

Beatitudes/clothed in Christ 2

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon highlights the necessity of character and Christ-likeness in the life of a believer, emphasizing gentleness and community support.

Duration: 51:44

Scripture: Matthew 5:13, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 12:18-19, Matthew 12:35

Topics: "Beatitudes"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. He highlights the need for believers to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and to seek the favor of God in their lives. The speaker also addresses the negative influences of media and television that can dull our hearts and hinder our godliness. Additionally, he encourages young people to show gentleness and kindness to those who are isolated or mistreated in school. The sermon is based on Matthew 5:13, which teaches that our value in the kingdom is determined by our union with Christ and our conformity to his image.

Transcript

In the 22 years that I've walked with the Lord and preached, I have seen storms, and I have seen times of uncertainty, but I have learned that God is always faithful. He's never taken by surprise, and that things are ordained of Him in the strictest of sense. There's not a maverick molecule in the universe.

And I do not trust in the ability of men to hear God, but I do trust in the ability of God to speak to men. That He who began a good working in every party here will finish that work in every party, in every party. If it weren't that way, I would be too afraid to get out of bed in the morning.

Well, let's look at Matthew chapter 5. We understood in verse 13, first of all, that we're going to read that text again, but we understood something very, very important in Matthew 5, 13, that there are certain characteristics essential to Christianity. And those are the things that we should focus on in our personal lives and that our value in the kingdom is not determined by our activity, but determined by our union with Jesus Christ. And that's we can do many things, but if we are not conformed to His image, we have not done the best of things.

Matthew 5, 13, you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. Let's

pray. Father, I pray that you would use your word to help us to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And Father, I pray that you would grant mercy and grace to strengthen all who need to be strengthened, to comfort all those who need comfort, to be our ever present help, Lord, in our ever present time of need. Amen. You may be seated.

I want to take a look once again at verse 13 quickly and then go back to the characteristics which we were discussing this morning. He says something very, very important. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Our productivity in the kingdom of God is directly related to our character and our Christ likeness. One of the great problems I have with our seminaries today is that we are so focused on knowledge, which is important. Doctrine is extremely important.

I spend my life studying doctrine and teaching doctrine, but we spend so much on doctrine and spend even more time on models and systems and programs. But we spend so little time dealing with the character of the seminary students. In the same way, we need to be very, very careful because we are, by and large, Americans.

We are doers more than beers. We are those who are active rather than those who sit and ponder the great truths and try to discern the character of our own being. And that needs to change.

It truly does. Now, there is a balance. There are people who are always meditating and never do anything, and there are people who are doing things and never considering their actions or the character from which their actions come.

And in all things, there is moderation and in all things there must be balance. But if I were to look at the Church of Jesus Christ in America today, I would say our greatest problem. It's not that we lack the resources to do things.

Not that we lack the models, the programs and the plans, but that we lack conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. Now, he says no longer good for anything. Do you see how intricately our character affects everything that we seek to do in the Christian life and Christian ministry? Many of you have children.

I don't want to run a rabbit here, but I'll say it since I'm here. Many of you have children. You're concerned about what they will do when they grow older.

You should be more concerned about what they will be when they grow older. Because it matters very little before the throne of God what they become in this world. Rather, does Christ enter into their lives and are they conformed to the image of Christ? It is all about character.

It is all about Jesus and our greatest passion, even our magnificent obsession should be Christ likeness. To be like him in the most intimate relationships that we have. Otherwise, what we don't do becomes in a great sense, null and void.

Null and void. Now, let me step back here for a moment and say something that's very, very important to say. You maybe heard this morning when I said there's never been such a thing as a great man of God.

The point that I'm trying to make is there's never been a perfect man. You take a look at Charles Spurgeon and in my opinion, you'll not find a greater preacher ever walked on the face of the earth. The man, well, let me put it this way.

I was speaking in a conference, a reformed conference a while back in Detroit, Michigan, and everyone was there. They love Charles Spurgeon. They love Jonathan Edwards.

They just talk about these men all the time. And I stood up and I said, first of all, I'd like to say that Charles Spurgeon was a heretic. And Jonathan Edwards was not as pious as some of you believe.

And I went on and on and I began to destroy all their idols. And some of the people were actually getting very, very angry. And then I stepped back and I said, you think too much of men.

You see, God does not use perfect men. He uses men. And so when I say that that we need to be conformed to the image of Christ, we also need to recognize that God has always used men lacking something somewhere.

And that is why, my dear friend, we need so much the body of Christ. And we need to be open to one another. And we need to be open to the word of God that comes forth from others.

We live in somewhat of a I don't want to say it's a state of limbo, but we definitely swing on a pendulum. There is a real sense in which God has done a supernatural, miraculous work in our life, regenerating us, making us alive and making us new creatures. There is another sense in which there is an element in our lives that's yet to be redeemed.

And there is a struggle when I'm seeking for a new missionary on the foreign field. I do not look for the perfect man. I do not look for the cleanest man.

I do not look for the man who seems to be able to cross every T and dot every I and just look so special. I do not look for beauty in the man. What I look for is passion in the man, passion and a desire to do the things of God.

You might be here tonight and you might be very, very far away from anything that resembles conformity to Jesus Christ. My question for you is, is there a passion in your heart to be like him? Are you willing to say I am not like Jesus in my home? I am not like Jesus in my workplace. I am not like Jesus with my children.

There are so many places where I am lacking. If you have reached that point sincerely, you're not far from the kingdom of God. There's hope for you.

There's hope. And let's go on and take a look at some of these characteristics. We've already discussed poverty of spirit, which refers to absolute dependence upon God.

Let me say this, a lot of modern preaching today is all about all the great things and pleasant things and lively things that God wants to work in your life. And we have to be very, very careful because I have found that when God regenerates a man, when a man is truly converted, there is a real sense that God will begin to work death in the life of that man. He says in his equal quite clearly, one of the new covenant promises in chapter 36, I will cleanse you from all your idols and from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

In order to bring you to a state of dependence upon God, he has to blow mighty winds upon you. He has to tear down the stronghold of your own self-confidence. He has to do whatever and will do whatever he has to do to bring you to a point where you recognize you can do nothing apart from Jesus Christ.

Absolute dependence, absolute dependence. Then we talked about mourning, which for the Christian is not a desperate thing. We mourn over our sin, but we're then lifted up and carried on the wings of grace.

We know that our contrition will not end in despair, it will not end in condemnation, but the Lord of glory will raise us up. If we humble ourselves before the Lord, he will lift us up. He will.

That's his promise. Blessed are those who mourn sensitivity to sin. Let me just say for a moment, step back because each one of these things is a week's worth of study.

There are certain things in your life. If you're a typical church with typical problems, there are some things in your life that dull your sensitivity to sin. And it's fraternizing with the world.

There was a great violinist playing in Europe and after he played an old, old man about to retire and after he played, a young man came up to him and said this, Sir, I would give my life to play like you. The old man said, I have given my life to play like me. Do you want the spirit of God to empower you? Do you want the favor of God upon your life? Do you want to see God working? Do you want to be sensitive? Do you want to have a quick ear and a willing heart? There are things you're going to have to leave behind all the things and all the influences that dull your heart and make your ears full of wax.

You're going to have to list those things and take them out of your life. One of the greatest problems in the church today is the influence of media and television and all sorts of things that just makes us so dull to true godliness. Church, do you want to be godly? Do you want to be quick to the call? Do you want to be sensitive to sin? It will come at a cost.

It'll come at a decision. Some of you young men out here, you want to be used of God. Many want to be used with used by God, but few finish the race.

Matter of fact, few even start. You'll have to turn away from those things which God despises and run to with a passion the things that God embraces. He says, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle. I am a farm boy from Southern Illinois. I come from a family of farmers and ranchers, men who boast in their strength.

Men who you could suppose if they had a flag, it would say something like don't tread on me. I carry that in me and it's not of God. God calls me as well as you to be courageous.

He calls us to be strong in the strength of the Lord. He tells us that there are times when we will have to draw a line in the sand and say you will go no further. There may be times when we have to lay down our life, but at all times we are to be gentle.

Sir, do you seek to cultivate this characteristic in your life? Gentle. We speak of the power of our Lord. We speak of the courage of our Lord and our Lord turns right back around and says, do not confuse me with the Romans.

Do not confuse me with an empire of steel. Are you gentle? Do you think that's a womanly, feminine characteristic? Well, it is, but it's a manly one also. Blessed are the gentle for they.

What does it say about them? They shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the gentle. Now, whenever we want to define a term, we have to realize that Jesus Christ is the great definer.

For example, if I say if I tell you you need to be holy. When I say that you people need to be holy, I want you to know there are probably just as many definitions of holiness in this church as there is people right now. The question is, when I tell you you need to be holy, how do we discover what true holiness is? We go to Jesus Christ.

And when the Bible tells us that we need to be gentle, where are we going to find a definition of that? Where are we going to find an example? And it is in the person of Jesus Christ. Everything you need to know is found in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. So I want us to look for a moment at being gentle.

And I want us to go to the book of Matthew. Chapter 11, verse 28, comes me, all who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

Now, there's something about people who are weary and heavy laden. They're also usually quite intimidated. And afraid.

And intimidated, afraid people do not come and seek help from anyone but the gentle. I always tell men that I'm teaching, I always ask them, I say, how do children treat you? Because that's a great sign of godliness. That's a great sign of the character of Christ.

The children, are they comfortable around you? They love playing with you. Sometimes they want to pull you out of the church and have you ride a scooter outside in the parking lot. You see, we had people coming to Jesus that would go to no one else because everywhere else they went, the door was closed.

Everywhere else they went, they were crushed even more than when they came. We're speaking about gentleness. We're talking about the type of character in which those who are weary, heavy laden can come and actually believe they're going to find rest.

They're going to find some help. He goes on, he says, take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble and hard. What an amazing thing.

Here's the man that stood against an entire religious system, an entire empire. He would teach those Pharisees and they would get so mad at him that they'd rip their clothes, they'd tear their hair, they'd grind their teeth, they'd throw dirt up in the air. And then you'd look at him and say, you want to hear another parable? He backed down from no one.

But at the same time, at the other side of this wonderful personality, this perfect reflection of what manhood should truly be. We see this man describing himself as one who is gentle and humble and heart. People looking at you, coming to you, would they say that about you? One time I told my wife, oh, what a prophet.

I told my wife, I said, well, that's just not my character. And she said, you're right. You need to repent.

That's not the way I made. She said, but that's the way God wants to remake you. Comes to me, all who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me now. So much teaching in the church today, and this is what's very, very difficult. You need to understand.

It is not a hard thing for me to teach you. But it would be a terrifying thing for me to disciple you. And what do I mean by that? If I'm just teaching you from the pulpit, I can say some really good things and you all walk out of here saying, wow, that was really nice.

Come live with me. He says, come to me, watch my life and learn from me. Now, there there is where we find a difficult thing.

He's saying, learn about humility by living with me. Learn about being humble at heart and kind and merciful and all these things. You want to know these things, then come and live in my house.

That's quite an amazing thing. I don't know many men, including myself, who would make that statement. If you want to know humility, then come live with me for a while and watch me.

Who would dare say something like that? And yet that is the goal for our lives. I remember when I was in college at the University of Texas and also in seminary, I think I made a terrible mistake. I can remember staying up all night asking God.

God, make me a preacher. God, I want to preach your word. God, I want to have the power of God on my life to preach your word.

And you want to know something, at least to some degree answered it. I preach all over the world. There seems to be a measure of grace on it.

I had other friends wiser than myself, and they prayed something like this. Lord, make me like Jesus. I don't care to be a great preacher.

Make me like Jesus. Could I have made a terrible error? Yes, yes. I would trade all my prayers that I've ever made about ministry and preaching.

I would trade them all for prayers about conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. I would not feel intimidated at all if you asked me to teach on the biblical view of humility and gentleness. I can do that.

I can go through the book of Proverbs and teach you that. What would intimidate me is if you said, Paul, can I come to your house and watch you for a while to learn about gentleness? I would terrify me. I might be able to fool you for a while.

I could guard myself. But in the unguarded moment. The real me would come out.

Now, I want us to look at him and I want us to continue looking at this. He says you will find rest for your souls. You and I need to be people in a sense where others can find rest in us.

They can find a haven. They can find a friendship. They'll see someone who looks past their sin.

And as Christ looks past hours. Are you a haven for people? I have to be very, very careful here because I want I want to share something with you. To some of you, this will sound about.

Well, I don't know how it will sound. But I have known people who are very needy and that's OK. But I've also known people in the church that are so needy that everyone else in the church begins to run away from them because every time they approach us because they're needy.

They're always receiving and never giving. And even unto you, I give this admonition. Not only the strong need to be a haven, but those of you who feel like you are weak and needy, you need to begin to reciprocate and also provide haven for other people.

Also give. And maybe in your giving, maybe in your helping others, your problems will disappear. A Christian can be needy, but we should not always be needy.

A Christian should always try to at times should be able to find haven in the strength of others, but should not always have to live based upon the strength of others. One of the things that I'm doing here right now, my wife would rebuke me for if there's so much in this text, I want to say everything. But the primary purpose here is to say that Jesus.

Was gentle and that gentleness was proven by the fact that the weakest and the most weary came to him, young people. Let me tell you something, give a unique opportunity because you're in grade school and high school. Now, let me share with you something about that.

Some of the cruelest people on the face of the earth are in grade school and high school. That's true. Now, some of you have either been victims of those cruel people or you've been the cruel people yourself.

The thing about it is in every one of your classes, there are certain children that no one else plays with. They make fun of the clothes they wear and everything else. And they're isolated and left out and hurt and broken, and they don't even want to go to school because of everything that happens to them.

You know what? You could be a haven for them. You could reach out to them. You could prove what the master says here, you could be gentle and kind, and those people would find rest in your Christ likeness.

You see what I'm saying? Tell you what, when you look at this stuff and start applying it, it's really amazing. Now, another thing that I want to say about the gentleness of our Lord in verse 18 of chapter 12, behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

Here we would think the great captain of the host has come in the name of the Lord and powered by the Holy Spirit to do a great work of justice. Then he goes on in verse 19. It's not battle array that he has placed upon himself.

It's a mantle of humility and gentleness because it says he will not quarrel, no cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A battered reed he will not break off and a smoldering wick he will not put out until he leads justice to victory. And in his name, the Gentiles will hope the most ungodly pagan peoples of the planet will learn to hope in this mighty one of God.

But here's here's the text that I want us to see in verse 20, a battered reed. He will not break off. It's amazing that the Puritans actually spoke much of this text, even a book on it.

Let me just share with you what he's saying, talking about our Lord Jesus. He said a battered reed, he will not break off. Now, in Israel, the children would sometimes go down to the river and get a reed because

you can do so many things for the reed.

But primarily, you can whittle one out, put some holes in it, you make a fine flute out of a reed. But there's a there's a thing about a reed that's very, very difficult. It's very fragile thing.

And in the hands of children, well, you start working on that reed for a few minutes, it breaks in your hands. Well, what are you going to do? You're going to spend the whole day trying to mend this thing? Of course not. Throw it away.

Why not? Why not throw it away? I mean, there's billions of more reeds in the river from which we can make our musical instruments. We don't need this thing. It's broke.

It's cracked. It's worthless. Throw it away.

Get another. That's not what Jesus does. He begins to work in the life of a person, young person, man, woman, child, begins a good work in them along the way that work becomes cracked, broken, chipped.

It appears to everyone else that it's useless. We're so quick to throw people away, aren't we? But Jesus comes and he takes that cracked, broken piece of reed that can't even use it to carry a tune. He takes that reed and begins to work again.

You know, Satan is not only the accuser of the brother and primarily is the accuser of God. I can imagine Satan to Jesus just working. What are you working with that thing for? It's already proven to be flawed.

It's useless. Go get something else. Christ just continues to work.

And then before you know it, he takes that thing and puts it back to his mouth and plays music, a greater music than the flute could have ever played before. They say to make an opera singer a good one. You have to break their heart for someone to sing with passion.

You have to break their heart and love. I believe that. It's only broken things to play the sweetest music, because everyone recognizes they were broken and broken by their own doing.

But God came and fixed them and therefore the creator get that much more glory for himself. And after all, that's what it's about anyways, isn't it? And then he says in a smoldering wick, he will not put out. Now in Peru, in places where I live, we use lamps.

And even as a little boy, I can remember in the terrible winters we might have there in Illinois, sometimes electricity lines would go down and we would be all around the fire and we'd use kerosene lamps. Now, there's something that young people don't understand about a kerosene lamp. When a kerosene lamp is filled with oil.

There will be a flame on the wick, but the wick will not burn, it will not consume itself. But when the oil is gone from the container, the wick begins to burn. And when the wick begins to burn, it is the most wretched thing you have ever smelled in your life.

And someone walking in from a day out of the house, working in the fields in Israel, comes back and finds a lamp, the oil is burned out of it, the wick is burning, stinking up the whole house. The only thing they're going to do is take that fragile vessel, they're going to grab it and pitch it right out the window into the heat. Why? Well, it's ruined everything, it's stunk up the house, it's horrible.

Not Jesus. Not Jesus. In his gentleness, he comes back, he takes the wick, he cuts off that which is charred.

He mends the vessel and then fills it again with the oil of his spirit and it burns brighter than ever before. These are some of, just some of the illustrations of what it means to be gentle, to be gentle. And he says, back to chapter five, he said, Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

They shall inherit the earth. And as I said, there's so much in this text that makes me want to run rabbits, but some of you are so trying to inherit the earth now and you're not waiting upon the Lord. And the way this earth is at this present moment, you really don't want much of it.

It is time to live for the Lord with all your heart and soul, mind and strength and await an earth that will be recreated by the power of God incorruptible. A beauty so great that if you were to catch a vision of it, you would go mad. The gentle will inherit the earth, not the movers and the shakers, not itinerant preachers, not people who cast out demons and prophesy in his name and perform many miracles.

But the gentle shall inherit the earth. The Puritans would use this text to determine whether or not a church member was even saved, because they would warn the church member, if these characteristics are not in your life to some degree, you need to worry about the condition of your soul. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. How can I do justice to a text like this? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. What is righteousness? What we're always thinking of us being right and that's there.

But I want you to think outside of the box for a moment. When you think about righteousness, they hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. They hunger and thirst for God to be vindicated.

They hunger and thirst for God's will to be done on the earth, for God's kingdom to come. They hunger and thirst for every creature on the face of the earth to fall down in adoring worship. They hunger for God to get all the glory that God deserves.

You see, when we look at text, it's always man centered, isn't it? They hunger for God's righteousness to prevail and for God to be vindicated and honored above all so-called gods. They hunger and thirst for that. And then they hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God in their own life through Jesus Christ.

There are so many today who hunger and thirst for a type of righteousness. They're very zealous towards it, but it's not according to knowledge. And they are twofold sons of hell.

They do all sorts of things in order to make themselves righteous so that they might be acceptable before a holy God, proving that they neither understand holiness or righteousness. When you and I hunger and thirst for righteousness in our own lives, it's primarily, as the Apostle Paul said, to be found in him, to be found in him, to be trusting in no one, no other thing but him. I always go back to the Puritans because I like the Puritans.

I don't agree with everything they say, but I like them. They spoke much when they talked about repentance and they would say something that's quite unusual. It's found in Hebrews, but it kind of catches us off guard.

You've heard of repenting from dead works. They would say repenting from good works. Now, what do they mean by that? Repenting from any trust in any work, even that which might be a moral work to gain some standing before God.

Yes, my friends. You don't realize it, but many do that many sincere Christians, they have accepted the righteousness of God in Christ. They have believed in Christ.

If you talk to them, they'll tell you and they are sincere. Truly, they are believing in Christ alone and they truly are saved. But in the practical working out of their salvation, they are still trying to find some position before God based on their own good works or performance instead of resting in the perfect work of Jesus Christ.

You say, well, Brother Paul, you know, you're basically telling people to stop doing good things and just rest in Christ. No, my friend, if you're truly resting in Christ, you will be more like Christ than anyone with a moral agenda. You see, a carnal lost church member will hear these things and say, well, let's go sin.

A Christian will hear these things and say, if grace is this way, let us follow the master. Let us be holy. Now, hunger and thirst for righteousness also means a hunger and thirst in our personal lives to be more like Jesus.

My dear friend, one of the problems that I see in much in some reforms theology is this idea that the law is the supreme example of God's righteousness and that if we want to be righteous, we need to conform to the law. And some people will say, you know, on Judgment Day, the unbeliever will sit there on one side of the scale and the law be placed in the other and he will be way. That is not true.

Let me tell you how it's going to work. The unbeliever will be placed on the side of that scale and Jesus Christ to be placed on the other side. The extreme, the maximum, the ultimate example of true righteousness and holiness is embodied in a person now, not just ten commandments, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

That's why when we go to terms like holiness and righteousness, we identify those and we determine what they mean within the context of who is this person, who is this Jesus? It's all about Jesus and we do not throw out the law. We simply say that Christ is greater than even the law. Christ is our supreme example, because I want you to know you can cross every T and dot every I of that law and be nothing more than a lost hellbound Pharisee.

We have to hunger and thirst to be like Jesus. Now, let me give you an example. Some of you possibly have heard of T.W. Hunt, a great man of prayers, written many books, he was a professor of mine and kind of I considered him a mentor in a way and some things and would go into his office and talk to him and just amazing man of prayer.

And I walked in one day in his office looking like something the dog had just drug in. And I'm just walking in kind of like that seminary student I told you about this morning, you know, I'm so unholy, I'm so ignorant. And I walked in and he said T.W. Hunt would always go like this when he'd look at me, go, Paul, what is it now? And I said, Dr. Hunt, I am so unholy, I am so unrighteous.

I desire to be like Jesus. I desire to my heart to be pure. I desire to just be holy.

Oh, I just I'm just not content. I'm just miserable. And he's looking at me like this and then all of a sudden again, he went and he stood up and he walked over to where I was seated.

He put both hands on my shoulders and he said in the name of Jesus Christ, I pronounce you blessed. He turned around, sat back down and I looked at him and he said, Paul, you don't understand what I just did. I said, no, Dr. Hunt, I don't understand what you just did.

Paul, have you never read? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Paul, you walk into my office. You're not content about anything in your life.

The only thing you want is to be more like Jesus. You want to be more righteous. You want to be more holy.

You want to be more pleasing. He said, boy, he said, listen to me, you are blessed. He said, if you walked in here content about your spiritual state, it might be evidence that you're lost.

Now, here's the point, church. Many of the works of God in your life, Satan is twisting around to make you condemned. You sit there and you go, I'm just not as holy as I want to be.

I'm just not as righteous as I want to be. I want to know his word in a greater way. I want to be more like him.

And then you hear the voice of Satan. Yes, you're not like him at all. Condemnation, condemnation.

And you don't recognize that the words out of your mouth is not a pronunciation or a pronouncement of condemnation, but one of blessedness. Those of you who are content with your spiritual state ought to fear condemnation. But those of you who seek to be more like him.

Ought to worship God because he has done a true work in you. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Now, listen, for they shall be satisfied on all accounts.

Dear flock, God will vindicate himself. He has done it in the cross and he will do it in the glorious appearing of the one who died. God's righteousness will prevail.

His will will be done. His kingdom will come. Whether this church participates in the work or not.

To his righteousness, you'll be satisfied if you're hoping for God to come back and prevail. You will be satisfied. Take heart.

No matter how beaten down the truth is, no matter how much you see the truth twisted on television by heretics who preach in the name of Jesus, no matter what you are going to see a day when you will stand there in the flesh and God will be vindicated before all men and all men will bow before him and his truth will be proclaimed and honored. Count on it. It's going to happen.

And being found in Christ. Oh, my dear friend, he could have made you righteous like the angels. And that would have been enough.

But he did not do such a limited work. The righteousness of God in Christ. That is why in that room, that holy of holies with the presence of God dwells in its fullness.

Those mighty beings that could destroy the earth with a glance from their eyes, they bow their head and cannot look into the face of God. And yet you will play among the foals of his robe. You will enter in where angels cannot because you bear not the righteousness of angels, but the righteousness of God in Christ.

You will be satisfied. You will stand there one day. You will be righteous.

Found righteous, declared righteous. Not only that, my dear friend, you will be righteous. At this point, I can say this theologically, there's not a righteous person in this room.

What do I mean by that? We all still sin. We're subject to sin. So in that sense, we are not righteous.

When the Bible talks about us being justified or being made righteous, it's talking about a forensic legal declaration based upon the work of God and Jesus Christ. You and I have been declared righteous because Christ, when he died, he satisfied the justice of God and appeased the wrath of God. You and I have been declared righteous.

That is true. But one day you will be righteous. I try once a year to read the Chronicles of Narnia.

I know it's a children's kind of book, but you need to read them because you never want to stop being a child. When they come to the final great war and then the renovation of all things and Aslan, who represents Christ, comes and leads his people into the land of his father. Yelling to them, higher up, further in, because the higher up and the further you go into heaven, the bigger it gets.

And they're all running wildly. That's what you do in heaven. They were running wildly, passionately.

And they come to this tree and one of them says, I've never seen anything like this before. And the fruit on it. Oh, how I would give anything to take from.

I so desire to eat from that fruit. And I said, well, do you suppose this is prohibited? And the statement is made that is brilliant. One says, I think we finally come to a place where nothing is prohibited.

Where no desire that we have. Will be taken away. And why is that? Because you will be perfectly righteous in the kingdom of your father.

You will be perfectly righteous and every desire of your heart will be a righteous desire. And therefore, every desire of your heart will be filled. That's a wonderful thing.

Truly a wonderful thing. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. And I want to finish with seven.

I've gone on a little bit too long, but it wouldn't be appropriate to stop without touching this. If ever there was a passage or a verse of scripture. That proves that Christians are still not perfected.

And must still battle with the flesh. This is it. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Now, what do I mean? How could it be that people like ourselves who crucified the Lord of glory, who took God's son and nailed him on a tree over a garbage dump and then receive mercy? How could a people like us who has received so much mercy ever need to be reminded that we're supposed to be merciful? You talk about flagrant, horrifying hypocrisy is when someone stands up and just revels in the mercy of God and then cannot extend that same mercy to someone else. Well, you just don't know what they did to

me. I don't need to know.

That's never the issue. I'll never forget the church I was in. I was kind of known as, you know, the very strict and all sorts of things, always preaching on holiness and righteousness.

And one day, a person who had committed horrendous atrocities came forward weeping. And you could just see the congregation just cringe. And I went and talked to them.

They broke down even more and were crying and threw themselves down in front of the church and weeping. Walked over there and held them. I talked to them.

I got a call later on. How could you even think about forgiving that person? We know they're a hypocrite. We know they've done this.

We know they've done that. How could you embrace that? How could you do that? And I said, if there is no hope for that person, then I go to hell too. Then I go to hell too.

I have to, because if there's no mercy for them, there's no mercy for me. How many sins did Adam and Eve commit before they were cast out of the presence of God? One, picking a fruit. Yet my sins could not be added up on the greatest calculator, the greatest computer.

Only in the books of God, the extent of my sin is known. You see, it's just a question of who has sinned, not who has sinned more, because once you've sinned, there's no other category. We as a people should always proclaim truth.

We should never back down on truth. Never. We should always receive in mercy those who are broken.

If not, we'll find ourselves broken and have no one in whom we can find shelter. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Now, does this mean that if we're not merciful, God, we're going to lose our salvation? What does this mean? It is teaching us basically that the primary characteristic of true conversion, true Christianity is mercy.

If I have truly experienced the salvation of God, if I have truly experienced conversion, if I have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, if I have seen that he has spilled, shed his own blood for my soul, if my sins have been laid out before the divine panel and I've been pardoned in the name of Jesus Christ, then I must forgive. I must show mercy. I must help.

My dear friends, there's enough destroyers in the world. Don't need another one. And prophets, those of you who are prophets, if you're not carrying a basin and a towel and a bomb, then don't call yourself a prophet.

Jesus was dangerous to some, harmless to others, merciful to all who sought mercy. Merciful to all. Now, church, God will be faithful to you upon that one thing you can count.

Now, let me ask you a question that will determine your spiritual maturity. Do you need anything else? No. God will be faithful to you and God will be faithful to the man who has left here.

God will be faithful to all his people and he will finish a perfect work in every one. And on that great day, we'll stand there and be found in him. Let's pray.

Father, please help. Please help your people. Strengthen them.

Help your servant and strengthen him. Oh, dear God, you are much bigger than all of us. I pray for your help.

Jesus name. Amen.

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