

The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached

by Neil Rhodes

Jesus' sermon on the cross emphasizes the importance of forgiveness, instantaneous salvation, and being placed into the family of God, giving us authority in his name.

Duration: 49:57

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 23:34, Luke 23:46, John 19:28, John 19:30

Topics: "The Cross", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the sequence of events that occur when someone believes in the gospel of Jesus Christ. They emphasize that when we give our lives to God, He is able to keep and hold everything we give to Him. The sermon references Psalm 116, which tells the story of a young man who is discouraged but chooses to trust God with his life. The speaker then focuses on the fourth statement Jesus makes on the cross, where He cries out with a loud voice and experiences darkness. The sermon highlights the importance of understanding the sequence of events and the powerful sermon Jesus preaches through His statements on the cross.

Transcript

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You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. Tonight I want to preach a title called The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached.

I'm not preaching it. The sermon was preached 2,000 years ago by Jesus Christ. It's the greatest sermon ever preached, and we're going to take a look at that tonight.

Turn with me to Luke chapter 23. Keep your hand in your place in Luke 23. We're going to talk about the cross tonight, and we're going to follow in sequence all the words of Jesus from beginning to end.

Jesus makes seven statements on the cross. Most of us, we don't know the sequence of events that take place, and we hear a message that he thirsted. And another time in John, he says, it's finished.

Another place, he says, Lord, I yield up my spirit into your hand. We hear these statements, but do we know the sequence of events that these statements are made? In fact, if you follow them just statement by statement, you begin to see the greatest sermon ever preached, that there on the cross, Jesus Christ is preaching a sermon that one statement leads into the next, that leads into the next, that leads into the next. And I believe that as we celebrate Easter coming up next month, although we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ every single day of our lives, but you're going to understand it more clearly tonight.

Now, Lord Jesus, I thank you that there is a victory in the house tonight. And that's because we've been under your word all day today. Your presence has been among us, and we thank you for it.

Now, Lord Jesus, you're the one that has put this word deep into my soul. God, I've rejoiced in it. I've relished in your word.

It's given me hope and life. It's spurred me on. God, it's just satisfied my soul all week, and it's been a joy in my heart now to bring it forth to your people.

But God, my words fall to the ground, but yours are eternal. Now, you do the work that you intended to do tonight, Father. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. As I mentioned to you, these are the words that Jesus preached while he was on the cross. And in Luke chapter 23, verses 33, we see the very first statement that he makes on the cross.

Luke 23, verse 33, And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him. And the male factors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, this is the first statements on the cross that Jesus makes, Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

See, beloved, the very first statements as we come into the kingdom of God that we need to understand as we come to this place where we come into this kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in Jesus Christ. One of the very first things that I think we need to understand is that I come in as a person who is absolutely, completely forgiven of all of my sins. All things are passed away, behold, all things become new.

In fact, a physician had said this at one point in time. He said that the institutions would be, half of the people in mental institutions would be set free today. They could go home if they understood that they had been forgiven.

But many people, because they don't understand it, in fact there's people in the house tonight that can't praise the Lord, they can't lift their hands up because they don't appreciate today that God has absolutely forgiven them, that there's not one thing. If you were to die tonight, there is not one thing. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, there is not one thing that will be held against your charge.

Not one thing. If we truly understood the power of the words of Jesus on the cross when he said, Every single thing that I have ever done up to this point in time has been nailed to the cross. I am 100% forgiven by Jesus Christ.

When he looks at my life, he sees nothing in me that causes sin because it's been nailed to the cross. Now, I know I fail. I know I stumble.

I know that I cry out to him to wash me, to cleanse me. I know that my attitude needs correcting. I know that my life needs touching and changing from time to time.

But when God looks at me, he sees his Son. His Son, Jesus Christ, lives inside of me. And he's declared me free from all sin.

Hallelujah. And if we understood that message, I remember a time I was called to a house and the neighbor called us up and said, Pastor, there is a person that we haven't seen come out of their house for days. And we think that you should go and see them.

I'm thinking this is a call for the police, not a pastor. And so my wife and I, we get in the car. We go to this house and we knock on the door and we knock on the door and we hear some shuffling and we open up.

The door opens up and here is this couple. They are totally inebriated. They have been on a drinking binge for days.

And they are satiated with alcohol. They've been drinking. They are absolutely in a continued stupor for days.

And the smell, the stench in the house was overpowering. And you almost wanted to gag when we went in. But they invited us in and they came in.

They wanted to know what we were doing there, who we were. And in the inebriation, we were trying to communicate to them. And I thought, now what am I doing in this place? I don't even want to be here.

This place smells. They can't even understand anything that we are saying to them. And so in my heart I just thought, well, I'll give them the gospel message as best as I know how and leave it to them.

And in a real sense, the blood of their lives is off my hands. So I began to tell them the story and said how that there was, that even if you committed murder, even if you killed somebody and you were sentenced to life imprisonment, it's like this, that the governor comes and has mercy and compassion on you. You deserve to be in jail for life.

You deserve not to be released. And this is what the gospel of Jesus Christ is, that we have been locked up in sin and we are bound. We deserve everything that we get.

And we are locked up in sin. And I was telling the story. I said, but even if we were a murderer and locked up in prison, that God would come and He would just unlock that door.

And He would say, like a governor would come and say, you're free, you're free to walk out of this prison cell. And while I'm sharing this, I'm thinking, well, I'm getting to the end of this quick message and saying, well, you know, you're free, you can walk out of this hell hole of alcohol and you can walk free. The man begins to cry.

He begins to weep and begins to sob. And his wife begins to sob. And I'm thinking, oh, no, now I'm going to be here a few more minutes with them.

And so I begin to share with them about the power of forgiveness. And the more I talk about it, the more they weep and cry. And then I said, well, do you want to pray? Do you want to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Do you want to know that your sins are forgiven? I don't even think my words are

meaning anything to them.

They're so inebriated. And the guy says, yeah, this is what I want. This is what I've been longing for all of my life.

And I think you have. And as I began to share with him the gospel. You see, this man, when he was in the Second World War, he was an older man at the time.

And he got into a scuffle, a fight on board deck with one of his own men. And they got into a fight and he threw this guy and he hit his head against this corner post on the ship. And the man died.

And from that time onwards, he couldn't forgive himself. And from that time onwards, it was just like I couldn't forgive myself from what had taken place. But on that day, he was.

So he went into alcohol. He began to binge on alcohol. He couldn't be set free until the message that Jesus Christ forgives all sin.

Nothing that we have ever done can be held against us. He took every single thing to the cross for us. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. And so we see that this man, he got up, he accepted Jesus Christ. And from that day onwards, just the power of the knowledge that you are forgiven sets you free from the stranglehold of the enemy.

Hallelujah. I believe that there are people here today that you would be so much farther along with God if you only knew that you were forgiven. But you keep stumbling.

You keep falling. And you need to know. You need to hear a message tonight.

Jesus Christ has forgiven you of all of your sin. He holds nothing against you. If you believe this and lay hold of this today, you will be forever free.

Hallelujah. That's the true gospel that Jesus preaches. So on the cross, the very first statement he says, you can't come into this kingdom unless you come with the knowledge that you're free.

All things are passed away. Behold, all things have become new. Now the second statement he makes is, look down here in verse 42.

The first statement, you're forgiven. This is the beginning of our Christian walk. Then in chapter 23, verse 41, So now he's talking to these two men nailed to the cross on either side of him.

See, Jesus just doesn't do anything arbitrarily. You take a look at Joseph. Joseph was a man in prison, a righteous man in prison.

And yet on either side of him, there are two who have sinned against the king. And one, we know the story, the baker dies and the butler is restored. So we understand that this is, again, this is the precedence of Jesus.

Again, a righteous man, and he got these two sinners on either side. And they were railing on him. And there must have been something.

But you know, when you come into the presence of God, you begin to understand what kind of a person you really are. So here is these two men on either side of the cross. They've been railing on him.

But the one begins to, there's something that begins to work on the inside. You see, beloved, whenever you come into the presence of almighty God, something begins to happen in the life. You cannot come into the presence of almighty God and stay the same.

He's going to change you. There's going to be a work of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. As we come into his presence, he's going to start putting his finger on issues in our life.

So here is this man on the cross. He's been railing on Jesus. And then suddenly he says to the guy across the way, I don't know how he's doing it, but he's turning around and says, Now listen to me, in verse 42.

Verse 41, he says, And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds. But this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

So here is this man. There's a stirring in his heart. He says, whatever you're doing to my life, whenever you come into the presence of God, there is a stirring.

God wants to make changes. He wants to bring life. So there's a stirring.

So this man turns and he says, We are justly condemned on the cross, but this man hasn't done anything. So he says, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Now you see, beloved, we always think in our hearts and minds that this is for some other day.

But really, when you take a look at the scriptures, when Jesus says the second statement, he says to them, And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. Because we know the story so well, we automatically begin to think that today means when you die. We're going to die and then when we're dead, you're going to be with me in this place of the departed dead.

But it's so inconsistent with the gospel. So I began to research the scripture. I began to look it up.

When you see in the New Testament Greek the word today, what it means, it means to exist. It means present. It means immediate.

So whenever somebody touches by faith that which Jesus is, there is an instantaneous work of God in the heart. Jesus, when the woman, 12 years with an issue of blood, touches the hem of his garment, Jesus immediately says, Who touched me? There's an immediate work of power. When somebody reaches out and touches Jesus by faith, there is an immediate work.

You see, Jesus doesn't put this off to some other day. He's talking to this thief and he says, Right now, right now you are in touch with paradise. See, Jesus and the kingdom are synonymous.

You can't separate. Jesus isn't going to take you to a place. He is the place.

Jesus is the place. He is the peace. He is the righteousness.

He is our life. So when he speaks, he says, Today, you're touching life right now. In fact, paradise means to be in a place as in the garden of Eden without sin.

And he's saying, You, right now, at this moment in time, you're touching what eternity is all about. It's like going to 51st here in Broadway and you're walking down the street here and you come to Broadway, you're on your way here and there's a homeless person. This is the best way I can think about illustrating it.

So there's a homeless person standing on the corner and he says to you, as you're walking by, he says, Will you remember the homeless? Will you remember me today? Will you give me? In other words, he's saying, Do you have anything that you can give to me? Imagine if I came up to this person and he said, Would you remember me? Is he expecting something now? There's something that he is looking toward. He's wanting me to reach into my pocket. Now imagine if I said to him, Today, you're going to get blessed.

Hallelujah. He's thinking, Yeah, I've heard that story before. I'm coming back.

Today, sometime today, you're going to get blessed. No, he's not speaking like that. When the man says, This is what Jesus is saying.

It's not today, some other time, some other moment. He's saying to this man, When you meet that person on the street, and he says, Will you remember me? It's like you reach into your pocket and say, Come on in to McDonald's, buddy. You come and sit down here.

You're going to have a feast, and it's all on me. See, this is what Jesus is saying. When you touch heaven, when you reach out and you touch the name of Jesus, you get all of heaven.

It's an immediate work. So the message of the cross, the most powerful message preached, is number one, I am forgiven. And number two, that work of the Holy Spirit is instantaneous.

You should always understand that when you come to this altar to do business with God, that God means to do business instantaneously in your heart and life. He's not talking about, Well, if you come and make a commitment today, maybe next week, maybe a year from now I'll set you free. That's not God.

Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ. Tomorrow I'll come back and you'll stand up and walk. No, immediately, in the name of Jesus, stand up and walk.

And the Bible says immediately he began to leap and jump and shout for joy because the power of God touched his life. See, the message of the cross is an immediate work. It's an immediate work in the heart.

The moment you confess Jesus Christ, he says there is the power of God to touch and minister to your life. Now, the third statement that he makes, go with me to John chapter 19. Write these down.

You'll be able to follow them through. John chapter 19. Does this make sense to you, beloved? Forgiveness.

So the message, instead of just seeing Jesus on the cross, suffering and dying and thinking of just the human suffering, begin to think of the message that he's preaching. In John chapter 19, this is the third statement that he makes. He says, Lord, forgive them.

This day thou shalt be with me in paradise. Then in verse 25, he says, Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister Mary and the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene. And when Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple standing by whom he loved, that's the apostle John, the one who's the writer of this book, he said unto his mother, Women, behold thy son.

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home. See, the third statement is that Jesus is on the cross and he looks down and he sees his mother and then he says to John, John, this is your mother.

Mother, this is your son. And from that moment onwards, he takes her into his own home. And really, when you understand what he's speaking about, he's talking about being placed into families.

In fact, he's using the scripture, Psalm 68, he says, God setteth the solitary in families. Listen to this scripture in Romans, chapter 8, verse 17. And if children, so if we are children of God, the moment that we come to him and he forgives us our sin and it's an immediate work, the very next thing that he does is he places us into the family of God.

We're now family. We're now children and heirs of God. Listen to what Romans says in Romans, chapter 8, verse 17.

He says, And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. He says, When you come into the family of God, everything that Jesus has and has got now belongs to you. Hallelujah.

He says, I place you into family. So suddenly there's no race, there's no color. Suddenly all the boundaries, there's no ethnicity any longer because when we come into the family of God, we all belong to him.

We become children of the living God. So sitting next to me on my right hand to the right, and to my left are people all over the world. There's no ethnicity with God.

We all become children of God, the heirs of everything that he has supplied. And so we understand that when we sit down at the table, when the enemy comes in, there is a table set before us in the presence of our enemies. And it's not just American gospel, it's for anybody anywhere all over the world.

We sit down and we are family. Hallelujah. The Bible says, When I see you on the street, it's not how are you, where are you from, and what country are you from.

The moment we see each other, it's, hello brother, how are you doing? Hello sister, how are you? Older people are called mother, and men are called father. But the younger ones are called brother and sister. We are suddenly changed.

There's no longer any looking at who belongs to who, and what group do you belong to. We suddenly belong to the family of God. It's the power of almighty God that when we get saved, that he puts us right into the family.

And then he says, If you are part of my family, I give you authority in my name. It's like going to the bank and saying, I want to withdraw a thousand dollars today. Oh you do, and what is your name? My name is such and such.

And if my father owns a cattle on a thousand hills, I can go to the devil and say, Devil, in the name of Jesus, you are bound and you have to flee right now. On what authority? My authority? No. I'm a child of the living God, and he's given us authority in his name.

Hallelujah. So he puts us right into family. He says, I will make you part of my family.

Glory to God. That's the third statement. Statement number four, go with me to Matthew 27.

Matthew 27. This is the one that gives us most of the confusion. Matthew chapter 27, verse 45.

This is the fourth statement that Jesus is making in a period of six hours on the cross. But this is the one that gives us probably the most difficulty of understanding because we want to just see this humanity rather than see exactly what he's doing now. Verse 45 says, Now from the sixth hour there was darkness all over the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama, sabathrani. That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there when he heard that said, This man called for Elijah. You see, the natural thinking is calling for Elijah.

Here is Jesus saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? We automatically just read this in his absolute suffering. He's saying, God, where are you? But you see, that's not what it is. If you follow the sequence of events of what Jesus is communicating on the greatest sermon ever preached, he's telling us, that when you come into my kingdom, I forgive you.

So you come in clean. Nothing is held against you. It gives you authority in my name.

The work is instant. When you call on my name, that work is done immediately. And the power of the Holy Ghost sets you free once and for all.

Number three, he says, I put you in a family and I cause you to be a joint heir with me on everything that the Father has. Therefore, this next statement isn't, Well, where's God? Where's God? Why doesn't God show up? And see, that seems to be the experience. We go through a dark period of time.

Jesus has just gone through three hours of absolute darkness and sometimes that's what the Christian walk seems. We go through this dark period. Well, God, are you still there with me? Where are you? Do you show up when things get tough? Three hours of darkness and when he comes out of this darkness, is he saying, when he communicates that, is he just saying to the people, Where is God? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? What is the meaning of this scripture? See, most people just see this as Jesus in his humanity, God turning his face and there he is alone on the cross.

No, no, no. That's not what he's doing. You see, the next statement that comes for the believer is the authority of God's Word.

That in every trial and every difficulty, the only way that the true believer of Christ comes through every difficulty is a knowledge of the Word of God. So here is Jesus on the cross and when he begins to make that statement, you know what he's doing? He's quoting Psalm 22. He's not saying, I'm going through a tough time and God, where are you? No, he's using the Word to speak at the devil.

He thinks that the devil, you think that you're winning, you've got another thing coming. He begins to speak the Word of God. Turn with me to Psalm 22.

I know I get a little excited. Please forgive me. But look here, Psalm 22.

Verse 1, he says, My God, he's just quoting the Scripture. He's fulfilling the Scripture. He's not in a struggle.

Jesus isn't in a struggle. He's not asking where is God. He's giving you the time.

He's saying, if you want to know what's going on right now, just turn to the Scripture. I'm going to tell you what's happening. Just go to Psalm 22 and there you're going to find out exactly what is taking place.

The devil thinks that he's winning this battle. That is not true. Look here what it says.

In verse 5, he says, He cried and he delivered and he trusted. And God came through. Look at verse 8. He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him.

Let him deliver him, seeing that he delighted in him. But look at verse 22. This is where it starts to get exciting.

Yes, it talks about the physical suffering that he goes through. But look at verse 22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

See, Jesus is saying, Listen, this isn't the end. This isn't God forsaking me. You've got to read the end of the Psalm.

The end of the Psalm says, I'm giving victory to every person who trusts in me. It says there's going to be a praise in the great congregation. There's going to be people innumerable.

You can't even begin to number them. But there's going to be a whole group of people who are going to trust in me and there's going to be a praise. And we heard that tonight.

We heard the praises of people rising up to heaven. This is exactly. You are fulfilling Psalm 22.

In the great congregation, they will praise my name. Jesus says, Devil, you think you got me beat on the cross. You don't know.

You've been duped. This is just the beginning of the power of God being unleashed. You don't understand.

But this, what I'm going through now, I'm going to give to my people and they're going to stand against you. You think I'm standing against you alone. Absolutely not.

There's a congregation of people that are rising up and they're going to stand against you. Every person who names the name of Jesus, I give them authority. Can you imagine how many devils are put to flight just by one church? 3,000 people here tonight.

Can you imagine 3,000 people standing against the devil in the name of Jesus? The devil doesn't stand a chance, beloved, if you believe it. So Jesus is saying, this is what he is, he's just quoting the word of God on the cross. He's talking about the power of the cross.

Look at verse 25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation. Verse 26.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied. There's going to be a whole group of people who are so hungry and so thirsty, but they are going to be so satisfied. Oh, the hunger of their soul, the yearning of their being, they are going to be satisfied with me.

See, he's fulfilling the psalm. He's just speaking Psalm 22 to this. The meek shall eat and be satisfied.

They shall praise the Lord that seek him. Your heart shall live. Now, in verse 14, he says, My heart is like wax, it's melting.

Jesus says, My heart's melting like wax for you, but your heart is going to live. Hallelujah. Others, you, I might be going through the battle, but I am going to cause you to be satisfied.

I'm going to cause your heart to live every bruise, and your heart is going to be healed. I'm going to bring you into a place called life. Your heart is going to be full.

You're going to be so full of God, nobody's going to stop you. You're going to be like a bulldozer plowing through every circumstance. See, what Jesus is saying, that these are a people in the great congregation who are going to praise me.

They don't care about their circumstances. They don't care what the devil is doing. They know something more about God than the devil does.

And that he says, I'm going to give them life, and their praises are going to be raised up in the sanctuary. See, that's the people who know their God and do exploits. It doesn't matter what storm... We heard that this morning.

It doesn't matter what the devil is throwing at you, but you've got to understand when you get Jesus into your life, you get forgiven, you get forgiven instantly. He places you into the family, and then he puts the authority of the word of God in your mouth. And you will praise him and use the word of God against every work of the devil.

Look at verse 30, or verse 28, For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations. He says on the cross, he's saying, Devil, do you honestly think that you've won? He says, The kingdom is mine, and I'm the governor. It doesn't matter what you're doing right now.

You've got to see the power of the word of God. You see, Jesus on the cross is showing us that when you are in touch with God's almighty word, that nothing can deter you. There is nothing that can hold the child of God back when you rise up with the word of God in your heart.

Beloved, if anything tonight, lay hold of God's word in a new dimension. The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor. Look at this verse 30, A seed shall serve him.

It shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and they shall declare his righteousness unto the people that shall be born, that he hath done this. So that's what Jesus is saying.

Now turn with me. So no wonder when he gets to the next statement, he says in verse, that was the fourth. Now the fifth statement that he makes, go back with me to John.

In the sequence of events taking place, this is what Jesus is saying. So the fifth statement that he makes, the fourth is, My God, my God, he's just quoting the scripture, which leads us into the very next statement in verse 28 of John chapter 19, verse 28. Forgiveness, instantaneous, the family of God, the power of the word of God.

No wonder then when he gets to verse 28, we get so naturally in our thinking. Verse 28 says, And after this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished. See, you've got to understand, he's establishing, he's going through the words systematically, and he's establishing that the scripture might be

fulfilled, and he's saying, saith, I thirst.

So again, it's not like, well, yes, there was probably a natural sense that Jesus was thirsty. Yes, he was probably dehydrated. That stands to reason.

It's a natural concept. And so when he says, I thirst, he's not just declaring that in his physical body that he thirsts. What he's saying here in reality, he's again quoting the scriptures.

He's again quoting, everything's been fulfilled, so he says he thirsts. He says, you see, the result is that when you come to the knowledge of the forgiveness of Christ, and instantaneously this work is done, and he places you into the family, and he puts a word in your mouth to speak against every attack of the devil, when you've tasted that the Lord is good, you begin to thirst for more. There comes a hunger in your heart for more of God.

That's why we have services. It was told, they said to Pastor David, it is impossible that you can go into an inner city in the United States and have church. People won't come.

They won't come. They won't turn out. It's impossible to have church.

Then it's impossible to have two services on a Sunday in the inner city. It's impossible. People won't come to church twice on a Sunday in New York City.

And then there's three services on a Sunday. Beloved, why are you here? What got you out of the comfort of your home, and got you on the transit, or by automobile, and come to the house of the Lord? Why are you here? Why are you in church? Why are you in the heart of New York City, in Times Square, sitting under the preaching of the Word? Why are you here? I'll tell you why you're here. Because the Spirit of God is here.

It's because the Spirit of God is drawing you. It's because inside the heart, this world doesn't satisfy. And when you've tasted that the Lord is good, nothing quenches that thirst except more of Jesus.

When you've tasted Jesus, you just want some more. And so this is what he's saying. He says, I thirst.

I thirst for fellowship. The thirsting of my soul isn't for this world. It's for the fellowship of the Father.

And that's what he's saying. He's relating. This is the message that he's preaching.

It's the greatest sermon ever preached. He says, I thirst. And then he goes down to verse 30, which is the sixth statement.

And Jesus therefore received the vinegar. He said, It is finished. And he bowed his head.

Listen to me, folks. This is the new coming. Everything that the Father... See, in heaven, the Father spoke to the Son and said, Son, these people, they can't live for us.

We've given them a covenant in the Old Testament. And I told them, if they keep these things, I'll be with them. I'll be God to them.

I'll deliver them from all their enemies. All I want them to do is just do these ten things. But they can't.

Nobody can. But I want fellowship with them. So the Father says to the Son, Son, I want you to go down.

Because I know that you'll do everything that I ask you. And if you go down, my promise, what I made to them, is going to be true to you. But you can't do anything that you want to do on your own self.

You can't do it. You've got to go down. I'm going to walk with you.

So He goes down, and when He walks down, and He's walking there, and He's doing everything that the Father says that He should. He speaks nothing of Himself. He only speaks those things which the Father gives to Him.

So when He gets to the cross, He says, It is finished. My part of covenant is now completed. Father, everything that you've asked me to do is now finished and completed.

Now your part of covenant needs to stand. So Jesus says, It's finished. The covenant has been established.

It's done. So now it brings us to the next statement. Go back to Luke chapter 23.

And this is the last statement that Jesus makes in Luke 23. And when you understand this, it's so powerful when you see that Jesus has done everything the Father has asked. The covenant of grace, the covenant of rest has now been established.

So the very first act after Jesus says, It is finished and established, the very first act that He says to the Father, He says, Now, Father, into your hand. You see, nobody could take His life from Him. Jesus gave His life.

You see, He believed everything that He had done so far was absolutely of God. He believed everything that was spoken in the Scriptures. And it was like Jesus was now Himself saying, Father, I know that I've done everything you've asked me.

And I know now that as I put my hand, my life into your hand, you are going to be almighty God to me, that you will keep my life in the palm of your hand, even in the midst of death. So He says, I yield my life. So the sequence of events is that when we come and we believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, then the call of God is to us to give our lives to God who's able to keep us.

He's able to hold and to keep every single thing that we give to Him. He started the work. He's going to finish the work in our lives.

And so He says, It's finished. Now, Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. He says, I'm trusting my life.

He says, I believe everything that the part of your covenant is going to come to pass. And I yield my life into your hand. Reminds me of Psalm 116.

Don't turn there. Let me just paraphrase Psalm 116. Psalm 116 is about a young man.

The Bible doesn't tell us what he's got involved in or what the sin is or what the discouragement is or what the reason is that this person is so discouraged. Psalm 116 is written. It's a no-title psalm.

Some say it's David. Some say it's other people. But it's an untitled psalm.

But Psalm 116 talks about a young man who comes to the very end of his life. He is so depressed. He's so down.

He wants to die. He thinks that death is maybe the answer out to all of his problems. It's a powerful psalm as he begins to speak it out and he comes to the cords of death are wrapped around me.

We don't understand what it is that causes him to be so low, so desperate. But he remembers that God is gracious. He remembers that God is merciful.

He remembers that God is good. So the psalmist, he begins to write that in like 11 or 12. He begins to say, God, I remember how good you are and how gracious you are and how merciful you are.

But it's verse 13. So what can I do though? What can I do, God? What is this? This young man has got a revelation. He's at the end of himself.

He's at the end of his rope. He's crying out to God and this is what he says. What is there that I can do? But Psalm 116 verse 13 puts it so clearly.

He says, I will take the cup of salvation. I'm going to take everything, God, that you have supplied for me. I'm going to take this cup and I'm going to drink it.

And while I drink it, as I partake and receive everything that you've done for me, I'm going to do it by calling upon the name of the Lord. He says, I'm going to take this cup and I'm going to drink it. Everything, every part of the deliverance, everything that you've ever said for me, you have given to this cup of salvation.

I take this cup and I begin to drink it in the name of the Lord. God, I take everything. I open my heart and receive it.

And the end of the psalm, if you read up, it shows you that God brings this man through. God brings the healing and the grace to his life that is needed. And he says this is exactly what Jesus is doing.

He says, Father, into your hand I commend my spirit. I give you my life. Now turn with me to Matthew in closing.

Matthew chapter 27, one more time. See, once we have yielded our life, he's forgiven us. The work is immediate.

He places us into the family of God as heirs. He puts a word of authority in our mouth that we can use the word of God against every attack of the devil. He puts a fellowship and a desire for fellowship with God in our hearts.

He shows us the covenant of grace that he says, I will keep you. And then he asks us to surrender our lives to him. And the moment we do that, the moment of surrender, then allows God to work on our behalf.

And I mentioned this a week and a half ago, two weeks ago on a Friday night. Look at this in 27, Matthew 27, verse 51. Now God is able to work.

This is God's part of the covenant. Jesus had done everything and he says, now I give my life into your hands. He's showing us the pattern.

You give your life to God and then God shows up. This is God's side of covenant. You've got to see it, beloved.

This is the most powerful thing. God, this is God's side of what he promises that he'll do in our life. Verse 51 says, and behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

He says, really, what he's saying is God, you're not reaching up to God, but God is taking from the top. He's opening up heaven to you. He says that which was born from fellowship in the past, you couldn't find your way to God.

God says, no, I'm coming and I'm opening up this way to you. I'm opening up a way that you can have fellowship with a holy God before you couldn't, but I'm opening up a way that you can come into the presence of a holy God. In fact, he says, from the top to the bottom, from heaven down to mankind, God opens up a way for fellowship.

Number two, he says, there was an earthquake and the rocks were rent. And it speaks to us, beloved, that God will take every hard part of our life, everything that won't let go, every stranglehold of sin that God says doesn't seem to let go. He says, I can shake everything loose from your life.

I can take the hard heart and I can break it in pieces. I'll take the hard heart and I'll put a heart of flesh back into its place. He says, and this is the result of God.

He says, I'll come through powerfully for you. He says, I will open a way of fellowship. Number two, I'll take out the hard heart and give you a heart of flesh.

And then he says in verse 52, he says, the graves were opened. Beloved God says, I'm going to take everything that is death. The devil thought he was winning when he was putting you into that place of death.

But I am a God of the resurrection. Hallelujah. Every part that is death in you, I'm going to call and cause out.

Lazarus, you come out of that grave. God has the power to call us out from death. I'm going to take everything that causes death in my life.

God begins to speak life. Hallelujah. And the end result is that they stand back in absolute amazement and they say, he is the son of God.

See, beloved, the greatest sermon ever preached is Jesus. And he tells us, are you struggling with guilt tonight? Is there guilt that you can hardly praise him? I want you to know instantaneously tonight. It doesn't matter what you've done, even if it was last night or yesterday or this last week.

It doesn't matter. The devil is sitting on your shoulder saying, you can't worship God. I got news for you tonight.

When you come to Jesus, his forgiveness is instantaneous. You say, Jesus, and he says, I'm right here. That hardness of heart, he breaks it.

That thing is holding on, he gives an earthquake. It's instantaneous. He puts us in the family with authority.

And then he sends you out with a word in your mouth. Any attack of the devil, you stand on God's word and you say, it is written. And he has to flee.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Greatest sermon ever preached. Jesus says tonight, he says tonight, as my son just yielded his life. He says, all I'm asking you is you come and you trust me with your life.

Will you do that? Will you trust God with your life tonight? The son of God trusted the father with his life. You come tonight. I've prayed and I've asked God that there are at least 12 people in the house tonight that have grown up in a religious background but have never given their life to Jesus Christ.

You've never known what it is to have somebody say to you, you are forgiven. You're free. And to invite Jesus into your life.

I've prayed that there would be a minimum of 12 people in the house tonight that would respond and say, I want to receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. For others, if there's area that's holding you back, I'm going to pray that God begin to shake those things off of your life. They seem like they're holding on, but the devil doesn't understand the power of almighty God.

When God begins to shake, those things begin to fall. Hallelujah. Everything that is death, he'll make alive.

Let's stand together. Father, I ask you right now while we stand together, Lord Jesus, you are King of kings and Lord of lords. Even on the cross, you're preaching a message.

You're speaking to us. You're telling us of the immediacy of your power available to us. Now, Lord Jesus, I ask that you fulfill your word in Jesus' name.

Amen. Beloved, tonight, let me ask you a question. How many of you have grown up in a religious home, a religious background, whatever religion it was, but you've never, never said, Jesus, come into my life.

I want to receive you as my Lord and Savior. I want you to unashamedly put your hands straight up tonight. I see that hand right up there.

You've never received Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior. Just put your hands straight up tonight. God will see that hand.

We're going to give you an invitation. There's another person over here. Hallelujah.

I think God is speaking to people. There's another hand over there. God bless you.

God is speaking to you that tonight you will come home to glory. God wants to save your life. He wants to declare to you forgiven.

I'm going to invite you. This altar is open tonight that you step out of your seats. If you want God to exchange death that's in you for life, you step out of your seats tonight, and we're going to call upon the name of the Lord.

We're going to take the cup that he's provided and believe that he's going to set us free tonight. In Jesus' name, you come tonight. Father, we thank you that your Word is still the most powerful force in the universe.

When someone lays hold of your Word, they are changed because you are the Word of God. When we lay hold of your Word, we're laying hold of Jesus, the living Word. For those who have come forward today to

receive Christ, you pray this with me.

Lord Jesus, I come to you today. I acknowledge like the thief on the cross, I deserve all that I get because I've sinned against heaven. But I thank you tonight that you on the cross took all of my sin.

And I can be free tonight forever by receiving you into my life. This day, right now, I believe that Lord Jesus, you are the Savior of this world. I receive you into my heart and into my life.

And I believe right now, I am forgiven. The guilt of the past will never haunt me again. The devil can never use anything of the past again in my life.

For you have forgiven and you have cleansed. And you've given me a brand new beginning tonight. Tonight, I declare I am a born-again believer and that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords and Lord of my life.

And I give him my life in Jesus' name. I give him thanks. Hallelujah.

Just say thank you, Jesus. Hallelujah. Thank you, mighty God.

Beloved, now for the rest of us. For the rest of us. When you see the sequence of events and Jesus came through some of the toughest times on the cross.

The very first thing as he comes through that time is that he begins to speak the word. He begins to quote the word of God. Your greatest defense against every attack of the devil is the word of God.

And as you just pick it up and say, God, I may not fully understand this, but you declared instantaneously I would be changed. That you would be my protector. That you would be my governor.

That you would rule my life. That you would fight every battle. That you would put to flight the enemy.

You don't have to understand it all, but you can believe it. And when the enemy comes in, just take the word of God. Get into the Psalms and let God speak to you.

And then when the enemy comes in, just give him the word of God. He can't fight against it. That's exactly what Jesus did.

It's the power of the word and he put to flight. And the praises just erupted out of his life. Pray this with me tonight.

Lord Jesus, I thank you. That you are Lord of my life. Those areas of death, I believe are changing.

And are changed. Immediately. Right now, in Jesus' name.

I reach out and I touch the hem of your garment. And power comes into my life. Holy Spirit, come right into my life.

And do a work that no man could do. Change those areas. By your power and by your word.

Now Lord Jesus, my defense is your word against every attack. And I will use it in Jesus' name. So Father, I thank you tonight for the work that you've done in these hearts.

Lord Jesus, you're empowering your church. We surrender our life to the King of Kings tonight. And we know that our God will come through powerfully.

Hallelujah. In Jesus' name. Amen.

And amen. God bless you. In Jesus' name.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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