

The Cost of Salvation

by Major Ian Thomas

The purpose of Torchbearing is to lead people to a relationship with the Lord Jesus, whereby they are prepared to allow Him to be God in them.

Duration: 1:12:01

Scripture: Genesis 6:5-8, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by describing the sinful nature of the world, highlighting the prevalence of immorality, murder, and the devaluation of life. He emphasizes the need to turn back to the teachings of Genesis and confront the reality of sin in society. The preacher also discusses the mission of Torch-Bearing Worldwide, which aims to bring the mission field to people and send them back as ambassadors of God. He concludes by emphasizing the importance of the gospel and the sacrifice of Jesus, who took on the sins of humanity to offer refuge and redemption.

Transcript

Torchbearing as such, came into being as a result of ministry over previous years. The end of World War II, being released back from reserve of offices, from which I had been recalled at the outbreak of war, being already commissioned in one of the most famous regiments in the British Army, the Royal Fusilier, City of London Regiment, and if nobody's told you, primarily responsible for winning World War II. With the help of a few other folks, to whom we are always grateful.

But, Cave and Ray Hall in England is a very beautiful location, that God was pleased to make available to us, and opened in 1947. We'll celebrate our 50th anniversary in 1997. That's not too long to wait.

Fantastic. God's been so good to us since then. For what then began as a young people's conference grounds, primarily targeting teenagers and bringing them during the summer months, developed into a conference grounds and Bible school.

That then reproduced itself around the world. So now there are 22 locations on the five continents of the earth, 17 of which are conference grounds and Bible schools and Bible camps, similar to His Hill here, different locations. And there isn't a rigid format.

God has been pleased to make available to us some fantastic facilities. And he says simply, here are your tools, get on with the job and let me know what's happening. And that's been fun.

That's been a real adventure. At Cave and Ray itself, we've had something now like 100,000 young people staying with us, and tens of thousands of others, of course, in the other locations. There are two in Germany, there are two in Austria, there's one in Switzerland.

We operate in Spain, though we have been defrauded of our location by the local government who put a promenade through it. And that doesn't matter. That doesn't faze God, he's got all kinds of other plans up his sleeve.

We're just looking up his sleeve, that's all he's got there. We have a location, a beautiful spot in Australia, another beautiful location in New Zealand, in Japan, right at the foot of Mount Fuji. And in Indonesia, in the highlands between Jakarta and Bandung, and probably one of the loveliest conference grounds in the whole of Indonesia.

God's so good to us, fantastic. And in the Philippines, we don't have a permanent residential center, we have three student centers which we help to multiply, whereby high school kids can come because one class is released at one time in the day, so that all through the day long, one class is free to do as they please. And so we make a student center available to them within five minutes' walk.

So they can come, sit down, read books, play games, do their homework. And in the meantime, the Filipino staff who've been brought into a lovely relationship with a lot of well-trained by Dave Hobson, son of one of our council members and who has been based very often here in his hill, and reaching these high school kids who in many ways have been much neglected in the past because most focus has been laid upon the street kids, of which there are thousands upon thousands and need all the help they can get. But the high school kids have been somewhat neglected, but they're going to be the future leaders, doctors, lawyers, school teachers, army officers, members of parliament.

And so we focus our attention upon these, and dozens of them, literally dozens of them have come to know the Lord Jesus, not by way of a flash in the pan, simply a decision for Jesus to get out of hell and into heaven, but of being instructed, are growing. And through them we have access to classes which we can teach in the high schools and to speak at their morning assemblies. So God has given us a wide open door there also in the Philippines.

In Malaysia, too, God has given us a ministry. The director of that ministry is now in Columbia Bible College doing some additional training so that he can go back. His chief ambition is one day God will be pleased to give us a permanent base from which he can operate.

Well, that's in God's hands, not ours. We don't tell him what to do. We're just fingers in his body, and he's the head of that body.

And we've never claimed the right as fingers to get into committee under the chairmanship of the, you know, thumbs, and tell God what he's going to do with his body. That's stupid. That's what God has to contend with all the time, that which is called his body on earth.

It's called the church, where the fingers sit in committee and tell God what they're going to do on his behalf. And he says, thanks for nothing. I mean, how would you get on with a body like that? So that, you know, halfway through the morning you want to blow your nose, but already your fingers under the

chairmanship of the thumbs have decided to scratch your back.

I mean, how would you do? Well, we've sought to avoid that embarrassment to the one who is the head of that body of which we claim to be members. So whether God has a permanent center in mind, up his sleeve for Malaysia is his business and not ours, but we are prepared to cooperate when he gives us his instructions. Marvelous.

Now, God has given us another beautiful place in Costa Rica. The first Spanish-speaking base is an open door to Spanish-speaking Central and South America. And we've been in operation there for two years already, several thousand young folks have been there.

The Bible schools have now already come into session, and we're quite excited about what God is doing in that area. The latest excitement is God has given us a new base, beautiful base in a ski resort in Quebec, French-speaking Canada, one of the neediest parts of our North American continent. It's estimated that out of five and a quarter million people, only 30,000, as an approximate estimate, know what it means to be born again.

It's a country riddled with a religion which has been totally discredited, and that's left a vacuum that they're trying to fill with every kind of voodooism, and it's a pathetic country. One out of every five teenagers attempts or succeeds in committing suicide. Ten, one out of ten adults attempt to succeed in committing suicide.

It's a country, very cultured, but has lost any substance to its being, and God's been pleased to give us a beautiful, beautiful location there. Now, this is what we call torturing. What's the object of the exercise? There's only one, that's the gospel, which is not a creed, not a dogma, not an organization, not a program, a person, Jesus.

So from the very beginning, our prime ambition has been to lead boys, girls, men, and women to that relationship to the Lord Jesus, whereby they were actually prepared to allow him to be God in them. That's the only purpose for which the students are here at this hill, not to get their heads packed with doctrinal knowledge, as we've heard already in the earlier session this morning, or to have a sort of exhilarating experience and go high on Jesus. We're not interested, we're not in that business.

Only that these men and women who are here now, and hundreds of others, we've got just about 900 students in our Bible schools worldwide right now, and the object is to introduce them to that relationship to the Lord Jesus, whereby recognizing how God made them, how he intended them to function, what went wrong in the remedial measures that he's introduced, put things right, and now prepared to enter back into that relationship of mutual inter-availability, whereby they will allow him to be God in their lives. You can't legislate that. You can introduce them to the principle, but in the measure in which they grasp the truth as it is in Jesus, you can let them go and you know you've preached yourself out of business.

Marvelous. And then throw them back wherever they come from. I suppose in Bible schools at the moment we've got representatives of at least 40, maybe 50 different countries.

It's much more economical to bring the mission field to you and send them back than try to go to the mission field. And that's the philosophy that God has laid upon our heart. Though God also sends those of his body whom he chooses into the place of his divine appointing.

And when you're sent and you went, you're put, and when you're put and you know who put you, nothing can frighten you. And you let all God loose in the world in which you live. There are copies of the annual general report that I present normally each year in November at our annual general meeting that has just taken place last weekend in Fallbrook, California.

And that gives a panoramic view of the whole Ministry of Torch Bearing worldwide. And fill in the details that I couldn't possibly attempt to fill in right now. So these are available in the office just on the desk.

They're going to take them. We'll also bring probably some here, stick them on the piano in case you miss that. But do please take a copy of the annual general report which covers the whole operation worldwide.

All we can say is, with profound gratitude to God, he did it. And therefore there's only one person to be congratulated. The one who did it.

Isn't that fun? And we're very happy to allow him to take the credit for anything that he has himself done. For the rest, forget it. Because it's only the wood, the hay, and the stubble that'll go out in flames and leave us in a heap of ashes with empty hands.

Well, that's just a brief introduction to torch bearing. In the beginning was the Word. Capital W. The Logos.

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and was God. It was with God only because God is a trinity.

And the Logos, Jesus, was with the other two members of the trinity in the triune Godhead. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God.

And God, of course, as all of you know in that first verse of the book of Genesis is a plural word because in the unique identity of three in one that we can't possibly begin to fathom with our minds. And I'm glad we can't because I don't want a God so small he'll be small enough to be tucked into my little head. In the beginning was the Word.

He was with God and was God. By him all things were made. Without him was not anything made that was made.

He is the creative deity. And in him was life. Life.

That life which the Bible later describes again and again as life which is eternal, everlasting life. The only life that is eternal, everlasting life, is God himself. Eternal life, everlasting life isn't a place you go to when you're dead and buried and the family have put a bunch of roses on your grave.

That's not eternal life. This is the record God has given to us eternal life. If any of us right now possess eternal life, that which alone qualifies us to spend eternity in heaven, if you and I have got eternal life, it's only because somebody lives in somebody.

Because this is the record God has given to us eternal life and this life that he's given to us is in his son. He that has the son has life. If you haven't got him, you haven't got it.

He that has the son has life. He that does not have the son of God, if there's somebody sitting here and that somebody isn't in you, the somebody, you haven't got life. You're as dead as the day you were born.

As dead as Adam became the day he fell. Destitute of the divine content, all that makes man functional. In him was life.

And that life was the life of man. In other words, God was created as God lamp, but it took oil to enable man to shine. And as I have reminded some of you already, Proverbs 20, 27, the human spirit that uniquely lifts man out of the animal kingdom of which he is part and makes him man, the human spirit is God's lamp.

Proverbs 20, 27. Because man wasn't created with the capacity to shine. He wasn't created with the capacity to produce light.

He wasn't created with his own inherent ability to display the glory and perfection and holiness of God. He was created to be a lamp that needed oil without which he cannot shine. And in him, Jesus, was that life, the word, which is the light of man.

So we just remind ourselves of the eternal timeless deity of the Lord Jesus in co-equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit, who in the triune Godhead inhabit eternity. And it was from eternity the Lord Jesus came to us nearly 2,000 years ago. Micah chapter 5 and verse 2, out of thee Bethlehem Ephrata shall he come.

A little baby boy to be born at Bethlehem. Out of thee Bethlehem Ephrata shall he come whose days have been from eternity and go on to eternity. The eternal God who inhabits eternity stepped out of eternity in the time left heaven and came to earth.

That's the word, who was made flesh and dwelt among us. Now having reminded ourselves of that, let's turn to the beginning, the genesis of things. Genesis in chapter 1. When you hear a word, why is it? If you hear a word, where does it originate? Oh, somebody said something.

It's a means of communication. So you're not surprised when it says in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book in the Bible, the genesis, the beginning of things, in the beginning God. That's where it all began.

He didn't begin in the beginning, he was. In the eternal present tense of the verb to be, he that comes to God must first believe that God is, timelessly, past, present and future. God only knows one tense, the present, the I am.

In the beginning, our beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. He looked into chaos and produced cosmos, order out of disorder. The earth was without form, void, darkness was upon the face of the deep.

But the Spirit of God, representing the whole triune deity, moved upon the face of the waters. And the one by whom God created all things is the one who called the Logos spoke. And what he, Jesus, who was in the beginning with God and was God, said was this.

Verse 3. God said, let there be light. And there was light. Verse 6. God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And it was so. Verse 9. God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear. And it was so.

And as God spoke, God looked. We read here in the book of Genesis right at the outset of things that God said and God saw. When God said, what did he see? Well, we are told that the things that are came into being from the things that were not when God spoke, when the Logos gave utterance, the creative word.

What did God see after what God had said? Well, look at the end of verse 10. God saw that it was good. So, God said and God saw.

And what God saw because of what God said was good. Verse 11. God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herd yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit of its kind, whose seed is in itself.

And it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself after his kind. And God saw.

What did God see after what God said? End of verse 12. It was good. So, God said and God saw.

And what God saw because of what God said was good. Is that complicated? This is God in action. God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven.

Verse 14. Divide the day from the night. Let them be for lights.

Verse 15. In the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And it was so.

And at the end of verse 18, God saw that it was good. The evening and the morning were the fourth day. Verse 19, the 20th verse.

God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature. That have life. Foul that may fly upon the earth in the open firmament of the heaven.

And God created great whales. Every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind. Every wing fouled after his kind.

Birds. And God saw the result of what he said. And it was good.

Good. Now, this is the story of Genesis, the beginning of things. It began with a good God.

And that good God spoke a good word. And what God saw as a result of the good word was good. It was as good as God.

Verse 24. God said, let the earth bring forth a living creature after his kind. Cattle, creeping thing, beast of the earth after his kind.

And it was so. And God saw, verse 25, that it was good. Then, having done all that, God said something else.

Because in man, God wanted a creature that could love him back. That cannot be compelled. Because love cannot be compelled.

So, man was uniquely created by God, not like the rest of the creatures that he had created on earth within the animal kingdom to echo like a parrot, or mimic like an ape. And this ground we covered, for those of you who are visiting us today, in the early part of the week. Man was never created by God to echo like a parrot or mimic like an ape.

A mindless echo, what God said. Put another way by Charles in the earlier session this morning. Knowing what God said, textually aware, but being still spiritually unenlightened as the Peter said, thou art the Christ.

Absolutely right what he said. He echoed it. But it was mindless because he had no ideas to what God had in mind in sending the Christ, prophet, priest, and king.

That's why he said, not so, Lord. You say they're not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. In other words, you're behaving like an animal.

Unenlightened by the one who created you to be inhabited by himself. To teach your mind, control your emotions, and direct your will, and be within you the source of his own image, and the one who alone can enlighten your understanding of what God is at. You and I were not created to echo what God had to say, nor to imitate what God is supposed to do.

This, tragically enough, has become a Christianity that has been detached from Christ. Religion that's been detached from God. So that people go to a piece of religious real estate to be house trained in religious activity.

But the end product is the echoing of a parrot and the mimicking of an ape. Pardon me for saying so. The natural man who receives not the things of the spirit of God, they're foolish unto him and neither can you know them.

You don't have to be out of church, an atheist, repudiate the existence of God to be that. One of the characteristics of the natural man is that inherently he is a religious, and if he can't worship God, he'll worship a cow. Or a tree.

Supremely himself. Humanism. Whereby satanically deceived, he became his own God.

The religion that is taught in all your public schools. Where religion is forbidden. Self-worship.

Drawing upon the illimitable depths of your own personality. Throwing out your chest and demonstrating what a fantastic species you are as the last end product of an evolutionary process that began with a big bang and ended up with man having first become an amoeba. Aren't you proud of your heritage? God said, verse 26, Genesis 1, let us make man in our image and in our likeness, neither to echo nor mimic, but to enjoy a relationship from within of mutual inter-availability where you give your life to him and he gives his life to you.

You heard about that this morning. That's the only way to save your life. If you want to behave like an animal, like a brute beast, then you'll want to save the things that brute beasts and animals enjoy.

Things that pass with time and finally are buried. But if you want to save that life for which man was created, God's life, eternal life, give yourself to him and he'll give himself to you. Put this way in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 6, he that comes to God must first believe that God, present tense, is.

The timeless present tense of the verb to be, because you can only be by virtue of who and what God is. He that comes to God must first believe that God is. And that he, the God who is, is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

In other words, all that God is, is available to the man who is available to all that God is, in mutual inter-availability. How available was the Lord Jesus man to his father as God? Totally. How available was the father as God to his son as man? Totally.

Mutual inter-availability. So there was no margin of difference between what the Lord Jesus said and what the father was saying. There was no margin of difference between what the Lord Jesus did and what the father was doing.

There was absolutely no margin of difference between what the Lord Jesus was then as man and the father is. He could say, look at me and see God. Why? Because he was God? No.

The God he was, is, and always will be. Because he humbled himself, emptied himself, made himself nothing and of no reputation and came into this world of his own deliberate free choice to be born a human being, to be man as he is God created man to be, who cannot be functional apart from the presence of the creator within the creature. Because he made man that way.

And in the sinlessness of that humanity demonstrated the innocence of a pre-fallen Adam. He was man in normality, in mutual inter-availability. God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, over every creeping thing, all the works of God's hands.

Male and female created them and he called them, Genesis 5, them, male and female, Adam. The word Adam comprehends male and female. Genesis chapter 5. He made them in his own image and likeness and called them Adam.

God said in verse 29, behold I've given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth. The green herb which was designed in God's economy to be nourishment for the animal kingdom. Tells you that, verse 30.

I've given every green herb for meat and it was so. God spoke and it was so. And having spoken, what did God see? Verse 31.

God saw everything that he had made, everything. And behold, it was not just good, very good. How good? As good as God can make a thing good.

When a thing's as good as God can make a thing good, it's as good as God himself. Now, this is the word. Who's in the beginning with God and was God? He's called the word because he spoke, he said.

And what he said happened. And when he looked at what happened, he said, good. What he said, he saw.

And what he saw was good. All right, now look at chapter 6. The 6th chapter of the book of Genesis. And there's a sort of change of gear.

Verse 5. God saw. In chapter 1, it says, God said and then saw. Now in chapter 6, God saw and then said.

Change of gear. Verse 5, God saw. That the wickedness of man was great in the earth, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And verse 7, the Lord said, on the base of what he saw, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth. Something's happened. Something must have happened.

On the base of what he said, God saw and said, it's good. Then suddenly, on the base of what he saw, God said, it's bad. So bad, I'm going to destroy it.

How bad? Well, let's just remind ourselves. Look at chapter 8 in the book of Genesis. In the latter part of that 21st verse, the Lord, God said, the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

That's the 8th chapter of the book of Genesis, latter part of verse 21. The imagination of man's heart, God said, is evil from his youth. This is the man of whom God said when he made him good, very good.

So good that when God looked at man made in his own perfect and absolute image and likeness, God could not but in man see himself. So, not created to echo or to emit, but the mirror that would reproduce as a derived image by what man does, says, and is the perfection of deity. Bringing an invisible God out into the open where he can be seen and heard.

That was what God had in mind in fulfilling his ambition to produce a man who could advertise deity. Do you think God is very proud today of those whom he created to advertise deity? Do you think when God gets up in the morning and reads the newspaper, he's very proud of this human being that he created so that all creation could look at man and know what God was like? Do you think he's excited about it? Greed and lust and pride and hate, all that ugly list called the works of the flesh. Vassiviousness, murder, prostitution, baby murder, little wonder God said, I think I'll wipe them out.

I'll trash them. Look at Psalm 53, 53rd Psalm, the first verse, the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. It takes a fool to say that.

And you can almost forgive a fool for saying it because what he says is an utterance that has its origin in his own ignorance. It takes a fool to say there is no God. And there's something worse than being a fool.

What man became, a rebel. You see, if you say there is no God, you're a fool and you can excuse the stupidities in which you engage if there's no God because there's nobody watching and there's nobody to whom you're responsible. You can forgive a fool if he is a fool for what he does.

He doesn't know any better. What is worse than being a fool is to believe there is a God and act as though there weren't one. It's one thing to deny God's existence.

It's a million times worth to ignore God's existence that you don't deny. As the average church girl who recites the creed and sings his songs and then acts for the rest of the week as though he didn't even exist. The fool has said there is no God.

Corrupt are they, they have done abominable iniquity. There is none that doeth good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that had any spiritual discernment, that did seek God.

Every one of them is gone back. They are altogether become filthy. There is none, no not one in the original that doeth good.

No, not one. Do you think God was happy? It isn't that man, you know, is corrupted by his environment. Something happened, of course, which we have touched upon.

We're going to think a little bit more about it before the week is out. Called the fall of man. When believing the devil's lie that a man can be functional without God, he repudiated his needs as the creature of God the creator.

He believed the humanistic doctrine that's taught in your public schools and is believed in from your president right the way down through the administration and is bringing this nation to the same decrepit state of anarchy and confusion and despair that has already existed in what was once the Soviet Union. Because man learns absolutely nothing from history except to condemn himself by repeating it. And the doctrines that have been perpetrated in your public schools are those that were taught by Lenin for 60 years.

And a nation suffers from a man's stupidity in political, financial, moral, intellectual degradation, anarchy, and chaos. But that didn't come from environment. That came from the heart of man which God says is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Because the heart of man in the day that Adam fell embraced a doctrine that made man his own God. Satan said you don't have to be like God and live in servile dependency upon a creator. You can be as God, your own God.

And man believed the devil's lie and that was the day that man died. And you can't forfeit, you can't die without forfeiting life. And the life that man forfeited in the day that man and all mankind in Adam died was the life of God for which man was made.

There was no oil now in the lamp. There was no gas in the car. There was no ink in the pen.

There was no God in the man. It's not environment. Look at Psalm 58, verse 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb.

Who are the wicked? Well, God looked down from heaven upon the children of men and there was none righteous. No, not one. They've all gone astray.

And the wicked are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they be born. Living a lie.

What kind of a lie? Well, God created man to bring an invisible God out in the air where that invisible God could be seen and heard and man forfeiting the life of God could only live a lie about God. That's the nature of sin. The lies that man tells about God.

See how it's described in the New Testament. Look at Romans in chapter 1, verse 18. God's holy wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.

Any unlikeness of God. Anything that is a lie about God. Anything that is an aberration from that in which man was made.

God's image and God's perfect likeness. His indignation is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative. Truth is still true, but human beings deliberately, maliciously, cunningly make it inoperative.

Because, in verse 21, when they knew and recognized him as the God, they did not honor and glorify him as God or give him thanks. Instead, they became futile, godless in their thinking, vain imaginings, foolish

reasoning and stupid speculations. And their senseless minds were darkened.

Claiming to be wise, they became fools. Professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves. By them, the glory and majesty and excellency of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images resembling mortal man, birds, beasts and reptiles.

The mere creature took the place of the creator. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their own hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, abandoning them to the degrading power of sin. Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.

So, verse 28, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve of him or consider him worth the knowing, God gave them over to a base and condemned mind to do things not proper or decent but loathsome. Until they were filled, permeated and saturated with every kind of unrighteousness, iniquity, grasping, covetous, greed and malice. They were full of envy, jealousy, murder, strife, deceit, treachery, ill will, cruel ways.

They were secret backbiters and gossipers, slanderers, hateful to and hating God, full of insolence, arrogance and boasting, inventors of new forms of evil, disobedient, undutiful to parents. They were without understanding, conscienceless and faithless, heartless and loveless and merciless. Though they are fully aware of God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them themselves but approve and applaud others who practice them.

Peter, in his second epistle, just turn to it for a moment, second epistle of Peter, we're getting there. In those days there was something characteristic of what there is nowadays. They practiced a form of godliness but they denied the power thereof.

In other words, they were inherently religious and practiced religion but denied the power thereof. They were aliens and strangers to what in God's divine economy alone makes man functional, God. So in those days, verse 1 of chapter 2, in the second epistle of Peter, there arose false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among his own, who will subtly, stealthily introduce heretical doctrines, destructive heresies, even denying and disowning the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

Many will follow their immoral ways and lascivious doings because of them the true way will be maligned and defamed. Verse 12, these people like unreasoning beasts, mere creatures of instinct, born only to be captured and destroyed, reigning at times of which they are ignorant, they shall utterly perish in their own corruption, being destined to receive punishment as the reward of their unrighteousness, suffering wrong as the hire for their wrongdoing. They counted a delight to revel in the daytime, living luxuriously and delicately.

They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions at love feasts, carousing together even as they feast with you. They have eyes full of harlotry, insatiable for sin. They beguile and bait and lure away unstable souls.

Their hearts are trained in covetousness, lust, and greed. Children of the curse. Well, you say, is this a thanksgiving message? I thought it would be good at the outset to make you as miserable as possible.

Turn back to Genesis. I'm just telling you the truth, that's all. Is anything of what he has been described is foreign to the world in which you look around and see? Turn on your newscast tonight.

Discover how many people have been murdered since yesterday. How many babies have been murdered by their mothers because they've turned love into lust, having babies they don't want, so they kill them. That's what we do with puppies, except we just put them in a bucket of water.

I always say, if mothers have the right to kill their own children, I think if children don't want their parents, they should have the right to kill them. Don't you think that's fair? I mean, fair is fair. God saw, and God said, and what he said was the result of what he saw.

As earlier in the creation, God said and God saw, and what he saw was the result of what he said. Good. But what God then had to say as the result of what he saw was that, at verse 8, the sun shone through the clouds, there was a rainbow in the sky, grace shone through judgment.

Verse 8, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and at the end of verse 9, because Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, Noah walked with God, and God said to Noah, verse 14, make thee an ark. In other words, in the midst of judgment, God provided refuge. Noah is described in the epistles of Peter as a man who for 120 years preached righteousness, told the truth in the middle of a lying world.

Grace revealed through judgment. Chapter 8, verse 1, and God remembered Noah. Chapter 9, verse 1, and God blessed Noah.

Here's a man who walked with God, found grace, and God remembered, and God blessed. God said in verse 12 of chapter 9, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations, right down the centuries until a bunch of folks meet on Thanksgiving Day in His hill, Texas. It shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.

And God is light, the purest of all things, and light so pure it can't even be seen. You don't see light. There's no light in the atmosphere apart from the specks of dust that reflect it.

In a vacuum, even though you were to beam a beam of light through it, it would be pitch dark, nothing to reflect. The incredible thing is that God's grace, the light of His mercy, takes fallen human beings to reflect it and become tangible, experiential. God is light.

There was only one way God could display Himself then, in the purity and holiness of the glory of God in whose image man was made. Split it into the spectrum, in the rainbow and the cloud, where light, the perfect of all things, becomes visible in the seven colors of the rainbow. So, God displayed His glory.

I'll set my bow in the cloud and it shall be for a token of a covenant between you and me. I'll bring a cloud over the earth that the bow be seen in the cloud and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you. So, there was a covenant between man and God of which man was to be reminded as God remembered, and he saw the perfection of deity displayed in the magnificence of the rainbow.

What was the covenant that God made between Himself and man? Well, you'll read about it in the third chapter of the book of Genesis in the 15th verse. It was a covenant that God has settled in His heart before ever the world was, for the Lord Jesus is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Revelation chapter 13.

In other words, the redemptive measures that God introduced whereby man could be regenerate, restored to life, be raised from his state of death, wasn't an emergency measure that God thought up at the last moment. It was a plan God had in mind, kept secret in the eternal age of the past for the eventuality that occurred when man was stupid enough to believe the devil's lie that he could be functional without God. And that plan of God was not made public, not given divine utterance until man fell.

Genesis 3 and verse 15. Rebuking the devil in the day that man fell, seduced by the liar who is the father of lies, Satan, the enemy of God and the enemy of man so. God said to him, I'll put enmity between you and the woman.

I'll put enmity between you, your seed and her seed. The seed of that woman will bruise your head. He'll destroy you.

In the process, you'll bruise his heel. He'll hang one day, God incarnate in the sinlessness of true humanity on a Roman gallows with nails through his hands and feet and a crown of thorns upon his head with a mocking jeering crowd around him staring at him and gambling for his clothes. One who will be made sin for a fallen race of fallen men that man might find in him the refuge from the inevitable consequence of his own stupidity and guilt, the seed.

God says, I'm going to set my bow in the heaven to remind you that I have made a covenant as the creator between myself and man, the creature, in spite of his wickedness. And I'll be true to my covenant. You see, God looked into this dirty world, and you can imagine Father, Son, and Holy Spirit discussing the situation.

We created man to derive the glory from the indwelling presence of the creator within the creature, so engineered that the presence of God in the man is indispensable to his humanity, so engineered that man in normality represents a quality of life that can derive only from the presence of the creator within the creature to be distinguished thereby from the animal kingdom, a quality of life that will have absolutely no possible explanation but God in the man. But he's believed the devil's lie that he can be man without God. He's now embarked upon the mad humanistic experiment of human self-sufficiency.

He can get by without his maker. They believe the devil's lie that you can lose God and lose nothing, gain God, and you've got no more than you had before, so forget it. That was the devil's lie.

Lose God, lose nothing. Gain God, gain nothing. You're on your own.

That's how man behaves today. Even as a professing Christian, that's how you can behave. That actually Christ living in your heart doesn't add anything to you.

That's why you struggle on trying to do it without him. So if you lose him, you've lost nothing. You gain him, you gain nothing.

So what's the difference between Philip with his 200 pennies in the bag, mobilizing his own limited resources but ignoring Jesus, and the atheist in the crowd? No difference. Except that the atheist was a practicing atheist and a professing atheist, and Philip was a professing Christian and a practicing atheist. What's the difference? What's the difference between Adam trying to be a man without God and a Christian trying to live the Christian life apart from Christ? What's the difference? It's the same subtle lie of the devil.

That's why Paul says, second epistle to the Corinthians, I fear lest a Satan beguile thee, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Jesus. Aberrating from the centrality of the creator within the creature, Christ and the Christian putting God back into the man. That's a corruption of the mind.

That's evangelical humanism. That says to trust God and leave it to him alone as the one who can, that's passivity. If you let Jesus do it, if you bow out and let God be God, then nothing's going to happen.

What are they telling you? That man is his own God, that Jesus is simply an excuse for the religious activity, he doesn't really exist. That's blasphemous. Anybody who tells you that to bow yourself out and allow the Lord Jesus to be God in your life and let him do it, that's passivity.

Know that the Lord Jesus would say to them what he had to say to Peter, get thee behind me Satan. This was the covenant. So, God looked down upon a world debauched, one big lie about God.

So, all that God could write across that human race was *Ishabod*, the glory has departed. And in the triune Godhead, they knew perfectly well that man could never be restored to the from which he had fallen unless he receives again the origin of that glory. But he can't receive again the origin of that glory, have God's life restored to a fallen, guilty, sinful man unless there is a substitute who in his person is prepared to pay the debt.

Pay a debt he does not owe, because man owed a debt he could not pay. So, God looked down from heaven to see if there was a man who did fear God and there was none righteous. No, not one.

So, in so many words, the Lord Jesus said, well, we better implement the plan. And as the word by whom all things came into being, I'll go myself and provide a means whereby those who will may escape. I'll go and build the ark and fulfill the covenant.

I'll reveal the glory and they'll see the purity of deity displayed in the seven colors of the rainbow by everything I do and say and am. And nearly 2,000 years ago, a little baby was born, conceived of the Holy Ghost, fashioned the borrowed womb of a virgin girl, who was a man who never could have been, never could have been apart from God. Only one explanation for the life of Jesus, God.

Not because Jesus was God, though God he was, isn't always will be, but he was born a human being. But he was a man as a human being who could never have happened apart from God. First of all, it demanded the divine intervention of a miraculous conception.

Said the angel Gabriel to Mary, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son. Conception doesn't take place in the womb. That was a miraculous divine intervention.

That his pedigree might have its origin not in man, but in God. Therefore shall that holy thing that shall be born of you be called the Son of God. A little baby was born.

God spoke. We've reminded ourselves of that. May I remind you again in the first chapter of the epistle of the Hebrews, in many separate revelations, each of which set forth a portion of the truth in different ways God spoke of all to our forefathers in and by the prophets.

In the last of these days, God has spoken to us in the person of a son. God spoke again. He said another word, and it was the biggest thing God ever said.

For the word by whom all things were made was made flesh and dwelt among us. The word by whom God appointed him to be the heir and lawful owner of all things by and through whom God created the worlds, the reaches of space, and the ages of time. He made, produced, built, operate, and arrange them in order.

God said, and God looked, and God saw good. But he by whom God spoke again, his last word. For there are no options.

There are no alternatives. When that little baby boy was born at Bethlehem, God spoke his last word to man. You've missed that, and you've missed a lot.

He is the sole expression of the glory of God. He is the light being, verse 3. He is the outraying of the divine. He is the perfect imprint and the very image of God's nature.

In other words, he was man, born at Bethlehem, conceived of the Holy Ghost. Man is he as God created man to be, who was made in God's image and in God's glory, of whom God could say when he looked at man, good, very good. There's only been one man on earth since Adam fell of whom God could say that.

Jesus, good, very good. This is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. Why did he have to come himself? Because miraculously conceived of the Holy Spirit from the moment of conception where life begins, no matter what stupid human beings may say, that's the moment of life, conception.

When you murder the conceived, then you murder human life. From the moment of conception, he was God's beloved son, conceived miraculously by divine intervention in the person of the Holy Ghost and he lived for 33 years on earth full of the Holy Ghost. He became through the Holy Spirit and for 33 years he constantly affirmed, I am being what I became by the Holy Ghost.

He said, I was born to be. It took the Holy Spirit for me to be born, it takes the Holy Spirit for me to be, because by the Holy Spirit, the God who is the eternal present tense of the verb to be lives in me. I share his being and everything I do and say and am advertises my father.

Look at me and see my father. Not because I'm Superman, let alone superstar, simply because I'm functional. Because we've learned this week that a man is functional only when God is, what is it? Visible.

God, man is functional from God's point of view only when God in the man is visible. The obvious reason, God created man in his own image and his own likeness, so of a man creating God's image and own likeness, if he's functional, what would you expect to see if you look at that man? Oh God, if you dare to say I'm a Christian, if you say I've opted out of Adam into Christ, I've claimed the right on God's terms to be reconciled to my maker so that he can restore me to function, what you're saying is you have the right to look at me and see Christ behaving. Don't kill yourself.

If you're not prepared to settle for that, die to yourself and be alive to God through Jesus. Give yourself to him so that he can give himself to you in mutual inter-availability as the son gave himself to the father and the father gave himself to the son. Don't claim to be a Christian.

Who intends to be one? Just say I was a guilty sin, I was on the way to hell and I opted out of hell and into heaven and I wiped my feet on Christ like a doormat so that I can escape the punitive consequence of my guilt and that to me is salvation. Get off my back. Is that what God had in mind? Why was that little baby born? God incarnate.

The word made flesh. Well, we've got to quit in two or three minutes. We're picking up the theme of course again tonight, but look at it in Hebrews in chapter 2 and verse 10.

Hebrews in chapter 2 and verse 10, speaking of the father in his immeasurable love, patience, kindness, grace that shines through judgment. Hebrews chapter 2 verse 10. It became him.

That's an old-fashioned expression. It means it was incumbent upon, it was characteristic of God's character and nature. It's what you might expect of that kind of a God.

Not a God who says I'm going to damn some and they're going to be damned whether they want it or not and I'm going to save some and whether they want to be saved. Uh-uh, that isn't God. That's a deity that's been engineered in human ingenuity to satisfy their own ambitions.

It was incumbent upon this, our God, characteristic of his nature, for whom are all things, by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory. Now don't allow the humanist to reinterpret the Bible for you. You'll hear gospel messages, you know, saying this is, this is to get you to heaven.

That's why God sent his and get you to heaven. That isn't glory because heaven isn't glory. What does the Bible say? Romans 3 23, all have sinned and come short of heaven.

Is that what the Bible said? All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And when the father sent the son, it was to restore men to that glory from which they fell, the image and likeness of their maker. That's nothing to do with destination, does nothing to do with the place you're going to when you're dead and buried.

It has only to do with your character, your office, your assignment as a creature who was made by God to bring an invisible God by what you do say and are out into the open where he can be seen and heard. That is glory. But God knew when he looked upon this fallen world that man could only be restored to function if somehow there was somebody who could pay the price of their redemption, deal with the sin question, so that God, without doing violence to his own righteousness, could restore to forgiven sinners the life that man lost in Adam, that life which alone makes man functional as the oil that's in the lamp, the life which is the light of man.

But there had to be somebody who could forfeit that life and that meant there had to be somebody who had that life to forfeit. And there was only one man ever born on earth since Adam fell who possessed that life, man lost in Adam, who could lay down that life to restore us out of death into God's image, by restoring to us the life from which righteousness derives, the life of God, for the fruits of righteousness, Philippians 111, are by Jesus Christ. It doesn't say the fruits of righteousness are by echoing Jesus Christ, mimicking Jesus Christ, the fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ, fruit that springs from life, and the life from which that fruit springs, Jesus.

It became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to restore them to function, so that in them can be seen the one who is the origin in them of his own image, God, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. In other words, what it was going to take for this little baby boy born at Bethlehem, conceived of the Holy Ghost, who constantly affirmed, I can only be by virtue of who my father is, for without my father I can do nothing, the father who lives in me, he does the work, it was to restore you and me to function, so that that life he possessed, and by virtue of which he was functional, because 24 hours a day, day or night, that could only be seen in him by what he did, said,

and was the glory of the father. He had first by that sinless humanity on earth for 33 years to reveal the glory that had been lost in Adam, but in order to restore the glory that he revealed, he had to relinquish the glory.

That's the cross, where in three agonizing hours of darkness, the heavens were in mourning for God's incarnate sinless son, who was made sin for us, with all his consequences, alienation from the father and the Holy Spirit in death, that we might be restored to glory. That's what happened on the cross, the only man who could forfeit the life of God, because he was the only man who possessed the life of God, and the moment he was made sin for us, who knew no sin, the lights went out, and the earth was plunged into darkness, he died, he died, that we might be forgiven. And that's cause for thanksgiving, but that wouldn't in itself have been enough.

It would have changed our destination, but it wouldn't in itself have given us what it takes to shine. So, after those awful hours of darkness in which the light went out, he could cry and trump, finished! Tell the rest, hey father, mission accomplished, that for which in the eternal ages of the past I was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world has been brought to fruition. Thank you father for restoring to me now by your indwelling Holy Spirit, restored to my human spirit, that life that I alone of all mankind could lay down for a fallen race of fallen men, so that that life, father, now restored to me, I may now restore to them who will plead that blood I have shed on the cross, resurrection.

As we shall see tonight, you see, there's no sunrise without sunset. He had to die, first that he might live, and he says because I live, you will live also, because I've given myself not just for you, in the redemptive act to change your destination, risen from the dead I've given myself to you. To put that life back into dead men that gives them what it takes to be, to put oil back into the lamp, ink into the pen, gas into the car, God back into the man, so that you might be to the praise of God's glory and shine in a dark world.

Let's pray.

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