanding.

We're shriveling in our souls. The higher we climb in intellectual things, the more degraded and deprived we get. Depraved.

Now Paul has no hesitation about what he's saying. This chapter of Romans begins with there is no condemnation. It ends with there's no separation.

But he doesn't say there's no persecution. There's an awful lot in between. But he's got this settled in his mind.

I've only one thing to do as long as there's breath in my doughty and that is deliver my soul. And he never sees people as black or white or yellow or brown. He doesn't see them as rich and poor.

He doesn't see them as kings and commoners or princes and prostitutes. No, he doesn't see them that way. He said from the moment I was emancipated, I'm a debtor.

I'm a debtor to all men. And whether you know it or not or care for it, I want to put that round your neck tonight. You're a debtor.

This generation of believers is responsible for this generation of lost people. And there are more lost people at this moment tonight than ever in world history. How would a man go to the Epicureans and the Stoics and the philosophers with just a piece of philosophy to argue about? Again, this epistle to the Romans is the masterpiece.

It is to the New Testament what your backbone is to your body. He goes into profound truth here. Again, he tells us that Christ died for our sins, but he must do more than die for our justification.

He must do more than that. He must live up there so that we have an advocate with the Father. And he must send an endowment down so that we can get through this world.

Not just scraping through in victory, but be more than conquerors. As I reminded you this morning, those people in Hebrews 11. They didn't do it.

They were being reminded because their faith was shaking. And they're taken back to Old Testament days. And they were reminded that in Old Testament days, there were men and women who subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

And listen, not one of them ever had a Bible. Well, one day, friend, you're going to give an account. What have you, 24 versions wrapped up in that one new book they've put out? You're like Weymouth, you're like the NIV, other versions and all the nervous versions and reverse versions.

And you've got them. Well, listen, friend, you're going to answer to God for every one of them when you stand at the judgment seat. And if you've been storing up your moldy knowledge in your mind, you'll have to give an account for why you had all that knowledge and didn't act on it.

Paul says, I'm going to be free from the blood of all men. Sure, the seventh chapter of Romans can bring us all under condemnation. It's a miserable, miserable, miserable thing to go through it and read it.

But oh, when he comes into Romans 8, he's mounting up with wings as eagles and running and not be weary and walking and not fainting. He's found the answer to the greatest problem in the world, the problem of sin. That first of all, he can be forgiven.

The mind, the heart, the conscience can be cleansed. And not only that, that God can erase the record he has against us. But not only that, but he can come and he can cleanse the sewer that's within us.

And not only that, he can come and in dwell, inhabit the human heart by his spirit. You know, I've said in a meeting recently, and a lot of people got shocked. In fact, I got shocked when I said it, but I still say it again.

I said, I go to some churches and I think the preachers, the devils advocate. The preachers make so much excuse for sin and weakness and failure. The devil could close his business down, the preachers will carry it on for him, in most areas.

Now don't, don't, don't let anybody tell you can be cleansed and have victory, no, that's sinless perfection, is it? Well, sin is normal. Oh, what you're telling me is that God didn't make Adam normal then? He didn't have any sin, did he? Well, then somebody says, sweetly, you know, dear, you need a little bit of sin to keep you humble. Well, then why not have a lot and be real humble? You can't help it, you sin because you have to.

You don't sin because you have to, you sin because you want to. You can have all the persuasion in the world, but you have to do it. Somebody may tempt you to lust or tempt you to this or tempt, but they can't make you do it.

The devil can't make it. You know the old silly slogan, the devil made me do it. Forget it, he didn't.

You did it because you wanted to do it. The prodigal took his journey into a far country. He comes to his father with the gimmies.

Give me this and give me that and give me the other. And he went out loaded. When he came back, he didn't say to his father, give me.

He came back and he said to his father, make me. Sure, he spent his money in righteous living. His other brother stayed at home.

He was a goody goody. No, he wasn't. He was a prodigal.

Why? Because he wasted all his substance. Why? Because he never used it. Hey, come on, your father's calling for you.

You hear them playing the fiddles, having a great time and clapping. What's it all about? Man, I've been at the other side of the ranch. I'm so tired.

All he says is, your daddy says, hurry, hurry, hurry. Your brother's come home. My brother's come home? Well, tell my dad I'm not coming.

He stinks. The father said, your brother's come home. Welcome him.

He says, dad, I haven't been telling you. I beg you. I've had somebody, a private eye following my brother.

Do you know what he's done with all that fortune you gave him? He's lived with other women. He's got drunk. He's gambled.

Our name stinks. You think I'm coming with him? And what's going on? Oh, he says, I took that prize beast we were going to take to the 4H club, you know. And we killed it, the fatted calf.

Come on now, you like roast beef. You won't get me eating that beef anyhow. Listen, dad, I've heard you crying at nights.

I've heard you praying at nights for my brother. I've heard you asking people, did you see a boy that looked like this? I didn't tell you what a lousy son you've got, how corrupt he is. You never shed a tear over me, did you? You never had a sleepless night over me.

Hmm, and that's what you get for being good. You never killed a fatted calf and made a meal for me. Hold it a minute, the father said.

Do you know why I didn't kill a calf? No, why? Because I don't have one. You don't have one? No. Don't you remember we sat down with your brother and you got the estate and you got all the cattle and he got the money.

It's your cattle. It's your money, it's your substance. They're your herds, they're your riches.

What have you done with them? You've wasted them as much as your brother wasted them out in the wild world. Like the man who buried his talents. Come on now, what have you done with the knowledge you've got? Paul says I'm a debtor.

I never, I never see a man in his social bracket. I never see a man in his religious bracket. I see that man as bound in sin, fatted in sin, doomed and damned and lost forever and ever.

Unless I can intercept him on the way and tell him of somebody who's able to save to the uttermost. Yeah, he's surveyed the wondrous cross alright. He's the man that talks about in the 15th chapter of Corinthians where he runs down the resurrection.

And there's a phrase in that and I don't know, is it tomorrow and is it, is it here they're going to sing the Messiah? I know there's a notice out there. I like that place in the Messiah where you know there's a kind of a pause and then the, is it the baritone sings, Since by man came death. And then there's a plonking on the piano or something and suddenly, by man came also the resurrection from the dead.

I like that. By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world. And since that billions and trillions and quadrillions of sins are being committed.

And if you'd sin 10 million sins, if you come broken and contrite, there's one who one day he took our sins in his body on the tree. Though it wasn't his body that did the suffering, his soul was made an offering for sin. And as the hymn writer said, none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed.

Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through before he found the sheep that was lost. I don't know and you don't know and no man that ever lived ever knew. You see, the older I get, the more I realize great is the mystery of godliness.

There are things we'll never explain to you by reason. If you could explain them by reason, you wouldn't need faith. There are something that puzzle me, I accept them by faith.

I don't know how somebody in eternity, the heaven of heavens couldn't contain him, was compressed into the matrix of the Virgin Mary. I don't understand that. How she conceived a son without any human aid, but he was conceived by the Holy, I don't understand it.

But there's something more baffling than that. Not that God became man, but that that man became sin. He became the very embodiment of sin.

I've seen pictures of the crucifixion in art galleries around the world, but not one of them makes sense. Because nobody saw Jesus die, not even God. You say he didn't, no, no, no, no.

He was too awesome, he was too terrible. There was a Greek by the name of Diogenes. There was an Egyptian philosopher by the name of Diogenes.

And on the very day that Jesus died, in the middle of the day, the sun disappeared, it went as black as night. And Diogenes, a heathen, said, either God is suffering or somebody he loves is suffering. And in the moment, when as the poet says, the psalmist, when mercy and truth met together and righteousness and peace kissed each other.

In the moment that he became sin, it was too much for God to look at, so he blew the sun out for a little while. He drew a veil, it was too holy and sacred. It was like the day of creation that only God witnessed.

And in one sense only God witnessed, for this is the new creation. You sang it tonight, love divine, all love excelling. You sang, take away our bent to sinning.

You sang, finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be. You think Jesus died just to leave us shuffling in this world, in bondage to sin and pride and secret lust and envy and all the hellish things that people in the world are messed up with? Paul has no doubt in his mind about the substitutionary death of propitiation that Jesus became for our sins. He says in verse 34 of this 8th chapter, who is he that condemneth? The believer has a fourfold protection in Jesus Christ.

He is protected by his death because it says there that by his death he became a propitiation for our sins. He is protected by justification because he rose again from the dead. He ascended and he rose again from the dead because he ascended again to justify us.

He is protected by the fact that Jesus now lives at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for us. So he is protected externally there in eternity. He is protected again as I said to you this awesome thing that boggles my mind.

That if you are a true believer and you have repented of your sin and trusted him to cleanse you, again that in verse 9 God dwelleth in you. In verse 10 Christ is in you. And verse 11, do you wonder he says we are more than conquerors? How can you fail if that's true? He is able to cleanse the heart.

He is able to purge the conscience. He is able to come and make a person the habitation of his spirit. The habitation where God lives in me, Christ lives in me, the spirit lives in me.

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