

Clothed in Christ (Part 1)

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being conformed to the image of Christ and having the fragrance of Christ in our lives, rather than just following external rules and regulations.

Duration: 49:47

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Galatians 3:27

Topics: "Clothed in Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying the prophets and the teachings of Paul in order to understand the depth and power of God's message. He highlights that true prophets of God may deliver strong and challenging messages, but they always offer hope and redemption. The speaker then reflects on his own journey and the realization that ministry and accolades mean nothing if he does not see Jesus Christ reflected in his life. He urges the audience to focus on becoming like Jesus rather than just doing things for Him. The sermon concludes with a reminder that our problems stem from our character and lack of emphasis on becoming like Jesus.

Transcript

Good morning. No, I'm not preaching. As all of our members are certainly aware, our church has a strong history of being a place where you can come and consistently hear the Word of God preached from this pulpit.

In line with that history and in the absence of our pastor, the elders have invited Brother Paul Washer to deliver the message this morning and in the evening service. Brother Paul Washer is head of HeartCry Missionary Society and staff member of Waldo Baptist Church in Metropolis, Illinois. Those of us who know him will remember him as a former member of Christ Memorial and missionary to Peru that our church supported for many years.

I have known Brother Paul for the last 15 years and can testify that he has a sincere heart for God and is dedicated to preaching his word. Please join the elders in welcoming Brother Paul to Austin and to High Point Baptist Church. Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Galatians, the book of Galatians chapter three, verse 27.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free man.

There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Let's pray. Father, I come before you in the name of your son, and I know that apart from him I would have no part with you.

And as always, Father, you know me. You know who I am and you know what I am, that I stand in need of grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy. I pray that in this day, Lord, you would prove yourself wise, prove yourself strong in using this day, the weakest among us.

Lord, I trust thee that you have been an ever-present help for me and that you have done so for your own glory and because you are my love. Father, I will preach a message today that I myself have trouble living. Lord, do not allow me to be in the hypocrisy of making people believe I'm something I'm not.

For I know, Lord, there are no such thing. There is no such thing as a great man of God, only weak, pitiful, faithless men of a great and merciful God. But, O Lord, if you would provide the power through your Holy Spirit to change my life through this message and to make me more conformed to the image of Christ through this message, Lord, I would greatly appreciate it.

Help us all, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. Paul is speaking out of the book of Galatians, a book in which the church is being attacked by Judaizers, legalists. Now, make no mistake about it.

There is a need for law and rules and wisdom in Scripture. We have the law of Christ. We have the commandments of God.

All these things are true. But I'll tell you something. It is so easy to cross all the T's and dot all the I's.

It is a quite different thing to be clothed with the scent, with the life of Jesus Christ. Usually, when there is no power of God, we go to rules and we say, because we do this or don't do that, we're spiritual. My dear friend, the mark of spirituality is the fragrance of Christ in our lives and the fragrance of Christ in every aspect of who we are as a person.

I have spent many, many years of my life preaching the gospel around the world. I have known a measure of success, people would say. But I want you to understand something, that preaching and ministries and great things are not the mark of success.

It's the fragrance of Christ on your life. It's the love that you have for the people of God. It's the love.

Once I was preaching and after a move of the power of God in a certain place, a lady came up to me and she said, surely you are a man of God. I said, have you ever seen me with my wife? She said, what? I said, how can you say I am a man of God by listening to one puny sermon? You must watch, you must see, you must look. Any fool can preach, but to be like Jesus Christ, that's the question of my life.

I have got to the point where ministry matters very, very little to me. I want you to know it matters very, very little to me. Because if I look in the mirror with accolades hanging off my shoulders and medals around my neck, but I look in the mirror and I do not see Jesus Christ, and I must confess to you that many times I look in the mirror of God's word and I do not see Jesus Christ in Paul Washer.

Then what does all the ministry matter? What does all the noise and the banging of drums matter? The question for me is this, am I conformed to the image of Christ? And not just in the realm of church. I know

how to put on a show with my wife and with my children, with your wife and your children, your husband and your children, those around you, those closest to you. That will determine, that will determine, are you clothed with Jesus Christ? This is the challenge.

God can win the world. God can do all sorts of things. God does not need me, but he commands me to be like his son.

And that is all. And my dear friend, that is enough. That is enough.

Now, what does it mean to be clothed with Jesus Christ? And we're going to go back to our principal text now. I want us to go to Matthew chapter five. Look in verse 13, Matthew chapter five, verse 13.

You are the salt of the earth. Now, I want to put special attention just for a moment on something. You are.

It is an affirmation. He does not say that the Christian is to become. He does not even say in this point that the Christian is to act like he says you are.

What we have to realize today, there's a very important word in philosophy. It comes from a Greek word, ontos. It is ontology.

It is the study of being. Today, we are too much about what we do and not enough about who we are, what we are, what am I? Who am I? Am I like Christ? Am I this in my own life? And even before you today, I appear much more spiritual than I actually am. It's not about what I do.

It's about who I am being in the very depths, the core of my person. Says 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. This text terrifies me.

It truly does there. Now, we all know of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, but at the same time, we cannot deny that throughout Scripture we are warned to be careful. We are warned to be careful.

Now, when this text is usually preached, it's all about doing something. We're the salt of the earth. So as the salt of the earth, we need to get out of the salt shaker.

We need to be this influence in the world. We need to do all these things. I would like to submit to you that that's not the contextual interpretation of the text.

When you pull a verse out and simply use it as a cliché, lose its meaning. I want us to look at what he's saying. He says you are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? Now, the point that he is making is this.

Now, I'm not a I'm not a chemist. As a matter of fact, I didn't do very well in chemistry at the University of Texas. But there are certain properties, elements, if you will, to salt.

If you take away those elements, you might and replace even put something better in their place, you might have a fine thing, but you no longer have salt. There are certain characteristics of salt. And if you take those characteristics away, it's no longer salt.

So what is he telling us? There is certain there are certain characteristics to being Christian that cannot be replaced. They are principal and necessary elements of what it means to be Christian, and those things

cannot be replaced without making the name Christian, without meaning. Now we ask ourselves, well, what are these necessary elements to Christian, to being Christian, not to doing Christian things, but what are the necessary elements to being Christian? Now, this is not how do we enter into the Christian life.

We enter into the Christian life through faith in Jesus Christ. But once we're there, what is it really all about? It seems like every week it comes down the pike, some new teaching about what Christianity is really all about. But what is it really all about? According to Jesus, well, he's just laid for us that there are certain characteristics to Christian, to being Christian, that if those characteristics are removed, oh, my friend, as the English say, you might have a fine thing, but you don't have Christianity.

So what are they now? Do we have to just ramble all through the Bible and pick out certain verses? No. Again, context. What does it mean to be Christian? What does God want from you? Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the gentle. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness. I have just described the clothing, the fabric, the fragrance of Jesus Christ. I am so tired of just doing, so tired of having my Christian life reduced down to how I perform and what I do.

Jesus Christ comes to me. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. And He tells me this, it is not what you do, for I can raise up rocks to do what you do and do better than you do.

But it is, Paul, the seal I have set upon you, the decree and the hope, is that you be conformed to my image. That you be conformed. That is what He desires.

And I submit to you today that all the problems, if not all, most of the problems in your life come from who you are not, from your character, who you are as a person. Our squabbles in our marriages come from fleshly outbursts. They come from not reflecting Jesus Christ.

The problem between brothers, the problem in life, the problem, the disruption of our own conscience, everything comes down from we're not putting enough emphasis where emphasis belongs and it is on becoming like Jesus. Everybody wants to do something when we ought to be wanting to be something. Now I want you to look at something that is very important in verses 1 and 2. When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

He opened His mouth and began to teach them saying, now there is something very important here, something extremely important. Have you ever been to Jerusalem? There just aren't a whole lot of mountains. If we were in Colorado right now, this church most definitely would not be called High Point.

You're not really sitting on a very high point. There are not many mountains in Jerusalem. Yet Matthew, inspired by the Holy Spirit, uses the word mountain.

He says, Christ came up on a mountain. And why is He doing that? I'll tell you exactly why He's doing it. Matthew was written to the Jews and Matthew is telling the Jewish people, now listen to me, the one prophesied, the prophet, the one greater than Moses has come.

He's gone up on the mountain. He opens His mouth and God says, this is My Son, hear ye Him. What Matthew is doing for us is He's saying, the one greater than Moses has come with a law greater than the law of Moses.

He's not going to lower the bar. He's going to raise it. He's going to raise it.

But He's going to raise it, not in a rule keeping, legalistic sort of fashion. As we go through the teachings of Christ, He's going to raise it in this way. It's going to come down to one thing.

There's an old pastor who, well he's not that old, if he hears this message he'll be mad at me. But there's a pastor who's been a mentor of mine for years. Now I know men who have PhDs all over the world and everything else.

This man pastors a church of about 80 people. God's got His hand on his life like no one I've ever met. And he always tells me this.

He'll tell me, Paul, in the New Covenant, love is not a thing. It is THE thing. And everything Christ commands us comes down to this royal law of loving God and loving your neighbor and being conformed to the image of Christ, not on a mountainside where it's easy, but in the context of a bunch of people who are not very easy to love.

This greater than Moses, this captain of the hosts of God, is now standing before us. The scribe of scribes, the teachers. Let me just share with you something.

Jesus makes this quite clear. There's never been a real teacher except one. And it's Christ.

There's never been a real prophet. There are all types of one greater than themselves. Christ.

There has never been on this earth a real king except for Christ. Hear ye Him. Recognize His voice and hear ye Him.

He speaks to you through His Word. But this king is going to come to you with words quite different than you ever imagined. Words that at first will seem almost easier than the law of Moses.

And then as you grow, you'll begin to understand these are the most difficult sayings I have ever heard. They cost more for me than the law of Moses ever could. Let me just give you a brief example.

Law of Moses says tithe. Law of Christ says if your brother's in need, sell everything you have and give it to him. Law of Moses says give God a day.

Jesus said give Him every moment of your life. Every beat of your heart that does not beat unto the glory of God is apostate. You see how the standard's raised? Yeah, we're throwing out all the elementary principles of the law.

Because why? There's no need for shadows when the light has come. When the star and the sun have appeared and Christ is both bringing light to day and night. Now the rule is this.

Love each other as Christ loved you dying on a tree. That's why so many people would rather go back to rule keeping. Now let's look at these characteristics.

We won't have time to go through all of them, but maybe we'll get through some of them. Blessed. You know, I've studied this word.

I remember about 150 years ago when I was in seminary. We had to do this entire sermon on the mountain Greek and looking at this word and sitting there with Greek scholars and such and no one ever could really come up with a meaning. Well, I've got one.

It's not very proper. It's not very eloquent. But the term blessed just seems to be God's face looking my way.

Pleased. That's enough. Why do we think that blessed has to mean all these things? Isn't God enough? A dear friend of mine was preaching in Romania and it was speaking about heaven.

And I was sitting there, I cried through the whole message. I just, I sat there and I go, this is wonderful because the whole thing was the glories of Christ. That's all he talked about was the glories of Jesus Christ.

The presence of Jesus Christ. The life of Jesus Christ. And when he was done, a man raised his hand and said, this is wonderful, but what else do we get? And I saw that old preacher, his heart just break in two.

You've understood nothing. You've understood nothing. Blessedness is God looking down upon you.

My little boy, Ian, is three years old. He doesn't do a whole lot right. But when he does do something right, I can be assured he's going to look up.

Did you see that, Dad? Look hard because it probably won't happen again. Blessedness. Divine favor.

Divine favor. This is my son. I'm pleased.

Big cars and fine houses and prosperity teaching is kind of weak in light of just having God look at you with light in His face. Another way you could look at it is take all the blessings, all the good things of God that come down from the Father of lights, put them all in a bag. And that's what this means.

That's what this means. How much blessedness do you and I miss out on? Not because we haven't done 10 things to the victorious Christian life, not because we haven't had our quiet time. But we miss out on it because we have not grown in character.

We have not grown in conformity to Jesus Christ. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Poor.

We don't like that word. We live in the Roman Empire. We brag about steel and metal, strength and brawn, power.

Don't tread on me. Pride, wealth, fame, reputation, status. Some of you have possibly tasted of that.

Doesn't taste very good. Poor, humble, broken, servant, unassuming. Someone you would just pass over quickly.

Poor in spirit. What does it mean? Well, let me just read a passage to you that is one of my, as my little boy says, most favoritist verses in the whole Bible. I think I remember where it is.

Thus says the Lord, heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is the house you could build for me? He says, I don't need a thing from you. Now, to some of you, that might be offensive.

To me, that makes me very, very happy. And where is the place that I may rest for my hand made all these things? Thus, all these things came into being, declares the Lord. But to this one, I will look to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at my word.

You see, if it was any other way, there'd be no hope for me. I don't know about you, but for me, there'd be no hope. If he said, I will look to this one, the one with an exemplary prayer life and who knows the word of God like the back of his hand.

If he said that, there'd be no place for me to go. If he said the one bold and courageous who can stand against the enemies without fear. Again, there would be no place for me to go.

If he said the man of great faith, able to believe great things, then I'd have to go somewhere else. That's not what he says. He says to this one who's humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at my word.

And why is he this way? Because he knows he's not. He knows he's not spiritual as he ought to be. He knows he's not right.

He looks at God's word. And he says, my failings, my shortcomings, my everything about me. And yet faith causes him not to fall into despair because he looks into the face of Christ.

I had a seminary student write me a while back and he said, and I know this young man, he's very godly. It seems he's immature like young men are, but he's got God's hand on his life. And he said, Brother Paul, I'm just so unholy and unrighteous and so ignorant of the things of God.

And I have the gift of mercy. So I wrote him back and I said, young man, you are much more ignorant and much more unholy than you now know. And he wrote me back and said, thanks, I think.

And I called him up and I said, listen, I said, I've looked at your life and much of the way you live convicts me. Of how as an older prophet, I have become dull. I said, young man, you're probably more spiritual than I am.

We'll know probably about it. But I said, young man, I'm happier than you are. And he said, I don't understand.

Now, listen to me, this might set some of you free. Do you ever get up in the morning and you have your quiet time and feel the presence of God and you're studying the word and you seem to God seems to speak to you and then, you know, you go out and you witness to everybody and you're obedient and and boy, you just you did it right that day. I mean, you were just on top of the world.

You loved your wife. You didn't kick the cat. You're just you're walking with God and you're so full of joy at the end of the day.

And the next day you get up while you overslept, you shouldn't have watched that program the night before. You should have been in the word you didn't witness when you had an opportunity. And there's a real sense in which you're filled with sorrow.

You know what that is? Idolatry, you have become the source of your own joy. Your joy comes from you. And your continuous work, my joy comes from the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Now, I want to be obedient. I want to witness. I want to love my wife.

And there is a real sense in which the Holy Spirit convicts me when I do not do those things. But the point is, poverty of spirit is a wonderful thing. Because when you realize, it's like I used to tell young preachers, I'd say, in order to preach, you've got to have the power of God on your life.

Now, I tell them in order to tie your shoes, you have to have the power of God on your life. You cannot breathe. Sometimes I get invited to church growth conferences, not very often.

But they'll talk about all these great things they're going to do. And then I'll get up and I'll say, let me ask you a question. I go, from where does every breath come? From God.

From where does every beat of your heart, from where does it come? From God. Oh, so you characters out here, all you pastors and preachers and evangelists and missionaries with all these great plans, now tell me something. You can't even breathe.

Your heart will not even beat. Except for the power of God on your life. Apart from any measure of grace in my life, I will be here to you today.

Nothing more than a seething demonstration of egotistical flesh. That's all I will ever be. I was reading through Galatians this morning and I was so convicted.

I was reading through Galatians and it talked about dissension and disputes, things like that. And I realized that sometimes I do that with my wife. And it just showed me, it wasn't that, well, you know, we just have a problem or we don't agree.

In fact, the matter is, I'm in the flesh. I'm in the flesh and I'm not relying upon the power of God. And the reason why I'm not is because I'm not poor in spirit.

Someone says, well, I'm poor in spirit. How much do you pray? How much do you tremble? How much do you rely upon the wisdom of God revealed in His Word? Poverty of spirit. But isn't it wonderful, church? Listen to me.

Isn't it wonderful that you don't have to be something big? Actually, what you have to be is something low, something broken and humble. Take the back seat. Wash the feet.

Be timid and afraid of any task put before you so that it drives you to your knees. Realize when you wake up in the morning that I shall not move to my left or my right one quarter of an inch because without the power of God upon my life, surely I will fall. That's what the passage means in the prayer.

Lead us not into temptation. It's a recognition of weakness and a recognition of a tremendous need of grace, of grace. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom.

Oh, what a place. What a place. You know, back when I was a young man, not so much preaching about it anymore, but people used to preach all the time about crowns.

You know, crowns. You're going to get your crowns. There's this crown of evangelism.

There's this crown of this and a crown of that. I always wondered, would I really want to walk throughout all of eternity with like 400 pounds of crowns on my head? Do you remember when Jesus said the first will be last and the last will be first? When the first is last and last is first, there is no first or last. You draw a rabbinical circle.

I am an itinerant Bible preacher. That's all I am. No one's ever going to know your name either.

You're not big. You're not Charles Spurgeon. You're not George Whitefield.

You're not a great theologian. You haven't swum across swamps in the Amazon to preach the gospel. You're just you.

So what does that mean, this kingdom of heaven? Is it a place that you almost ought to dread because, well, there's a pecking order there? You know, there's these big shots and then there's you. You know, there's all places. There are places that all of us can't go.

You realize that. I mean, I remember I was no good at sports. You know, I never got picked for the team.

Felt bad about that. There's certain places I don't go because I don't have the reputation. I don't have the money.

There's all these places where I'm shut out. There's this pecking order in this world where I always have to take at least fifth or sixth or seventh place or down at the bottom or something. And many people think that that same thing is going to be carried over into heaven.

Well, you know, when I get to heaven, I won't even see George Whitefield or Charles Spurgeon or anybody like that because they'll be so close to the throne and I'll just have a cabin on a hillside somewhere. Do you really think heaven is that demonic? Kingdom of heaven brings such joy to me because it is a place where the poor and spirit finally find rest and absolute acceptance. Let me tell you something.

If you're a Christian, you finally walk through a door where there's no longer any pecking order and where you no longer have to be anybody and you don't have to score a perfect score or anything else because everybody is only there because of Jesus Christ. That is a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful place to be. I had a pastor friend of mine one time is also a teacher, a wonderful Bible teacher, and he's looked at a group of of us who were young students and he said, how many of you have been called to preach and raised our hands? He says, first of all, he says, I'm not the prophet or the son of a prophet, but I can conclude this from your calling into the ministry.

There's something terribly wrong with every one of you. He could not have spoken any clearer with regard to me. Broken people.

At first you get into Christianity and you think, boy, you know, I need to do this and I need to do that. And well, there are things we need to do. But then you get this idea that, well, the kingdom of heaven isn't much different than the kingdoms of this world.

They've been shut out of most of them. My dear friend, it's not that way. The young person baptized here today has the same status and glory as the greatest missionary who ever walked on the face of the earth.

I like that. Maybe if you're in first place, you don't like that. But if you're in last place where I usually come in, you like that a whole lot.

Freedom from these morbid chains that the world puts upon us and find no place at all in genuine Christianity. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Wow.

You say, well, I can't wait. Well, then don't because he's talking about now. Oh, I can't wait till I get there.

You're already there. It doesn't mean that because you're already there, there's no trials, no sicknesses, no struggling with finances, no other things like that. It means this because you're already there means this.

This is eternal life. You know him now and he knows you and that is enough. That's not blessed are those who mourn.

Why are we so in our generation of wanting to have self-esteem? We are so afraid of this word to mourn so afraid. Oh, my dear friend, God wants us to be whole and complete, but we will never be whole and complete by molding some false self-esteem in us. We will be molding complete as we look into his face and forget about ourselves and look to him.

But what does this mean to mourn? Blessed are those who mourn. Let's say that I have a statue of this man right here, a stone statue. I can walk up to that stone statue and reach under that tender part of the human arm and pinch with all my might and what's going to happen? Absolutely nothing.

Why? He's inanimate. It's a stone. It's a human being.

It has no life in it at all. But now if I reach over and grab that man by the back of his arm, that man in the flesh right there, and I pinch with all my might, I am sure we will have a fantastic reaction out of our brother. Why? Living.

Mourning could be the greatest evidence of true conversion. Simply means this, a sensitivity to sin. First of all, your own.

And second of all, the sin of this sinful fallen world around you. I was preaching a while back in Tennessee and some people got sort of angry with me. I preach in a lot of places once.

And they actually, these group of ladies, and they were leaders, they came up to me and they said, Brother Paul, we're having a real spiritual battle here, just a debate. We're kind of we're in division and we don't know what really God would think about this. And we just wanted to hear from you.

And I said, well, I'll do my best. What's the question? And I'm bracing myself for some tremendous theological question that would probably take hours of study. And they said, we don't know whether or not it's the will of God that we take our daughters to a Britney Spears concert.

I looked at him. I said, you're all lost. You're lost and you're going to hell.

Now, I said that. Please understand, I said that in a nice way, OK? I mean, but the fact of the matter is, I said, you have no sensitivity. Sensitivity to sin.

You know, one of the marks of true Christianity, according to 1 John chapter 1, is not that the believer is sinless, but that the believer recognizes sin. Let me give you a perfect example. There have been times here when the pastor has preached.

I'm sure because he's a man who preaches the word of God. When the pastor has preached and the Holy Spirit has been moving in people's lives and begin to deal with people about sin. Is that not true? That's happened.

Isn't it amazing? And if there are pastors here, they're all recognized that this is true. Isn't it amazing that when a pastor preaches a message and God begins to do a special sovereign work dealing with sin in the lives of the congregation, it is always the most holy, most devoted and most godly people in the church who come forward weeping and broken over sin. And it is always the most ungodly, carnal, wicked church members that sit back there cold as a stone.

Why is that? We're seeing the difference between church membership and conversion. The one thing about a believer is they will be sensitive to sin. Now, sometimes as believers, we can become dull and we will need the rebuke of another and all sorts of things like that.

But in the end, we will have a sensitivity to sin. And God, who began a good work in us, will finish it and bring us to mourning, even if he has to use extraordinary means. I remember it was probably 15 years ago, I was preaching a sermon and I want to tell you it was powerful.

And when I finished the sermon, a dear brother, an older Christian in the congregation, I stepped down and he said, Paul, he looked at me like this. He said, you preach the truth today and you did it in the flesh and you need to get down on your knees right now and ask God to forgive you because God did not place a whip in your hand to kill the people of God. You know what? He was absolutely right.

About me, and I didn't see it when I walked down those steps, but I saw it when he told me that. Let me ask you a terrifying question. When was the last time you wept over your sin? You say, well, I haven't fallen.

My friend, no one falls, we slide. You say, well, I haven't done the big stuff. Everything's big stuff.

Being insensitive to my wife, needing to hear I love you and a hug before I walk out the door is big stuff. When was the last time you wept? When was the last time you were broken? When? I can only draw two conclusions. If you haven't been one, you're perfect or two, your heart, like mine does many times has become dull.

Blessed are those who mourn. Now, why are they blessed? This is very, very important, and we're going to end here. I was hoping to get through a lot more, but we'll stop here.

Why is a person blessed? Now, in the scriptures, we understand there's a repentance unto life and a repentance unto death. We know that Peter had a repentance unto life. Judas had a repentance unto death, was not mixed with faith and all sorts of other things.

But here's the wonderful thing. If you study the prophets, man, sometimes they said things to Israel that literally I don't feel comfortable even speaking about in mixed company. And if you look at it in Hebrew, you're really going to see some fantastic things that they said.

Even Paul, the apostle in the book of Galatians, makes a few statements that literally will curl your toes. But here's the wonderful thing about the mark of a true prophet of God speaking a true message of God. He might come down like a hammer.

He might burn like a fire. But God will never leave his people without saying this. Come to me and I will take it all away.

Come to me and I will fix you. Come to me. I am not done with you.

Come to me. Come to me. This is how the Christian life works.

Now, this is about as close I get to a dramatic sermon as you're going to see. You begin the Christian life. How do you begin it? You begin it with a revelation.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is revealed to you primarily through preaching. You see God's holiness if you've never seen it before, which causes you to see your sin as you've never seen it before. But in that revelation, you are not brought to despair because although you see a revelation of God and his holiness and a revelation of your sin, you also see a revelation of the grace of God in the face of Christ.

And you do not fall into despair, but you run to Christ, the city of refuge. All right. And he makes all things new.

All right. Now, after you become a Christian, here's a unique thing that will happen. You will think you're about the holiest thing going.

I remember as soon as I became a Christian, I would go out on 6th Street and preach. Man, I thought I was the prophet. Prophet.

Muppet, maybe. The prophet. You know, and I'd look at preachers who wouldn't preach on the streets and all these things and fasting and prayer.

And boy, I thought I was just it. Until God began to do what God always does. He began to work death in my life.

He began to pull back and show me what I really am. That's why if you talk to a man of God who's walked with God for 60 years, he will see himself as much more unholy now than he did when he first started. But he will be happier now.

And this is how it works. As you begin to walk with Christ and you truly begin to understand him and understand his character and his grace, you begin to see as you walk with him more and more of the holiness of God. You begin to see more and more of your own failings, which leads you to greater and greater and deeper mourning.

But you also see greater, greater revelations of his grace that picks you up higher than you've ever been. And you continue that all throughout your Christian life so that at the end of your days, you are more sensitive over sin. And you are mourning greater over the small things that you would have even dismissed when you began.

But at the same time, you're happier. Because it is all in the face of Christ. It is all Christ.

Just Jesus. Just Jesus. I had a young man one time and I didn't want to put out his fire.

He said, Jesus is all we need. I said, young man, Jesus is all we have. That's all.

Now, I'm not going to give an invitation. This is why. I give invitations, but I'm not going to give one now.

This is why. I don't want you to take 45 minutes worth of preaching and think that the Spirit of God is done with you because psychologically you've left it on an altar. I don't want you to leave it on an altar.

I want you to take this home. I want the Holy Spirit to bother you. I want Him to deal with you.

I want Him to be looking back at you every time you see your reflection. I want you to sit down and ponder these things. I don't want you just to superficially listen to this and let it go, walk out the door and go eat it, you know, Ruby Tuesdays.

I want you to meditate on these things. I mean, after all, if I had to suffer this stuff all morning, surely you can suffer it for an afternoon. Pray with your husband.

Pray with your wife. Gather your children together. Think about this.

Sit silent. The psychologist Jung one time said that hurry is not of the devil, it is the devil. And I don't agree with him because I believe in a personal devil, but he had a truth in there.

Your hurried busyness truncates spiritual life. So I'll pray and just ask God to help us because we need help. We need help.

Let's pray. Father, please help us. Help us to be like Christ in the hidden places.

Help us to be like Christ among the people who know us best. Whatever it takes, Lord, and it may take a lot. Make us like Jesus.

In Jesus name. Amen.

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