

Gospel Meetings - Part 4

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the necessity of presenting ourselves as living sacrifices to God, motivated by His mercies and the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice.

Duration: 1:14:37

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Paul addresses the misconception that salvation is easy and can be achieved by simply preaching about Jesus. He emphasizes that salvation is actually impossible for humans to attain on their own, and that it requires the sacrifice of Jesus and the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Brother Paul explains that many people are blind to the truth and cannot see Jesus even if the curtain is pulled back. He then introduces a powerful motivation for giving one's life away, stating that it is so great that it surpasses all other motivations and can even inspire individuals to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Gospel.

Transcript

Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12, verse 1. Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Father, I praise you for your mercy, for your grace, for your kindness to your people. I praise you that that is bound up not in the virtue or merit of your people, but in the virtue and merit of Christ and his perfect sacrifice on that tree. For his sake, Father, help your people.

For his sake, Father, teach us and change us. For his sake, Father, wash and purify your church. She is his bride and finds her value and worth in that.

In Jesus' name, amen. I just want to iterate something of what was said to catch us all up on last night. We were dealing with this passage, and we started out by saying that Paul was urging.

He was urging. Many times today in what we call the American clergy and the evangelical community, I believe that preachers have traded in their mantle of a prophet for the coat of a businessman. We have

administrators and those who know how to use techniques and church growth strategies and so on and so forth.

And we have forgotten that it is all about a man standing before a group of people, preaching the Word of God with a passion and a burden upon his heart. When the prophet spoke of an oracle in the Old Testament, that oracle had to do with a burden. Jeremiah himself would speak about if he was to shut himself up, that his bones would be on fire.

He could not contain it. He could not bear it. As we look at the Apostle Paul, we see that he had such a passion, not only for Christ, but for the bride of Jesus Christ, the church.

And it was his great longing to present that bride to Christ, a pure and a chaste virgin. We live in a time where purity and chastity and things such as that can't even be defined. We have become, in a sense, at least culturally, the nation in which we live.

We are immoral and uncouth and uncivilized and pagan and dirty and silly and stupid and foolish. And all those things come to bear, even upon those who have been redeemed, so that they must fight constantly to be something other than what their culture clamors for them to be. So Paul was looking at this church, a group of brethren.

He calls them brethren. He was speaking to a church. And he was urging them to do something that, by and large, is unthinkable.

He was urging them to give away the most precious commodity themselves. Not just lands, not just garments, not just lifestyles. But he was urging them, pleading with them, in love, to give away themselves.

And I think we ought to sit back and look at this for a moment, the idea of him urging, motivated by love. This is not some god, as a tyrant, who literally wants to suck life out of a group of people. We are not urged to give our life away to live some monkish, horrible, lifeless existence.

But Paul is pleading with them, in love, to give their life away, because he knows, in love, the greatest good that a man can ever serve for himself is to give his life away to Christ. Because the one who keeps his life will lose it. And the one who loses his life, for Christ's sake, will gain it.

Old Leonard Ravenhill used to say, during an invitation, he says there's two promises. Eternal life and a cross. Not your best life now.

Eternal life and a cross. Come to him and die. And die to self and self-centeredness.

And give your life away. Jesus did not come to this earth primarily for the sake of humanistic endeavors. He came for the glory of God.

And in calling forth a people, he demands of them that they pledge the same allegiance to God. And knowing that if they do so, they will find life. And life in abundance.

So he urged them. They were brethren, and he urged them. But what on earth or in heaven could ever be given as a motivation to call men to give their lives away? It doesn't matter what you would present before an honest and reasonable man on the face of the earth.

It's really not worth giving his life away. Everything on this earth is finite in value. Everything on this earth is passing away.

Nothing has eternal significance. So what on this earth can you offer a man to cause him to give his life away? Well, you would think the word would be nothing. But it seems to me that men are willing to sell their lives for a lot less than nothing.

There are men who give their lives away for the fame of other men. There are men who give their lives away to be able to buy more things at a mall. There are people who give their lives away trying to sustain a youth and a beauty that will not be sustained.

No matter how many operations they have. People are so willing to sell their lives for nothing. As one old man used to say, it's easier to sell a lie than it is to give the truth away.

But Paul gives us a motivation, a great and mighty motivation. The greatest motivation. It is so great, it eclipses all others.

As a matter of fact, once you grasp this motivation for giving your life away, there's no reason to even hear of another. Once you hear this motivation, no pastor will have to tell you, do this because God will bless you a hundredfold. Or do this because it will fix everything in your life.

Or do this because God will really prosper you and help you. Now, this motivation is so great that you can even be told, do this and it may cost you everything. But the motivation is so great, you'll still do it.

What is that motivation? He says, the mercies of God. Now, what are the mercies of God? Well, we could go to the book of Psalms. We could go to Genesis chapter 315.

We could go to everywhere in the Bible and find mercies. But I think Paul is pinpointing something that I set out for you last night. When he speaks about the mercies of God, I believe he's talking about the first eleven chapters of the book of Romans.

That's what therefore is about in this passage. You see, in the book of Romans, Paul sets out in the most systematic way that he sets out anything in any of his epistles. He sets out everything that God has done for a wicked fallen humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

And then he says, because of this, what God has done for us in Christ, therefore live this way. He answers Francis Schaeffer's question, how then shall we live? He does the same thing in the book of Ephesians. If you're looking for the deepest theology in the Bible, do not go to the book of Revelation.

Go to the book of Ephesians, first three chapters. Man could spend his entire life there in the first thirteen verses and never come close. And after this mighty dissertation, theologically, of all that we, the believer, has in Christ, he comes to chapter four and he says, therefore, live this way.

Paul is setting this before the believer constantly. That the motivation for the Christian life is what Christ, what God in Christ, has already done in the person of Jesus Christ. He shed his own blood for your soul.

He shed his own blood for your soul. Much of what is done in Christianity today is done in the name of self-preservation and self-advancement. Why should I do this? It will help you.

Why should I do this? It will make you better. Why should I do this? It will make you prosperous. The Bible knows no such talk.

The Bible actually says, if you follow him the way you ought, it might cost you all those things. But it still should be done. Because if one man died for all, then we're convinced that all died.

That all should give their life for this one who is worthy. A reading of an old Puritan pastor who once a person was struggling with their salvation and they were going, you know, I've repented, but I don't know if I'm saved. I believe, but I don't know if he's saved me and I don't know.

And the old Puritan said something to this person that would be absolutely offensive to us today. He said this, young lady, you should repent and believe even if he sends you to hell because he's worthy of you repenting and believing. Now the Puritan was not saying that if someone truly repents and believes, God will send them to hell.

The point he was making, we do not repent and believe simply out of the idolatry of self-preservation. We repent and believe because God is worthy of repentance and faith. You see how twisted it can become? So he says, the mercies of God.

Now, some of you are new faces, so I want to say something again. I sound like a broken record. When I talk about Christ dying on the cross, please understand what I'm saying.

Most people have what we call an evangelio romantico, a romantic gospel that's not a biblical gospel. It is a gospel of the Son of God being mocked and beaten by Romans and nailed to a tree with a crown of thorns on his head and a spear in his side. And preachers tell us, look at all he gave to save you.

Well, I would say look to those things and I would take nothing from them. But if that's all you're looking at, you've totally missed the cross. Now hear me out before you pick up a stone.

If you're saved here today, you are not saved simply because the Romans and Jews rejected Jesus. You are not saved simply because they beat him and they nailed him to a tree. You are not saved simply because they put a crown of thorns on his head.

You are not saved simply because they thrust a spear in his side. You are saved because when he was on that tree, he bore the sins of his people and God the Father crushed him under the full force of his holy hatred against evil. So many people do not even begin to understand what most theologians call the Acropolis of the Christian faith in Romans 3.23 on through 28 that Christ died as a propitiation.

It means this, God is just. He cannot forgive you if he's just. In the same way that if someone murdered your entire family and you caught them and took them to the judge and the judge looked down at this man who slaughtered your entire family and said, I'm a loving judge, you're free, I forgive you.

The first thing that would come out of your mouth is, I demand justice. You'd write the congressman, the senator, you would get on the telephone and call the newspapers and the media and you would say that there is a judge on the bench far more wicked than the criminals he sets free because judges are supposed to do justice and therein lies the great problem of all of Scripture. If God is just, he cannot forgive you because you are evil and you have broken every command he has ever given and if he turns away from judging your sin, he is not a just or a holy God.

So the great question of Scripture is, how can God be just and declare right those who are wicked? There's only one way. God becomes a man and lives a perfect life and goes to that tree and bears the sins of his people. He stands in their law place and then all the divine justice, the wrath of God, the holy hatred of a holy God against the wickedness of men, all of it, all of it that had to be punished is thrown down upon the head of the Messiah.

Have you never read in Isaiah 53.10, but it pleased the Lord to crush him. It doesn't mean that he got gleefully out there crushing the head of the Messiah. It meant that it fulfilled the eternal purpose of God to crush his own son so that wrath would be appeased, justice would be satisfied and God could forgive the wicked and still be just.

That's what the cross is all about and many of you have never heard that before because we're more concerned about meeting people's felt needs and making our church grow without telling them the truth because we don't know the truth because again, we spend more time figuring out what is the new fad in culture in order to appeal to people to get in our church rather than spending time in our studies hours and hours a day on our knees. It's all about the Christ and God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. So when I say that we are motivated to give our lives away by the mercies of God, I want you to go straight to the cross of Jesus Christ and that should be the controlling factor.

Why do you love your wife? Because Christ died on a tree for your sins. Why do you not lie? Because Christ died on a tree for your sins. Why do you no longer live for self but the kingdom? Because Christ died on a tree for your sins.

He shed his own blood for my soul. I need no other argument. I need no other plea.

It is enough that Jesus died and that he died. So we are commanded to present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Present our bodies.

Now let me share with you, so many times you see these evangelistic things going on, crusades or whatever. People are asked to raise their hand and come forward. If they want to get saved, pray a little prayer and all this sort of thing.

An evangelist goes down the road boasting about how a hundred people got saved. The only problem is on Sunday the pastor can't find one of them. But that doesn't matter.

He's able to go down the road and boast about how many people got saved. But if people do not come forward, then he has to go to plan B. How many of you out there tonight need to rededicate your life to Christ? And so you have all these people marching down the aisle. They do it almost every meeting, rededicating their life to Christ over and over and over again.

The problem is they don't need to rededicate their life to Christ. Most of them need to get saved. The fact is they live ungodly lives because they're ungodly people, because they've never been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

They've never been transformed by the power of God. They do not know God and God does not know them. And what we're trying to do with all this discipleship is make a bunch of goats act like sheep.

The Southern Baptist in Kentucky has found out, they've recently discovered, and I'm Southern Baptist so I can say this, recently discovered that over 60 some odd percent or more of all the Southern Baptists

never go to church. Never. And so what they've figured out, well, we just need to... This is what they've decided.

We need to hire more people on the state convention or whatever to do discipleship. That's the problem. There's just no discipleship.

No, that's not the problem. The problem is our weak, unbiblical evangelism that declares people saved when they're not saved. Because Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me.

Why are they not following? Because they're not sheep. You say, brother Paul, that is so cruel. What is crueler? Be a friend of men? Not tell them the truth and let them march happily into hell? No.

He's not talking about rededicating your life here. He's talking about once and for all present. Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.

I hear a prophetic call in this. How long will you limp between two opinions? If he's God, then serve him. Come forth with a clarion call.

If he's God, then give your life away. Present, he says, present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice. I want us to turn for a moment to Romans chapter 6. I wanted to get to this passage.

And since we're on to present, let's just run through this. First of all, we come to Romans chapter 5. And we have this wonderful declaration that salvation is a work of God's grace. It is all attributed to the grace of God.

And that we're saved by faith in Jesus Christ. And even that faith in Jesus Christ is a result of the grace of God. It is all grace.

And so Paul's opponents come to him and say, Well then, if it's all grace, let's just live like the devil. If it's all grace, is that what you're saying, Paul, to all your converts? That it's all of grace, therefore live like the devil. And if you look in verse 1, he says, What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? That was the argument laid against him.

And do you want to know why? For the same reason that argument exists today. You see, all these church people who claim to be Christian, they claim to have faith in Christ, and yet they live like the devil. They live like worldly, godless, carnal people.

Their lives in no practical way are submitted to the Word of God. They have no sense of the sovereignty and the lordship of Christ in their life. They have no concept of their practical life being directed by the Word of God.

And what is so frightening is what Jesus said in Matthew 7 when He said, You know, depart from Me. I never knew you, you workers of iniquity. The word there means you lawless ones.

And what He's saying in there is this, Depart from Me those of you who claim to be My disciples, and yet you lived as though I never gave you a law to obey. That describes so many people in evangelical America today. Jesus saved me.

But when you ask them about the law and the teaching of Christ, and how it affects their daily life, it doesn't. And that's exactly what Jesus said. Depart from Me those of you who claim to be My disciples, but

you live as though I never gave you a law to obey.

A command to adhere to. A principle to follow. It's like John MacArthur said, Do you want to know what your profession of faith in Jesus Christ is worth? Zero.

Because many will come before Me on that day and say, Lord, Lord. And I'll say, depart from Me. I never knew you.

Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. So you mean everybody who says they're a Christian and everybody who says Jesus is Lord is not entering into the Kingdom? No. Well, then how do we know when someone's really entering into the Kingdom? How do we know when we're entering into the Kingdom? He says, oh, it's easy.

The one who does the will of My Father. Are you saying, Brother Paul, that salvation is by works? Absolutely not. That is blasphemy.

Well, then what are you saying? I'm saying this. Salvation is a supernatural work of God. It is by faith and faith alone.

But since it is a supernatural work of God in which God literally changed the nature of a man, that man, the expression of true salvation, is going to be a new lifestyle of growing obedience and sanctification. That the evidence that one time long ago you repented is that you're still repenting. And the evidence that one time long ago you believed unto salvation is you're still believing.

And the one time long ago that you turned from sin is you're still turning from sin and growing in godliness. Because He who began a good work and you will finish it. And you say, Brother Paul, are you saying a Christian cannot stumble? A Christian cannot only stumble, they can somewhat fall.

But if they are a Christian, God will discipline their lives according to Hebrews chapter 12 and bring them back on the path. But if there is no discipline, they are not a child of God. And yet we find countless individuals in our churches today who live carnal, ungodly lifestyles with absolutely no, no measure of Christ's discipline.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be. Now, I don't know just how strong this language is, but I am told by scholars all throughout the world it is very strong. Paul is adamant.

He is certain. He may even be a little bit angry. May it never be.

Don't you ever say that. Why? He says, how shall we who died to sin still live in it? Now, what's this talking about? Now, I believe that the first part of the book of Romans in chapter 6, the greater half of this is talking about a lost doctrine. I think he is speaking, at least referring to backwards and forwards, the doctrine of regeneration.

I truly do. Now, just listen to me. We are going to put on our thinking caps for a moment.

I want you to look at what's been done to evangelical Christianity in America. Evangelism is all about decision. Decision.

Make your decision. I made my decision. Hour of decision.

Have you made your decision? You've got to make your decision for Christ. Salvation has come down to a man, in the power of his own will, making a decision for Christ. It's almost like salvation is a decision to jump out of the line going to hell, to jump into the line going to heaven, and that's it.

And anyone who's made that decision, we tell them they've been born again. But we have no concept of what the term born again or born from above really means. Born again or born from above is the doctrine of regeneration.

What does it mean? Well, first of all, the Bible says that we're dead in our sins. The word there means dead. If it meant something else, they would have put something else.

It doesn't mean sick in our sins, troubled in our sins, plighted by our sins. Dead in our sins. Regeneration is made alive.

That we were spiritually dead to God. Now, what does that mean? Let me give you an example. So there's a dead man on the platform right here.

He's dead. He's laying here. He's dead.

Not mostly dead, but dead. Okay? And I come to him, being the benevolent Samaritan that I am, I come to him and I say, Sir, hearken unto my voice. Not far from here is a well-established hospital.

They have those funny electric things that they can put on your chest. And though it will be quite painful, they can shock you back into existence. Now, sir, come with me.

What's wrong? You want to be dead all your life? Come! Please! Now! That's ridiculous, isn't it? Well, so is our evangelism. So is our evangelism. Can you imagine me and Brother Randall, 2,000 years ago, standing in front of Lazarus' tomb? Lazarus! Come forth! Okay, you try.

Lazarus! Come forth! You try. Lazarus, come forth! You know any other language? What's going to happen? We're going to stand there all day until we are hoarse, going, Lazarus, come forth. Lazarus just happens to have a problem.

When you're dead, you can't hear anybody. Now, but think about this. Jesus comes up and goes, Lazarus, come forth.

There's still the problem. Jesus spoke. Whoopee! He spoke to a dead man.

Dead men can't hear. So what you need to understand is when Jesus said, Lazarus, come forth, He also imparted into Lazarus the life to stand up and hear. And that's what you don't recognize.

When a man gets out to preach the Gospel, he is not some little tinker toy type of man who's learned a few slick systems who can go out and motivate and coerce and manipulate people emotionally to come forward. If he is a true preacher of God, he is a prophet standing in a valley full of dead bones. And God looks at him and says, can these bones live? And he says, you know, Lord.

Well then, Son, call upon the wind. Speak to these bones. That's the problem in America today.

You think salvation is just some little human decision of the will. The fact of the matter is it is a supernatural work of God. Men hate God.

Don't you recognize that? And men cannot come to God. Why? Because they hate Him. It's like this.

Let me give you an example. It says in the Bible that Joseph's brothers could not speak a kind or gentle word to him. Why is that? Did they have lips? Yes.

Did they have tongues? Were any of them mute? Not that I understand. Why is it that his brothers could not speak a good word to him? It says, because they hated him. So what it's saying is this.

Have you ever seen a person who you say, you need to forgive this other person? I can't. Why not? I just can't. They've done me so much wrong.

I cannot forgive them. What are they saying? The animosity, the bitterness, the hatred in my heart keeps me from forgiving them. That's why when we say men can't come to God, we're saying they can't come to God because they won't come to God, and they won't come to God because God is holy, they're wicked, and they hate what they see.

And Jesus said the same thing. You will not come to the light because your deeds are evil. Men are evil.

So the more they see of God, and the more they see of God's law, the more they will hate God and kick against His law. That is why when a preacher like me gets up to preach, he knows it's absolutely hopeless. No matter what I say.

No matter what I do. I cannot coerce. I cannot manipulate.

Why? The Spirit of Almighty God must come down in that place and resurrect people. It is a spiritual work of God, not a thing for tiny boys. If I see one more church sign that uses that Geico thing, salvation is so easy a caveman can do it, I don't know what I'm going to become.

Salvation is so easy a caveman can do it. No, salvation is so impossible that the blessed, tris-holy Son of God had to spill His blood to make it happen. And then the Spirit of Almighty God must come and literally resurrect a dead man and give Him spiritual sight so that He can see.

As I was sharing earlier, and this is important for you to understand Romans 12. This is important. I'm going to get back to it, but you have to understand this.

Most people, they preach like this. It's like Jesus is standing behind a curtain and there's the whole congregation of lost people, and Jesus is behind the curtain, and someone says all we have to do is show them Jesus. And they see Jesus, they're going to come to Him.

Just pull that curtain back. Preach to them about Jesus and they'll come. But that's not true.

Why? Well, the audience is blind. So you pull the curtain back. Nothing.

Why? They're blind. And then someone says, you're right, Brother Paul. We've got to preach Jesus.

We've got to pull that curtain back so that they can see Him and the Spirit of God's got to come and give them sight. Then they'll come to Him. No, they won't.

They'll kill Him. Why? Because when they open up their eyes and for the first time in their life see Jesus as the impeccably holy and righteous Son of God, and they see Him with that wicked, God-hating heart of theirs, the more they see of Him, the more they'll hate Him. The more they see of His will, the more they'll

kick against it.

See, here's one of the problems. Preachers aren't telling you today what is a long-drawn-out doctrine throughout all of Orthodox Christianity. Men are fallen, radically depraved.

They are born in their sin and iniquity. They are born conceived in sin. They are haters of God.

They are truly evil. And the only reason you don't make Hitler look like a choir boy is because the grace of God has restrained you. So if we were to pull back the curtain and the Spirit were to allow you to see, then what you saw you would hate because your heart is evil.

So what has to happen for a man to get saved? I'll tell you what has to happen. A preacher preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ and calls men to repent and believe the Gospel. And the Spirit of God comes.

And what does He do? He does exactly what Ezekiel says. He takes out a heart of stone. What is that heart of stone? Get the biggest man in Texas and make a statue of him.

I'll punch him. I'll pinch him. I'll prod him.

I'll kick him. I'll let a pigeon land on his head. And he's not going to do anything.

Why? Because a statue of stone, no matter how big it is, is an inanimate object. It cannot respond to stimuli. That's the heart that a man has.

He cannot respond to divine stimuli because it's dead. But he says, I will take out your heart of stone and I will give you a heart of flesh. And what is flesh? Flesh, in this sense, is not talking about something bad.

A heart of flesh is something that can respond to stimuli. I'm going to give you a heart that can see me, hear me. I'm going to recreate your heart in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness and I'm going to throw open your eyes.

And the moment I open your eyes and you see my Son, my beautiful, precious, holy Son, you are going to be drawn to Him because that heart of yours has been changed. And that is why he is saying here, shall we sin so that grace may increase? And he says no! No way! Why? Because although we were born with a sinful, adamic nature that drank down sin like it was water, even though we loved evil deeds and hated the light in saving us, God made us new creatures. Salvation is not just a thing of the human will.

It is a supernatural work of God just like recreation. The Spirit of God hovered in the creating of the universe. The Spirit of God recreates a person who is genuinely born again.

Makes them new. Makes them different. How is it that you can be witnessing to a drunk, you can be witnessing to a guy who has done everything possible, who has no morality, no nothing, and all of a sudden when you're witnessing to him, he sees Christ, he's broken over his sin, he comes running to Christ and then he's absolutely just a different man.

Did he just make a decision? The Spirit of God made him anew. Now I'll give you the best illustration. I've been living in Alabama for a year so I can use this illustration.

Let's imagine that I have a plate of that barbecue I ate today. That was wonderful stuff. Wonderful plate of the finest food.

Bucket of garbage. And we let a pig loose in the auditorium. I lived on a farm for many years.

I know exactly where that pig's going. He's not going to eat barbecue. He's going to stick his head in this bucket of vomituous filth.

He's going to plunge his head in there as deep as it can go. He's going to eat with all delight and he's going to shake his little tail and he's not going to worry about any of you seeing him. But if in one second I have the power to change that pig into a man, change his very nature, he is now a new creature.

He isn't just a pig who decided to turn over a new leaf. He isn't a pig who's going to finishing school. He isn't a pig who's being disciplined.

He is a pig that supernaturally has been changed into something other than a pig. He's been changed into a man. And the moment he's changed into a man, there are some things that men simply by nature cannot eat.

They can't do it. And so he throws his head out of that bucket. The very thing he was gobbling down with delight, he's now throwing it up with disgust.

He runs out into the field. He's eating grass. He's doing whatever he can do to get this taste out of his mouth.

And then finally when he settles down, he turns around and looks at you and he is so ashamed he can hardly bear it. I just described your conversion. You say, well, I never.

You've never been converted. That's your conversion. You see, it wasn't just a thing of will.

It was a supernatural, recreating work of Almighty God for His own glory to show how powerful He is. And that is why Paul says, no, the believer will never continue in sin that grace may abound. Why? Because he is a new creature.

And that's what no one seems to understand anymore. A new creature. Now, let's go on.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized unto Christ Jesus have been baptized unto His death? Now, it's debated back and forth, English scholars, American scholar, this scholar, that scholar. What does baptism refer to? I'm kind of old school. I simply believe it refers to baptism.

The water baptism. That's my opinion, but it doesn't take the meaning of the text away which way you go. I do not believe that they're saved when they're baptized.

I believe that what it's simply being demonstrated here is this, is that baptism is an external sign of an inward reality. Now, what happens? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized unto Christ Jesus have been baptized unto His death? In baptism, He's taken under the water. He is being buried with Christ.

He is taken under the water. He has died. It's an outward symbol of something that's already happened.

The moment they were saved, they were regenerated. They were born again by the power of God. Their old man died and a new man came to take His place.

Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized unto Christ have been baptized unto His death? The same way that Christ died, we died and we were buried. We really were when Christ regenerated our hearts, when the Spirit regenerated our hearts. Something really happened.

When the Bible uses terminology like new creation, new creature, it's not poetry. It's not just saying, oh, that's nice, and we can say it this way in a song. No, it's what really happened.

Ontologically. Your very being changed. You became something new.

That's why, you know, for years in my misery, in my drunkenness, in my self-centeredness, in everything that I was, and then sit there after doing terrible, foolish, and hurtful things to people, sit on the side of my bed and go, I'm never doing that again. How could I have done that? Why would I have done that? I've got to stop doing this and make vow after vow. And yet, my buddies call that evening and yeah, off we go again.

Until one day someone shared the Gospel with me. And what happened? It wasn't, I need to try to do what's right. I need to stop this.

I need to turn over a new leaf. It was, I did that before? How could I have done that? Why would I do something like that? What's happened to me? Whoa! Come on, Paul, it's time to go! Let's party! What? No. Let me share with you something.

You mark this down. This happens all the time, especially in the South. Preacher goes, goes visit someone who hadn't been in church for five years.

Goes visits him. Person sees the pastor coming. He's very polite.

He's trained to be polite. After all, he's from the South. Opens that door.

Come on in, Pastor. You want some sweet tea? Pastor starts talking to him a while. After he talks to him for a while, he hangs his head down.

You're right, Pastor. You're right. I just need to put this filthy stuff away.

I just need to stop going to all these places. I need to lay aside this stuff, chasing these women. You're right, I just need to get right.

I just need to get in church. I just need to do the right thing. That man is as lost as he can be.

Because you know what he's saying? He's saying, you're right, Pastor. I need to stop doing all the wicked things I love and start doing all the righteous things I hate in order to go to heaven. That's exactly what he's saying.

You don't see a new creature there. You see someone. And that's one of the problems with the Christian life.

Most Christians think the Christian life is struggling to be something you're not. It's not. It's being what you are now.

A new creature. And so he says, therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism unto His death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in a

newness of life. We've not only, has the old man been done away with, not only has the old man died, but a new man has come to take his place.

That heart of stone is removed and a new heart of flesh that will respond to God has been put in its place. Why? So that we walk in a newness of life. And he goes on, knowing this.

Let's go to verse 6. I can't go through. Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him. That's not a promise.

That's a reality. He's not saying, if you believe it and receive it, it will be true. That's Keswick teaching, which has so influenced so many people.

But what he's saying is this. It's a reality. If you truly are a believer, the old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.

It doesn't mean that believers will be perfect. As a matter of fact, anyone who comes to you saying they're a believer and they're perfect, they're not a believer according to 1 John 1. Because one of the greatest evidences that someone truly is a believer is that they are sensitive to the sin in their life, and it leads them to repentance and confession. But there is a great difference between a believer struggling and fighting against sin and growing in sanctification, and a person who calls himself a believer but lives continuously in a state of slavery with no power to overcome it.

It's not true. For he who has died is freed from sin. Now, I want us to go down for just a moment.

If you are a believer, you are sitting there, and this is so hard to communicate because everyone is just so trained to think I'm speaking, I don't know, mystically or something. That I'm not talking about realities or truths, but this is a reality. If you truly are Christian, your very nature has been changed.

You say, well, Brother Paul, then why do I struggle with sin? It's not because there are two natures black dog, white dog fighting inside of you. You struggle with sin because that new nature of yours is still housed in a body of unredeemed flesh with ingrained habits of sin. But, think about this for a moment.

That fallen flesh, that body with those ingrained habits of sin, realize this, that is not your reality. That's not who you are. It is wrong, I believe, for a Christian to stand up and say, I'm just a filthy, wretched sinner with a heart so deceitfully wicked that who can know it? And I'll tell you why.

I had a guy say that one time over and over in his sermon. After his sermon, I walked up to him and I said, let me ask you a question. Do I understand you right? You are a rotten, filthy, wicked sinner and your heart is so deceitfully wicked who can know it? He said, yes.

I said, just exactly what did God do to your heart when He regenerated it? I do not want to play down the struggle of sin in the believer's life or the power of the flesh, but I want you to know something. If you are a believer, the reality is this, you are a new creature. You need to not think, okay, I need to try and struggle to live like something I'm not.

Don't do that. You need to renew your mind and consider these things true and live like you are. You aren't these lies anymore.

You're something else. And so he goes on and he says this. Verse 11, Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God and Christ Jesus.

And why is that? Because you really are dead to sin and alive to Christ Jesus. That's the whole purpose of the first six verses. You think I'm getting excited.

You're right. There's this teaching out there that if you just consider yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ hard enough, you will actually be dead to sin and alive to Christ. It's a Keswick teaching.

It's resting in Christ. It's let go and let God. None of it's true.

It's a reality. He says in the first part of the text, you are dead to sin. Look what he says.

How shall we who died to sin still live in it? And then he talks about being baptized unto His death and raised to newness of life. And that's why he can come back in verse 11 and says, even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus because you really are. You are living now in a new reality, in a new realm.

That's why Augustine, who was a very immoral man, especially with the ladies, after his salvation, he's walking down the street and this lady of very poor reputation leans out in the balcony and says, Augustine, Augustine, it is I. And he goes, yes, but it is not I. Even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lust. Don't do it.

Now, let me share with you something. Here's this believer. Well, I'm just a wretched, old, wicked sinner.

My heart's deceitful. I love sin. I hear believers talking about that.

You love sin? Well, yeah, we just love sin. Alright, so look at the power in this. First of all, what does that say for the doctrine of regeneration? It's not a big, very big work.

But second of all, look at this. Here comes sin right for him. And he goes, well, I just might as well, how can I resist it? Be who I am.

I'm still just a wretched, old, this and that. Well, you know, I still fight against this and no power to stand against it. But someone who understands, I believe, the doctrine of regeneration and sees sin marching down the aisle towards him, sees temptation marching down the aisle, stops and says, no.

And I'll tell you why. You're coming to me with deception. You're trying to make me believe that if I bite into this, I will experience pleasure, I will experience joy, but I will not experience any more pleasure or any more joy than a man sticking his head in a bucket of vomit to slop like a pig.

I will not believe that. I am not that any longer. That's not who I am.

I won't enjoy it. It won't bring me pleasure. Most people think the Christian life is this, denying yourself all these worldly pleasures so that you can get to heaven.

But if you're a new creature, worldly pleasures are no longer a pleasure. You say, brother Paul, can Christians be dece... Yes, but it is a deception. When a Christian stops renewing their mind in the Word of God, when they stop hanging around other godly people and having iron sharpening iron, and they stop thinking godly thoughts, and they begin influenced by the world, they can go over there and stick their head right in a bucket of sin and bite down.

And the moment they do, they know they're wrong. They know it's sickening. Now, they may continue to chomp for a while in their dullness, in their hardness of heart, in their confusion, but sooner or later, they're going to vomit it up.

Why? They are new creatures. They're new creatures. It's just like this.

Let me set it before you. A man is lost. And he's going to work.

He's late. It's raining outside. He's got books under his arm.

They're all dropping out. He hasn't had breakfast. He's trying to get the doorknob open.

And he's trying to rush out. And the moment he gets the door partway open, his wife goes, honey, could you take the trash out? He spins around. And he goes, can't you see I'm late for work? I can't get the door open.

I've got to get to work. I've got stuff to do. How come every time I'm walking out of here, you tell me to take the trash out? And he jumps in his car, fully justified, drives to work, and he's just as happy as he can be.

Totally justified in his sin. He gets converted. Truly converted.

Regenerated. Born again. Same scenario.

He's got books under his arm. He's late for work. He didn't have breakfast.

He's kicking the cat. All these things. He's just messed up.

And he's walking out. He reaches out for the doorknob, and his wife goes, honey, could you take the trash out? He doesn't premeditate. He doesn't think.

He doesn't... nothing. He does this. What's wrong with you? Can't you tell I'm late for work, and it's raining, and then it's pouring outside, and my boss is going to get me.

How come every time I'm going out the door late, you ask me to take the trash out? And you say, well, behold the power of God. What are you talking about, Brother Paul? I'll tell you what I'm talking about. And the moment he does it, it's like a knife just went through his heart.

And maybe he walks out the door. It's like he engulfed down a bucket of slop. And maybe in his stubbornness, he turns the car on.

Maybe he makes it to his office. Maybe even makes it partway through the day. Husbands? But finally, he can't stand it anymore.

The Spirit is convicting him so heavily. God is coming to him in discipline. But, since he is a child of God, God no longer comes to him as a judge.

He comes to him as a Father. But it is so heavy upon him that he has to call his wife, Honey, forgive me. I was so wrong.

Now why did that happen? Why? It happened because, yes, the reality of him being still in this body of fallen flesh that has ingrained habits of sin. He's lived in a world of sin. He's been trained in sin for years.

All his reactions have been trained. And he spins around and he says that. But the moment he does, the reality that he's no longer that same old man.

He is a different man because he can't stomach it anymore. He's changed. He's no longer his own.

He has been recreated in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness. And he's brought to confession. Why? Because the reality of who he is, he's a different person.

Now he says, even so, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Now what must he do? We're going to talk about this tomorrow because we didn't get to it. How can he do this? The renewing of the mind.

You were born again behind enemy lines. Your flesh screams at you that you're nothing different. The world screams at you that you're nothing different.

You're just some goof following a ghost from Nazareth. You're someone who's just a religious fanatic. They have no idea you have been born again by the very will and power of God.

You're constantly bombarded, being convinced that you're not who you are. And preaching is so low with regard to conversion and so many people are called Christians who live totally carnal lives that you're convinced that there's not that much power in the Christian life and it's okay to just live in sin because that's what everyone does. No! You need to hear from the Word of God over and over again.

Your old man has died. It has been crucified. You have been risen with Christ.

You are a new creature. You have been given the Holy Spirit. It's like that silly little story of the little eaglet that falls out of the nest and lands right in the middle of the chicken coop.

And all he ever sees all his life is chickens. Chickens are about the foolish, most ugly, stupid things I've ever seen. I mean, they don't have any arms or anything.

They just walk around. I mean, that's an elegant chicken. Have you ever heard anyone say that? So what does he do? He walks like a chicken.

He acts like a chicken. He eats like a chicken. One day an eagle flies over.

And that eaglet looks up and goes, Oh my! Now that's something. Oh my! What is that? I've never seen anybody live like that. I've never seen anybody walk like that, fly like that.

How he holds his head. And the eagle flies and looks down and says, What on earth is that? Flies down. Hey, what are you doing? What do you mean, what am I doing? What are you doing here? Why are you walking like that? What are you doing? What do you mean, what am I doing? This is what I am.

No, it's not. It's not what you are. Stop it.

Do you know one of the things that I have greatly learned through some godly men, especially through J. Adams, is the need to repent of believing a lie. You're not a victim when you believe a lie. You're a transgressor when you believe a lie.

That's exactly what Adam and Eve did. They believed a lie. You believe this lie.

What? That conversion isn't that powerful. That godliness isn't possible. That walking with God is not really a reality.

It's just some pipe dream and God never gave you the power to do it. And that eagle says, Come on. That guy goes, I can't do this.

Yes, you can. Finally, he has to literally grab the thing, fly up in the air and let him go. And pretty soon, he says, oh my, this is true.

This is greater than anything anyone ever told me. I never knew I could walk this way. I never knew I could actually fly.

Now, for some of you, you've never walked that way. You've never known power over sin. Not because you're simply believing a lie, but you're yet unconverted.

You have no power over sin. But some of you, truly converted, need to begin to stand upon the truth of God's Word with regard to what you are. And when sin marches in the door, you look at it and you say, look, you're a lie.

I have nothing to do with you and you have nothing to do with me. And no, it's a lie. You don't have anything to offer me.

And no, it won't even be pleasurable for a season. It won't be pleasurable at all. Because I've been recreated.

And if I do believe your lie, it's going to hurt me. So he said, do that. And what should you do? He says, verse 13, do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness.

Stop doing it. What benefit, he's going to ask you later, did you get from these things? Absolutely nothing! You know, it's just insane. A guy will just save up all his... well, he doesn't save money.

No one saves money anymore. He'll go in debt to buy this huge car to make him happy. And then after he does it, I'll say, what benefit did you derive from that? Because it begins to be like rot.

No benefit. What benefit does anyone ever derive by living outside of the will of God? Absolutely nothing! And so he says, stop doing it! But I hear Christians go, I can't help it. This is who I am.

No, it's not! You eagle it in a chicken farm. It's not! It's not who you are. And if it is who you are, you're not a Christian.

If you're the type of person that says, well, I just love that old sin and I just love that, but you know, I need to do the right thing. You love it? No, you don't. Some of you don't love sin and yet you say you love sin because that's the language you've been taught.

Really? He says, stop it. Stop it. It's just like John 15.

What an amazing passage. I am the vine. Now, you need to try to be a branch.

That's not what it says. I am the vine. You are.

You are a branch. So stop trying to be something else. You really are a branch.

Now live like a branch. So he goes on and he says, just stop doing that. But present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead.

Why? Why should we present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead? Because you're really alive from the dead! It's a reality! It's not a wish. It's not a hope. It's not a promise.

It is what you are! You are alive from the dead! By the Spirit of God! There's only two realms. Christianity in the New Testament just moves in two realms. That's all.

That's it. You're either in the flesh, which is death. You're lost.

Or you're in the Spirit. You're either in Adam or you're in Christ. And it goes on and on and on and on.

There's only two realms. So many people are confusing these things. You really are alive from the dead! So live like it.

Don't try to be something you're not. Just be what you are. He says, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

You cannot be happy in offering yourself to this world. You cannot be happy in offering yourselves to unrighteousness. Why? Because you are no longer an unrighteous creature.

You are recreated in the image of God, in true righteousness. This is what he means. This is what he means in verse 8. Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.

Present yourself to Him. Now, let me just go on one other thing. I want you to think about this for a moment.

Present yourself to Him. Now, do you realize that's absolutely one of the most amazing statements in the whole Bible? Present yourself to Him. Now, have you studied anything about God? Anything presented to Him is absolutely perfect.

Not 99.9% perfect. Absolutely perfect. So how can you present yourself to Him? Because although you may be a dedicated Christian and walking with God and desiring to do His commands, you are like me.

It is a battle. You sin. You must confess.

We are a confessional people. We are a broken people. We take great confidence and joy in the fact that God looks at the one who is not perfect, but the one who is broken and contrite and trembles at His Word.

So how is it that we can present ourselves? A friend of mine, Michael Durham, when he's on a plane, he'll open up his Bible or something and someone will look at him. He'll start talking to him. And they'll say, well, what do I have to do to go to heaven? And Michael just kind of looks up.

He'll be there looking at his Bible. And he'll look up and say, oh, that's easy. You just have to be absolutely morally perfect all the time just like God.

And he'll look back at his Bible. And the person will go, what? Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

In order to be with God in heaven, you have to be absolutely morally perfect with absolutely no sin at all and just nothing but... what can I say? Almost infinite value in all your good works. You just have to be

absolutely perfect. Well, let me put it this way.

You just have to be absolutely righteous like God is righteous. He goes back looking at his Bible and finds the person's going, hey! Wait a minute! Nobody's like that! Yeah, you're right. Now can we talk? But here's what I want you to see, believer.

In Christ, you are that. If you were not that, you couldn't even call Him Father. If you were not that, you would know nothing of His Spirit, of His presence.

I'm not saying that when a believer becomes a Christian, they become perfectly righteous. What I am saying is this. When a person becomes a Christian, when they become a believer, Christ's righteousness is imputed to them so that God now... You see, what you need to understand is Christ did not just die for you.

Christ lived for you. He lived a perfect life for you. And He always, always, when He was living, He always heard, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

He obeyed everything. He was always pleasing to the Father. And when you believed in Christ, all your sins were forgiven by virtue of the cross, but you were granted, you were declared, forensically, legally, declared righteous before God in Christ.

That's what you are now. Now, let me share with you. This comes from Charles Leiter, a dear friend of mine that's really helped me in this area.

Man has two problems. He has two problems and that's all. One, he's under the condemnation of sin.

Two, he's under the power of sin. That's the only two problems man has. Under the condemnation of sin, he's under the power of sin.

When Christ died for you on that tree and rose again from the dead, and then when you believed in Christ, the condemnation of sin, that problem was gone forever. Okay? You're righteous in Him. You're accepted in Him.

God sees you as altogether lovely in Him. Not one spot or blemish, he says, in Him. So your condemnation problem was removed.

But you don't just have a condemnation problem. Slavery to sin. So by faith, you were justified, which took away the problem of condemnation before God.

But regeneration took care of the problem of the power of sin in your life. Those two things. And a lot of guys get off balance because they have such a low view of regeneration.

When Christ died for me and I believed in Him, I was justified in Christ through His death on that tree, through His perfect life. His righteousness imputed to me. I stand before God now and there is therefore now no condemnation.

But also, I am no longer a slave to sin because the Holy Spirit has regenerated my heart, regenerated my life. I have a new nature and I walk in newness of life. So both of those problems now have now been taken care of.

Now, it's not to deny that there's a struggle with sin. But there's a difference between struggle with sin and slavery to sin. Let me put it this way and I'm going to end with this.

He says, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Again, this comes from... Ma'am, I'm almost preaching everything I've been taught from Brother Leiter. Let me give you an illustration that he gave me a long time ago. He was a physics major.

I mean, his head is about that big. He is so brilliant. It's unbelievable.

And I'm glad that this is not... Well, it is on TV. No, it's not on TV. Charles, your head's not really that big.

Just this big. But he said, imagine this, Paul, for a moment, okay? Imagine this. This really happened to him.

He walked into class. It was the last semester in physics. It was the Weter course.

It was, you know, the professor's last name was like Ben Laden or something. It was the most difficult course in the face of the earth. And he walks in there with five other physics majors, and they sit down, and they're trembling.

The professor walks in, looks at him, says, you men have been through all the courses in physics in this university, and if you've gotten this far, it means you've done well. You all have an A. Now, let's just enjoy the material. Now, Charles said, now let's just change the scenario for a moment.

We have these five physics guys who love physics. I mean, they love it. They eat this stuff, drink it, they talk about it.

They're physics guys. It's what they love. There's five math majors in there also.

They hate physics. They hate it, but they've got to take the course. So the professor walks in, and he says, all right, everyone has an A in the course.

Let's just enjoy the material. Now, these five physics guys, they go, we've got an A? You mean, we can just study this stuff for fun? You mean, we can just like pour our mind into this without any worry of any flunking or failing? We can just enjoy this material? We can extrapolate? We can just dream? We can just, man, stay up all night, you know, just talking about this book and everything that's in it? The teacher goes, yeah, you've got an A. Now, let's just enjoy the material. The math majors go, we've got an A in this class? We've got an A? Yeah.

You mean, we've got an A? Yeah. They walk out and throw the physics book in the trash can. That's the difference between a converted church member and a carnal, wicked, lost church member that are filling up all the churches in America.

We've got an A? It's all of grace? Oh, great! Let's sin! We'll keep with our same lifestyle. Do all the sinful, horrid things we love. Nothing about discipleship.

Nothing about keeping His commands. Nothing about following Him, giving your life away. Nothing.

It's all about, we've got an A? Let's avoid Him at all costs. But the converted churchman says, we've got an A? He did that for us? Let us follow Him. Let us know Him.

Let us press on and press in to this great God. Oh, what a joy! We've got an A! Let's enjoy the material. What hour is the Bible study? When's the prayer meeting? When are you going soul winning? Honey? I can't sleep.

I can't either. Let's just look at the book of Ephesians. Let's pray.

You see? Let's pray. Father, thank You. Help us, dear Lord, that these truths become a reality in Your people.

Help us.

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