

Biblical Assurance (Part 5)

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of true Christianity, separation from the world, and discipleship, highlighting the characteristics of a true Christian and the consequences of not following God's will.

Duration: 57:03

Topics: "Assurance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the fleeting nature of life and the importance of living in accordance with God's will. He warns that death and hell are approaching and urges the audience to consider how they should live in light of this reality. The preacher highlights the temporary nature of worldly achievements and possessions, comparing them to the passing empires of Rome and Babylon. He also emphasizes the distinction between those who practice righteousness and those who practice sin, emphasizing the need for a life dedicated to God.

Transcript

Tonight, we will be in first John again and possibly finish up tonight. I want us to just open up our preaching and first John, chapter five. Verse 13, you stand, we'll read God's word, first John, chapter five, verse 13, these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Let's go the Lord in prayer. Father. Father, I have a great longing in my heart this evening that your word go forth clearly.

That it be a seed. That it be as water. That it be as a hammer, that it be as a fire.

That it be all the things that it says itself to be. That you would open up the hearts of people to receive the word. Even my own heart, Lord, that you would be glorified.

And our bearing of much fruit, that you would be glorified in the conversion of men in Jesus name, amen, may be seated. The purpose of the entire book of first John is that a man, a woman, even a child might read it, pray over it and come to know whether they truly are of the faith. Now, this is not an academic exercise in itself.

I want you to understand. There are so many people in our churches. That are lost, some, of course, come on Sundays and they're there, they're wild throughout the week.

They know not God, they fear not God. But there are others who are very, very sincere in a sense, very religious in a sense of about doing the work of the kingdom and in trying to please God. But but they really do not know him.

The evidence that you have come to know God is not simply religious activity or morality. But the realities of what we are finding in first John, if you are a Christian, will be realities in your own personal life. When I said at the beginning that the true Christian walks in the light, they live a style of life that reflects the character of God and conforms to the will of God.

Is that a reality in your life? When I say that a true Christian is sensitive to sin, are you sensitive to sin? And does the Holy Spirit lead you to to pronounce that sin before him? And then keeping the commandments, a reality in the Christian life will be obedience to the commandments of God, a habitual lifestyle of obedience. And yes, a Christian may step off the path. That is true.

And he may run. But according to Hebrews chapter 12 and many other texts in the Bible, he will not run that far. God will bring him back in discipline.

And then there is, of course, walking as Christ walked. Is it your desire to be like Jesus, to walk like Jesus? Is that a reality in your life? Not just a byword, not just a cliché on the back of a Christian T-shirt. But is it a reality? And then there's loving your brother.

You cannot have the spirit of God and be filled with hatred toward other believers. Not only other believers, toward even your enemy, because we are commanded to love our enemy. Are these spiritual realities in your life? And now we go on.

Another test is found in in chapter two, verse 19. I'm sorry. Chapter two, verse 15.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the father, but is from the world.

The world is passing away and also its lust. But the one who does the will of God lives forever. We have this sense in America that you can somehow be a true Christian and have an ardent, burning love for the world.

If I were to redefine Jesus' statement in Matthew about the narrow and the broad way, if I were to redefine it based on what I see in people who call themselves Christians, it would be this pass through the narrow gate and walk in the broad way. But no, there's not only a narrow gate, there's a narrow way. And that narrow way is the way marked out by God's commands, God's precepts, God's wisdom.

And the world is not found in that way. Now, he says, do not love the world nor the things of the world. What is the world? Everything that is a part of this fallen system.

Fallen system of a thought and action and politic, everything on this earth that does not acknowledge God as Lord, every thought that does not measure up to God's word, everything promoted that is not of God, everything that comes out of fallen man and the one who leads him. Who is himself the devil, this world, what is it? Everything that contradicts what God has revealed about himself and his will. Look around you, we swim in this world, we live in this world, but we're not supposed to be of it.

And a true Christian will not be of it in the same way that a true Christian will love the Lord. He will disdain. The very things that God disdains, I've said to at times that this book is simply it's given to us to guide our life in this respect, to teach us everything that God loves and to tell us to love it the same way and to teach us everything that God hates and to teach us to hate those things the same way.

There are things in the Bible that we are commanded to love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. And there are also things that we are commanded to turn our backs upon those things, to walk away from those things as unworthy of our calling, as unworthy of a child of God. And yet I see so many so-called believers so wrapped up in the world do not love the world nor the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Do you long for the city whose builder and maker is God? Are you longing for that day when the kingdom is consummated, when all things, every promise is fulfilled and Christ reigns? Or are you happy and content in this present age? And do you seek after the very things that the rest who don't even profess Christ seek after? Not enough is preached about separation, not enough is preached against the world and the things of the world and its pleasures and its trinkets and everything else. And because of it, many, many even Christians are bound to the point that they are no longer useful to God.

He says, if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. How can you love the very things? For which Christ was crucified, can you love the nails, can you bless the hammer, would you kiss the hands? That crushed his head with a crown of thorns, because when you say, you know, Christ and you are a disciple of Christ and yet you love the world, you do that very thing. Oh, my friend, there is a great divide, a great separation.

The scripture warns us that those who are not separate now will be separated on that great day from the sheep and they will be labeled goats and they will find their place in hell, says verse 16, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life is not from the father, but is from the world. Every desire that you have that is not conformed. To the will of God is a lust of the flesh.

Now, let's take this to a whole new level instead of just being theologically minded. Everything that you see. Everything that you see, everything that you desire, the book should be opened up to determine whether it is a thing from God or a thing outside the will of God.

You are not your own. You were bought with a price if indeed you belong to him. Everything in your life is to be guided by God's principle, by God's word down to the clothes I buy, the way I take care of them, the house I own, the car I drive, everything we ask.

Is this your will, oh God, or is it simply something deviant, a lust of the flesh, a lust of a wicked, fallen flesh, or is it according to your will? The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, we are so drawn today, especially men above women by the lust of the eyes, the things that we see, but most of what we see is a deception. It is held before our eyes like the the old cartoon character who's riding a donkey and takes a cane and sticks it out, hangs up, hangs a carrot off a string from the end of the cane and gets the donkey to chase after the carrot and thus make the donkey move. So Satan rides on the back.

Of many men and women and sits out in front of them, sits out in front of them, trinkets that sparkle like gold, but they're nothing more than hay, wood and stubble, and they will burn. They will burn. We are so attracted by the eyes.

Young men, perfect example, when they're thinking about finding a mate, many of them are drawn away by their eyes and they look more to the physical than the virtue of the girl. And vice versa, look more to the outward than the internal. Look more to the things of the world that sparkle instead of the things of God that often come in the appearance of something quite dull.

How are you? What do your eyes chase? What does your heart long for you? What does your heart long for? Treasure in heaven. Does your heart look to heaven because that's where your treasure lie? Or have you gathered so many trinkets around you, you can't even get your head above them to see heaven? Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the boastful pride of life. How can I find an example of this when it runs rampant all around us? I think the best thing is an athlete in the Olympics.

He gets the gold and they interview him. How did you do this? Well, I've I've trained hard. I've trained for years, I've disciplined myself.

And he goes on and on and on. And the little tiny parasite doesn't even know that he can't breathe apart from the power of God. It is to seek to accomplish things that are not inside the will of God.

It is to seek to accomplish things that are not empowered by God, things that men claim they have gained apart from God's grace and God's will. Men build their bridges and their towers and their buildings and their businesses and everything else, their bodies, but not in accordance with God's will and not in submission to his lordship. We are to be brought in every part of us into subjection to the lordship of Jesus Christ, even our thoughts, even our thoughts.

The world is passing away and also its lusts, this word here can can go two different ways with this idea of passing away. It may mean not just simply passing away, but being pushed out, being pushed out would indicate a judgment fallen upon this godless age that God's kingdom is advancing and that as time rolls on and we draw near to that final hour, all these things of the world are being pushed out by the judgment of God. And on that day, the only thing that will remain is that which is done and has been done in his name and for his glory.

Or it can be simply kind of indicating a parade of fools dressed up in clown suits with little tin horns, and they march one by one off the cliff into eternal death. The world is being pushed out. But the man, the woman, even the child who does the will of God will abide forever.

You young people should understand the world is on vapor, life is a vapor, it's a morning dew on the hottest summer day in Texas. It's gone like that. Yesterday, I was nine, today I'm forty three, tomorrow I will be ninety.

It flies, it's running from you. Death is coming and hell is moving and it's drawing nigh unto you. If I stayed in this pulpit long enough, I'd bury many of you.

Many of you will meet your maker before you think it's time. How then shall we live? We are mortal. Our lives are just that, a spiderweb over a flame.

How then shall we live? I'm constantly pleading with people, I'm constantly telling people this, we should live between two days, the day when Jesus Christ hung on that tree before men and the day all men will stand before Jesus Christ and then bow. Those two days ought to be the great motivation of our life. Everything else is fleeting, everything else.

You are fleeting. Your youth will be gone like that. You'll be left with nothing.

Your strength will wither like an autumn leaf. Your mind, you may have the greatest of minds, you may be a Stephen Hawking, you may be maybe the most brilliant man on the face of the earth, but one day that thing will turn to powder. How then shall we live? Because the earth and all the things of it are passing away.

Go look for Rome, that mighty empire, and tell me when you find it, because it's nothing but a bunch of rocks and stone and monuments and relics. Hunt down Babylon and tell me about how glorious it is. All you'll find is dust in a place where jackals howl.

Will any of you be greater than George Washington? And yet, do any of you mourn his death? Do you think anyone will mourn yours? The world is passing away. How then shall we live? There are so many who claim to be Christians and yet live for the world and they're deceived. When the foundations of this earth are shaken.

They will be shaken out of it like ants out of a popcorn bag. They will fall to the ground and be smashed by the judgment of God. It's passing away.

It is. It really is. It really is.

Now, let's go to another test. Verse 19, chapter two. They went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us.

But they went out so that it would be shown that they are not of us. What does this mean? A true Christian will persevere among other true Christians. Now, that doesn't mean if someone comes to this church and they they join the fellowship and such, and then three years later down the road, they decide that they're going to go to another church.

We don't quote this verse and say, well, there they weren't Christians because they didn't stay with us. Now, what it's talking about is someone who makes a claim to be a Christian and someone who makes a claim to be a part of the body of Christ. And then they depart.

From any sort of fellowship with any biblical body. Now, let's just look at this for a moment, because it is so prevalent in America, I go to conferences sometimes with the so-called experts or teaching, and they claim they say this, they go, we have such a problem in the church today, we're getting so many people saved, but they don't stay in the church. So many people are being born again, but they're just as many are going out the back door is coming in the front door.

No, my friend, that's not true. Problem is, we've got a bunch of people out there preaching a gospel they don't understand because if they truly are saved now, they might not be led of God to stay in this church, but they will be in a biblical body. They will go to a church where the word of God is preached and they will grow on to sanctification.

But if they so supposedly get saved and then depart from this fellowship and did not join up with any other biblical fellowship or or any fellowship that can be identified with historical Christianity, my dear friend, they were never saved. I'll never forget in Peru, a dear pastor, a friend of mine, Ernesto Zacarias, great, great evangelist. And when I say that, I don't talk about someone who goes to churches and preach.

I'm talking about a guy who knocks on doors. Any coward can get in a pulpit and bellow out the gospel, it's the man who stands in front of H.E.B. with tracts in his hand, it's the man who knocks on doors, that's an evangelist. We need to do some of that.

Amen. Amen. But he came to me and he goes, he goes, I'm never having an evangelist in my church again.

And I said, well, why? He said, we had a revival last week and a hundred people were saved. I said, well, that's wonderful. And not one of them showed up for church Sunday.

But you can bet that evangelist went right down the road and bragged to everybody how many people got saved. I want you to turn quickly with me to John. Chapter 10, John, chapter 10, verse 26.

But you do not believe because you are not my sheep, you are not of my sheep. Now, notice he doesn't say you're not my sheep because you don't believe. But he says rather something that is kind of a hard thing for some to accept, he said, the reason you do not believe is because you're not of my sheep.

You're not of my sheep. Not a part of the elect of God. You look religious, you look like all sorts of things, but you are not a part of the elect of God because you don't believe because the elect of God will believe.

Now, that's not my whole point. There's four or five sermons right there in that verse. But look at the next verse.

My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. Do you see that I hear people today saying, well, the reason why so many people are getting saved and not staying in the church is that we're not discipling one on one. My dear friend, we need to disciple one on one, but that won't keep anybody in the church.

What will keep them in a church being born again by the power of God? You won't be able to beat them out of this church. You'll offend them. I won't shake their hand and all sorts of other terrible things, but they'll stay.

Why? Because they're God's sheep. They're God's sheep, and even if they had enough of us and head down the road. They'll link up with another body, it's biblical.

It's true because they're not following man. They're following Christ and they're following of Christ because they were elect before the foundation of the world and they've been born again by the power of God and he who began a good work in them, even before the world was formed, will finish it when the world has been dissolved by flames. So are you a type of person that say, well, I was a part of that like the rich young ruler.

Can you imagine talking to him two years down the road? Someone comes up and witnesses to him and he says, oh, I tried that. Didn't work for me. My dear friend, this has nothing to do with pragmatism, has to do with the power of God.

You don't become a Christian because it works. You become a Christian because God changes your heart and you become a new creature who desires the things of God. Now, let's go to another test.

Verse 22, who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, the one who denies the father and the son. Whoever denies the son does not have the father and the one who

confesses the son has the father also that it is impossible to have a relationship with the father apart from the son. You say, well, what kind of test is this? The true Christian is going to acknowledge everything that the scriptures teach about the person of Jesus Christ.

They are going to accept fully that he is God and they are going to accept fully that he is God who became man for the sake of his people to die on a tree. They are going to embrace the fullness of Christ person. They're not going to be like some cult that springs up, almost every cult that springs up in the past has sprung up in the past and springs up today has a problem with the person of Jesus.

They'll either deny his deity or they'll deny his humanity. And then there's liberalism, which, of course, would not deny his humanity because they want Jesus to be a humanist. They deny his deity and they're wrong.

The Christian accepts Christ as God. And Christ as man, but that's not really a problem in the evangelical movement today, is that all those conservative evangelicals, none of them are standing up saying, well, I doubt his deity or I doubt his humanity. But let me throw something else at you to accept the fullness of the person of Jesus Christ.

We must also accept his lordship, his lordship. Isn't it amazing? Jesus is the only Lord who can't tell anybody what to do. My dear friend.

He can not only tell you what to do, he can make you do it and he won't apologize for violating your so-called free will. He lays his hand on the table and no man will pry it up. He raises his hand to swear by his own name and his own glory and no man will pull it down.

He opens a door no one will shut. He tells the sea stop and it obeys. You say, well, you know, I've taken Jesus as savior, but it's going to be a while before I take him as Lord.

Oh, my dear friend, you take him not as Lord, you take him not as savior. I always hear these fellows using, you know, the the revelation, chapter three, verse 20 passage. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

You hear my voice and you want just open that door and I'll come in. But unless you open that door, I won't come in. First of all, that verse has absolutely nothing to do with evangelism.

It's talking to Christ. It's talking about Christ and his relationship with the church had grown cold. It's not a verse for evangelism.

But I one time I was preaching and I just for the sake of it, I addressed that issue because there were a lot of men who were using that to evangelize and such. And I said, well, let me if you're going to use that verse, let's just throw something in. At least we can make it a little more biblical.

And they said, what? I said, here's what you tell them. If they've decided they want to that Jesus is on the other side of the door of their heart and they want to grab that doorknob and open it up, tell them that the moment they reach for that doorknob, they're going to hear somebody's throat clear. And the throat that's going to clear will be the throat of Christ and he will clear it.

He says, hold it one moment before you touch that doorknob and open this door. Let's get a few things straight. When I walk into this room, it's mine.

Everything in it is mine. Now, do you really want to open up that door? Because when I come in, I come in as Lord. Oh, now that you explained it that way, maybe I need to pray a little more.

Oh, maybe you do. Maybe you do. It's accepting the fullness of Christ's person.

Now, let's go on to test number nine, verse twenty nine of chapter two. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone. Also, who practices righteousness is born of him.

Now, look at that, I mean, it is not this is not rocket science. Look what he's saying. If you know that he's righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of him.

Remember when my first boy was born, they said not a doubt on the face of the earth who this boy belongs to. Looks like his father and acts like his mother, he is definitely belongs to you, too. There wasn't a doubt.

Wasn't a doubt at all. You know, God is righteous. Do you act righteously? What does it mean to act righteously? Righteousness is conformity to the law or will of God.

Does your life conform to the will of God as a style of life? Is that a reality? Are you desiring to know God's will and are you desiring to conform your life to that will? Now it goes on. Look in chapter three, verse three. Oh, look at this.

And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as he is pure. One of the greatest evidences that you have become a Christian is that you are purifying yourself. I want to tell you something.

I believe in the sovereignty of God, the sovereign grace of God, a thing called Calvinism. I do believe in that. But I want to tell you something.

Many people who embrace that doctrine become what I call antinomian. They begin to think, well, well, God is sovereign. If he wants me holy, he'll make me holy.

No, my friend. God commands those who are his to strive to be holy, to practice holiness, to seek after holiness. We are to pray.

We are to seek God that we might be holy. We are to read his word that we might be pure. We are to do spiritual exercises.

Whatever is given to us in Scripture, we ought to be seeking to be holy. Anybody tells you any other thing, they're selling you half a gospel. God is at work to make his people holy and he will do it.

But God uses the means. God uses means also to do that. And you, my friend, if you truly are a Christian, you are going to desire to be pure.

Now, let me ask you a question. Let's just lay out your life right here and right now. Let's just lay out a life of yours, a week in your life.

Where will I find you seeking to be pure? Now, be honest, I'm not angry, but I am passionate. Be honest. If we were to open up a week in your life or two weeks or a month, where would we see you seeking to be holy? Where would we see you separating from the things that God does not like and drawing unto the things that please God? Where would we see you weeping over sin? Where would we see you in

Scripture? Where would we see you memorizing? Would we see it at all? Do you desire to be pure? And is it reflected in your outward man? Is it reflected in your outward person? Do I look at you, young man? Or old man, for that matter, do I look at you just the way you are, the way you handle yourself, the way you dress? And do I see a person who is seeking to be pure? Dear sister, dear lady, dear girl.

Now, look, can anyone look at you and say there is a person who is seeking to be pure, seeking to be holy? I have that question for you, because I want to tell you something. You can judge a book by its cover, according to Jesus Christ. And it is terrible.

I have spent my life preaching around this country, and I want to tell you something. It is terrible when the guest preacher has to walk in with his head down because he's afraid that he will be caused to stumble by other believers. Can I look at you? You say, judge not, lest ye be judged.

And I say, twist not scripture, lest ye be like Satan. Can we look at your life? I'm not talking about necessarily you have to dress up like a Puritan. But my question is, is there modesty? Is there decency? Is there the beauty of the Lord or is there the sensuality of the world? Do you seek to be pure? He goes on and he says, everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

What is he trying to point out for us? That sin is not just some kind of little mistake. It's not just some little quirk in our personality. Sin is absolute, unflinching rebellion in the face of God.

It is breaking free and joining Antichrist. Never forget, he's called the man of what? Lawlessness. It is joining the ranks of hell.

It is bowing down to Satan and saying, your kingdom come, your will be done. Sin is a terrifying thing. And those who practice it as a style of life, habitually loving it, unflinching, their hearts are not broken.

What does it say? It's lawlessness. Verse five, you know that he appeared in order to take away sins and in him there is no sin. What's he saying? The same thing he has been saying, he's light and there's no darkness at all in him.

So if you're walking in darkness, you're not a part of him. He is righteous. Therefore, everyone who practices righteousness is of him.

And those who practice unrighteousness that live outside God's law and word, they're not of him. In him there is no sin. Those who habitually practice sin as a style of life do not know him.

He goes on and he said, verse six, no one who abides in him sins. No one who sins has seen him or knows him. Now, what does that mean? Again, it is not speaking.

It is not saying that the true Christian is sinless. But what it is saying is the true Christian is not involved in the habitual practice of sin. It will be a life of seeking God that, yes, there will be sin there that one can see.

It is the difference between, I don't know, I think I use this illustration maybe the first night. It is the difference between following me around with a photo, just a camera that takes snapshots and a video camera. If you were to follow me around with a camera that takes only snapshots and you could catch me one day when I'm nailing old tin back on a barn of ours.

And if any of you have ever lived on a farm, that tin is as hard as it can possibly be. And I'm up there nailing away. And all of a sudden I smash my thumb.

I throw the hammer. I fall off the ladder. I kick the dog and you take a picture.

See, I told you Paul Washer was not saved. You could take that one instance in my life of sin and you could use it to say he's lost. But if you followed me around with a video camera, you would get a much clearer picture.

Although you would see sin, you would see a style of life. That is different from one who habitually practices sin or is given over to it. And that's what he's talking about here.

Now, he says, verse seven. Now, this is so important. Little children, make sure no one deceives you.

The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. Now, just think for a moment, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Think, what are we so caught up with today in America? Well, he's not living like a Christian at all. But you can't say he's not a Christian. I know he's been carnal for five years, but now you don't judge.

You can't say he's not a Christian. I think John was so just his mind made clear by the Holy Spirit. Look at the way he addresses that.

Now, little children, what are little children so easily deceived? Little children, make sure no one deceives you with what with what I just said. He says, look, the one who practices righteousness is righteous. Just as he is righteous and the one who practices sin is of the devil.

For the devil has sinned from the beginning. You see, little children, don't be deceived. If your life is one of practicing unrighteousness.

It's because you're not righteous and you're not righteous because you're not of God. What do we see in your life? Do we see your life marked by righteousness? Now, the Son of God appeared for this purpose to destroy the works of the devil. That is a somewhat terrifying statement.

What he's saying is, now, listen, those of you who claim to be Christians, but you live a style of life that's marked by unrighteousness and ungodliness. God came, Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. He has done it and will do it.

Be careful you're not destroyed in the same wave of wrath that will fall upon this earth. You say, Brother Paul, you can't grow a church preaching like that. It is not my responsibility to grow a church.

It's my responsibility to preach the truth. Now, I want to finish up with one more test and we're going to bring this series to a close. This is in 1st John, chapter 5, verse 13 or verse 12.

He who has the Son has the life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. The one thing that will be most prevalent, I guess you could say, in the life of a true believer is this.

If you were to mention to them that their salvation somehow was a result of anything or anyone other than Jesus Christ, they would become nauseous. The true Christian is going to acknowledge that nothing in

their hands do they bring. It is only Christ, only Christ, only Christ.

So often, I have so much trouble with men, so much trouble, because they'll say, I believe in Christ. If you died, where would you go? I'd go to heaven. Why? Well, I'm trusting in Christ and... And what? And what? That and just killed any hope you ever had for salvation.

Let me give you an example. You've heard people use that illustration about the chair. What does it mean to trust, you know? And someone will say, well, that's a chair and I believe it's a chair, but that doesn't mean I'm trusting in it.

I'm not trusting in this chair until I sit down in the chair. And they say, that's a definition of faith. No, it's not.

Look at your feet. This chair falls. You spring back up.

This is faith. As one old Scottish preacher said, I plan to swing out into eternity on that scarlet thread, the person and work of Jesus Christ, old deacon in my church that I love so much, one of the godliest men I have ever known. Even when I was an unconverted little boy on the farm, I remember him coming over and fixing our hay wagon or fixing our baler or something.

And just everyone on the farm, our family, everything mad and cursing and everything else. And he would come just out of Christian love, just an opportunity to minister and fix everything and walk away. It's Ed Douglas.

He said that one time, as I've shared with you before, he was wondering, what does it mean to trust in Christ? And he's standing there in his hayloft and he said he looked up and it dawned on him and he said this, I'm going to trust only in your son. And if that is not enough to save me, then I'm going to hell because I'm not going to trust in any other person or thing. Christ and Christ alone.

Now, John wrote this in such a way, this last test, so that we would not get involved in creedalism. It is so easy to take even a great confession or a wonderful creed and say, I believe all that. I'm saved.

No, my friend. Is it a reality in your life? And is the person of Christ precious to you? I'm not praying that my boys become great evangelists or great missionaries or great preachers, because I've seen many of them that I couldn't even have fellowship with them. My desire is that Christ be most precious to them.

That Christ be most precious to them. And that Christ is not only all you need, he's all you desire. That should be our goal, to be consumed like a moth drawn into a flame.

Christ, I want to know Christ. I want to know Christ. I want to sit at his feet.

I want to gaze at his glory. I want Christ. Heaven for me is Jesus Christ.

And that one desire is so great that things like gates of pearl and streets of gold and shiny crowns mean nothing. I want to see him. I want to see him.

Now, we've gone over a bit, and I want to share with you something. Brother Robert, could you come forward and get me a microphone? I really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

Something has happened in my family that is a mighty thing. To some of you, it might seem scandalous. Those of you who are saints, it will be precious.

It will be precious. My wife has been married to me for 12 years. She has served with me through a war.

I mean a real war. Bombs, machine guns, people dying. She has shot down rivers with me, asleep in the bottom of a boat that was leaking, going through the very places where a boat is lost once a day.

She has preached with me in the jungles of Peru, traveled with me to Europe. Been a friend. Tremendous friend.

I've often looked at her life and saw such morality, discipline, virtue. But two days ago, my wife came to me and said, Paul, I'm lost. I don't know Christ.

I know I don't know Christ. All my life, since I was 14, I just wanted to be a missionary. I wanted to obey God.

All these things, and in my flesh, I have done as much as I can possibly do. I am wore out. I am frustrated.

I am bitter. And I'm lost. And I had been praying for the last three years.

I would say, Lord, I've never met a woman that would... Everyone always told her, You're the only person that could have ever married that man. Who else would have gone into a tent in the jungle and stayed there? Who else would have? But I knew all of her virtue and all of her thing, but it seemed like works. It seemed like a burden.

It seemed like doing the right thing. And I cried out to God, and I said, I never told her this, never, until the day she told me two days ago. And I used to cry out to God and say, God, she's more of a Christian than I am.

What will she be like if she ever gets saved? And so we got home, and God began dealing with her actually in a tremendous way when we were out preaching on the street in San Antonio. And that evening, I didn't say anything to her. I felt like the best thing I could do was get totally away.

I didn't want any emotion. I didn't want anything except the Spirit of God to work. And I went to bed and tried to fight with God throughout the night.

And early in the dark morning, she came to me and she said, The Lord has saved me. I know that He has saved me. And I know I belong to Him.

And it's no longer this is what I'm supposed to do, or I want to be good, or I want to be moral, or I want Him to even love me, or I want to look like this or look like that. I know that He's saved me. And I just want her to come up for a second and share why.

Well, simply this. This is exactly what I've been preaching. You can be so much.

And yet not know the Lord. The patience, the love that the Lord has had. Like Paul said, I have served as a missionary and I have witnessed to people.

I guess the only explanation for that is that the Lord can speak through me also. He can use an unbeliever even to carry the gospel if that's His will. And I grew up in a moral home and went to a Christian school, went to Bible college.

Desire felt in my heart. I thought at the time that I needed to serve the Lord. And it was just doing the right thing.

But there was no life in me. There was no desire for the Word. It was my quiet time or Bible reading was in my to-do list.

It wasn't, I need to do this. I just thirst for God or I need the Lord in my life like every breath. It was so duty-oriented always.

And it's so amazing that God allowed me to go for so long. And almost like a car, you know, you can take a brand new car and drive it until, you know, you run out of gas first. Then the red light comes on.

Then you need oil. Then you need all these things. And then it doesn't matter what you do.

If you don't do the right thing, it's not going to work. And that was me. I was doing the right thing and there was no life in me.

And I would not even mention that to Paul. I didn't know that he had noticed all these things. But I would doubt that I belonged to the Lord so many times and think, no, it's just me.

Maybe I'm having a bad day or all kinds of things. But I wouldn't sit down and look at the Scripture. I would just avoid that.

I would always think, oh, you're going to be such a bad testimony if you ever tell people that, how you feel. Or if you become a Christian, you know, you just need to be a good person. And it was unbearable for the longest time.

And I kept thinking all these things. And eventually the Lord kept telling me, you need to stop and pray. You need to stop and pray.

And when Paul would preach these messages, I would squirm in my seat and just know that I needed to get with God and pray and seek Him to really tell me what was in my heart. I had a lot of trouble with anger in my life towards a person that had hurt me for many years. And I wouldn't let go of that.

And I kept thinking, if I was a Christian, I wouldn't feel this way. I would at least cry out to God and say, Lord, help me to overcome this. But it was like a rebellion in my heart.

I don't want to overcome this. This person deserves my anger and my hate. And that verse that Paul preached on this morning about loving your brother and if you don't and you hate him, you're the darkness and you're blind.

That was me. Friday night when I read that verse, it was like, God, just let it all just come out. And I was able to see just my life from the beginning.

The good kid that had always done the right thing, had gone to church, been around good Christians, gone to camp. The missionary and all these things. And it was almost like Satan was also saying, no, but look, you've done all these good things.

That can't be nothing. And I also worried. I thought, well, if I do admit that I'm not a Christian, then this person that I have trouble with is going to say, well, no wonder.

You haven't been a Christian all these years. No wonder we don't get along or all kinds of stuff. And it was this horrible battle until God just told me, you need to repent.

There was no repentance in my prayer when I was 14. There was no just great need for God's forgiveness. There was no recognition of sin.

It was just, OK, sure, I want to go to heaven and I'll pray. And it was just amazing, just God's patience through all those years. And I can look back and honestly say, I really, I don't care.

Looking back at all that stuff, it meant nothing. But it means the world to me that God didn't spare anything to bring me to this point and let me know, you know, now I belong to him and that, you know, he has saved me. I want you to see that it's the most amazing thing.

Also, when people start to ask you these things and God begins to deal with their heart, our greatest tendency to jump in there and try to push the thing along. We turn everything upside down and ruin it. And it's hard just to obey the Lord when he says, shut thy mouth, old man.

And cry out to me. And, you know, I'm so amazed that this has happened in this time of my life and her life. And I am just so happy with what the Lord has done.

Someone just the other night, it was like, what's what are people going to think? What are people going to say? And my answer was this. I really don't care because I know that a genuine work of salvation has occurred. And please understand, this is exactly what I'm talking about.

It's not just the rebel that calls himself a Christian and hates God, but it can be an extremely moral person and a person who wants to do everything right and everything. But they know not the Lord and the commandments of God are burdensome to them. And I'm not necessarily going to have an invitation tonight, except for this.

If this has dealt with you, if you're struggling with this, please come talk to me tonight. One of the pastors. If you want to go talk to my wife, if you're a lady and you're saying, man, what she said was just, it's me.

Again, God loves you and we love you. And I want to tell you that I just couldn't be any more pleased with what God has done. And I think it's a lesson to all of us with regard to our children and the way we should handle them.

We have to be very, very careful that we don't turn them into just good children who know not the Lord. But saved children who desire the things of God. Let's pray.

Father, I would pray that your hand would be upon us all. With great grace that you would save the lost and encourage the brethren. Lord, I thank you so much for what you have done for my house.

For my house. You are a faithful God. In Jesus name.

Amen. God bless you.

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