

Why God Made Man - Part 2 of 6

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the origins of sin, the nature of temptation, and the consequences of man's choices against God's will.

Duration: 1:00:09

Scripture: Genesis 2:17, Matthew 6:33, Acts 16:30, Acts 17:11, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:21

Topics: "Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story of meeting members of the Gonsu tribe who were curious about his presence. While they visited, the speaker tried to listen to a BBC broadcast for news but encountered technical difficulties. He uses this experience to illustrate the concept of spiritual death and separation from God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of the human spirit being connected to God and compares it to the necessity of air for survival.

Transcript

...our hearts, minister to us, and reveal the Lord Jesus Christ to us. We long to have the eyes of our spirit open to behold Him, see Him, the King, in all His beauty, that we may glorify Him in His worthy name, and for His sake we pray. Amen.

Now, back again in your thinking for just a moment. Back to that moment in time when an intelligent creature set his will against the will of God, when Lucifer, the son of the morning, made a choice. We had spoken earlier of his imagination, or, if you please, his temptation.

Perhaps this is a good time to work on that definition for a minute. Temptation, what is it? Temptation is the proposition presented to the intellect to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Now, if you don't think I can drive back out of that and drive into it again straight, I'll prove it to you.

Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind, to the intellect, to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Now we might want to amplify that a little and say temptation is a proposition presented to the intellect and reinforced by the emotions to satisfy a good appetite in a bad way. Temptation here, in terms of Lucifer, was not a good appetite, it was a bad appetite.

He had actually used his intellect to imagine what he would do if he were God. There's nothing wrong with that. He might even have improved his administration if he had let it go at that.

But there came a moment when he said, I will set my throne above the throne of the Most High. Now, there are many places where one has to say, I can't prove, but it does seem clear. I can't prove what I'm about to say, but it does seem clear that sin had no actual existence in the universe until an intelligent creature set his will against the will of God and made choice to do that which was contrary to the will of God.

It could have existed at any time, but it didn't exist until an intelligent creature had the power of choice made a wrong choice. And then it became a reality in the universe. It was there, it was now a fact.

I think it waited. Potentially, it had the possibility of existence, because as long as there is positive, there exists the potential for negative. But it waited until an intelligent being chose that negative to have actual appearance in the universe.

But from that time on, sin is a reality, because it's now expressed not only in Lucifer, but all of the angelic beings that we would today, I suppose, call demons. Angels that fell with Lucifer were cast out of heaven with him down to earth. We left off in our understanding of this with man in the midst of the garden, placed there by God with everything that man needed to be complete and happy and fulfilled.

Man, for our purpose, now has Eve, Adam now has Eve beside him. They have every means of satisfying all the appetites in the way that God has prescribed that will honor and glorify God and bring joy and blessing to them. However, remember, there is day and there is night.

And I do not know, because we have no record of what God, how God explained the meaning of night or of the adversary that was there. And we don't know. What we do know is that God told this pair whom he loved and whom he'd made and his image and likeness into whom he'd breathed the breath of life, that they could eat of all the fruit of the garden.

Everything that he had prepared was theirs, save for that tree in the midst of the garden. Should they eat of that, should they choose to eat of that, there would be very serious consequences. Consequence is that they would die.

Now, he has in so doing given them adequate warning that there is going to be a test. They have the power of choice. They have nothing at all to constrain them to choose outside of the perfect will of God.

God's revealed himself to them. They're there. Surely they have appetites, but surely there's enough fruit of every kind that they do not need to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden.

Now, it's interesting, isn't it, that after man sinned, God had an angel with a flaming sword at the edge of the garden to keep man from going into the garden to eat further of that tree. You ever wondered why God didn't send that angel a few days early to have kept Lucifer out, kept the serpent out? He might have, you know, just as he might have found another planet somewhere and made a habitation for man. But he didn't.

He revealed himself to man. He gave them everything they needed to be completely happy. He gave them due and adequate warning not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden.

And yet he permitted the serpent to come. And you know what happened. There ensued a conversation between the serpent and Mother Eve.

Yea, hath God said? A question raised. Did God really say that? Did he really mean that? That if you ate of that fruit that you were going to fall over dead, that fruit isn't poisonous. It's good to look at.

It's pleasant to taste. It'll make you wise. Make you wise.

In fact, if you'll eat it, you're going to be like God. Well, now remember, they had been made in God's image, in God's likeness. They were like God.

But they were in his image, in his likeness. They weren't God. And he is making a proposition.

Presenting to their intellect. Appealing to one appetite. Well, look at the appetites that he's appealing to.

Appetite for food. It's pleasant to taste. Appetite for pleasure.

It's good to look at. Appetite for status. You shall be as God.

Directed toward the intellect to satisfy good appetites in a bad way. Now there was nothing inside of them that compelled them to do this. They had nothing inside of them that made them eat.

You could say, well if you would, you not. That 100% of all the people there did not have a fallen sinful nature. All they had was a human nature.

All they had were human appetites. And an intellect. And a proposition that could be presented to the intellect.

And emotions that could be stirred by the proposition. And so, Mother Eve listens. And she likes, wants.

And she takes. And she eats. Now somehow we had the idea that Adam was off on a business luncheon somewhere else.

But he wasn't. Because it says, and she gave to her husband to eat. Here.

In effect she is saying, you got a choice to make old man. You can either be with God who comes at 5:30 in the afternoon in the cool of the evening. Or you can be with me all the time and I'll make your choice.

I ate. And so, he ate with her. They made a choice.

They chose. That is what you have to understand. God gave them the power to choose.

And they chose to eat. It was a choice. Now God had said, don't eat.

For the day thou eatest, thou shall surely die. The lie was, lest ye shall die. Now God didn't say, lest ye shall die.

God says, the day thou eatest thou shall surely die. Now, that's the first mention of the word die. They ate.

And they didn't know much about death. There hadn't been any. In their life, their experience.

I'm certain that the inference that was given and expected to be drawn was. You eat this and it'll poison you and you'll fall over dead. Well, that wasn't what happened.

There wasn't any poison in the fruit. The poison was in the action. The moral action of morally responsible people.

Who made a choice against the will of God. And they chose to please themselves. Oh yes, ye shall be as God.

And because they ate, that's exactly what happened. They now had attained to that state where they were God. I will do what I want.

But they died. They died. How many ways did they die? Well, they began to die physically, didn't they? Because from that time forth, there was a definite termination to human life.

It took a long time. Got up there around 900 years. But the most astonishing thing about that chapter is.

And he lived to be 973 years and he died. And 900 years and he died. It wasn't how long they lived, but the fact that they died.

And death passed upon all men. For we are told all have sinned. It was therefore that physical death was one of the consequences of the choice that they made.

Because of that choice, physical death came. Now let's look at the word death. What is it? Is it annihilation? Is it destruction of being? What is physical death? It's the separation of the non-dying part of a person from the part that goes back into the soil from which it's come.

Death always in the scripture is separation. Not annihilation or destruction. And so to die physically is for the non-dying part of a person to leave the dying part.

The part that returns to the soil. You see, you are not a body. You are a spirit living in a body.

I am not a body, but a spirit living in a body. One day you and I will be, I trust, on that last bed when loving friends gather around us. And watch in that difficult struggle when the human spirit is released from the body.

And with that last gasp, I trust there will be tearful eyes. One will say to the other, He's gone. She's gone.

What do you mean? Everything familiar remains. Body still warm. Eyes still open.

No one feeling. No one hearing. No one seeing.

No one speaking. Gone. That is death.

Separation. Physical death, therefore, is separation of the spirit from the body. But he died another way, did he not? He died legally.

Man had legal claim on God. Since God had made man, God was obligated to provide for the creature whom he had made. And he was, therefore, responsible to provide food and clothing and shelter for the creature he had made.

But because man had rebelled against God, had become God in his own right, all legal obligations that God had to man have died. They've been separated. Man has no longer any legal claim upon God.

The only thing man can ask from God after that point is justice in judgment. That they can claim. Not as a child to a father, but as a culprit to a judge.

That's the only legal claim that man has upon God once sin has come into the world. No other. He has turned from God.

Turned to his own way. He's become God. Climbed up in the throne of his life.

And he, God, no longer has any legal obligation for the creatures that he made because the creature turned away from him. You ever seen an ad in the paper? Having left my bed and board, I am no longer responsible for the debts of so and so and so. All legal responsibility ceases with separation.

That's separation of death. Death to the relationship. There was a third sense in which man died.

And that is he died spiritually. God had breathed into him the breath of life. And that spirit in man, the part of a man that knows the things of a man, the spirit of man that was designed for fellowship with God.

But by man's choice, man's sin, there was a separation. And man no longer was in communication with God. In direct communication.

This means, therefore, that you have to recognize that God was geographically just as near, but spiritually separated. When we talk about being dead in trespasses and sins, as we do, and as the word makes it clear, men without Christ are, we're not talking about the fact that some supposition that God is way off in the corner of heaven somewhere, and man is here, and there's a great geographical gulf between. The fact of the matter is, Paul, in his sermon on Mars Hill, established once and for all the geographical location of God.

He said, in him we live, and we move, and we have our being, and he's not far from every one of us. It's hard for us to realize, isn't it, that God was just as geographically close to Hitler as he was to the dearest saint. But that's true.

All the crimes committed by all the criminals of the world are committed in the immediate presence of God. All sin committed is committed in the presence of God. He is the witness to all sin and all conversation, even to the motives of the heart.

So, separated spiritually. It's hard for us to understand what this death, spiritual death, means. Difficult.

Because we're so bound by the sense of the material. Right now, in this room, there are three atmospheres. The first atmosphere is the one with which we're most familiar.

It's the atmosphere of air. And we have not quite as much air here, at 3,700 feet or whatever it is, as we have in Washington at 700 feet. It gets a little thinner up here.

But you've got enough to get along real good. They tell me of these guys, these fanatics, that run up and down the gorge wall, you know. There must be enough air to take care of those problems, I guess.

They seem to get... I couldn't even run down, much less run up. But be that as it may, there seems to be enough air. But, you know, with joggers, I'm going to watch some of the joggers I've come to know since I got here, down in Washington.

Every jogger I see looks like death warmed over. He died three days ago and he just... I've never seen a happy one. I've never seen one with a joyous smile.

All just gasping for the name. If I think if I could see one really smiling and joyously exulting in this, I might try to take it up. So I hope nobody smiles.

I wouldn't want to go that far. But the fact is, we live in an atmosphere of air. And if I were to clasp your nostrils and cover your mouth and tightly hold it for five minutes or seven minutes, you'd become a statistic.

You've got to have air. And you've only got one receiving set for it. And that's your lungs.

And you've got two passages for it, through your nose and through your mouth. But you've got to have it. And without the receiving set, you can't do it.

And without the air coming to it, you won't live. In air we live and move and from it have our being. And there's a second atmosphere.

And that's electronic sound. Now, all you hear is my voice at the moment. But if you said, well, we want you to prove that there is electronic sound in this room, we'd have to go out and get floor-to-ceiling shelves and put them up for long wave and short wave, for ultra-high and very high, for television and radio and all of it.

If tomorrow you came in and all the electronic sound in this room had a receiving set tuned in for each particular one, and it all came up to 125 decibels, oh, brother pastor, you'd have to re-plaster this place. It would just be shattered. Now, you don't argue with me when I tell you this room is filled with electronic sound because it's part of your life.

But when I was in the sedan, that was a different matter. Two of my friends from the Gonzo tribe, one man, Salia, who was my informant, and his wife and his wife's sister came for an evening of visit with me. They wanted to meet this strange creature that Salia got up at four in the morning and walked for about 12 miles and then got there in time to sit all day and let me pick words off of his lips and then would walk home, made the women do all the work.

They wanted to see him, so they came for a call. And I was in a little rest house with grass-thatched roof and a sand floor, and so they comfortably seated themselves on the sand floor, and we visited. I sat in the little chair I had.

But I wanted to get the BBC broadcast because I wanted the news. So somewhere in the conversation, I reached over and put on the switch. I had an old three-knob military radio connected to the 12-volt battery on the truck, and the truck was right there, and I'd run this out, and we got it in.

First thing you know, there comes this chimes from Big Ben, and this is BBC London calling, and that's Stentorian Voice. And he began to give the news. Oh, they're still... Her eyes were wide.

You could brush them off with a stick. I mean, they were way out there. And I watched the sister, and she didn't want to make anybody to see what she was doing.

She just slid on her seat, crossed out the door, and then she crept along under the wings, under the wall, and got over, and I could see her back there looking at me. And then she came by, and she turned to her

sister and said, shh, shh, shh, shh. And her sister turned to Celia and said, shh, shh, shh.

I said, Celia, what did she say? Oh, that's all right. No, please tell me, what did she say? She said that she saw who's doing the talking. And I said, is that... What did she say? She said, well, back there, she looked in the back of that box, and you got some little huts in there, and little people in those huts.

And they're the ones that are doing... Well, it was a tube radio with a black top and lights on there. And she saw the filaments up there, and those were little people, and they were doing the talking. And I tried to explain, no, no.

The air is filled with sound, and this just takes it and separates it. And Celia said, no, the air is filled with sound, just like I did. And the sister-in-law said, you tell that fellow.

He's lying in his teeth. I saw the little people in those little houses, and he can't tell me. And when he tells you there's sound around here that you can't hear, don't you believe it? You know that I got the best ears in our village.

I can hear a lion roar further than anybody, and if there's any sound here, I'll hear it. It was absolutely and totally out of her cultural capacity. She simply could not imagine what you take for granted, that there was another ocean surrounding you for which you need receiving sets to become aware.

There's a third ocean. You walk at the bottom of a third ocean, and that ocean is God. In Him we live and move and have our being, and He is not far from every one of us.

But you have to have a receiving set, and the receiving set is the human spirit. And as long as one lives in impenitence and rebellion that is dead, you go to your television set and put it on and no sound or picture comes, what are you going to say? Your wife will say to you, what's the matter? Oh, I thought you were going to turn it on. Well, I turned it on, but the set is dead.

She says, hit it on the right side in the back corner. It'll always come on. You hit it and it doesn't come on.

That's the only way most of us know how to fix the things. If we hit it twice and it doesn't come on, we've got to take it somewhere. And so you hit it and it doesn't come on.

It's dead. Now what's that mean? That during the night all the pieces in it are rusted down with a little bit of powder and you blow it away? It's annihilated? No! That isn't what it means. It means that there's a connection loose.

That's all. Just one little connection loose. It's separated.

And what happens when man sinned? The human spirit became inoperative as far as God is concerned. That was death. That was spiritual death.

Separation of the human spirit from God. And then, of course, there is the fourth aspect of this. He said, thou shalt surely die.

And that is ultimate separation. In that place that he prepared for the devils and his angels. For those who in their impenitence and the stiffness and the hardness of their hearts refuse proffered grace and offered mercy will spend eternity.

It is described as hell. It's described as a place of suffering. A place of darkness.

A place of death. Why? Because the God of the place is going to be the God of darkness and of suffering and of hatred. And thus it is that man died.

Right there in the garden, man died. Well, you can see the effect of that, can you not? You say, now how does this pertain to us? Look, if you don't understand what happened then, you're not going to understand what has to happen now. You've got to know where the tracks start in order to know where they're going to go and how to move on the tracks.

That's what I'm trying to establish. And so, into that garden, the cool of the day, the Lord came. Now, he knew what had happened.

Everything that had been done had been done in his presence. But instead of Adam and Eve being there to meet him, they're out in the garden where the foliage is the heaviest, the bushes drop the furthest, and where they can worm their way in and can say one to another, maybe you won't find us. And then you hear grace manifest when the voice of the Lord calls, Adam has to declare himself.

Adam has to reveal himself. Adam, where art thou? And then when he comes out standing there, what is this that thou hast done? Well, we saw we were naked. Who told you you were naked? What is this thou hast done? We ate of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden.

But do you know what Adam said? Now remember what's happened to him. He is now dead in his trespasses, in his sin, because of his choice. And what does this one who was given a helpmeet to have, to hold, to love, to cherish, what does he say? If you're going to kill somebody, kill her.

She gave me the fruit to eat. What's that sound like? You remember what we talked about this God of this world? What were his attributes? Darkness, lie, hate, death. What do you see in what Adam says? He was in darkness, covered in spirit, a lie.

She didn't make him eat. He chose. He made a choice.

And death, already there. If you're going to kill somebody, kill her. He's already given her up.

He's already murdered her. If you're going to get even with somebody, take her. She did it, not me.

Came pretty full blown, didn't it, into the world. Didn't seem to sort of, just sort of ease on up. It just came in right full.

And then the most marvelous picture of grace, I think, in the Old Testament. One little statement. And the Lord God.

Remember, the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. For his name is Jehovah, Yeshua, Yahshua, Jesus. The Jehovah, the Lord God.

Listen to it, so simple. Made coats of skin. The first blood shed in this recreated world was shed by the hand of the Son of God.

When a lamb or two lambs died, that they might give their skin. Now you can make a coat of wool without the lamb dying. But you can't make a coat of skin without the death of the lamb.

And so the first blood shed in the recreated earth was shed at the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnation manifestation as the Jehovah God in the midst of the garden when he made coats of skin. And he pointed a finger down across the centuries to a time when John the Baptist would see him and would say, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And you have the gospel right there in the first chapters.

Now, let's look at what we've just discovered. We've discovered that sin is a choice. We've discovered that the first pair had nothing within them to coerce, force, or make them choose as they chose.

We've discovered that they were tempted and they yielded to temptation. They chose. And because they chose, they died.

Now, let me skip over to Romans chapter 3. And the scripture says, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That is a simple declarative statement. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Now, let me ask you a question. Does the scripture explain why all have sinned and come short of the glory of God? Now, don't tell me Augustine explained it.

I'll tell you about Augustine if you want to know. I'm asking the scripture. Does the scripture explain why all have? Friends, the scripture tells us why that all have sinned.

It does not tell us why. Men have tried to figure out why. But every time they do, they have to go back to metaphysics and back to philosophy.

They can't find it in the scripture, so they have to build a pyramid on a needle's pinpoint. But the scripture tells us all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Is it necessary for us to find some reason why 100% of all the people in the Garden of Eden sinned? They did.

All sinned and came short of the glory of God. Why? They chose to do it. They chose.

It was a choice. You ask me, do you know why all since then have done it? And I would say the scripture is absolutely clear. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

But all the explanations that men have invented have come under the class of metaphysics and philosophy. And they have simply served to divide the body of Christ. Most of the time, when you find the body of Christ divided, you will find that it's divided not over the scripture, but over the philosophies and the metaphysics of the people that are there.

If we stay with what the Word says, we protect ourselves so much. Once we go beyond the Word, once we go beyond the Word, we end up in a terrible dilemma. So, here we have this thing.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In the Garden, all sinned and came short of the glory of God. Death passed upon them.

Since that time, death passed upon them. You have your explanation as to why everyone did it. Well and good.

Well and good. I have no objection to it. My only concern is that we understand that the Word says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And death is passed upon all men, for all have sinned. I was sitting on that bench back there at the University of Minnesota. And this young student said to me, he said, I'm a sinner.

I'm a sinner. I've done everything in the book. I've broken every commandment in the Word of God.

I have broken them all the time. Last week, I broke most of them. And the one I didn't break last week, I'm planning on this week.

Now, will you tell me why I've done that? So I gave him one or two of the explanations I'd been taught. And he looked at me and he said, you mean to tell me that the reason I did what I've done was because I couldn't help doing it. You're a liar.

There are some weeks when I don't. I've never had any sin I've ever committed that I didn't commit because I wanted to commit it. And now you're telling me I have to commit it.

And you're telling me that the God you love and worship is going to send me to hell and damn me forever for doing what I couldn't help doing. He said, I got better sense than that. I know that the reason why I've sinned is because I've chosen to do it.

Nobody's ever made me do anything. And he got up and said, you can worship him, but a God that sends people to hell for doing what they couldn't help doing isn't a God to be worshipped. He's a monster.

And he stopped off across there mocking me. And I went back to the word of God. And I began to study it from where we are in Genesis right through to Revelation.

And what I have found is this, that God says men are responsible for what they do. They're responsible for what they do. They choose.

And I said, well, why do they choose? I don't know. I don't know. I don't know why they do it.

I don't know why I did it. I don't know why you do it. He said, well, listen.

In church history, there was no theologian that ever tried to explain why all have sinned and come short of the glory of God until Augustine tried to do it. And he did it because he'd been under, he was a thoroughgoing, thoroughgoing, total manichaeist, which is a Gnostic dualist who was committed to the fact that the body is bad. And Augustine believed, as many had believed, as the Gnostics had believed, as the dualists had believed, that sin was resident in the flesh, that God never created man with a body.

God created man according to Gnosticism, pure spirit. And when pure spirit sinned, then there was a penitentiary, a prison made in the form of a body, and that the body is bad. Because Augustine believed this, he took what had been mentioned by origin in Tertullian, and he developed a theology out of it.

And his theology was this. If twins are born to godly parents, and when the first twin is born, the priest is there to baptize it. And while he is baptizing the first twin, the second twin is born, and then in a moment dies.

And then the baptized twin dies. The one that has been baptized will be forever in the presence of God, enjoying the bliss of heaven. And the one that was died without being baptized will burn forever in the pit of hell.

This was Augustine's theology. Baptismal regeneration. And it was Gnostic dualism that he made into orthodoxy.

He had all who disagreed with him killed and put to death. And that became synonymous with orthodoxy. What Augustine did.

Now I'm coming back with you to the word. And I am saying that sin is the committal of the will to please oneself, to enthrone oneself as God. We have turned everyone to his own way.

All we like sheep have gone astray. Look at it from this point of view. If God didn't consider the question important enough to give to us an absolutely clear, unchallengeable explanation as to why.

Is it important enough for us to divide the body of Christ as it has been divided over the centuries? I question it. All have sinned and come short of the glory of Christ. Of God.

It is therefore most imperative that we should understand that when you stand before a company of sinners and you proclaim to them that the reason they sinned was because they had to sin and that God is going to damn them for doing what they couldn't help doing. You have at that point destroyed the possibility of their ever being conviction wrought by the Holy Ghost. Look, if I can prove to a person who has congenital syphilis that it came about because of the disobedience and the sin of their parents, I can get them concerned about their welfare, but I can't get them convicted of guilt.

Guilt can only be brought to a heart of a person when there is responsibility. And what we have done by the way we have presented the gospel has been to make it impossible for the Holy Ghost to get people under conviction of sin because we have removed from it all sense of personal responsibility. In my effort to try to get, see God work and bring sense of conviction of sin to sinners because the word says, when he the spirit of truth has come, he will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.

What I have tried to do is to say that when reaching the age of accountability, everyone have endorsed the choice of our first parents and have chosen to live as though we were glad in our own lives and please ourselves. Now I think it's that I'm a devout coward and I don't want to get slaughtered for having gone beyond that. But I believe that reaching the age of accountability, every one of us have reaffirmed the choice of our first parents and said, I am going to do what I want to do.

And conviction begins with that choice. And that commitment. And that sense of personal responsibility.

I don't want, I'm perfectly willing whenever anyone wishes to get into a discussion. In fact, I'm writing, working on a book now dealing with this. But I don't believe it's necessary for us to go into a minute knowledge of Platonism and Gnosticism and Dualism and Manichaeism and all of this.

Let's suffice it to say that when an individual reaches the age of accountability for whatever reason he chooses to please himself and govern his own life, I will do what I want to do. Reaffirms that fact that he is God. Because the word says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

I don't believe it's necessary for me to go back to sinners and explain all the history of historical conflicts that there have been with theologians over hundreds and thousands of years. I do think it's necessary for me to confront an individual with the fact that at a given point in time that individual said I will do what I want to do. I may think I know why he said it.

Someone else may think they know why they said it. But I am not going to give that individual any excuse to blame God for what he did. He made a choice.

And he's responsible for that choice. And God ever and always has dealt with people as having the power to choose. Because he gave them that power.

And it wasn't annihilated. It wasn't abolished. It wasn't destroyed.

They have the power to choose. And so at that age, when they were able to make, I don't know what the age is. That's not important.

But there was some point in time for each of us when we became conscious of a choice and we chose to please ourselves. This is going to be the principle by which I live. I will do what I want to do.

I'll govern my life and rule it the way I please. I'll choose how to be happy and how to gratify my appetites. Now with that established, then I believe the spirit of God can come back to that point of choice and say you chose.

Let the theologians argue in their ivory tower why he made the choice. I don't want to get involved in this discussion with that. What I want to do is to get that person to the place that he realizes he's responsible.

I hear God through the prophets saying, as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die? Why do you choose to die? Now that sounds to me as though God is dealing with them as having the power and the ability and the responsibility to turn. And if they do not turn, it's not because every inducement that heaven could make, every proffer of mercy that God could bring, everything that God could do.

The sinner chooses not to turn. And oh, how I long to see the day come again when we so exalt the justice of God and the holiness of God and the righteousness of God that there shall come a great wave of conviction of sin. When men shall cry out, what shall I do to be saved? Now listen, I don't have the right and it's probably good I don't, but if I had the right, do you know what I would do? I would declare a moratorium in America for the preaching of how to be saved for one year.

No radio program, no television program would be permitted to tell people how to be saved. I would want to see the preachers become like Noah, preachers of righteousness and exalt the holiness of God and the justice of God and the law of God and the government of God until sinners were smitten and stricken and crushed and broken and cried out as did the Philippian jailer, what must I do to be saved? You know what we've done? We've gospel hardened a generation of sinners by telling them how before they had any idea in the world why they needed to be saved. I think it's back there when we discover that there is a choosing for which men are responsible, that we begin to see how we can proclaim the gospel to see sinners prepared for grace.

The only kind of people God saves are lost people. And if God and his sweet grace and marvelous provisions of truth can't get them lost, they'll never be saved. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and lostness is not a state of position, it's an attitude of the heart on the part of the person.

They've got to discover how lost they are. And so let us proclaim the truth of God and the holiness of God and the word of God as to see men prepared for grace. But we'll go on from there tomorrow.

Father in heaven, move thou upon us until we come to know and recognize and realize that it was grace that drew salvation's plan and grace that brought it down to man. Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary. Move thou upon us, teach us, prepare us.

We're pastor's leaders. We're responsible how we minister to this generation of sinners. And we ask that as we think together, our hearts may be thoroughly knit in truth.

Stir us up like Bereans to search the scriptures to see if these things be so. In Jesus' name, amen. You're dismissed.

Thank you.

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