

Are You on the Narrow Path?

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of walking in the narrow way, a life of increasing holiness, as God disciplines and changes us, in order to be truly a Christian.

Duration: 56:16

Scripture: Matthew 7:13

Topics: "Narrow Way"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of examining oneself to ensure that they are truly in the faith. He gives an example of a pastor encountering a member's 14-year-old daughter on a street corner with bad company, highlighting the responsibility of parents to guide their children in the right path. The pastor argues that true evidence of being a Christian is not just a one-time prayer, but a life that aligns with the will of God. He also discusses the concept of the Christian life as a narrowing path, where believers are transformed and no longer desire the sinful things of the world.

Transcript

For more media content from Grace Community Church in San Antonio, Texas, go to gccsatx.com. It was not special in a Christian family is that you speak of the gospel. Now, I'm well aware that some parents who speak of the gospel are not truly. And so young people will look at that, see the contradiction and say, I don't want anything to do with this Christianity.

But then there are those that also have parents who are. Christian. Yet, even though they are truly Christian, they are not perfect and they are going through a process we call sanctification, they are growing little by little.

But we judge them for their flaws, and maybe as a young person, you turn away from Christianity. But one of the greatest problems is when you hear the gospel preached to you over and over and over again. And it is commonplace.

It is not special. Another problem is when you grow up in a culture that treats the gospel of Jesus Christ and the person of Jesus Christ as though he were some sort of a impersonal ticket to heaven or a vaccination or a flu shot. Someone asked a young person, do you know Jesus? Oh, yes.

I have already done that. You've done what? Well, I've prayed and ask him into my heart. I have called upon his name.

I was baptized. And they don't realize that. Although I'm not a prophet or the son of a prophet.

There probably isn't a Bible preacher in the country who wouldn't agree with me. That a great majority of the people who go through all those steps. Never produce fruit and never demonstrate that they are truly Christian.

You see, the gospel of Jesus Christ, according to the Bible, is the most powerful message that's ever been told. The word itself is powerful, but when the gospel comes into a person's heart and they're truly converted, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that created the universe. So, well, God created the universe, yes, through Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we see all three of the persons of the Trinity involved in creation.

But what you need to see is. The Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the universe. There's never been a greater demonstration of power physically.

Anywhere. So don't think that he's actually coming to your heart. If there's no evidence of a new creation, if there's no evidence, I was speaking with someone just a few days ago and they were sure that they were a Christian.

They had prayed the prayer, they had asked Jesus to come in, they thought they were sincere, all sorts of things, and I asked them this one question, I said, yes, but do you love him? And they said, well, of course, I said, no, don't give me that. Do you love him? Is there something burning in your heart? Has your life changed in any way? Do you want to run from the things that displease him so that you can run to him and please him and rejoice in him? Do you have fellowship with him? Because if you don't don't think that you are a Christian. One thing I love so much about the old preachers was that they believed that salvation was a powerful, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

And that when someone truly was born again, although they would not be perfect and although they would have their struggles with sin, you would have no problem in discerning that something had really happened to them. Now. Can anyone say that about you? Can they say that about you? I want us to look at a passage that I've preached quite often, but it's very, very important.

For people who go to church in the United States of America to hear this word, Jesus says in verse 13 of chapter seven of Matthew, enter ye in the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in there at because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it. Now he's talking about two different things. He's talking about a gate and he's talking about a way.

In a sense, he's talking about two different gates and two different ways. Now, here's the problem in American Christianity. We no longer talk about the way we only talk about the gate.

We talk about the gate, we will say this, there's only one gate to heaven, only one door to heaven, and it's Jesus Christ and you need Jesus, you need to call upon Jesus, you need to believe in Jesus. When we say that, we're teaching the truth. It's not multiple choice.

You can't get to heaven through a number of different gates or persons. Christ is the only gate. And everyone says, amen.

But realize this. We have conveniently forgot what the rest of the Bible says and we have conveniently forgot what the old preachers used to say. There's not only a gate, there's a way.

There's two different gates. One of them is Christ. The other gate represents all the other choices, good works, Mohammed, Buddhism, whatever.

We all know that Christ is the only gate, but he also talks about two different ways. Not just two different gates. So what does he mean? The old preachers looked at it this way.

The only way to heaven is through the gate, the narrow gate called Jesus Christ. But the evidence that you have passed through the narrow gate by faith is that you're now walking in the narrow way. And what is the narrow way? The way set out by the commandments of Christ.

So if you say I have passed through the door, I have trusted in Christ. Yet you live just like everybody else in the world. You have no verifiable evidence that you're truly born again, even though you say with your mouth or you say, I feel it in my heart.

But what you've got to understand is this. I can feel in my heart that I'm a reindeer. But it doesn't make me a reindeer.

It just makes me emotionally unstable. I'm not a reindeer, no matter how much I try to feel like a reindeer. In the same way, it doesn't matter to one degree, it doesn't matter what you feel in your heart.

And it doesn't matter what you say with your mouth, the true evidence that you have trusted in Christ and are saved only by faith is that after you trusted in him, you began to walk in a narrow way, different from the world. My dear friend, if you love the world and want to be like the world and you only clean up your act on Sunday or to please your parents, it's evidence that nothing's happened to your heart. And if nothing's happened to your heart, Jesus hasn't done anything to you because that's where he works.

Now, some people will say, well, isn't that work salvation? I mean, isn't salvation just free? If I believe in Jesus, salvation is free. It has nothing to do with works. If anyone ever comes to you and say salvation is by faith and works, run from them.

But what you have to see is this. The person who has trusted in Christ has been born again. Now, that's a terrible thing that's happened to that terminology.

Born again nowadays just means they made a decision. It's not the same thing. Born again means born from above.

It means born of God. Another word is regenerated or made alive. It means that prior to Christ coming into your life, you were spiritually dead and cared nothing for God.

But I know a bunch of people who claim that they're not spiritually dead, but they still care nothing about God. You see, if you believe you've been born again and if you've been born again, it means that you've been recreated. A new creature is going to live a new way.

Charles Spurgeon had one of the best illustrations ever about this. Let's say that in the back of the church there was a big 400 pound hog. And then up here I had the finest food you could possibly buy in the Valdosta area, and on this side I had a bucket of slop.

And I said, let the pig go. Where would the pig run? Well, if you know anything about pigs, it's going to run right to the slop. Why? Because he's a pig.

You can't blame him. That's what pigs do. Pigs love slop.

So he runs down here. He has no shame whatsoever. He sticks his head in the bucket and he eats slop and he's happy and he's shameless.

Now, let's say, though, in one second that I have the power to touch that pig and transform him into a man. What's going to happen? I'll tell you what's going to happen. The moment he becomes a man, he will throw his head out of that bucket.

Why? Because he's decided to turn over a new leaf? No, there are things that pigs eat that men can't eat, even if they try. He's no longer a pig. By nature, he no longer loves garbage.

So he pulls his head out of that bucket and the very stuff that he once desired to eat, the very filth he once desired to eat, he can't eat it anymore. It just won't go down. What he delighted in, he now hates.

He throws his head out of the bucket. He's vomiting up everything he was eating down. And then he turns around, looks at you, looks at you and is ashamed.

I just described your conversion. You may not like it, but I just described your conversion. I just described mine.

We were people who by nature, what did we love to do? We love to sin. Some of us, it was more obvious. We were older when we got saved.

We did a lot of horrible things. I was one of them. I loved to do all the things of the world.

I wasn't shamed about it. I bragged about it. I love to do it.

I tried to invent bigger ways to do it. Then one day, Jesus Christ touched my life. Now, at that moment, did I become sinless? Absolutely not.

Did I stop struggling with sin? No, still struggle with sin. But what happened? The things I loved, I can't explain it. I couldn't even get them down anymore.

Why is it because I just decided I was going to become a new person? No, it's because born again means that God literally recreates you. This is not just poetry. This is not just a beautiful thing.

The Bible tells you so that you think about it as a beautiful thought. It really does happen. That's what born again means.

Peter speaks about it as the very seed of God is implanted in your heart. You become a child of God, a new creature. Now you say, well, Brother Paul, then then all the Christians never turn back to a life of that will never turn back to it because they've been changed.

Well, yes and no. What do I mean? A Christian can get out of the word, get out of fellowship and in some degree forget what's been done to him. But I'll tell you this, when he runs over to that slop again and sticks his head in the bucket, he knows it's wrong.

And when he eats it down, he doesn't even love or delight in what he's doing. And it makes him sick. Why? Because he didn't just turn over a new leaf.

He really became a new creature in the same way that that man that I transformed from a pig, he can forget that he's a man, start running with pigs, put his head back down in the bucket. But the moment he does, he's going to throw up again. Why? He's no longer a pig.

He's no longer a swine. He's a new creature. That's why the old preachers would take this text and say, listen, the only way to go to heaven is by trusting in Jesus Christ.

But the evidence that you've really trusted unto salvation is that you have begun to walk. In that narrow way now, you know about discipline, there is supernatural divine discipline on the believer's life, there can even be church discipline. That's the way this works.

Let's say I'm a man. I hear the gospel and I make a profession of faith. I ask Jesus to come into my heart, I'm baptized and I start coming to church.

After a while, though, it just kind of all the newness of it wears off and it becomes commonplace. I start getting back into the world a little bit more, a little bit more, a little bit more. And nothing happens.

There's no conviction really of the Holy Spirit. There's no discipline from God, the father, as it says in Hebrews, and I just kind of wander back in the world. I may still be going to church because churches don't care that much about holiness anymore.

I may still be going to church. I might even be a deacon, but in my heart and in my secret life, it's ungodly and there's no problem. I have no problem with it.

What is going on there? I'll tell you what's going on. I'm lost. That's what's going on, I'm lost.

Now, let's say, though, that it's a different case and I'm a man and I've trusted in Christ, it seems I've made a profession of faith. I've called on the name of the Lord. I've asked him to save me.

I've been baptized and I start walking in the narrow way. Now, there's something about the narrow way you need to understand as the years go by, it keeps getting narrower. You know, as Brother Allen said, man, when we were in Peru, we were so green and stupid in so many ways, not just as missionaries, but as Christians.

I was probably able to do things I wasn't so convicted about, but now 20 years later, man, it would kill me. You see what I'm saying? God, what does he start doing? He's such a gentle shepherd. And he takes and he starts leading us, but as he's leading us, he puts more responsibility on us.

He closes that. To the point where maybe you could get in a fight with your wife when you first got married and think you were justified. Now, if you just say a word hard to her, the Holy Spirit almost knock you on the ground.

The way is getting narrower. More like Jesus, more is demanded, you see. Now, let's say that I've made a profession of faith, baptized, and I begin to walk with Christ.

And I have a problem with my temper, and one day I just kind of blow up. And the Holy Spirit convicts me, maybe I just kind of keep going stiff necked. God comes and disciplines me.

I've stepped off the path and he grabs a hold of me and he puts me right back on it and I keep going. And then wander a little bit over here. He takes me and he pulls me back.

What am I saying? There's the evidence that I'm truly saying that I now have a father who's going to make sure that I walk in the way I'm supposed to walk. He's changed me. And not only has he changed me, he's going to continue changing me all the days of my life.

And he's going to continue disciplining me and guarding me, admonishing me, encouraging me. And he's going to make sure that he who began a good work finishes it. That's why when I see people who have made professions of faith in Christ, they're living in the world and all sorts of things, and they'll go, well, preacher, I did that.

I I asked Jesus to come in my heart. I even cried. I remember I was nine years old.

I go and you haven't bore any fruit since that moment. So I'm not going to tell you. Turn from your backsliding, I'm going to tell you, examine yourself, test yourself to make sure you're even in the faith.

Now, let me give you another example about walking in this way. Let's say that the pastor of this church is coming home one night, one in the morning from preaching somewhere and he comes by and your 14 year old daughter, you're a you're a member of the church, sir. You're a solid member of the church.

And he sees your 14 year old daughter out there on a street corner with a bunch of bad, bad, bad people. The pastor is probably going to stop and say, honey, get in the car. You know what? He's probably not going to be that mad at the girl.

He's going to be mad at you. He's going to say, what kind of father are you? What are you doing letting your little daughter run around with these people? You're a derelict father. I want to tell you something all over this country, pulpits and Christians are making people believe that our father, our heavenly father is a derelict father.

I want to tell you something. I am capable. I don't even want to think of what I'm capable of doing, but I know this, the long arm of my father will see to it that it'll end pretty quickly.

Why? Not because of me, because of him. He is a good father. He has entered into a covenant relationship with me and he is not going to let me run wild.

But we see countless people who apparently they say that they have passed through the gate, they've trusted in Christ, yet they're on the broad way. As a matter of fact, we could rewrite the Holy Scriptures just looking at Christians and saying this, that those are saved, those that are truly saved pass through the narrow gate and then walk in the broad way, because that seems to be what's going on. Listen, my dear friend.

The evidence that you're truly Christian. Is that when you pass through that narrow gate, you trust in Christ, there is an internal change that manifests itself gradually more and more in an outward change and

a different way of walking and a different way of living. I used to tell people when I was saved, God changed me, and that's true.

He changed me. But that can be very misleading. We also need to say when God saved me, he began to change me and continues changing me.

Is that a reality in your life? You've made a decision to follow Christ. Has it continued on? Because the evidence that it was real is that it's still real. Sometimes people look at Jesus like he was a flu shot.

And they'll say, well, I done did that. You done did what? I did that a long time ago, preacher. I go, listen.

The evidence that you truly repented a long time ago unto salvation is that you're still repenting today. And the evidence that you truly believed in Jesus a long time ago is you're still believing and clinging to him today. So that's what he's saying here.

He says, now look, he says, look what he says. Enter ye in the straight gate for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in there at. Now, listen to me.

No one loves souls like Christ. Nobody. He wasn't saying this is some stern, just almost rejoicing in the fact men were going to hell.

Now, he was broken. He came to save men. But look what he's saying.

Even the Christ, God in the flesh is saying this. He's saying, listen to me, you must pass through this gate. You must walk in this way because many are going to walk in the other way and they're going to go to hell.

Let me ask you a question. You look like a Christian. Or do you look like the world, young people, you're going to see in just a moment.

But the true evidence that you're Christian is that you're doing the will of the father, not that one time in your life you prayed and asked Jesus to come in because there I could go to every bar in this county right now and almost everybody sitting on a stool has prayed and asked Jesus to come in. And I got news for you. In most cases, he didn't come in because he made no change.

Now he goes on and he talks about in verse 14, because straight is the gate and narrow the way. What is he talking about? He's talking about the Christian life is a life that's ever narrowing. And you know what? If it narrows, you got to get rid of things.

We all come to the Lord with all sorts of sins and sinful baggage, all kinds of quirks in our personalities, all kinds of sinful attitudes. We're just filled up like a big mule with packs and packs of sin upon him. And as that gate start, as that way starts getting more and more narrow, the Lord begins shaving things off and changing us and changing us and changing us.

You know, one of the greatest ways that I know that I'm truly Christian. It hasn't been because of all the blessings or the wonderful times in prayer. It's been over 25 years.

I can look at and and I praise God for this more than anything. And I hope you understand it. But over 25 years, I can look at his hand disciplining me and disciplining me and disciplining me.

I mean, just I remember one time I literally had this old sixty six Mustang and I went out to the garage and I got in it and I just thought I'm going to get away from him. I'm going to go to California. I hear he's not there.

I'm going to go wherever I can go. And I knew that there. No, he has come now.

He's not letting go. He has birthed me anew. It's just like my little boys, they didn't make a decision about them coming in to my life.

I brought them into my life and now they're mine. He brought me to him. He saved me and now I'm his.

He's going to deal with me and I can go all the way to California and he'll be there waiting for me. You see, it's that kind of gate. If you talk to someone who's really Christian.

In one sense, they ought to be full of joy and everything, but in another sense, if you talk to someone that's truly Christian, you're going to see. Just brokenness. And scars.

And whelps and bruises. Where God has just broke them and is changing them and working in their life. When Paul said that he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus, he's not just referring to physical chains.

He had come under the lordship of Jesus Christ and Jesus was going to make him into exactly what he wanted him to be. You see that? Is that a reality in your life? Can you see Jesus doing that in your life? Some of you maybe have been in bondage because you thought, man, God's disciplining me, maybe I'm not a child. My friend, his discipline is evidence you are.

What ought to scare you to death is if you can pretend to be Christian, go out and live like the devil and God doesn't do anything to you. That ought to terrify you because he says every child of his he disciplined. Another thing about this narrow gate is this.

The world will come against you. I know we're not necessarily in a country where they're killing Christians and martyring Christians and things like that, but my dear friend, I don't know any human being who truly walks with Jesus Christ that the world doesn't try to get at them. I think of how many sometimes as preachers we so forget, you know, we're in the church all the time, we're a lot of times around other Christians.

I talk to men who are godly men who work in factories and I mean, men laugh at them and everything just because at noon they pray over their meal when pornography is being passed around, they walk away and men laugh at them. I mean, listen, you can't tell me that you can be in a high school or grade school and truly follow Jesus Christ and everybody in the world is going to think you're just great. They're going to make fun of you.

You see, it is it is a difficult way. This professor one time had a picture on his on his on his door of his office. It was at University of Texas.

I'll never forget this. I don't I don't think he was a Christian. I think he was actually making fun of Christianity, but it was a Larson's Farside and the devil was standing there in hell.

And this guy just walked in and he goes, well, he goes, I just always was going with the flow. I didn't know the flow was going in this direction. If you're going with the flow.

You're going in the wrong direction. And it could be evidence that you're not even Christian. The Christian life is difficult if it's truly lived out like it ought to be, the godly will suffer.

You see, listen. Maybe what's happening in the United States won't be as bad as we think. You know, prosperity has always hurt the church.

Persecution has never hurt the church. And when you have to start making a stand, you're going to lose your job if you don't deny Christ. When Christians really start having to make a stand, then we'll see who's really Christian.

Because what you've got to see is, look, this is a fallen world. This is a world that apart from the work of the Holy Spirit hates God and hates his Christ. If you're truly following him, you're going to feel some of that.

From people around you, do you? Do you? Are you truly Christian? It's so hard to describe to people the otherworldliness of the Christian faith. And what do I mean by that? The Christians that I know that are in persecuted countries, they're considered traitors to their own country. They don't have a country.

They don't have a president. They don't have a leader. They don't have a social group they identify with.

They are completely outcasts. And those people who are completely outcasts from their society because of Christ, they are constantly looking at the kingdom and constantly waiting for that city made without hands, that city coming down from God. But when you live like we live in a country with freedom, we almost try to have dual citizenship.

You need to be very careful. We follow one king and his name is Jesus. To be loyal to him.

To be loyal. Young person, listen to me. Only by the spirit of God can you even hear what I'm saying.

Listen. This is not a thing of just trying to determine what you want your life to be like. This is not getting your best life now.

What I'm talking about is the difference between an eternity in glory and an eternity in hell. That's why preachers, they ought to be joyful. But they'll always seem older than they really are.

Because they got to carry around this burden every time they stand up in front of people or walk through a Walmart or anywhere else. I'm with people either going to heaven or people either going to hell. If it wasn't this way, I wouldn't be preaching.

I'd find something else to do. But young people, listen to me. It's really this way.

Now, Jesus says here that few will find it. Now, do you know how this passage has been so misinterpreted? People think that when Jesus says that few are going to go to heaven and most are going to go to hell, that what he's talking about is this, that there's a group of people who say Jesus is Lord and yeah, I believe in Jesus and I've trusted in Christ and yeah, I believe Jesus is God and he died on a cross, that that's that group over here. And then over here, all those people in the Broadway or the movie stars and the rock stars and the the atheists and those who do not follow Christ, you know, people who hate Jesus.

That's not what he's talking about. He's not even talking about these people at all. You know what he's saying? Now, listen to me.

It's one of the most terrifying things in all the Bible. This is what he's saying. He's saying among those people who say that I am Lord, few of them will go to heaven.

He's not talking about the movie star, the atheist, the porno star, the agnostic, the Muslim. He's not even talking about them. He's saying among those people who say I am Lord, few of them.

Few of them will enter into glory and the rest will go on to destruction. You say, well, Brother Paul, how do you know that context? Just the context of the passage, because look what he goes on to say. Go to verse twenty one.

This is context. You have to study the Bible in its context. He says, not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

But he that doeth the will of my father, which is in heaven, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name have done wonderful works? Then I will profess unto them. I never knew you depart from me. Ye that work iniquity.

Now, see what he's saying is he's saying among those young people, among those adults who say, Lord, Lord. Many of them will not enter the kingdom of heaven. But we'll go on into destruction.

Well, what's the difference then between the two groups, because this group said, Lord, Lord, and this group said, Lord, Lord, and he says the difference is one group did the will of the father and the other group didn't. You say, well, that's salvation by works. No, it's not.

What he's saying is this group said, Lord, Lord. If their heart was never really changed and they just kept doing the stuff of the world, this group said, Lord, Lord, because they had really believed in Christ and believing in Christ, they had really been born again and being born again, they became new creatures and their life was given to doing the will of God. And my father taught them and led them and disciplined them and trained them.

And they kept walking. How many people? Even in this county. Are hellacious sinners.

And yet they believe themselves saved. Why? Why pray that prayer? Can you get saved praying a prayer? Yep, you can. After you get saved praying a prayer, will you be sinless? No.

But something will happen. You will start changing. You will.

Can you backslide? Yeah, but your father's going to be there and he's going to deal with you. He's going to bring you back. What scares me is the countless millions of people in the United States of America that believe they're going to heaven, whether they're adults, grandparents, children, so on and so forth, because one day they heard the gospel and they walked an aisle or raised a hand or prayed a prayer.

But afterward, there was no change whatsoever in their life. They even live worse now than they did before. Yet they believe they're saved.

The evidence of conversion is a changing life. And Jesus says this so clearly here. I mean, it's so clear.

Now, look, he goes on and he says, beware of the false prophets. Verse 15, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Do you know that most of most false prophets are about the nicest guys you could ever meet? They smile all the time.

They tell you absolutely everything you want to hear. They'll help you find your best life now. There was this television show this one time about it had this two preachers and one of them was kind of crusty and rough and everything and people didn't like him very much.

And the other one was man, he was just sweet and kind and everything. But at the end of the film. They spotlight this one sweet preacher and he's in his office and he's talking to somebody or something on the phone really sweetly, and when he puts down the phone, he goes like this with his tongue and it's forked just like a snake.

An old man told me one time he said, son, your best friend is the one who tells you the most truth. Your best friend is the one who tells you the most truth. Listen to me, I'm going to prophesy, OK? Not based on something God told me, just history.

You're going to see a day when the greater part of what's called an evangelical in America, they're not going to be persecuted because they are going to say that Jesus Christ is a way. And then a small group in this country is going to be only a small group that will actually stand up and they'll be hated for it. And they'll say, no, Jesus is the way and there's no other way.

It's coming. It's come. It's already happened.

Jesus is not a way. He is the way. And he is worthy of absolutely everything.

You know, after 25 years of following Christ, you know what my only regret is? My only regret, young person, is that I followed after him so halfheartedly. And then I kept so much for me. That's my only regret.

I have never met a person who has followed Jesus Christ all their days that ever regretted giving him too much. Never. But most of the saints and the dearest saints I know go to their grave going, oh, if I had only given him more.

Because he talks here about destruction, look, your strength is going to be destroyed even before you die. You're going to grow old and weak. Your beauty is going to be destroyed.

You young ladies, you need to realize something, your beauty, you're going to have it maybe into your 20s and then starts the massive decline. So what are you living for? What are you living for? Spend the rest of your life hiding behind what's really happening to you. Are giving your life to eternity, following Christ.

Walking this road. Because it is a most precious road. Most precious road.

Now, false prophets have this about them. Outwardly, they look one way and inwardly they look another way. Do you know everybody who's false is that way? Not just false prophets, but false Christians.

Young person, let me ask you a question. If mom and dad were gone, would you be here tonight? There was a king. In Israel who served the Lord all the days of the priest.

Who gave him wisdom and guided him. And the moment the priest died, the king turned to wickedness. What did he demonstrate? That his devotion to God was never his own.

It was the authority over him. Child, will you be that way? Will you be that way? Another thing, God told Jeremiah, if you can't run now with footmen, how are you going to run with horsemen? What he's saying is, young person, if you can't follow Jesus Christ now, while you have parents over you who are trying to guide you and teach you, then how do you think you're going to follow Christ when you're out of the family? Unless something has been done to you, that you have this personal relationship with Christ. That you have this relationship.

We have taken, not just the liberals, the fundamentalists, not everybody. We have taken the supernatural out of Christianity. Listen, when someone gets born again, is it a decision on the part of a man? You bet it is.

There are two things a man must do. He must repent and he must believe. Call all men to repentance and faith.

But do you know this? That in there is a supernatural work of God. And he who began a good work in someone's life is going to see that it goes on all the way. Now, I've got about eight more verses here, which we don't have time to get to.

You know, young person, literally, I have such a burden for young people because, listen, you think you know so much about the world. You don't know anything. You think your mom and dad maybe don't know anything.

They're just a mom and dad. They don't know anything. Just full of rules.

Do you know why? Because they do know the world. They've seen things, young man, that would terrify you. Young lady, they have gone through things that would make you scream.

They know that this is life or death. They know that you can destroy your life that quick. They know that you can be in hell before the drop of a hat.

You've got to realize, Jesus Christ, stand up, please, right now and call him the biggest blasphemous liar and then walk out of this door and never grace this church again with your presence. Do that. It would be better than you just sitting there and looking Christian when you're not looking Christian.

And all the lies, you don't even have a clue. You think you're a match for the father of all lies. You're not.

He's a murderer from the beginning. And how did he murder? He murdered with lies. He said, has God really said? Now, young person, do you trust Christ? Is he your only hope? Do you fall upon him? Do you grab a hold of him? Do you need him? But another thing, do you love him? I was, without a doubt, had to be one of the most conceited, self-centered jerks in the history of the world.

I didn't love anybody but myself. But the day that Christ made it known to me that he died for such filth as me, there was a love created there. I have never been one that walked just perfectly or talked just perfectly or dressed just perfectly or anything perfectly.

But there's one thing I can't get away with. Even in this mess of myself, I can't stop loving him. Can you say that? Is there a love in your heart for Jesus Christ? If there's not, what should you do? You should search your heart.

You should search your heart. I'm going to end by saying this. One of the things that bothers me is a person will say they want to be saved.

They'll come forward in a lot of these meetings and things like that. They'll get five minutes worth of counseling on the greatest decision that they could ever make. They get five minutes worth of counseling.

They're told they're saved and then they go on. And then the rest of their life, we try to disciple them and we try to get them to act right and do all sorts of things. Maybe the problem is we should have taken longer than five minutes and made sure they really got saved.

Little children come up to me after a message, five, six years old, and they say, Brother Paul. I'm believing in Jesus, I believe in Jesus. What do I tell them? Do I go, OK, you're saved.

Do I tell them they're not saved? You know what I tell them? I say, are you believing in Jesus? Praise the Lord. You keep believing in Jesus. And if you truly believe in Jesus, you are saved.

But listen to me, son, if you after you get a little older, you start walking away and you don't care about Jesus anymore and you just keep going after the world and going after the world and you forget all about Jesus, then know this young person, you've got no Jesus today. Because the evidence that you truly believe is that you're going to go on believing. You're going to go on believing.

I mean. How is it that some people you ever notice this, they get saved and the pastor almost has to do nothing with them? I mean, they just follow the Lord. And other people get saved, but if you don't go by and pick them up every Sunday morning, you don't call them seven times throughout the week and everything else, they're not going to come to church, they're going to be drinking in a bar, everything else.

What is the difference? I'll tell you what the difference is. One got saved. He said, my sheep, they hear my voice.

We should discipleship, we should disciple people. But I want to tell you something, someone really gets saved. Whether you disciple them or not, they're going to follow Jesus.

You lock them up in a prison all by themselves. They're going to keep following Jesus. Why? Because once Jesus starts to work, he's going to see to it that it's finished.

Do you believe in security of the believer? I hope so. But most people don't understand it. It doesn't just mean that the moment you get saved, God keeps you by his power.

But it means that not only does he keep you from the condemnation of sin. He keeps you from the power of sin and he gradually works in your life. Now, for you, it might be two steps forward, three steps back, four steps forward, one step back, a battle all the way through, kind of like me.

But. You're going to keep changing. It's kind of like this when you go from.

From Alabama to the Appalachians. It isn't like this from Flatland, Alabama, to the Smoky Mountains, it isn't like this is like this, but no matter how many times you go down, you keep going up and up and up and up. Some of you who are truly saints of God, this is a description of your life, isn't it? You follow him.

You mess up. You follow him. You fall two steps forward, one step back, three steps back, six steps forward.

But when you look over the full course of your life, you just keep going up. And some of you flatlined from the day you supposedly received Christ. Young person.

You're going to die and you're going to waste your life. On so many foolish things. Unless you follow Jesus Christ, your pride is of the devil.

Your desire for the things of the world is of the devil. You're wasting of your time is of the devil. Set yourself on a course to following Christ.

You'll not regret it. You will not regret it. You will not.

Now I'm going to turn this service over, but I'll tell you this, invitation is open, and if you need to talk until tomorrow, I will talk to you until tomorrow. Just don't leave here unless you know Christ. Just don't leave here unless you know Christ.

Don't leave here until you settle these things. And I'll tell you what, I'm not going to give you some easy answer. We'll go through the scriptures.

Let me just tell you one story and then I promise I'll finish. I promise. This is the greatest moment of my life other than my salvation and my marriage and the birth of my three children.

But it's a great moment. I was up in Alaska and I mean, no, I was like 30 kilometers south of Alaska in Canada preaching and there were actually more grizzly bears in that area than there were people. And I was preaching in a little church.

And right when I got up in the pulpit, about 20 people, the back doors just opened up. And I mean, this man came through and he was giant. He was a giant of a man.

Looked to be 65. He could have whooped everybody in this room. I mean, he was just a man.

He's the saddest human being I've ever seen in my life. And while I was preaching, he walked right down the row, sat right down. I just changed my message.

I just started preaching the gospel. After I got done, I walked down there. I said, sir, what's wrong? He pulled out a manila envelope and he just showed me an X-ray and he said, I'm going to die in three weeks because I've lived all my life on a working cattle ranch.

You can only get there by a float plane or riding down a raft or going over the mountains with a horse. He goes. I never been to church and he goes.

I never read a Bible. I heard one time somebody talking about some guy named Jesus, and I know there's a God. I've never been afraid in all my life, but I'm going to die and I'm terrified.

And I said, sure, sir, you should be terrified. And I said, sir, did you understand the message? He said, yeah, I understood the message. Now, what would a most evangelist done at that moment? Well, just pray this little prayer and ask Jesus to come in.

This man's going to die. I said, sir, you understood the message, explain that to me. He said, I understood it.

Who couldn't understand it? But that's it. I go, what about your sin? He goes, what about it? You say it's wrong. OK, it's wrong.

That's all I know. That's what you told me. You see, there wasn't any teaching of the Holy Spirit going on here when he convicted power.

I said, sir, here's the deal. You got three weeks and you're going to die. I got to leave on a plane tomorrow.

I will cancel my ticket and we will stay here until you get saved or until you die and go to hell. So we started. And what do you do? I mean, what do you do? You just manipulate somebody.

I mean, what can you do? I'll tell you what you do. You get every promise in the Bible that deals with salvation and you just start reading them and you pray. And sir, look at this promise.

Whosoever will, sir. God so loved the world. He gave us only begotten son on and on and on.

And we go through promises and we pray together, sir. What's going on in your heart? Nothing. Well, let's just keep going.

What do you understand? We've gone on for about an hour or so. That's it, sir. I said, let's read John 316.

He goes, well, we read that passage. I said, well, let's just read it again. Let's pray.

Ask God just to. Just give you some light here. So we prayed and I'll never forget because he had his had that Bible in his hands, my Bible on his knees, and I forget those big old fingers look like they were that big around and he's holding that.

And I said, sir, read it. It's a promise. It's a promise for you.

Just read it. And this is, folks, this really happened. He goes.

All right. For God so loved the world that he gave. And then his big old hands start going like this and he goes, oh, no, I'm saying I'm saying I'm saying I got to turn a lot.

All my sins are gone. I said, sir, how do you know? He said, haven't you ever read this passage before? What happened? I'll see. Guys, listen to me.

You must decide to repent. You must decide to believe it. But no, this just repeating some little prayer means not it is a work of the spirit of God.

And he must open up your heart. He must open up your mind so that you see Jesus. You say, I want that.

Then you can have it. Just realize this. Just sit there and go look, young person, you know, you sit there and go, I got to take this test.

If I don't get it, I'm not going to graduate. Look, there's a bigger test coming. It's heaven or hell.

Sit there and go. Do I really know him? Go to your mom, go to your dad, go to your do I know him? Do I really know? Is he really doing something in me? Let's pray. Father.

I pray, Lord, that you would. Work, Lord, work. Lord, I know that.

It is not your will that any should perish, I know, Lord, that you do not delight in the death of the wicked.
Oh, God. Helpless sinners.

Oh, Lord, if you were to send every one of us to hell, you'd have to make no apology whatsoever. But oh, God, in this day of salvation, save people. Save people, stir them up, Lord, and the believers, Lord, stir up the believer to realize what a gift we have in Jesus Christ.

Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord, help us, Lord. In Jesus name.

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