

An Unchanging Scandalous Gospel

by Paul Washer

The gospel message is a supernatural, regenerating message that requires the power of God to be effective, and it's impossible to believe apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:06:49

Scripture: Matthew 25:34, Romans 1:16

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of consistently teaching and studying the scriptures. He shares his personal experience of teaching his children and encourages listeners to take advantage of every opportunity to grow in knowledge and understanding. The speaker then turns to Romans 116 and discusses the themes of Christ, depravity, and judgment. He highlights the significance of living out one's faith through acts of compassion and service to others. The sermon concludes with a critique of a simplified approach to evangelism and a call to preach the message of salvation freely to all.

Transcript

I want us to open our Bibles to Romans chapter one, verse 16. There was so much lacking in Brother Conrad's sermon that I just feel obligated to go back and fill in the gaps. Since I am batting cleanup, I will do my best before we get to that text.

You know, it's always good when you have a group of people like this to ask for prayer. My prayer would be for wisdom in my life. And I have kind of a secret, well it's not really a secret, but I have a personal goal in my life.

And I really ask you to pray toward that end. And that I would be a biblical husband like Christ is to his bride. I always I want to ask that of you, it's not piety, it's just that I've come to believe that if I could be that.

Most of the other things would just fall in place. And, you know, it's so easy to in a way to preach, I always say, you know, God can speak through rocks and donkeys. But but to be a godly man.

In the context of the most intimate relationship I have on earth, the most close relationship I have with my wife. And my children. That's where true godliness is seen, not in so much preaching, but in living out the preaching in the most real situations.

I was preaching in in Fort Worth, no, in Austin a few years ago. And after my first sermon, the church search committee or whatever they call those things, posse, ran up to me and they said, would you consider being our pastor? And I kind of smiled with a twinkle in my eye and I said, are you out of your mind? And. And the leader of the search committee said, well, Brother Paul, why did you say that? I said, you don't know if I love my wife.

How can you ask me to be a pastor? There are no great men of God. There are only weak, broken men of a great and merciful God. I always thought when I was younger, I'd look at men that I knew God was using and think, boy, they have reached some spiritual level.

And because they've reached that level, God has really begun to use them. I know that God has used me, but I know it is all of grace. I remember preaching a few years ago and a revival broke out on campus and.

People were getting saved and other people were furious and throwing water balloons at me when I was going across the campus, I guess that's not as biblical as stones, but I do prefer water balloons to stones. And because of that, a group of young men thought that I was the Apostle Paul and they wanted to come and just be with me in Peru. But when they got off that plane in Lima, Peru, they thought I was the Apostle Paul.

When they got back on that plane about a month later, they were praying for my salvation. Now, I don't want to be trite or to say that we should not strive after holiness and hypocrisy is a crime that will condemn the soul. But men are men and that's all that they'll ever be.

There is one teacher, there's one father, and the rest of us are recipients of grace. That's why I so love the Apostle John, because I noticed that when he identifies himself, he doesn't say the one that loved Jesus. Because that's a great boast in itself.

That's declaring you fulfilled all the commands, he said, the one whom Jesus loved. I gladly take that as an eternal title and want no other title. The one whom Jesus loved, that's all we'll ever be.

And it's enough. Also, for all the budding preachers, I have something here that I would highly recommend to you when we study and read God's word because we have to prepare for sermons and well, we need to study scripture and systematic and and all these things that are so wonderful and we need to do them. But I have discovered through both trial and error that even if I'm studying all day long, a certain topic of theology, even a certain benefit of Christ, my soul will grow lean.

Unless. I daily and systematically meet with the Lord in his word just to hear a word from the Lord. Just to just to enjoy the things he says and not feel condemned if I even forget them by the afternoon, but just to sit with him and enjoy his word.

And Robert Murray McShane has a Bible reading list. Most of you may be familiar with it. It is one of the greatest blessings in my life.

Because I'm liable if I'm writing material for Peru or something, I get up at four or five in the morning and I sit down on my computer and begin to write and study scripture. I have found that even that is not enough. But for my soul and my soul's sake and its growth and its flourishing like a plant.

That I need to sit quietly and just enjoy God's word so often, young men, we try to. Comprehend God's word and comprehend truth, not knowing that that word is a doubled meaning word, comprehend not only

means to understand, but it means to grasp, to control. Like when it says that Christ came into the world, the light came into the world and the darkness did not comprehend it.

It can mean that the darkness did not understand it. It can also mean that the darkness could not conquer it. I'm afraid that sometimes we get in the word in order to master it.

To grab a hold of it, to be able to use it. And it's very good every day to read the scripture without such an intention. But to simply enjoy the word and for the word to comprehend.

And. Overcome or grasp us. I think that is extremely important.

One other thing that I want to say to you, I believe I could teach an entire seminary class that would be most beneficial to students just on all the mistakes I've made. If they would listen very, very carefully and then not do them, they would they would really make great progress in the kingdom. The other one is this.

You pull out your Greek New Testament. Or you start learning Greek and you'll say. After about two weeks, you go, I'm never going to learn this.

No, you're never going to learn that in two weeks. But in God's providence, you may have 50 years. You pick up Jonathan Edwards because you hear Dr. Piper talking about it all the time.

And so you read the first paragraph and you look at how big those just those two volumes are and you sit there and go, I can't get this. No, you can't get that in a month. But you need to begin.

Daily life disciplines. And realize that building a godly life and the foundations of a godly life. It's almost a speck of dust at a time.

And but if in over 25 years. If you're faithful to that, you've got a mountain. But after 25 years, if you're not faithful to that.

You'll be wore out, tired, fruitless and have a very small foundation. And again, I want to indicate to you, and this is so glorious, don't think it's a sad thing that when you finish your institute training here, your seminary training. You ought to be happy to know that you won't know everything.

That the adventure. Doesn't cease. It's just begun.

And one of the greatest problems that I have found with young men coming out of Bible institutes and seminary is they say, I've got my training. I've taken systematic, no, you have just begun a lifelong journey into those things. Piety.

Is a thing that develops not in months or even a few years. But what your goal is to one day is an old man or an old woman to lean upon your staff. And to worship looking back at the providence of God in your life.

That give yourself to that one other thing that just an illustration of this. I catechize my little boys and I teach them. And I teach them the scriptures and we read books and people will say, well, how many hours a day do you do that? I just want to smack somebody when they ask me how many hours their boys.

What I do is I catch a few minutes here and a few minutes there and a few minutes before bedtime. Time. That same principle.

Can be applied in your life if you're. Old or young, just take advantage of everything, those MP3 players and all those things that all you young people know how to work, don't lose a minute. Don't think that you're going to grow and gain knowledge at leaps and bounds.

You're going to grow at a peck at a time. A pebble at a time. All right, well, let's go to Romans 116 and see if we can straighten out Conrad's mess.

No, I my heart burned within me, not because of eloquence. Just. Another picture of Christ, another picture of depravity and of man, you say, well, how can that make your heart burn within you? Well, let me ask you a question.

Where did the stars go this afternoon? Someone put them in a bucket and carry them away to Tennessee. They're still there. The problem is there's so much light we can't see them.

But when the light is taken away and there's nothing but a pitch black background, then we can see stars. That's the same way. With the grace of God and the redemptive work of Christ, it cannot be appreciated, it cannot be enjoyed and it cannot be well seen apart from the backdrop of man's depravity.

And that is why you do such an injustice to men when you do not preach about sin. Now, in Romans 1 16, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Now, I want to pick out with the time I have some of the things that are destroying evangelism in America and that are hurting other countries where Americans go with the same sort of evangelism.

I also want to make it clear to you that I have met many reformed people who knew the 1689 confession and all sorts of things like that. But when it came down to evangelism. And it came down to inviting men to Christ, they were no different in their methodology than an Armenian, and these are the things that after preaching such a message, it was preached for us just a few hours ago.

If Brother Conrad would have said now, how many of you want to ask Jesus to come into your heart? We would have had a gospel message followed up with a very dangerous methodology. And so I want us to look at this. First of all, he says, for I am not ashamed of the gospel.

I want you to know the flesh of the apostle Paul had every reason to be ashamed of his gospel because his gospel contradicted absolutely everything about every culture that he moved in. We have become a people today who are so concerned about cultural sensitivity and we are not worried about biblical sensitivity. Paul, the apostle, noticed this.

He lived in many different cultures. He never changed his gospel. Not only notice this, he lived a long time.

He had decades of preaching, but he was not looking each decade for a contemporary expression of the gospel. He preached the same gospel to the Jew that he preached to the Gentile. He preached the same gospel that he did at the beginning, at the end of his life.

And it was always a scandalous, unbelievable gospel. Now, the message that we heard today was absolutely beautiful to you. Why? Because your heart has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, a supernatural recreating activity of God.

That's why it was beautiful. If your heart had not been regenerated, the message you heard today would have been absolutely scandalous. Not only would it have been scandalous, it would have been unbelievable.

And there is our problem. We as Christians do not recognize how unbelievable our message truly is. Let me give you an example.

Paul, the apostle, walks into Rome. First of all, he's a Jew. That's a mark against him.

Second of all, from church history, we understand that he wasn't that good looking of a chap. And he himself says he wasn't eloquent and he wouldn't use the rhetoric of the debaters of the age so as to fit in. He refused to succumb to his culture.

So he walks in and we have all these philosophers and they're teaching, let's go to Mars Hill, they're teaching with all their great eloquence. And then all of a sudden, Paul stands up. Excuse me.

They take one look at this guy, who is this, a tent maker? He said, I would like to talk to you for a moment. You're all wrong. Now, let's just stop here for a moment.

Do you realize that Christians were persecuted in Rome? One of the primary reasons was for atheism. And I want you to know that's one of the reasons why I'm probably going to go to jail one day. Atheism.

You see, Rome had all sorts of gods, had gods everywhere, everybody had gods and everyone was kind of in agreement with everybody else's God. They swapped gods like you and I would swap baseball cards. And herein lies the inherent problem with Christianity.

Paul walks into the middle of it and doesn't say Jesus is a way, a truth, a life. He says, Jesus is the way and there is the problem, because if he's the way, he's the only way and it excludes every other way, and that's when people get mad. Recently, I've seen film footage of several evangelical leaders who, when they have been cornered, not just Joel Osteen.

But others of greater reputation among us, when they've been cornered, will you say to me. That no one can go to heaven except through Jesus Christ, their answer has been to my great astonishment, it has been look, who am I to say or judge other individuals? That is not my calling. I am simply here to proclaim the love of Jesus Christ.

I want you to know they have denied the faith. They have denied the faith. That is the scandal of Christianity.

It will be no scandal to anyone in this country if you say, I believe in Jesus. He's the way for me. No one will have a problem with that.

No one will have a problem with it anywhere. It's when you say Jesus is the only way. That's when the scandal comes.

Now, I want you to think about this. He walks in among those philosophers and he says, I'm going to tell you about the one true God that you do not know. They say, OK, well, who is he? Well.

He he was born back in. Palestine, he was born back in Judea, really. What do you mean born? Well, God became flesh, if you know anything about Greek philosophy, that's about the worst thing you can say.

God, spirit and flesh, they don't mix. So automatically, it's just absolutely insane what he's saying he has, I imagine philosophers are gathering around going, hey, you got to come here and listen to this guy. It's unbelievable what he's saying.

He's saying God became flesh. OK, and what? Well, he was born to what king, to what line of kings? Well, he was born to a woman in. Well, it kind of in Nazareth.

Oh, really? And his dad, well, he didn't have a dad. He he was born, he was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Oh, really, and when did everyone discover this? Well, actually, only a few people discovered it because he was rejected.

Well, where is he now? Well, he was crucified on a Roman cross by his own people. Do you want to explain to me? How is it that the Apostle Paul could confront the Roman culture with such a message and yet almost everywhere he went when he finished his preaching, people followed him out of the arena. You have to come to the point where you recognize that the gospel message is a message that is impossible to believe.

Only then will you rely upon. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in your preaching. You must be like they said of G. Campbell Morgan, when he went up the pulpit, he would say to himself, like a lamb led to the slaughter and a sheep before his shears, he knew that unless God moved upon the hearts of men, absolutely nothing would happen.

There was no amount of finagling, no amount of manipulation, no amount of soft music, dimming of the lights or saying, I see that hand that could make a man. Truly believe in Christ, the gospel, if you're preaching the true one will be an absurd message. An unbelievable message, an impossible message.

To its hearers, apart from the regenerating, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, and here's what something I want you to understand, I am I do believe in sovereign grace with all my heart and it is a it is a theme of my life, but I want you to know this. When I look at the great awakenings, the great thing that seems to be rediscovered whenever God awakens his people is the doctrine of regeneration, that salvation does not come through creedalism. It does not come through religious right.

It does not come through human manipulation. It is a supernatural recreating work of God. And that must be foundational.

In our attitude as preachers, Dr. Piper has said we are not professionals, he is right. But let's go further. As preachers and teachers, we are prophets or we are nothing.

We are helpless men. With a hopeless message apart from the power of God, and when we walk out in that pulpit or as missionaries, we walk out on the plaza or we get up our courage and stand up on that bus and begin to preach, we must know this. We are exactly as Ezekiel.

Can these bones live? If. We will not presume upon our Lord and say most certainly they will live because we have done certain things that ensure a revival. But neither will we deny.

Or show doubt toward our Lord's power, will these bones live preacher? You know, Lord, you know, we are men as preachers and missionaries and proclaimers of truth, we are men above all other men cast upon the power of God. We have nothing except that he bless his message. Do you understand that the world was created ex nihilo out of nothing, but I would put forth to you that the conversion of a man

demonstrates more power of God than the very creation of the universe.

For the universe was created out of nothing, a Christian is created out of a corrupt mass of humanity. Paul had every reason in his flesh to be ashamed of the gospel because his gospel was contrary to absolutely everything in his culture. But look what he says, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

I am not against the work of an apologist. I do believe that many apologists are wrong foundationally in the way they approach the topic, the subject. But let me ask you a question, is it not true that you have settled in your own heart that if a man walked in with a machine gun right now and put it to your chest and said, deny Christ or I will kill you, you have it settled in your heart that you would die before you would deny him? Can you give me 10 legal historical reasons for the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Can you give me 15 legal, historical, grammatical proofs of why you believe the Bible is the word of God? So what is the cause for such faith in you? Let me let's go to the Aguadona tribe in Peru.

There are those there who have been converted and have suffered greatly at the hands of their own people. The Aguadona tribe, most of them don't even know how to read. They have no clue where Jerusalem might be.

They've never even seen a donkey. They can't give you 10 legal historical reasons for anything behind their faith. So why is it that they will die, that they will suffer persecution before they deny the gospel? And Calvin is the one who nailed this.

They believe because of the illuminating, regenerating, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. And it's the same reason I believe. And what I'm trying to put forth to you is this.

We are men with a supernatural, supernatural message. We are men who preach a message of recreation, of great power, a miraculous message. We depend upon the Holy Spirit, whether we're preaching here in the middle of Owensboro or preaching in the darkest, deepest jungle of the world.

Men come to me quite often, students in seminaries who are all now about being culturally sensitive and finding the proper context and all the silly little language used by silly little boys who do not have the power of God on their life, nor trust in the gospel. How do you preach the gospel, Brother Paul, to an Agua Duna Indian? I don't preach the gospel to an Agua Duna Indian, I preach the gospel to a man and the God of that gospel. According to his benevolent purpose.

Will regenerate the heart of the hearer. And a test to his own truthfulness, a test to his own glory, what I want you to see is that we are men and women, ministers of Christ, and we are cast upon a message that will save. We are cast upon a God who will save, but he will do so by miraculous means in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the more that you use techniques and contrivances, the more that you rely upon the arm of the flesh, the less you will see the power of God. That is all there is to it, and we see today in America and it's spreading around the world. Great ideas of church growth and strategies and all sorts of things.

Why? Because men no longer believe. That the gospel itself is the power of God and the salvation. Salvation.

And why do they no longer believe it, because they think they have seen. It's weakness with their own eyes, but the gospel that they're preaching is not a gospel. Here's the way it goes, men preach a gospel that's not a gospel when it doesn't work.

They assume that the gospel has no power and go to other things, but when a man truly preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ, he will see the power of God manifest in his ministry and in the lives of his hearers. Now, let's just look at the gospel for a moment. What's been done to it? It's been reduced to nothing, to four spiritual laws and five things God wants you to know.

We give you an example, we look at a man and we ask him, do you know you're a sinner? If he says yes, we go on to the next question, would you like to go to heaven? If he says yes, we go on to the next question. Would you like to ask Jesus to come into your heart? If he does ask Jesus to come into his heart, then we tell him he is saved, whether he agrees with it or not. Now, that's not an exaggeration of the way evangelism is done in America.

Nor almost every other place in the world that has been infected by such doctrine. But let's look at that for a moment. Do you know you're a sinner? If they say yes, what does that mean? Ask the devil if he's a sinner, they'll say, yes, I am.

And a mighty fine one at that. You see, we are as preachers, we are dealing with a culture that drinks down iniquity like it was water. We don't simply ask a man, well, you know, you're a sinner, don't you? Or we like to say it this way, so he doesn't feel too bad, you know, we are all sinners, so he doesn't think we're judgmental.

My dear friend, if he says yes, it means nothing. It is our tasks as preachers, as missionaries, as evangelists to also be scribes and to lay out before him with the word of God, if necessary, lengthy arguments that he may come to know not only that he is a sinner, but the heinous nature of sin and exactly what that means before God. We are to plow, we are to work, we are to teach.

We are to use both the old and the new, bringing it out as one who brings out a treasure and presents it before another man. We are to use everything in our arsenal. From scripture.

To lay before men that they are indeed sinners. And what it means, I have a biblical basis for this, just look at the book of Romans, it's the closest thing we have to a systematic theology in the Bible. And yet Paul labors with almost everything he has for the first three chapters in order to prove the sinfulness of man, in order to do one thing, to lay all men in the dust without an excuse, with their hand clapped over their mouth so that they say not one stupid thing before the verdict.

How many ministries today pride themselves in not making much of sin, of not even speaking about sin? And how many times have I heard from supposed God's ministers that it's not their ministry to do so? Well, I can assure them this, Brother Jeff Knoblet was preaching a while back and he said this, he goes, I've heard enough of these men saying that they're not going to speak about sin. Let me just say this to every one of them. The Holy Spirit is not working at all in any shape, form or fashion in their ministry, because one of the chief ministries of the Holy Spirit is that when he comes into the world, he will convict men of sin.

So if you're a preacher or an evangelist that doesn't speak much of sin, you are not speaking in accordance with the will of the Holy Spirit. This is a task. We're not to be angry, we're not to be critical,

we're not to be proud, but we are to go to men.

With everything that the scriptures provide in the power of the Holy Spirit, and we must labor. That they may know something of their sin. And.

The spirit reveals, yes, but the word of God is the sword of the spirit, I remember as a young man talking to old preachers who have now gone on to glory and I tell you what, I could fellowship with some of those old Armenian preachers much more than I can cold Calvinist, because they still believed in the power of God. I remember one old man, this is about 25 years ago, he said, he said, boy, he goes, we would preach and we would preach and we would plow for weeks. In the hearts of men, because we knew that there had to be a divine work, you don't hear things like that today, I get called people say, brother, Paul, we want a revival.

How many days do you want me to come? Three. Well, that's rather quick. So all this is supposed to be done, great awakening and everything in three days.

Well, it's all we have room for. Oh, my dear friend, if you look in the great awakening, those men would preach and preach and labor and plow. So if you ask a man, do you know you're a sinner? He says, yes, don't go on to the next question.

Labor in the scriptures. So that there can be somewhat of a biblical assurance that this man has been dealt with by God, that he knows what these things mean. And then if a person says, yes, I know I'm a sinner, then the next question, do you want to go to heaven? Have you ever had someone say, no, I'd rather go to hell to ask someone, do you want to go to heaven is not an appropriate question.

What you need to understand is everybody wants to go to heaven. They just don't want God to be there when they get there. Everyone wants a utopia, that's what political theory is all about.

Everyone says everyone wants a society where they get everything they want, where there is no pain. And. The question is not.

Do you want to go to heaven? The question is, do you want God, the God that you've ignored? The God that you've denied. The God you have suppressed his truth, the God that you have sought to twist into something made into your own image, do you repent of that? Do you desire him? And folks, when I'm witnessing. This is not just cold theory.

These are the things I want to deal with. Do you want God? Well, I want deliverance. Deliverance may be an idol, an idol.

That's not necessarily the question. Do you want God? Has Christ become precious to you? And then there's this thing, well. If you know you're a sinner.

And you want to go to heaven, would you like to pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart? Look at just think of Mark chapter one for a moment, Jesus comes to Israel, the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand. Now, who would like to ask me into their heart? That is not the gospel call. It is not the gospel invitation.

The gospel invitation is repent and believe a calling of men to repentance. And in explaining to men what biblical repentance is, so many times when I'm preaching the gospel in a private session, all alone with

another person and they say, well, what must I do? The Bible says repent and believe. Well, how do I know if I've repented? Well, begin to go through repentance in Scripture.

Begin to show them what it means being careful, though, because if we put a full perfect doctrine of biblical repentance before someone and demand that they have dotted every I and crossed every T in this biblical demonstration of repentance will become hyper Calvinist. Don't expect that in the first work of the spirit in the life of a man that you're going to find a full blown theological treatise of repentance in his life, but you will begin to see things a turning away from sin and acknowledgement of foolishness, a turning to God. And a faith, a faith.

To believe. You see, we want to seal the deal, don't we? We want something just to happen, we want to make it happen, we want to be able to deal with this guy five minutes and go to Denny's with the other overweight pastors. We don't want to deal with souls, but we must deal with souls.

After the preaching, the work has just begun, we are called to be doctors of the souls of men, we are to labor with them as though a woman giving birth. We are to struggle at times with men. We are so Catholic, it's unbelievable.

Look for a moment at the Catholic Church, a person is saved, why are they saved? Because as an infant they were baptized. And then throughout the course of their entire life, the Catholic Church is doing every sort of manipulation that they can possibly put forth in order to keep that person inside the walls of their church. Look what we do in America.

Baptists are exactly the same. You ask a Baptist, are you saved by and large? Yes. Why? Or any other evangelical, are you saved? Yes.

Why? I asked Jesus into my heart. That's it. And then we spend countless amounts of money, time and everything trying to get a bunch of goats to act like sheep.

One of the reasons why personal discipleship became so big in the late 70s and early 80s and continues on is this because of our superficial evangelism, people were making decisions, but were not truly converted and would not follow their master. And so we begin to look for every sort of way to train them and at least make them look decent. Now, I'm not against personal discipleship, but I want you to know this.

That idea that just as many people are leaving the church is coming into the church is not true. They're leaving the church because they were never a part of the church. They went out from us because they never were of us and they never were of us because probably they never heard a real gospel.

One of repentance and faith, you see, we talk about so many things, about so many great ideas and high theology, but when it comes down to just simply witnessing to a person, can we do it biblically? Will we try to manipulate them into a decision, get them to pray a prayer in most cases in modern day evangelical world, someone says, well, yes, I would like to go to heaven. Would you like to pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart? Because he promised in Revelation chapter three, verse 20, that if you ask him in, he'll come into your heart. Well, yeah, I would like to do that.

How long will it take? It only take five minutes. And so they pray and they ask Jesus to come into their heart. And then what happens? The person who's doing the evangelism says this, well, did Jesus come into your heart? And many times the person will say, well, I don't know, and then the evangelist will say,

well, of course he did, if he didn't come in, he's a liar because he promised he'd come in if you asked him such blasphemy that rolls out of the lips of evangelicals.

It's unbelievable. And so we spend five minutes with a person regarding their conversion and never address the issue again. And then if they go wayward, we go after them oftentimes by telling them this, you're a Christian, you need to act like one or you're going to lose all your rewards.

All of that is false. It's all wrong, it doesn't need to be tweaked, it needs to be thrown out completely identified for what it truly is, heresy. Let's go for just a moment.

To Romans chapter 10, verses nine and 10. That if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved for with the heart, a person believes resulting in righteousness and with the mouth, he confesses resulting in salvation for the scriptures say whoever believes in him will not be disappointed. This text.

This beautiful, glorious gospel promise has been twisted and twisted, possibly as much as any scripture on the face of the earth and done so by evangelicals. I saw recently a great, huge conference in South America where thousands of people were made to repeat, to confess Jesus as Lord. And when they did that, the evangelists proclaimed over them, the American evangelist, you're saved, you're born again.

All throughout this country, we have people confessing Jesus to be Lord. And yet they live in ungodliness, this country is swallowed up in unrighteousness. What does this text truly mean? We're not finding anything here that we do not find in the book of James.

We see salvation by faith and that faith being confirmed by something else. Let's put this. Scripture in its proper context.

First of all, we're in Rome and the Christians were being persecuted there like lambs. We die daily, Romans 8 is an encouragement to Christians who are suffering under great persecution in the Roman Empire. And in that Roman Empire, there was something very, very important that must be done, and it was a declaration with regard to Caesar.

Caesar is Lord. And so imagine that all of us are sitting out, we're all carpenters and we work for the same union, I guess, and we're all building something there in the city of Rome, we've just had lunch, it's a beautiful day, we're kind of resting before we have to go back to work. And some of us in that group are Christian.

And we're talking a little bit quietly about about Christ and about the upcoming meeting tonight in the secret place where we meet. And everything is happy, and then all of a sudden we hear the drums and every Christian begins to tremble and we look up and here come the soldiers. Carrying an altar with a little fire and a little bowl of incense.

And we're all made to stand. Kind of the Christians get in the back of the line, one of the carpenters walks up, pinches a little bit of incense, throws it in the fire and says, Caesar is Lord. He goes right back to his rest.

Another one walks up gleefully, jokingly, it doesn't matter really as long as you say the right words, pinches a little incense, throws it into the fire and confesses Caesar is Lord. And finally, it comes to one of us and one of our trembling brothers walks up and just stands there. And the Roman soldier prods him

with a spear and he looks up and he says, Jesus is Lord and he's run through.

And then the next one, Jesus is Lord and he's run through. And then the next one climbs over the dead bodies of his two brothers, Jesus is Lord and he's run through and then on and on and on and on. And we have taken.

This text and turned it into the most pitiful, trivial, creedal statement on the face of the earth, where if someone comes up in an evangelistic meeting and simply says Jesus is Lord, he's declared born again. This text is teaching us that we are saved by faith. But genuine faith is the result of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, by which a man becomes a new creature and when confronted with even death itself as a new creature filled with the Holy Spirit, he will confess Jesus as Lord as though it cost him his life.

Look what we've done. And. Look what we've done to this text.

And all over Latin America, where I have lived for so many years and all over Europe, where I have traveled and in Africa and every place you can go. This text has been twisted. So as to make salvation something you can get at the end of the service and it'll only take five minutes.

Decisionism. The hour of decision is the worst thing that ever plagued the soul of a man. How many people, if I address them with regard to their salvation, will point to a decision they made once in their life? Rather than properly declare, I'm looking unto Jesus.

Jesus doesn't even come into the equation. The sincerity of their decision is what they are holding on to. And I want you to know that that is what missionaries have taken out into all the world from our country.

Now, let's go for a moment to Revelation chapter three and look at another text. Verse 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him and he with me. I once. Encountered an evangelist using this in a most inappropriate way, and I said, you know now that he is speaking to the church and he said, oh, I know he is, but it works for evangelism.

It really works, it'll really produce results. Now, let me stand back for a moment, though, and give credit where credit is due. Throughout history, even Spurgeon.

Use this text encouraging men to come to Christ. But in the context of a proper theology and also, I want you to look at something that seems to escape everyone's notice. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him. But that isn't all. And I will dine with him and he with me.

But if someone wants to go ahead and use this text, I will not fight with them in inviting sinners to Christ. But I will say this, the evidence that the door has been open and Christ has come in is that there is then enduring fellowship with the same Christ. That fellowship continues on.

And that's one of the greatest problems that we have in missions and evangelism today. We do not harp on it enough that sanctification, enduring, progressive sanctification is the evidence of justification. That he who began a good work and a man will continue it, and that if a person truly has come to faith in Christ, if they have repented in the past unto salvation, they continue repenting today.

If they have believed in Christ unto salvation in the past, the evidence of true conversion is that they continue believing today. Now, this may seem trite to some of you, this may seem a no brainer to some of you, but if you got out into the larger evangelical community, you would find out that our entire world is covered with this heresy. And to point it out is to bring the wrath of the entire evangelical community down upon your head as a legalist and a person who believes in salvation by works.

Even the argument of lordship salvation, I think. Is wrongly formed, does someone have to receive Jesus as Lord or can they just receive him as Savior? That's not even the question. You see, the problem is this.

Again, men are not understanding that conversion is the result of regeneration. Someone who repents and believes has been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit has become a new creature and that new creature is not grudgingly going to submit himself to the lordship of Christ. He's going to welcome it.

Dealing with souls is a very difficult thing, and I encourage our evangelists and our missionaries this out on the field. We have a we have an evangelist down in Peru who's just he's gifted. But I'm constantly telling him in his proclamation, when your proclamation has ceased, your work has begun.

It should not be uncommon if you are preaching to the souls of men in a meeting, whether it be in a plaza or in a church building, that if God begins to convert men, that you may have to stay there till three and four in the morning. When was the last time you saw something like that? As you, dear sisters, know the pain of giving birth. So the pain of the work of the minister of Christ just recently in Holland, we would preach two times a night and the last sermon would last till midnight or or 1230.

And then the counseling may go on till four. Dealing with men and some men coming to something of an assurance of faith, but in that then the warning also continues. Oh, my dear friend, the evidence that God has truly worked in your night in you tonight is that he will continue working.

Let's go through first, John. Let me show you some truths. Pouring out everything you can into the life of these people, you simply can't say God worked wonderfully.

Now let's go eat. Let me show you another text. Let's go to Matthew for a moment.

Chapter twenty five. I don't want to read through the whole thing, but it's the judgment and the division of the sheep and the goats in verse thirty four. He says, then the king will say to those in his right, come, you who are blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in naked and you clothed me.

I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me. And then, of course, you know, the confused answer of the righteous, they want to know when they did this and they are told.

And then the goats are told just the very opposite and condemned. And so how do we use this text? Basically, almost every time I've ever heard this text preached, it was preached on how we ought to have prison ministries, how we ought to take care of the poor and how we ought to feed people. Now, there is a principle in there and it can be used for that, but that is not the meaning of this text.

Look how we will take a text and totally distort its meaning. This is not what it means at all. He's not talking about ministries, talking about salvation and the great judgment.

And what does he mean? He means this. Well, let me give it to you an illustration. We're the same group of believers.

The ones that have survived the onslaught of the first persecution that came about 10 minutes ago. And we're meeting one night. And as the services are dismissed, we all quietly break up and make our way home to different places, different homes, one by one, so that we're not noticed traveling in a group.

You go to bed and about three in the morning there's a knock on the door and you're awakened and it's a brother in Christ and he says, you must come to the meeting place immediately. They caught two of our brothers and they've taken them to prison. And so we all come together and we say, what happened? Well, they caught two of our brothers.

One of them is an elder. They beat them severely. They're half naked and they were thrown into prison.

Now, in some third world countries, even till today, when you're thrown into prison, if someone does not bring you medical attention from outside, water from outside, food and clothing from outside, you will die in that prison. And so one of the younger brothers kind of jumps up in the middle of the congregation says, well, I'll go immediately and attend to their wounds. And an older brother jumps up and says, well, now, hold it.

I appreciate that. And I will even go with you, but young man, you don't realize what you're saying when we gather up the clothing and the medicine, the water and the food and we take it there, we're going to be watched. And they're going to know.

That we, too, are believers. And we will possibly probably suffer the same fate, if not worse, young man, are you ready to die in the name of love for the children of God? Because if you're not, do not go with me tonight, he says, yes, I am. So they gather together the food, the clothing and the medicine.

They go to the prison and they are captured likewise. Look how convenient our biblical interpretation is in America, you see the great evidence this has got to be proclaimed in America, but it's got to be proclaimed in Latin America and Europe and Africa and every place where the heresy that's come forth from this country has gone forth, that the evidence of genuine conversion is that salvation is a past tense work of justification. It's a present tense work of sanctification.

It's a final work of glorification. He who began a good work and you will finish it. And the evidence that you have truly passed through this narrow or small gate is that you're now walking in the narrow way to missions conference again.

This may seem like, well, we know these things, but do you understand this is one of the chief reasons why men are walking to hell singing evangelical songs and we have to fight against it with everything we have. So what do we do? We preach and when we preach, what do we do? We offer salvation freely to all everyone who is thirsty, everyone who is hungry. Come.

When they say, what must we do to be saved, repent of your sins, believe it may be that they've sat under good preaching, it may be just a supernatural illumination of the spirit. They understand at that very moment what you're talking about and they believe under salvation. Others you may have to work with all night.

Others may you may have to enter into discipleship for weeks. Others may simply have to go out to a barn and cry out to God for days. And you help them and you encourage them and you love them until Christ is formed in them and they come to a full assurance of salvation.

And then if those who profess faith with you, with you here or on the mission field, they go astray. You go after them with everything. Turn them back.

And if they do not turn back, you warn them. Not with the possible loss of some. Extension on their mansion in heaven, but you warn them in this way, you have made.

The good profession in the sight of many witnesses with your baptism, but now you have turned off. The narrow way and you're walking as one in the world. In this state, you can have no assurance that you ever really, truly came to know him.

Repent, examine yourself, test yourself, make your calling and election. Sure, return to the Lord. This is what our fathers preached.

But more importantly, this is what the apostles preached. What Christ preached, I want to encourage you to set forth the gospel. Before men.

Study hard the gospel, seek to study men, seek to study scripture when you preach, seek to be a surgeon. You'll never get in trouble, young man, by preaching that sin is bad, you will get in trouble by speaking specifically against certain sins and pointing out how wicked they are. But in doing so, you may be stoned, but it may lead to the life.

To life being birthed in the heart of a man, it is not just enough. There has to be a prophetic element in your preaching, your desire is that through the word of God, men's hearts are laid open and it's costly. It is costly.

But it is more costly to do the other. This world is ripe. For a move of God, don't you understand when Christianity came on the scene, paganism had gone as far as it could go, religions were dying everywhere, no one had hope, there was nothing.

We live in the same time, it's not a time to cower, it's not a time to stand down, it's a time to be embarrassed and it's most certainly not a time to change our message. It is a time to stand up and say, thus saith the Lord, and when Larry King asks you, can anyone get to heaven in any other way than Jesus Christ? You look him in the eye, you look that camera in the eye and say, oh, it's much more than that. No one has anything to do with God apart from Christ.

Everything was made for him. Everything God has ever done, he has done for his son. And outside of him, not only is there no salvation, there's nothing.

But what's the greatest need in the world today then, evangelical preacher, for all men to turn from the folly of their self-made religions and turn to Christ in worship? Because mark my words, Larry, even you yourself will one day bow your knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. What a time to be alive. What a time to be alive.

Let's take full advantage of it until they spill our blood and they probably will. Let's pray, Father, how could it be? That such days have come upon us, these are the worst of times. These are the best of times,

everything is failing.

And every failure is a vindication of your name. It's supposed to fall, Lord, there is one thing that stands your gospel. Make us men and women that are driven by this message, that know this message, that joyfully proclaim this message.

Let us understand, oh God, that the power is found within the scandal. And if we remove the scandal, we remove the power. Oh, God, help us.

I can only think this, Lord, I plead with help to live up to the vocation you have given us, to live up to the time we have been born. Bless your church triumphant. And victorious, amen.

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