

Ten Shekels and a Shirt (Audio)

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon examines the dangers of serving God for material gain, using the story of Micah and the Levite to highlight the conflict between true worship and pragmatic faith.

Duration: 51:01

Scripture: Matthew 16:24-25, John 12:24-26, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 1:21, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Peter 4:11

Topics: "Serving God", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of Micah and the Levite, highlighting the dangers of serving God for personal gain or benefits, rather than for His glory. It emphasizes the need for repentance and surrender to God, not for the sake of personal happiness or success, but because God deserves our worship and obedience. The speaker challenges listeners to abandon utilitarian Christianity and instead focus on glorifying God in all aspects of life.

Transcript

And today I'd like to speak to you from the theme Ten Shekels and a Shirt, as we find it here in chapter 17. Judges chapter 17. I'll read the chapter and then I will read a portion also from the 18th to the 19th chapters that the background might be clear in our minds.

And there was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah. A little background if you please. There was a situation where the Amorites refused to allow the people of the tribe of Dan to any freedom, access to Jerusalem.

And they crowded them up into Mount Ephraim. The sad thing when the people of God allow the world to crowd them into an awkward position. And so they were unable to get to Jerusalem.

And we find that out of this come the problems we're about to see. There was a man of Mount Ephraim whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, the 1100 shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursest and fatest of, also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me.

I took it. And his mother said, blessed be thou of the Lord, my son. And when he had restored the 1100 shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son to make a graven image and a molten image.

Now, therefore, I will restore it unto thee. Yet he restored the money unto his mother. And his mother took 200 shekels of silver and gave them to the founder who made thereof a graven image and a molten image.

And they were in the house of Micah. And the man Micah had an house of gods and made an ephod and a teraphim. This is incidentally the image of that Rachel brought, you remember.

The image is literally the word. And he consecrated one of his sons who became his priest. In those days, there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

And there was a young man out of Bethlehem, the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehem, Judah, to sojourn where he could find a place. And he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem, Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy vituals. So the Levite went in, and the Levite was content to dwell with the man, and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

And Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah. Then said Micah, Now I know that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest. In those days there was no king in Israel, and in those days the tribe of the Danites taught them an inheritance to dwell in, for unto that day all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valor, from Zorah and from Ashtale, to spy out the land and to search it. And they said unto them, Go, search the land, who when they came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. When they were by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man, the Levite.

And they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither, and what makest thou in this place, and what hast thou here? And he said unto them, Doth and doth be of Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest. And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace, before the Lord is your way, wherein ye go.

And now if you'll go over to the latter part of the chapter, verse 14. And answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do you know that there is in these houses an ephod, and tarithim, and a graven image, and a molten image? Now therefore consider what we have to do. And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the tarithim, and the molten image. And the priest stood in the entering of the gate, where the six hundred men were appointed with weapons of war.

And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, the tarithim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? They said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand

upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. It is better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe, and a family in Israel.

And the priest's heart was glad. And he took the ephod, and the tarithim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people. So they turned, and departed, and put the little one and the cattle and the carriage before them.

Well, there's the story. This isn't part of the actual history of the judges. This is a gathering together of certain accounts that enable us to see the social condition in that period, when every man did as seemed right in his own eyes, and there was no king in Israel.

And so we understand that Micah was unable to get to Jerusalem, and perhaps for some kind of devout reason, he decided he would build a replica of the temple on his own property. And so he built what he thought would be an appropriate building, and he made the instruments of the tabernacle, for this was part of the furnishing, the ephod included among them. But then he also gathered some of the things and the people around him, the tarithim, the images, which God had forbidden.

But you see, nevertheless, there was a desire to get along as best he could, so he took a little bit of the world, and a little bit of Israel, of that which had been revealed by God, and he sort of mixed them up, until he had something that he thought might please the Lord. And then, of course, he was delighted beyond words, when a wandering young preacher came along, from Bethlehem, Judah. He was a Levite.

His mother was of the tribe of Judah, though he himself was a Levite. God had given permission through Moses that the Levites might marry into other tribes, and they might join themselves to other tribes. So this young man didn't like the living, and every Levite was provided for, but he had wanderlust and an itching foot, and so he started off to see if he couldn't do better for himself than was being done.

He felt that being a Levite was good, but there should be opportunities associated with it. And so he came to the house of Micah, and there he waited, there he was invited in, and asked to become the priest. And Micah made a deal with him.

He said, You'll be my priest, be my father and priest, then I'll give you ten shekels and a shirt. It says a suit, but you understand that the people of the day wore what would be called a jalapea, a long sort of an oversized, well, I was going to say nightgown. I don't know if that's exactly what it is, appropriately at least, something like that.

And so he gave him a suit of clothes or a change of apparel and his food and ten shekels a year. This was pretty good living for him, and so he decided that he would stay there and enter into the mixture of idolatry and so on that was in the house of Micah. But the people of Dan came along.

They were supposed to have driven out the Amorites, but the Amorites were too difficult, so they wanted to find someone that was a little easier to get out, to move. And they came to, as you've read, to Micah's house, and the Levites told them to go ahead, and then you find that they discovered that there were some people after the manner of the Zidonians at Laish, and they were peaceful, and no one was there to protect them, so they figured this would be a very good place to take some land for themselves. And when they came with the men that were set out to conquer this area, they figured that since they'd found the land through the young Levite, it would be splendid to have his assistance.

And so they went into the house of Micah, took all the things that he had made, and it cost a good bit of money because at least two hundred shekels had been given for this one piece of furniture. And so they just took it all, made it theirs, and took the Levites. Rather hard on Micah, but you'll notice that the young Levite was able to adjust himself to this.

It was amazing how flexible he was, and how easily he could accommodate himself to such changes, when there was a little rationalization along the way. As soon as he could begin to see that it was far more important to serve a tribe than a one-man family, and he could minister to so many more, why, he could see the wisdom of this, and he could justify it. And so with no real strain of conscience, he could make the adjustment, hold his hand over his mouth, while they took the furniture out of the little chapel that Micah had built.

But he was a wise man nonetheless. Rather than go along at the front, which put him in a place of danger, or at the rear, which put him in a place of danger, I say he was a wise man. He put himself right in the middle, so that if Micah sent any of his servants to get him, he was faced with soldiers on every side.

What can we call this, and how will it apply to our day and generation? Would I be out of line and order if I were to talk to you for a little while about utilitarian religion, and expedient Christianity, and a youthful God? I would like to call attention to the fact that our day is a day which the ruling philosophy is pragmatism. You understand what I mean by pragmatism. Perhaps pragmatism means, if it works, it's true.

If it succeeds, it's good. And the test of all practices, all principles, all truth, so-called, all teaching, is, do they work? Do they work? Now, according to pragmatism, the greatest failure of the ages has been some of the men God has honored most. For instance, whereas Noah was a mighty good shipbuilder, and his main occupation wasn't shipbuilding, it was preaching.

It was a terrible failure as a preacher. His wife and three children of their wives was all he had. Seven converts in 120 years, you wouldn't call that particularly effective.

Most mission boards would ask the missionaries to withdraw long before this. I say as a shipbuilder he did quite well, but as a preacher he was a failure. And then we come down across the years to another man by the name of Jeremiah.

He was a mighty effective preacher, but ineffective as far as results were concerned. If you were to measure statistically how successful Jeremiah was, he would probably get a large cipher. When we find that he lost out with the people, he lost out with royalty, even the ministerial assassination voted against him, and wouldn't have anything to do with him.

He had everything and everything failed. The only one he seemed to be able to please was God, but otherwise he was a distinct failure. And then we come to another well-known person, the Lord Jesus Christ, that was a failure judging from all the standards.

He never succeeded in organizing a church or denomination. He wasn't able to build a school. He didn't succeed in getting a mission board established.

He never had a book printed. He never was able to get any of the various criteria or instruments that we find and are so useful. I'm not being sarcastic at all.

They are useful. And our Lord preached to, for three years, healed thousands of people, fed thousands of people, and yet when it was all over, there were 120 or 500 that he truly could reveal himself after his resurrection. And the day that he was taken, one man said to all the others, forsake you, I'm willing to die for you.

And he looked at this one and said, Peter, you don't know your own heart. You're going to deny me three times before the cock crows this morning. And so all men forsook him and fled.

And by every standard of our generation or any generation, our Lord was a signal failure. The question comes then to this, what is the standard of success? And by what are we going to judge our lives and our ministry? And the question that you're going to ask yourself is, is God an end or is he a mean? And you have to decide very early in your Christian life whether you're viewing God as an end or a mean. Our generation is prepared to honor with signal honor anyone that's successful, regardless of whether they've settled this problem or not.

As long as they can get things done or get the job done or, well, it's working, isn't it? Then our generation is prepared to say, well, you've got to reckon with this. And so we've got to ask ourselves at the very outset of our ministry and our pilgrimage and our walk, are we going to be Levites who serve God for ten shekels and a shirt? Serve men, perhaps, in the name of God rather than God, for though he was a Levite and performed religious activities, he was looking for a place, a place which would give him recognition, a place which would give him acceptance, a place which would give him security, a place where he could shine in terms of those values which were important to him. All his, his whole business was serving in religious activities and so it had to be a religious job and he was very happy when he found that Micah had an opening.

But he had decided that he was worth ten shekels and a shirt and he was prepared to sell himself to anyone who would give that much. Somebody came along and gave more, he'd sell himself to them, but he'd put a value upon himself and he figured then that his religious service and his activities was just a means to an end, and by the same token God was the means to an end. Now in order to understand the implications of that in the 20th century, we've got to go back 150 years, 100 years at least, to a conflict that attacked Christianity just after the great revivals in America with Sinni, the spirit of God having been marvelously outpoured upon certain portions of our country.

There came an open attack on our faith in Europe under the higher critics. Darwin had postulated his theory of evolution, certain philosophers had adapted it to their philosophies and theologians had applied it to the scripture, and so about 1850 you could mark the opening of a frontal attack upon the word of God. Satan had always been insidiously attacking it, but now it was open season on the books, open season on the church, and Voltaire could declare that he would live to see the Bible become a relic and just have its place only in museums, that it would be utterly destroyed by the arguments that he was so forcefully presenting against it.

Well, what was the effect of this? The philosophy of the day became humanism, and you can define humanism this way. Humanism is a philosophical statement that declares the end of all being is the happiness of man. The reason for existence is man's happiness.

Now according to humanism, salvation is simply a matter of getting all the happiness you can out of life. If you're influenced by someone like Nietzsche who says that the only true satisfaction in life is power, and that the power is its own justification, and that after all the world is a jungle, and it is therefore up to the

man who would be happy to become powerful, and become powerful by any means he can use, for it is only in this position of ascendancy, or as we saw last night in the worship of Moloch, that one can be happy. And this would produce in due course a Hitler who would take the philosophy of Nietzsche as his working operating principles and guide, and would say of his people that we are destined to rule the world, and therefore any means we can use to achieve this is our salvation.

Somebody else turns around and says, well no, the end of the being is happiness, but happiness doesn't come from authority over people, happiness comes from sensual experience. And so you would have the type of existentialism that characterizes France today, that's given rise to beatnikism in America, and to the gross sensuality of our country. That since man is essentially a glandular animal whose highest moments of ecstasy come from the exercise of his glands, the salvation is simply defined the most desirable way to gratify this part of a person.

And so this became the effect of humanism. At the end of all being is the happiness of man, and John Dewey then, an American philosopher influencing education, was able to persuade the educators that there were no absolute standards, and children shouldn't be brought to any particular standard. That the end of education was simply to allow the child to express himself, and expand on what he is, and find his happiness in being what he wants to be.

And so we had cultural lawlessness, when every man could do what seemed right in his own eyes, and no God to rule over it. The Bible had been discounted, and disallowed, and disproved according to what they said, and God had been dethroned, he didn't exist, he had no personal relationship to individuals. Jesus Christ was either a myth, or just a man, as so they taught, and therefore the whole end of being with happiness is the individual would establish the standards of his happiness, and interpret it.

Now religion then had to exist, because there were so many people that made their living at it, and so they had to find some way to justify their existence. So back about at that time in 1850, the church divided into two groups. The one group was the liberals who said, who accepted the philosophy of humanism, and tried to find some relevance by saying something like this to their generation.

We don't know that there's a heaven, we don't know that there's a hell. But we do know this, you've got to live for 70 years, and we know that there's a great deal of benefit from poetry, from high thoughts, and noble aspirations, and therefore it's important for you to come to church on Sunday, so that we can read some poetry, that we can give you some little adages, and axioms, and rules to live by, and we can't say anything about what's going to happen when you die, but we'll tell you this, if you'll come every week, and pay, and help, and stay with us, we'll put springs on your wagon, and your trip will be more comfortable. And so we can't guarantee anything about what's going to happen when you die, but we say that if you'll come along with us, we'll make you happier while you're alive.

And so this became the essence of liberalism. It has simply nothing more than to try and put a little sugar in the bitter coffee of the journey, and sweeten it up for a time. This was all that it could say.

Well now, the philosophy of the atmosphere is humanism. The chief end of being is the happiness of man. There's another group of people that have taken umbrage with the liberals.

These groups, this group of my people, the fundamentalists, that say, we believe in the inspiration of the Bible, we believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, we believe in hell, we believe in heaven, we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But remember, the atmosphere is that of humanism. And

humanism says the chief end of being is the happiness of man.

And humanism is like a miasma out of a pit, it just permeates every place. And humanism is like an infection, an epidemic, it just goes everywhere. And so it wasn't long until we had this, the fundamentalists knew each other because they said, we believe these things.

They were men for the most part that had met God. But you see, it wasn't long until, having said, these are the things that establish us as fundamentalists, the second generation said, this is how we become a fundamentalist. Believe in the inspiration of the Bible, believe in the deity of Christ, believe in his death, burial, and resurrection, and thereby become a fundamentalist.

And so it wasn't long until it got to our generation, where the whole plan of salvation was to give intellectual assent to a few statements of doctrine. And a person was considered a Christian because he could say uh-huh at four or five places that he was asked to. And if he knew where to say uh-huh, someone would pat him on the back, shake his hand, smile broadly, and say, brother, you're saved.

And so it had gotten down to the place where salvation was nothing more than an assent to a scheme or a formula. And the end of this salvation was the happiness of man, because humanism has penetrated. And so if you were to analyze the fundamentalism in contrast to liberalism of a hundred years ago, as it's developed, but I'm not pinpointing it in time, it would be like this.

The liberal says the end of religion is to make man happy while he's alive, and the fundamentalist says the end of religion is to make man happy when he dies. But again, the end of all of the religion it was proclaimed was the happiness of man. And whereas the fundamentalist liberal says by social change and political order we're going to do away with slums, we're going to do away with alcoholism and dope addiction and poverty, and we're going to make heaven on earth and make you happy while you're alive.

We don't know anything about after that, but we want you to be happy while you're alive. They went ahead to try to do it only to be brought up with a terrifying shock at the first world war and utterly staggered the second world war, because they seem to be getting nowhere fast. And then the fundamentalists along the line are now tuning in on this same same wavelength of humanism, until we find it something like this.

Accept Jesus so you can go to heaven. You don't want to go to that old filthy nasty burning hell when there's a beautiful heaven up there. Now come to Jesus so that you can go to heaven.

And the appeal could be as much the selfishness as a couple of men sitting in a coffee shop deciding to go to rob a bank to get something for nothing. And there's a way that you can give an invitation to sinners that just sounds for all the world like a plot to take up a filling station proprietor's Saturday night earnings without working for them. Humanism is, I believe, the most deadly and disastrous of all the philosophical censures that's crept up through the grating over the pit of hell.

And it has penetrated so much of our religion. And it is in utter and total contrast with Christianity. And unfortunately it's held them free.

And here we find Micah wants to have a little chapel, and he wants to have a priest, and he wants to have prayer, and he wants to have devotion because I know the Lord will do me good. And this is selfishness. And this is sin.

And the Levite comes along and falls right in with it. Because he wants a place. He wants 10 shekels and a shirt and his food.

And so in order that he can have what he wants and Micah can have what they want, they sell out God for 10 shekels and a shirt. And this is the betrayal of the ancient. And it's the betrayal in which we live.

And I don't see how God can revive it until we come back to Christianity. As in direction, total contrast. It was a pinch for humanism that perpetrated in our generation in the name of Christ.

I am afraid that it's become so subtle that it goes everywhere. What is it? In essence it's this. That this philosophical postulate that the end of all being is the happiness of man has been sort of covered over with evangelical terms and biblical doctrines until God reigns in heaven for the happiness of man.

Jesus Christ is incarnate for the happiness of man. All the angels exist. Everything is for the happiness of man.

And I submit to you that this is unchristian. Isn't man happy? Doesn't God intend to make man happy? Yeah. But as a byproduct and not a prime product.

What is? It was that good man that's so admired by the fuzzy thinkers of our day out there in Africa. Dear Dr. Schweitzer, bless his heart. He's a brilliant man.

A philosopher, doctor, musician, composer. Undoubtedly a brilliant man. But Dr. Schweitzer is no more Christian than this rose.

And he would call it a personal insult if he were to say he was a Christian. He doesn't see Christ as having any relevance to his philosophical life. Dr. Schweitzer is a humanist.

Dr. Schweitzer was sitting on the bow of the boat going up the broad Congo River toward his station, watching the Belgian government officials with their high powered rifles shooting at the crocodiles sunning on the mud flats along the river. And they were expert marksmen. And as they would use these dum-dum bullets that would explode inside the crocodile and just send them spinning up into the air from the contraction of muscles.

And he said, how do you know so much about it? Well, to my shame, I was guilty of the same thing in the Nile. And they were there. This is what their sport was.

They bagged them and they taped towels and they put strings around the place where their gun was and had a little place for the gun and then they'd tie knots so they could see how many crocodiles they killed. A colossal waste of life. And it was there that Schweitzer saw the essence of his philosophy.

And do you know what it is? Three words. Reverence for life. Reverence for life.

Crocodile life. Human life. And other kinds of life.

My friend George Klein who was with us last week going back to the Gaboon was just about 50 or 60 miles away from Dr. Schweitzer's station. You know, Dr. Schweitzer is so convinced of the reverence of life that he doesn't like to sterilize his surgery. He has the dirtiest surgery in Africa.

Because bacteria are life and he doesn't want to hurt any of the good bacteria with the bad so he sort of lets them all grow together. His organ broke. Someone had sent him out an organ and the means of playing it and so Mr. Klein is an expert organist and an organ repairer as well.

So he went over to see Dr. Schweitzer and Dr. Schweitzer said, George, do you think you could fix my organ? He said, I wouldn't be surprised. Let me try it. So he took the back off and it was amazing that he discovered a huge nest of cockroaches.

With characteristic American enthusiasm and zeal, George started tumbling all over the cockroaches, not to let a one of them get away. And the good doctor came out, his hair standing straighter than it had for a long time and because of his anger and he said, you stop that right now. George says, why? They're hurting your organ.

He said, that's all right. They were just being true to their nature. He said, you can't kill those.

So one of the boys came in and said, it's all right Mr. Klein. He reached down very tenderly and picked them up and put them in a little bag and crimped the top and he put each cockroach in and they took them out in the jungle and let them loose. Now here was a man that believed his philosophy, reverence for life, utterly committed to it, utterly consistent, even when it came to the matter of a cockroach or a microbe.

Do you see? This is humanism. This is consistency. Now I ask you, what is the philosophy of mission? What is the philosophy of evangelism? What is the philosophy of a Christian? If you'll ask me why I went to Africa, I'll tell you I went primarily to improve on the justice of God.

I didn't think it was right for anybody to go to hell without a chance to be saved. And so I went to give poor sinners a chance to go to heaven. I hadn't put it in so many words, but if you'll analyze what I've just told you, do you know what it is? It's humanism.

That I was simply using the provisions of Jesus Christ as a means to improve upon human conditions of suffering and misery. And when I got to Africa, I discovered that they weren't poor ignorant little heathen running around in the woods waiting for, looking for someone to tell them how to go to heaven. That they were monsters of iniquity that were living in honor and total defiance of far more knowledge of God than I ever dreamed they had.

They deserved hell because they utterly refused to walk in the light of their conscience, and the light of the law written upon their heart, and the testimony of nature, and the truth they knew. And when I found that out, I assure you, I was so angry with God that one occasion in prayer I told him that it was a mighty little thing he'd done, sending me out there to reach these people that were waiting to be told how to go to heaven. When I got there, I found out they knew about heaven, didn't want to go there.

And they were loved their sin and wanted to stay in it. I went out there motivated by humanism. I'd seen pictures of lepers, I'd seen pictures of ulcers, I'd seen pictures of native funerals, and I didn't want my fellow human beings to suffer in hell eternally after such a miserable existence on earth.

But it was there in Africa that God began to tear through the overlay of this humanism. And it was that day in my bedroom with the door locked that I wrestled with God. For here was, was I was coming to grips with the fact that the people that I thought were ignorant and wanted to know how to go to heaven and were saying, someone come and teach us, actually didn't want to take time to talk with me or anybody else.

They had no interest in the Bible and no interest in Christ, and they loved their sin and wanted to continue in it. And I was to the place at that time where I felt the whole thing was a sham and a mockery and I'd been told a bill of good. And I wanted to come home.

And there alone in my bedroom, as I faced God honestly with what my heart felt, it seemed to me I heard him say, yes, will not the judge of all the earth do right? The heathen are lost. And they're going to go to hell not because they haven't heard the gospel. They're going to go to hell because they are sinners who love their sin.

And because they deserve hell. But I didn't send you out there for them. I didn't send you out there for their sake.

And I heard as clearly as I've ever heard, though it wasn't with physical voice, but it was the echo of truth of the ages finding its way into an open heart. I heard God say to my heart that day, something like this. I didn't send you to Africa for the sake of the heathen.

I sent you to Africa for my sake. They deserve hell, but I love them. And I endured the agonies of hell for them.

I didn't send you out there for them. I sent you out there for me. Do I not deserve the reward of my suffering? Don't I deserve those for whom I died? And it reversed it all and changed it all and raised it all.

And I wasn't any longer working for Micah and 10 shekels and a shire, but I was serving the living God. And I was there not for the sake of the heathen. I was there for the Savior that endured the agonies of hell for the heathen who didn't deserve it.

But he deserved them because he died for them. Do you see? Let me epitomize. Let me summarize.

Christianity says the end of all being is the glory of God. Humanism says the end of all being is the happiness of man. And one was born in hell, the deification of man.

And the other was born in heaven, the glorification of God. And one is Levi serving Micah, and the other is a hard, disunworthy serving the living God because of the highest honor in the universe. What about you? Why did you repent? I'd like to see some people repent on biblical terms again.

There was George Whitfield, you know him? He stood on Boston Common speaking to 20,000 people and he said, listen, Finneas, you're a monster. Monsters of iniquity deserve hell. And the worst of your crimes is that criminals all you've been, you haven't had the good grace to see it.

He said, if you will not weep for your sins and your crimes against the holy God, George Whitfield will weep for you. That man would put his head back and he would sob like a baby. Why? Because they were in danger of hell? No.

But because they were monsters of iniquity that didn't even see their inner care about their crime. You see the difference? You see the difference? The difference is here is somebody trembling because he's going to be hurt in hell. And he has no sense of the enormity of his guilt, and no sense of the enormity of his crime, and no sense of his insult against deity.

He's only trembling because his skin is about to be singed. He's afraid. And I submit to you that whereas fear is this good office work in preparing us for grace, there's no place to stop.

The Holy Ghost doesn't stop there. And that's the reason why no one can savingly receive Christ until they've repented. And no one can repent until they've been convicted.

And conviction is the work of the Holy Ghost that helps a sinner to see that he is a criminal before God and deserves all of God's wrath. And if God were to send him to the lowest corner of a devil's hell forever and ten eternities, that he deserved it all and a hundred fold more. Because he's seen his crime.

He's not been convinced he's caught, but he has seen his crime. And this is the difference between 20th century preaching and the preaching of John Wesley. Wesley was a preacher of righteousness that exalted the holiness of God.

And when he would stand there with a two to three hour sermons that he was accustomed to deliver in the open air, and he would exalt the holiness of God, and the law of God, and the righteousness of God, and the justice of God, and the wisdom of his requirements, and the justice of his wrath, and his anger. And then he would turn to sinners and tell them of the enormity of their crimes, and their open rebellion, and their treason, and their anarchy. The power of God would so descend upon the company that on one occasion it is reliably reported that when the people dispersed there were 1800 people lying on the ground utterly unconscious.

Because they'd had a revelation of the holiness of God, and in the light of that they'd seen the enormity of their sin. And God had so penetrated their minds and hearts that they had fallen to the ground. It wasn't only in Wesley's day.

It was also in America, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale. A man by the name of John Wesley Redfield had continuous ministry for three years in and around New Haven, culminating in the great meetings in the Yale Bowl, the first of the Yale Bowls back in the 18th century. And the policemen were accustomed during those days if they saw someone lying on the ground to go up and smell his breath.

Because if he had alcohol in his breath they'd lock him up, but if he didn't he had Wesley Redfield's disease. And all you needed to do if anyone had Redfield's disease was just take him into a quiet place and leave them till they came to. Because if they were drunkards they just stopped drinking, and if they were cruel they stopped being cruel, and if they were immoral they gave up their immorality.

If they were thieves they returned what they had. For as they had seen the holiness of God and seen the enormity of their sin, the Spirit of God had driven them down into unconsciousness because of the weight of their guilt. And somehow in this overspreading of the power of God, sinners repented of their sin and came savingly to Christ.

But there was a difference. It wasn't trying to convince good men that he was in trouble with a bad God, but that it was to convince bad men that they deserved the wrath and anger of a good God. And the consequence was repentance that led to faith and led to life.

Dear friends, there's only one reason, one reason for a sinner to repent, and that's because Jesus Christ deserves the worship and the adoration and the love and the obedience of his heart. Not because he'll go to heaven. If the only reason you repented, dear friend, was to keep out of hell, all you are is just a Levite serving for ten shekels and a shirt.

That's all. You're trying to serve God because he'll do you good. But a repentant heart is a heart that has seen something of the enormity of the crime of playing God and denying the just and righteous God the

worship and obedience that he deserves.

Why should a sinner repent? Because God deserves the obedience and love that he has refused to give him. Not so that he'll go to heaven. The only reason he repents is so that he'll go to heaven and tell him to try to make a deal or a bargain with God.

Why should a sinner give up all his sins? Why should he be challenged to do it? Why should he make restitution when he's coming to Christ? Because God deserves the obedience that he demands. I have talked with people that have no assurance of sins forgiven. They want to feel saved before they're willing to commit themselves to Christ.

But I believe that the only ones whom God actually witnesses by his Spirit are born of him. Are the people, whether they say it or not, that come to Jesus Christ and say something like this, Lord Jesus, I'm going to obey you and love you and serve you and do what you want me to do as long as I live, even if I go to hell at the end of the road, simply because you are worthy to be loved and obeyed and served and I'm not trying to make a deal with you. Do you see the difference? Do you see the difference between being a Levite serving for 10 shekels and a shirt or a Micah building a chapel? Because God will do you good.

And someone that repents for the glory of God. Why should a person come to the cross? Why should a person embrace death with Christ? Why should a person be willing to go in identification down to the cross and into the tomb and up again? I'll tell you why. Because it's the only way that God can get glory out of a human being.

If you say it's because you'll get joy or peace or blessing or success or fame, then it's nothing but a Levite serving for 10 shekels and a shirt. There's only one reason for you to go to the cross, dear young person, and that's because until you come to the place of union with Christ in death, you are defrauding the Son of God of the glory that he could get out of your life. For no flesh shall glory in sight.

And until you've understood the sanctifying work of God by the Holy Ghost taking you into union with Christ in death and burial and resurrection, you have to serve in what you have and all you have. It is that which is under the sentence of human personality and human nature and human strength and human energy, and God will get no glory out of that. And so the reason for you to go to the cross isn't that you're going to get victory.

You will get victory. It isn't that if you're going to have joy, you will have joy. But the reason for you to embrace the cross and press through until you know that you can testify with Paul, I'm crucified with Christ, isn't what you're going to get out of it, but the glory of God.

By the same token, why ought you to press through to know the fulness of the Holy Spirit? Why ought you to press through to know the fulness of Christ? I'll tell you why. Because the only possible way that Jesus Christ will get glory out of a life that is redeemed with his precious blood is when he can fill that life with his presence and live through it his own life. The genius of our faith wasn't that we were going to go through the motions like a Levite that were hired to serve God.

No, no. The genius of our faith was that we'd come to the place where we knew we could do nothing, and all we could do would be to present the vessel and say, Lord Jesus, you left us, and everything that's done will have to be done by you and for you. But oh, I know so many people that are trying to know the fulness of God so that they can use God.

A young preacher came to me down in West Virginia, Huntington, West Virginia. He said, Brother Reed, I've got a great church. We've got a wonderful Sunday school program.

We've got a radio ministry growing. But I feel a personal need and a personal lack. I need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

I need to be filled with the Spirit. And someone told me God's done something for you. And I wondered if you could help me.

I looked at the fellow, and you know what he looked like? Me. He just looked like me. I just saw in him everything that was in me.

You thought I was going to say me before. No. Listen, dear heart.

If you've ever seen yourself, you'll know that you're never going to be anything else than you were. For in me and my flesh there's no good thing. But like me? He was like a fellow driving up in a big Cadillac, you know, to someone standing at the filling station, saying, Pull up, bud, with the highest octane you got.

Well, that's the way it looked. He wanted power for his program. And God is not going to be a means to anyone's end.

I said, I'm awfully sorry. I don't think I can help you. He said, Why? I don't think you're ready.

I said, Well, suppose you consider yourself coming up with a Cadillac. You've talked about your program. You've talked about your radio.

You talked about your Sunday school and church. Very good. You've done wonderfully well without the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's what the Chinese Christian said, you know, when he got back to China. What impressed you most about America? He said, the great things Americans can accomplish without God. And he'd accomplished a great deal, admittedly, without God.

Now he's wanted something, power, to accomplish his ends even further. I said, No, no. You're sitting behind the wheel and you're saying to God, Give me power so I can go.

You won't work. You've got to slide over. But I knew that rascal, because I knew me.

I said, No, it'll never do. You've got to get in the backseat. I could see him leaning over and grabbing the wheel.

No, it'll never do in the backseat. I said, Before God will do anything for you, you know what you've got to do? He said, What? I said, You've got to get out of the car, take the keys around, open up the trunk lid, hand the keys to the Lord Jesus, get inside the trunk, slam the lid down, whisper through the keyhole, Lord, fill her up with anything you want and you drive. It's up to you from now on.

And that's why so many people, you know, do not enter into the fullness of Christ. Because they want to become a Levite with ten shekels and a shirt. They've been serving Micah, but they think if they had the power of the Holy Ghost, they could serve the tribe of Dan.

It'll never work. Never work. There's only one reason for God meeting you.

And that's to bring you to the place where in repentance, you've been pardoned for his glory. And in victory, you've been brought to the place of death, that he might reign. And in the fullness, Jesus Christ is able to live and walk in you.

And your attitude is the attitude of the Lord himself who said, I can do nothing of myself. I can't speak of myself. I don't make plans for myself.

My only reason for being is the glory of God in Jesus Christ. If I were to say to you, come to be saved so you can go to heaven. Come to the cross so that you can have joy and victory.

Come to the fullness of the spirit so that you can be satisfied. I'd be falling into the trap of humanism. I'm going to say to you, dear friend, if you're out here without Christ, you come to Jesus Christ and serve him as long as you live, whether you go to hell at the end of the way, because he's worthy.

I say to you, Christian friend, you come to the cross and join him in union and death and enter into all the meaning of death to hell in order that he can have glory. I say to you, dear Christian, if you do not know the fullness of the Holy Ghost, come and present your body a living sacrifice and let him tell you so that he can have the purpose for his coming fulfilled in you and get glory through your life. It's not what you're going to get out of God.

It's what he is going to get out of you. Let's be done once and for all with utilitarian Christianity that makes God a means instead of the glorious end that he is. Let's resign.

Let's tell Micah we're through. We're no longer going to be his priest serving for ten shekels and a shirt. Let's tell the tribe of Dan we're through and let's come and cast ourselves at the feet of the nail-pierced son of God and tell him that we're going to obey him and love him and serve him as long as we live because he is worthy.

Two young Moravians heard of an island in the West Indies where an atheist British owner had 2,000 to 3,000 slaves. The owner had said no preacher, no clergyman will ever stay on this island. If he's shipwrecked, we'll keep him in a separate house until he has to leave, but he's never going to talk to any of us about God.

I'm through with all that nonsense. Three thousand slaves from the jungles of Africa bought to an island in the Atlantic and there to live and die without hearing of Christ. Two young Moravians heard about it.

They sold themselves to the British planter and used the money they received from the sale for he paid no more than he would for any slave to pay their passage out to his island for he wouldn't even transport them. And as the ship left the river at Hamburg, left its pier in the river at Hamburg and was going out into the North Sea, carried with the tide. The Moravians had come from Hoornhoek to see these two lads off in the early 20s, never to return again for this wasn't a four-year term.

They'd sold themselves into lifetime slavery, simply that as slaves they could be as Christians or these others were. The families were there weeping for they knew they'd never see them again. And they wondered why they were going and questioned the wisdom of it.

And as the gap widened and the houses had been cast off and were being curled up there on the pier and the young boys saw the widening gap, one lad with his arm linked to the arm of his fellow raised his hand and shouted across the gap the last words that were heard from them. They were these, may the land that

was slain receive the reward of his suffering. And this became the core of a Moravian mission.

And this is the only reason for being that the land that was slain may receive the reward of his suffering.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/nfl-881QjHQ.mp4>

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