

Funeral Service / Mike Morrow

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer reflects on the life and legacy of Mike Morrow, celebrating his faith and the impact he had on others while offering comfort in the face of grief.

Duration: 1:09:07

Scripture: Exodus 34:28, Psalm 73:24, Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:38-39, Philippians 1:23-24

Topics: "Funeral"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of guarding the gift of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He highlights that the gospel is the most precious and powerful thing entrusted to humanity. The speaker encourages the audience to be faithful and true to the gospel, cherishing it and passing it along to future generations. He also reflects on the legacy of the pastor who delivered the sermon, highlighting the impact he had on the church and urging the congregation to continue his ministry. The sermon references the book of 2 Timothy, where Paul admonishes his protégé to fan into flame the gift of God and not be ashamed of the testimony about the Lord. The speaker concludes by quoting from a treasured volume, emphasizing the victory over death that comes through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Dear, dear family, and church family, loved ones, friends. Oh, we certainly look, what a loss. And yet at the same time, I know you'll agree on Brother Mike's part, what a gain.

As frail as our brother was, he's that much stronger now, and well, and rejoicing in heaven. I said I wasn't going to say it, but I'm just going to tell you. We were driving down on I-65, and we were kind of following the tractor-trailer, and the trailer load was these big tricycles and wagons and whatnot, and they were all different colors, and I thought it was a carnival, something like that.

And as we passed it, my wife read the sign on the side, and it said, Mike's Playland. And immediately my thoughts went heavenward. Amen.

I don't have to say more. There's a better hope, amen, beyond this life for the redeemed. He's no longer in a strait betwixt two.

Amen. You know, Paul really spoke Brother Mike's life when he said, for to me, to live is Christ, but to die is gain. And indeed I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, to be with Christ, which is far

better.

Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And he gave it everything he had right down to the wire, didn't he? What a brother, if I ever had a brother like Mark. And I'm honored to stand in this spot today.

And I think of two verses that just, they're precious, and they're summary verses of our brother. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel all the way through.

Amen. And afterward receive me to glory. We were never in conversation very long before he would kind of lean into me and say, Brother Rob, I want to ask you something.

And I knew it was on right then. And I was the one about to learn. Amen.

And what a blessing. My brother helped me to walk right, helped me to get back in line, helped me to go forward. And the other verse, all of you know it.

You can say it with me clearly. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in it. And I say, Hallelujah.

I thought about what a legacy our brother left to Susan and Ben and Missy and Jason and grandchildren and the daughters-in-law and the son-in-law and mom. He left a, just going to give you one, I had a whole bunch of them, okay? But he left a legacy of righteousness. And by that I mean the two types of righteousness.

The positional righteousness that he so embraced and so relished in the Lord Jesus Christ. He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Precious righteousness.

You knew he believed that. You knew he enjoyed that. You knew that he faithfully preached that.

And that's what made him so dear to all of us. But then there was the living out kind of righteousness. That he would be the first to acknowledge was Christ in him.

Amen? He modeled Christ as Christ lived out through him. He lived that righteousness, delighted in that righteousness, abhorred anything that would in any way hold him back from or veer him off from that practical righteousness which modeled Christ and glorified Christ. And he left a clear trail of righteousness and would want that to be what you remember preeminently.

That is the righteousness of Christ above all. And then for us to follow on. Amen? And not to veer off to the right or the left in this day.

And you know, there was a little volume that Brother Mike and I both treasured. And I will take the liberty to read from it at this time. I think it speaks to the occasion.

Yes, it certainly is a blessing to me. And I trust it will be a help to you. You put on Christ's atonement for your sins and his obedience unto death for your justification.

In your mind, you put on Christ. In your memory and your conscience. So you will have living comforts in a dying hour.

Your heart will rejoice in Jesus. And you will sing victory even in death. If Jesus be with you, you will say with David, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

And with Paul you will take up this triumphant challenge. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall death? No. Death is yours.

Death is your conquered enemy. It cannot hurt you. Death is your covenant friend in Christ, commissioned by him to summon you from a world of vanity and woe and from a body of sin and death to the blissful regions of glory and immortality to meet your Lord and be forever with him.

And having Christ on your mind, your memory, put on Christ on your mind, your memory, your conscience. If you do have Christ in these, you will take a smiling leave of this world and say as good old Simeon with Christ in his arms did, Lord, now let us now thy servant depart in peace according unto thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. What a pearl of glory lies hid in the gospel field.

I'll never forget, I was thrilled one time when Brother Mike, I don't know which one of us mentioned it first, but we were both reading the same volume about the gospel. And here we've been preaching for years and years. But I tell you, the gospel is more precious in these years now than it's ever been in the past.

More and more and more precious. And the word of God, more alive than ever before to us. And I know many of you feel the same way.

We both just happened to be reading the same volume, not realizing either one had it. And it was about the gospel, I think, in Technicolor. It sounds kind of modern, but boy, it was good.

Good, rich gospel stuff. Amen? And what a pearl of glory lies hid in the gospel field. What a jewel of great price is in the word revealed.

Who can set its virtues forth? How exquisite its glories are. It's inestimable worth what mortal can declare. When this goodly pearl I wear, and put this jewel of the gospel, and put this jewel on, I shall covet nothing here but tread these trifles down.

Then my heart will be above. My joy and treasure will be there. I shall walk in light and love, and with my Lord appear.

Amen? Amen. My brother loved the gospel, and I know all of us can say he made us love the gospel, because our brother loved the Lord of the gospel. Amen? The Lord Jesus Christ is all in all.

And you didn't have to be with him very long to realize that he was a lover of Jesus Christ. And oh my, I so, because of Mike Morrow, I so long to be more and more a lover of Christ. Amen.

The legacy that he leaves with his family, all of his friends and loved ones, with the church, is love Christ and the gospel. Honor him in the word of God above all. And family, I know you know this, but we are going to be praying for you.

I know it's a difficult, difficult time. And I'm honored to have a part and say goodbye to my buddy. And God bless you.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you for your infinite mercy toward us and for the way that you put things together in our lives. Thank you for bringing us to the end of ourself, saving us by your grace.

We thank you for Brother Mike and the influence he's had in all of our lives. Now he's going on. He's with you.

And we rejoice with our brother in that. But Lord, it's going to be difficult for family. We just pray that the precious riches of the treasures of God's word and God's peace might be their portion in an undeniable way.

I pray you'll bless my brothers coming on and all that they want to say from their hearts. But we all say from our hearts together, bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name.

Thank you for Mike Morrow. In Jesus' name. Amen.

How the mighty have fallen, said David of Jonathan. He continued his lament, I am distressed for thee. My brother Jonathan, very pleasant has thou been unto me.

Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. Besides my wife, I have had no closer friend than Michael Morrow. Our friendship was at a heart level.

It surpassed the common pleasantries and superficial platitudes that most relationships depend on. We agreed on much, and we could disagree on much. Still, no loss of affection or appreciation for the other.

In this, he is a friend to stick up closer than a brother. On hearing of Michael's passing, I was overwhelmed with an emotion I have never remembered experiencing. I've lost my parents, I've lost my grandparents, but I felt much like what Andrew Bonar recorded when he worded the word of his friend's death, Robert Murray McShane.

He wrote in his diary, this afternoon about five o'clock, a message just came to tell me of Robert McShane's death. Never, never yet in all my life have I felt anything like this. It is a blow to myself, to his people, to the Church of Christ in Scotland.

O Lord, work for thine own glory's sake. Arise, O Lord, the godly cease and the faithful fail. My heart is sore.

It makes me feel death near myself now. Life has lost half its joys, were it not the hope of saving souls. There was no friend whom I loved like him.

I've been feeling lately very much my evil neglected privileges and opportunities and my very small degree of holiness. This startles me. It is as if God were striking myself.

I'm sure that many of you who are among Michael's congregants feel as I do, but perhaps even much more. It's been given to me the task to speak to Union Baptist Church this afternoon. For you, you've not only lost a brother and a friend, but you've lost a pastor, a shepherd who cared much for your souls.

I know. Often he would bear his love to me in conversation. Names mentioned.

Delights expressed each time. Sometimes sorrowfully. Because he loved you so much.

It's been amazing to see the outpouring of the people's affection for our beloved brother. And particularly among those who never met Mike. I've been amazed as I've been reading on the Internet how many testified that Mike impacted their lives from a sermon they heard on the Internet or having heard him in a conference or reading something he wrote.

Many times Mike would open up to me and express his feelings that his ministry had little impact. Well, it was not true then, and it is not true now. His ministry lives on in you.

You are the legacy of this man and his ministry. The question is, what will you do with that legacy? Before I attempt to answer, would you allow me to reminisce? Sixteen years ago, your pastor came to you sent by God. I love that idea.

A man sent by God. And that's what he was. For you who were here then when Mike and Susan came in May of 2000, little did you know what divine providence planned for you and this good shepherd.

But it has been nothing short of amazing. When you were seeking the mind of the Lord, whether or not the morals were being called by the Lord to Union Baptist Church, Mike addressed you with the candor he was famous for. He told you that he had two major flaws.

The first was that he spoke in such a way that people knew what he meant. The second was that he would need you to come behind him and clean up some of his messes. Well, Mike was never known for his neatness.

But you accepted the challenge. And you've been faithful to help him deal with a few of the aftermaths of his bluntness. Not that there were many times that it was necessary, but you accepted the challenge knowing that a pastor is not perfect.

In the end, human shepherds of the flock of God are also sheep. Sheep who need the salvation of the good shepherd. Never have I met a man who delighted more in his God and his great salvation than Mike Morrow.

And I believe among the many contributions he has made to you, the single greatest contribution is he taught you how to delight in the God of so great a salvation. Now, as to the legacy question, first, I think there are some things we need to realize. First, realize that God gave you a fully developed and mature preacher of His Word.

By the time Mike and Susan arrived at Union Baptist Church, Mike was 51. And in his prime, he had learned through trial and error pastoral skill. He had come to a more mature doctrinal position, not accepting doctrines by parroting systematic theologies that he had read, but having wrestled with the Scriptures for himself, having come to conclusions.

Now, why did God give you such a seasoned man? God didn't give you a young man who was trying to understand what he believed actually and intellectually how that worked in real life. No, not at all. The Lord granted you a practice veteran who had already faced most of the pastoral dilemmas a man will face as he shepherds God's people.

He learned by experience how to apply the Bible to the real issues of life. Let's be honest. Most churches the size and the location of Union Baptist Church have less experienced men.

Why this exception for you? Also, I would remind you that you didn't have the typical SBC pastor. Mike is a Baptist who believes in the historic Baptist theology that included the dynamic of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural. He pursued a God that was to be experienced, and he lived by the guidance of the Spirit and developed a keen sensitivity to Him.

He did not believe, as so many Baptist pastors today, that when God finished the Bible, he sneaked off to some secret corner of the universe and became silent. No, he knew God was real and He was to be experienced in everyday life. And if you heard Mike's testimony, he testifies that leading up to his conversion, that a voice spoke to him in his head at a time he thought he was going crazy.

But he never lost the desire or spiritual sensibility to hear his Master. And I think of all of his traits and characteristics, this was the one that endeared him to me the most. Through Michael Morrow's leadership, the Lord sent you both reformation and seasons of revival.

In these last 16 years, many mercy drops have fallen upon you. The Lord of the harvest sent you a man to take you out of the bondage of a man-centered gospel that leaves many enslaved to self and sin and into the freedom of a God great, gracious, glorious, and good enough to save a sinner without the help of a sinner. And without apology, our brother preached to you a sovereignty without which there can be no real thing called grace.

And with every reformation there is turbulence. But again, the Lord sent to you a man that could pilot you through the difficulties and navigate you to a safe place where you have been these last few years. I think of the rich heritage that our good Father gave your pastor.

The man was mentored by some of God's choicest servants, Percy Ray, Joe Parsons, and others. These were men, Michael, who personally sat at their feet and he learned the spirit of the prophet as well as the pastor. Now I ask you, is all of this just happenstance? Just the way church life works? Or is it the sovereign hand of God to say to you, Union Baptist Church, I love you very much and I do have a plan for you.

You can call me a mystic if you please, but I'm convinced that God loves you and has a plan for your future that exceeds the sorrow you now feel. Our grief is good. When Moses died, God called the people to grieve for 40 days.

And while Mike exhorted you not to weep at his passing, it is right that we weep. We must weep. But our tears are not unadulterated sorrow.

They are mixed with joy as we see how much God has loved this church. Yes, Mike knew you would grieve, but what he did not want for you is that your grief to cloud your faith and keep you from seeing that Mike's tenure was only preparation for your future. You are the legacy of this man's ministry.

His life's work continues with you because God invested this brother's entire life in you. Yes, you only had him for 16 years, but you had the adoration of his entire life and God shaping, sanding, molding him for you. Yes.

My last extended and full conversation with Mike was about a week before he got sick. And interestingly, our conversation came to the subject of death. Neither one of us knew this day was coming.

And I said to him, Brother, I know to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, but I am uncertain what happens at that moment with the cessation of the body as the spirit and soul leave. I have no idea what that's like. Nobody whose experience has come back to tell me, and I certainly haven't experienced it myself.

So I don't know. I just don't know what happens. Oh, he said, yes, we do.

He said, you see angels. And then he reminded me of Jesus' story, the death of Lazarus. So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels.

Abraham's bosom. Our brother saw those angels. And his future is cast and cemented in the glorious presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, sharing in His rewards.

But it's left to you, Union Baptist Church, to march on in this present evil age. You can do so because you've had the benefit of these last 16 years. God has loved you so much to have given you this beloved brother.

Listen to me, please. He did not love Michael Morrow any more than He loved you. He did not love you because Michael Morrow was your pastor.

He loved you and gave Michael Morrow to you. God's love didn't come with Mike, nor will it cease with his passing. You have the same loving God who has given you a better shepherd than any fallen man.

His name is Jesus. I want to conclude with the words of your dear pastor, written just a few short years ago. Mike wrote, In the year 2000, I became the pastor of Union Baptist Church in Crittenden County, Kentucky.

I am where I hope to be when the Lord takes me home. It's been a hard, happy, sad, joy-filled journey so far, but my heart sings enthusiastically. All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask besides? God is so much better than good.

Amen. I've been asked to touch on another part of my dad's legacy, which is specifically something he enjoyed very much, and that was the ability... Well, God just allowed him to have young men gather around him and learn from him. That legacy of young men who sat at his feet and allowed him to disciple them.

I think it goes without saying, whatever little I am, I am by the grace of God, but through the ministry of my father primarily. And I know that in every generation, God allows his men to be influenced by men of an older generation. Last night, my mom had my brother and me on a mission looking for an old Bible of my dad's.

Brother Rob mentioned, and I believe Brother Durham may have mentioned, Brother Percy Ray. This was given to him by Brother Percy Ray when he graduated from Blue Mountain College. My dad honored men like that, not that there was anything particularly special about them on their own, but they were, as we all are, broken men who are used by a mighty God.

And there were men of the past, like Brother Percy Ray, who were used in a special way, who poured into the lives of younger men, like my dad. Brother Ray wrote in this Bible, and he gave it to him. Congratulations to you, Mike.

I love you. Appreciate you and pray for you. I'm expecting great things out of you.

Dad always saw that kind of thing as a passing of the torch. He often told me, he reminded me of something Brother Ray used to say, which was something to the effect of, if every man of God, if every preacher of the gospel were to drop dead today, tomorrow, God will have raised up another generation of preachers of the gospel, because that's what he's going to do. But he saw that men like Brother Ray, passing down a particular gift, a jewel, a precious treasure, a torch, to the next generation of pastors.

And Dad loved to experience the other side of that. I don't know how many times I've watched these guys, like myself, gathered around him, and just learned from him, and listened to him, and just soaked in a lifetime of wisdom learned, gained from a lifetime spent in the study, a lifetime spent on his knees. I can tell you of the times I walked into the kitchen, and it would be two in the morning, and he thought everybody was asleep, and he was downstairs in the study, bawling his eyes out before God, praying for his church, praying for his family, praying for lost people that he loved.

No one around to know the difference. He was doing it because that's who he was. And he mirrored that presence.

He showed us young men a glimpse of what it meant to be a man of God, not just someone who knew about God, but someone who learned the presence of God. That's what he wanted to pass down. When Dad was so sick in the hospital a couple of weeks ago, but while he was still communicating, one thing he said, one of the last things he said to my mother was, Guard the gift.

Looked her square in the eye and as clearly as he could said, Guard the gift. Young men, young pastors, ministers of the gospel, those of a generation left behind, those of us receiving the torch, that directive, to guard the gift, comes from a passage of scripture from 2 Timothy, the book that Paul wrote when he was passing the torch to a young man, a young protege. When he was about to go on and he was ready to hand off something that was most precious to him, something that was worth living for and dying for, he entrusted that gift to men like Timothy.

He poured into men like Timothy and then he said to Timothy, Guard the gift. I want to read to you a little section out of 2 Timothy, where Paul gives this admonition to his protege. He says, For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me as prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, a teacher. Which is why I suffer as I do.

And I'm not ashamed, for I know whom I believe. And I'm convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. What I'm bringing to you isn't my message. This is Dad's message.

Guard the gift. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the most precious and the most powerful thing that has ever been entrusted to man. And for whatever reason, he's seen it in his wisdom to take Dad and to leave his good treasure with the rest of us.

He's asking us to be faithful. He's asking us to be true to the end. This is one thing Paul was telling his young man, his protege.

Be faithful. Don't give up. Hold on to this gospel.

Cherish it. And when it's your time, you pass it along too. When my dad was in the hospital, we were at a point where they were trying to run a line in him.

And they were having a hard time and it was causing him obviously a lot of pain. It was one of those situations where I would have already been jumping out of the bed. And the nurses were standing over him, working with him.

And one was saying, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. And as he was working on him, this young male nurse was working on him, my dad just kind of waved him over. And I don't think Dad knew I was in the room or anybody else was in the room, but Dad just kind of waved him over.

And while the nurses apologized, Dad waved him over. And while that nurse was working with him, Dad looked up at him and said, I was about your age when Jesus Christ changed my life. Has He ever changed your life? Yes, sir.

I thought two things in that moment. Number one, my dad is Superman. And number two, I'm out of excuses.

That's my dad. By God's grace, faithful to the end. Yes.

Amen. By God's grace, he didn't fall down at the finish line, he shot right through it. Amen.

And it's my responsibility and it's the responsibility of those of us who are left, especially as ministers of the Gospel, to guard the precious treasure of the Gospel, to hold it, to love it, to cherish it, to run with it as an emblem, as a torch, to live for it, to suffer for it, to die for it. For one reason, because Jesus Christ is worthy of it all. And for me to say anything less would be dishonoring to this man's life, because that's why he lived.

He lived to preach the grace that Jesus Christ brought to man. I'm thankful for my dad. I'm thankful that I don't have to stand up here and make up things about him, try to fudge around the edges.

He was faithful. Yes. By God's grace.

And I pray that we who are left, who hold this treasure, are treated as such, and that when it's our time, people will look at us and say the same about us, that we were faithful. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Yes, sir. It is an absolutely tremendous privilege for me to be here with you today.

I was on the West Coast preaching in a conference, and I was sitting there waiting for the musicians and such to finish all their singing, and then to go up to the platform when I received a text. I walked outside, stood there for a while, and the only thing I could think of was, my father, my father, the chariots of Israel

and its horsemen. You know, oftentimes preachers will say they just don't feel worthy to be in a place.

I can say in good conscience before God that I honestly don't feel worthy to be here. Earth does not estimate the value of things very well. God sent His only Son to this earth, and they crucified Him.

A few years ago, I walked by the office of my dear friend Kevin Height, who's here, an administrator at HeartCry. He's kind of a military man. He doesn't weep much.

I saw him in there kind of teary-eyed, and I walked in, and I said, Kevin, what's going on? He showed me a magazine of a well-known woman who's going on in years, but the magazine was all about just how beautiful she was, and she was beautiful. At 60, absolutely beautiful. And the whole magazine was all about her beauty, and then Kevin pulled up another magazine that showed a woman, an African woman, who had been burned alive for her faith in Christ.

Most of her face was gone. By all physical appearances, she was absolutely hideous. And Kevin said, which one do you think is most beautiful to God? Which one do you think is most beautiful to God? I am sure today that there are funerals of millionaires, and princes, and kings, and actors, and ambassadors that are going on today.

And yet nothing and no one on this planet, no celebration could surpass what is happening here because of the man that Christ made. The man that Christ made. After my preaching back on the West Coast, I sat down at a table, and Dr. Joel Beeky, a very famous theologian and church historian, said, what's going on? I said, Dr. Beeky, one of the greatest men on the planet, just died.

He said, who was he? I said, Michael Mara. He said, Paul, I don't know that name, but sit down here. Tell me about that man.

And so I spent a great deal of time talking to Dr. Beeky about Mike. And he said, that is the great need of the day. Those old school men who had sound doctrine, and yet were pastoral, and yet had experienced the power, the power of God, the power of God.

I was working on a book about five months ago, and I came to a point where I was at a crossroads theologically, and I called up Brother Mike. And this is what he said to me. I just say it because it explains something of our relationship.

He said, Paul, why are you calling me? You're dear friends with John MacArthur and Joel Beeky, and he mentioned a whole bunch of other theologians. He says, you're friends with them. Why do you call me? I said, because Mike, there's hardly anyone on this planet who knows God more than you do.

And I can honestly tell you this, that he has forgotten more about God than I will ever know. He had more of God in his little finger than I would have in my whole being. You have no idea.

I have no idea who we're burying today. A country preacher? That's what he would call himself. But there will be people.

There already are people in Europe who have cried because they have just discovered that Mike Morrow has passed away. There are people in Africa and the Middle East. I just went on the Internet yesterday and was listening to Mike, looking at some of his sermons, his testimony, and to read underneath and just to kind of search the web and hear people say, Sir, you have a ministry that has touched the world.

It's so true. It's so true. When the famous and very good theologian James Boyce passed away several years ago, Dr. R.C. Sproul said that it was the judgment of God on America to take away such great men.

I believe the same could be said today. Men of whom the world is not worthy. Men that have been mightily, mightily used.

And a man today that has been mightily used, Mike Morrow. Now, I am glad that he cannot come down from heaven right now because he would have probably kicked every one of us that has spoken so highly of him. He would have said, why on earth are you talking about me? I thought your theology was better than that.

Did I not teach you anything? There is only one person worth words, and it is Jesus Christ. And you know, words, they're a terrible thing. They're useless.

Absolutely pitiful. Disgusting things. Why? Because when you use them to try to describe Jesus Christ, they all fail.

They all fail. As a matter of fact, every sermon a preacher has ever preached about Jesus Christ has been a failure. And every man of God, including Mike Morrow to some degree, has been a great failure.

Because you cannot succeed when you are attempting to comprehend and proclaim Jesus Christ. Even the great Spurgeon. I've read so many of his sermons, and he would sit there at the beginning of the sermon and just languish and almost be angry over the fact that in all he was about to say, he would fail.

Jesus Christ. Why is Mike Morrow in heaven? Jesus Christ. How did someone like Mike Morrow, so wretched a sinner, become a good man and filled with the Holy Spirit? Because of Jesus Christ.

And if he were here today, he would ask what I'm going to ask. Do you know Him? Not any of this silly little that one time you prayed a prayer and asked Jesus to come into your heart. Not any of this, you raised your hand in a meeting.

Not any of this, you're a church member. Not any of this, you're a moral person. He would look at you and say, all of that is rot.

Rot. Fabrication and rot. Do you know Him? Do you cling to Him? And does He know you? Does Christ know you? If I were to walk up to the White House this afternoon, when the guards stop me at the gate, I'd say, oh, you don't have to stop me.

I know the President. Do you think that would get me passed through the gate? Absolutely not. But if President Obama came out of the White House and looked at me and said, I know Paul Washer, I'm going in.

It's the same way. In all your boasting about you knowing Christ, here's the question. Would Christ say of you today, I know you.

And never forget that the Hebrew idea of know has to do with fellowship. With walking together. With communicating together.

Communing together. Dining together. When you came to the judgment hall, would Christ say, I don't know you.

We didn't walk together. You didn't cling to me. You didn't eat with me.

You didn't commune with me. You prayed a prayer. You went to church.

Do you know Him? Does He know you? I want to turn to a passage. I'll just read it. It's in 2 Corinthians.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5.21. The passage has already been mentioned here today. Listen again.

He made Him who knew no sin. This is the first thing you must understand. You do know sin.

You are intimately acquainted with sin. You were conceived in sin. You were born in sin.

You have drank down iniquity like water. Every part of you is familiar with sin. Every aspect of your being knows it intimately.

You are a sinner. Every law God has ever given, you have broken. But look what it says of Him, our Savior.

He made Him who knew no sin. Now the proper theological response there is to say this. Jesus knew no sin.

It meant He absolutely and perfectly kept the law of God. And that's true. He did what you could not do.

But you need to understand this on a higher plane. Let me give you an example. One time I was dealing with a man who told me he hadn't sinned in 11 years.

So I asked him this question. I said, what do you suppose the greatest sin would be? And he said, well, I don't know. And I said, well, let me tell you.

The greatest sin would be possibly breaking the greatest command. And what is the greatest command? To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Now I want you to think about something.

Of all the thousands of years of humanity, of all the billions of the sons and daughters of Adam that have lived on this planet, there has never been one second, not one fraction of a second, that anyone out of all of humanity obeyed this command. You have never loved the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Not once.

Not once. Of all the countless billions of people that have walked this planet, not one of them has loved the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. Never.

And yet we see Jesus. There was never one moment that he did not love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. He did every second of his entire life what all of humanity collectively could not do even a fraction of a second.

Do you want to know how righteous you have to be to go to heaven based upon your own righteousness and your own works? There you go. There it is. Anyone bold enough to stand and say, then I make my place in heaven by my own deeds? No one.

You would be a fool to even entertain such an idea. So many people think that some form of morality will make them acceptable to God. Nothing has ever been so absurd in the mind of man.

Nothing. And yet look what Scripture says. God made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.

Now you've read that many times, but what does it mean? It's not important only to read it or even memorize it, but to understand it to the point it becomes a reality in your life. What does it mean that He made him sin? It's a very dangerous statement because we can go too far and say too much, or we cannot go far enough and say too little. What does it mean that He made him who was sinless, He made him sin on our behalf? Well, the answer is found in the second part of this verse.

So that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Now let's look at it this way. The moment a person believes God as Abraham or as a believer today, the moment a person believes God, does that person become a completely and perfectly righteous being? No.

We still sin, we still fail, we still struggle with the flesh. Then what happens when we believe God? What does it mean to become the righteousness of God? What does it mean to be justified? It means this, the moment that a person believes God, the moment a person believes the Gospel, God declares them to be legally right with Him. Are you following? The moment a person believes in Jesus Christ, God declares that person to be legally right with Him.

And He treats that person as right with Him. So now we understand what happened to Christ on the cross. We understand what it means for Him to have become sin.

It doesn't mean that when He was on the cross, Christ somehow became deformed and became a corrupt and sinful creature or being. Absolutely not. Then what happened on the cross? On the cross, our sin, the sin of God's people was imputed to the Son.

And God legally declared Him to be guilty in our place. And then God treated Him as guilty. Now remember, He legally declares us to be right with Him, and He treats us as right with Him.

But how could He do that? How could a just God do that to wicked men? Only because God became a man in the form of His Son. And what did He do? He went to the tree, and our guilt was imputed to Him. He took our place, and He suffered the judgment of God that was due our sin.

All of it. Every bit of it. We've already demonstrated.

What have we demonstrated? That you cannot be right with God through your own righteousness. Righteousness requires full obedience to the law, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength throughout all of your days, every moment. And you have failed in every way.

But Christ comes, and He does what you could not do. He lived this life before God, and He constantly heard the approbation, what? This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And then He goes to the tree, and He takes your guilt, and He suffers the wrath of God in your place.

And right before He dies, He cries out, It is finished. It is all paid. It is all paid.

There is now no after reckonings at all. He paid it all. Not one more cent must fall from anyone's pocket.

He did everything. And to prove that He did everything, on the third day, God raised Him from the dead. And He ascended up into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God.

And there is no other name. No other name. Given to men under heaven.

No other name by which you can be saved. There is one God and one mediator between God and men. The man Christ Jesus.

What does God command all men to do at the hearing of this message? It's not to raise their hand. It's not to pray a prayer and ask Jesus into their heart. It is to repent of their sins and believe the Gospel.

You say, well, what is repentance? Let me give you an example. I believe that the greatest example of repentance in the entire Bible is the Apostle Paul. Most Greek scholars believe that the word repentance comes from a Greek word which means to change the mind.

Now, for you and I, that sounds very superficial, doesn't it? You just change your mind. But, not really. Listen to me.

You're seated here calmly because you do not think in your mind that a tornado, an F5 tornado approaches. But if you thought in your mind, you truly thought in your mind that an F5 tornado was five minutes away, everything about you would change. Your emotions.

Your will. Your actions. Everything would change.

Well, let's look at the Apostle Paul. He leaves Jerusalem and he thinks in his mind. He thinks what? He thinks that Jesus of Nazareth is the greatest blasphemer and false prophet that ever walked the planet.

And he thinks that the Christians are the great enemies of Israel and of God. Thinking that, what does he do? He goes out with letters in order to imprison them, even kill them. What happens? On the way, he meets Jesus Christ.

He meets Jesus Christ. And what happens? He changes his mind. What does he realize? He realizes, now listen to me, he realizes that he has been wrong about absolutely everything that matters.

Everything. His entire reality disintegrates. He's wrong, wrong.

He searches the house of his life. He can't find one place where he's not wrong. He's wrong.

He discovers that the one he thought was the greatest false prophet and blasphemer turns out to be the Messiah and the Son of God. The people that he thought were ludicrous, foolish, cultic, worthy of death, he now discovers are the very people of the Messiah. And what happens? He goes to Damascus.

He begins to preach the very Jesus that he once sought to destroy. That's repentance. Now, you say, how does that apply in daily life? Let's say there's a young girl here.

You're all about your youth and your beauty, and you think it is so important, and relationships, and boys, and all sorts of things. You go to church, you pray the prayer, you've done it all, but this is your life. This is really your life.

You think in your mind this is what's really, really true. And then one day, you meet Jesus and you realize all of that was wrong. Terribly wrong.

Worthless. Only worthy of being discarded. And you lay it all aside and you follow Jesus.

You're a businessman. You're respected in the community. You're wealthy.

You drive the right kind of car. You live in the big neighborhoods. Your whole life has been about luxury and gaining reputation in the community.

Oh yeah, you go to whatever, Baptist church. But your life's never changed. It's just one more badge of morality.

But then one day, you meet Jesus, and you realize you've wasted your entire life. That you've been your own god. That everything is rot.

And you follow Jesus. And then what is faith? What is faith? It is clinging to Christ and Christ alone. Nothing in My hands I bring only to the cross of Christ.

Why was the Gospel so precious to this man? Because he knew how holy God was. He knew how sinful he was. And he knew that there was only one qualified Savior.

Jesus Christ. That's Him. That's Him.

Isn't it amazing? Isn't it amazing that you can go into some churches and preach the radical depravity of man, and some people run out grinding their teeth as angry as they could possibly be? Upstanding church members hated the message. How dare He talk to us like that? And yet others leave the church going, Jesus Christ is magnificent because He saved a wretch like me. What are you seeing? The difference between the sheep and the goats is what you're seeing.

That we revel in our weakness. And we look to Him. There was a farmer I knew just north of here in Illinois.

Ed Douglas. And he was known as a young man to be such a moral, moral man. He was.

And I knew him. He was an amazing man. Many of us knew him.

And I asked him one time, I said, Brother Ed, how did you get saved? What happened? And he said, well, all my young life, I thought I'm moral. I am clean. I'm good.

Everyone says I'm good. Everyone says I'm clean. Everyone respects me.

And he goes, one day though, I heard the Word. And I went down to the creek and I was so bothered. I saw my filth.

I saw my wretchedness. I saw my sin. I saw that there was no hope.

And then I saw Jesus. And I said, what did you do? And he said, well, I had trouble getting my mind around what does it mean to believe savingly in Christ. And he said, eventually, I found myself going up the ladder in the barn to the second loft in our barn where we stacked all the hay.

And he said, I walked over to the edge of the loft. My toes were almost touching the end. Then I walked out a little farther.

I walked out a little farther until I was going like this. And he said, I said this to God, I am going to trust in Christ and Christ alone. And if Jesus Christ and His work on Calvary by itself is not enough to save me, then I'm going to hell because I refuse to trust in any other thing.

Christ alone! Christ alone! You should respect men like this. Man is nothing but fodder for hell. It's Jesus Christ who saved him.

It's Jesus Christ who made him. And if you're offended at that, know that if he could come down, he would run around this thing like the angels running around the earth shouting hallelujah, and he would say it's true, it's true. You listen to the preacher.

I'm here for only one reason. I'm going to close by talking about a funeral I was at several years ago with an uncle of mine who went to an evangelical Lutheran church. And I had talked to him many times about the Lord.

And he was. He had a reputation of the kindest man. And he was.

And I went to the funeral and the evangelical Lutheran pastor with his robe and everything stood up there. And for 15 minutes, all he talked about was how good my uncle was. How wonderful.

How kind. How loving. And I was just getting more angry and more angry and more angry that these people are going to be deceived.

And when he finally got finished talking about how great my uncle was, he said, now listen to me. I want you to understand he's in heaven right now not for any of those reasons I have given you in the last 15 minutes. He's in heaven because Jesus Christ died for sinners.

I ran up and hugged him. Jesus Christ died for sinners. Only sinners can say that.

Only sinners can rejoice in that. Are you sinful enough? Are you sinful enough to rejoice in that? Do you see Christ as your only hope? Do you see Christ as your only glory? Do you cling to Him not because of strength of will, but because of your need of Him and your fear to be without and be a cling to Christ in faith? If not, know today that you've heard the Gospel. Know today that even now, even when we dismiss, God has commanded all men everywhere to repent and to believe the Gospel.

Repent. Believe. And if your soul is troubled when we go back into the church, let us know.

There's nothing that would make Mike Morrow happier than to hear that someone was converted during his year. As a matter of fact, I'd rather think he expects it. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, I thank You. I thank You, Lord, that You can take a wretch and wash him off with the blood of Your Son and make a servant of God. I thank You that You gave us Mike.

I thank You for all these years that we've known him. I thank You for all the counsel that he gave us that no one even knows about. Thank You, Lord, for his faithfulness.

And I thank You most of all that the Gospel was precious to him. Oh, God, please, allow us to finish well. Give us grace to go out, Lord, without shaming You.

Go out bringing You glory. Go out testifying of Your name, Lord. Please, please.

And Lord, today, even today in this place, regenerate souls. Illuminate minds. Grant repentance and faith that we might rejoice, Lord, in Your good deeds.

In Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27925.mp3>

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