

# How God Views His Bride (Song of Solomon)

## Part 1

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer emphasizes the transformative love of God for believers, highlighting their new identity in Christ and the beauty seen by God in them.*

**Duration:** 49:11

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:21

**Topics:** "Bride Of Christ"

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### Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of believers seeking to understand and discover the depth of God's love for them. He acknowledges that some may argue that preaching about God's love will lead to a license for sin, but he counters this by explaining that true believers are no longer wicked or God-hating, but have been transformed into new creatures in Christ. The preacher then goes on to discuss how God looks at his children and encourages the audience to have a biblical perspective in their relationship with God. He concludes by mentioning that in the next session, he will address the topic of losing one's first love and aims to increase the audience's love for God by highlighting His goodness and grace.

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### Transcript

Most people, so many people think, what do they think? They think this, that Christianity is a man who leaves all the wicked things he loves to do and does all the righteous things he hates to do in order to go to heaven. If you feel that way, if that's your life, you're lost. Because a new creature, even though he still lives in a body of flesh and succumbs to sin and needs confession and repentance, he doesn't love wicked things anymore.

And when he does them, it breaks him in a million pieces. And he does love righteousness and he laments when he doesn't do it, because he is a new creature. Are you a new creature? Don't talk to me about your religion, don't talk to me about your morality, and don't talk to me about your intent to do good and just make the right decision.

Tell me something, are you a new creature inside? Have you changed? A new creature. Now, I hear Christians. Now this time, when I use the word Christian, let me define that.

I'm talking about a real Christian. I'm not talking about a church member. I'm talking about someone who's really been saved.

What is their standing before God? We've already seen the standing of man without Christ before God. And what is that? Totally under the wrath of Almighty God. Condemned and without hope.

He has a wicked heart so wicked no one can know it. All His good works are like filthy rags. But should we use that same language to define the believer? No.

Not at all. That language has nothing to do with the true child of God. Now I'm going to teach on this hopefully tomorrow night and Sunday.

Now we're going from more... I hate the word revival. Because basically revival is some guy coming in who's really slick with white shoes on that gets people excited about really dies down in about a week. And the people who get saved, none of them show up to church next Sunday.

What we want to do is teach truth to help you. I hear Christians say, well you know, I'm just wicked and I'm sinful and I've just got an old wicked heart. And my heart, you know, is deceitfully wicked.

Who can know it? I go, really? And they go, yes. I go, would you explain to me something? And they say, what? Just what did God do to your heart when He saved you? Have you ever thought about that? We use language many times that is not used in the New Testament regarding a believer. When Jeremiah says the heart is deceitfully wicked, he's not talking about a believer.

He's talking about man and Adam because God says He changes the heart of a man. Not that we should trust in our heart without the word of God, but what he's saying, I want to tell you something. Before I was converted, my heart was deceitfully wicked.

I wanted to do evil. I boasted about evil. I bragged about it.

I was not ashamed of it and never repented of it. I loved evil. Now, when I sin and I do sin, it makes me nauseous.

Why? Because I don't have the same heart anymore. I want you to learn, if you are a true believer, to clean up your language. Also, many believers walk around thinking that God's wrath abides on them, that God's angry with them when they sin.

Now, I know we're in the South, so you don't talk much about hockey, but when they sin, they go into the penalty box. And about five or six days in there, then you can come out and start walking your Christian life again. What I want to show you, I know I'm world famous for being the hardest preacher in the world.

I'm always telling people how wicked they are. But if I do tell people how wicked they are, it's so that they can appreciate Christ. And after they come to Christ, I want them to see what Christ has done for them.

If you're a believer, you're no longer wicked. You're no longer God-hating. You're a new creature, recreated in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness.

And what we're going to do tonight is look at how God looks at you. How does God look at His child? Have you ever imagined that you give God less credit than you receive for yourself? Is it not true, sir? Is it not true, mother? That you would die a thousand deaths for your child? I mean, at least until they're a

teenager. The love I have for my children scares me to death because sometimes I feel it borders on idolatry.

I love them so much that I can't even hardly sometimes sleep at night. Even when they have done wrong and I must discipline them, my love for them never changes. They are so precious in my sight.

And yet we somehow think that God's not quite that way with us. Like I said, my Pentecostal friends say, the greatest act of faith is to raise the dead. And I say, no, the greatest act of faith is for Paul Washer to look in the mirror of God's Word and see all His flaws and believe that God loves him as much as He says He does.

That takes faith. How does God see you? Look in verse 7 of chapter 4 of Solomon. You are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you.

When God looks at you, and I know that some of you just think I'm reciting poetry. This is not Keats or Burns. This is the Bible.

I'm not reciting poetry. I'm stating fact. When God looks at you, if you truly are in Christ, God looks at you.

He says, you are altogether beautiful. Now, let me do a little bit of theology with you. How many times did Adam and Eve sin before they were cast out of the presence of God? It says here, you are altogether beautiful.

Don't you realize that if God did not see you all the time as altogether beautiful, you wouldn't have any fellowship with Him. You would be lost and in hell. You see, remember what I said? In order to go to heaven, you have to be absolutely morally perfect without one flaw.

This is what I'm talking about. And that is why Christ drank the wrath of God on that tree. That's why He took the cup.

He drank for the crime, every crime you have ever committed, that you committed today and that you will ever commit in the future, He paid for it all. So that when God looks at you, the only thing He sees is you are altogether beautiful. See, that's why some denominations who have a work ethic, they believe, well, do your best and work as hard as you can and maybe God will accept you.

No, if you're not absolutely perfect without a flaw, you can have no communion with God. And for that reason, Christ is the only answer. But when you are in Christ, He sees you as altogether beautiful.

Now, look at this. He doesn't say simply that you're without sin. He doesn't say simply that you're pardoned.

But He says you're altogether beautiful. Now, in Psalms, it says this. It asks a question.

In modern day vernacular, we would say something like this. Who may ascend to the hill of the Lord? Or who is going to be saved? Who can go to heaven? And what does it say? The one who is forgiven? No, that's not what it says. It says the one who has clean hands and a pure heart, not lifted up his soul to falsehood, idolatry.

We see not a person forgiven. Not a person who is just neutral with nothing negative. But we see a person who has always done right all the time.

In order to go to heaven, you have to be more than forgiven. In order to go to heaven, you have to be more than just, I haven't done anything bad. You have to be perfectly righteous with nothing but good works.

Now, when Jesus Christ was on the cross, what happened? He carried your sin. It's the doctrine of imputation from the Latin, imputare, which means to think or consider. God thought or considered or reckoned our sin to be upon Christ.

Now, we always hear this language, Christ died for me, right? Well, let me give you a new language also. Christ lived for you. You say, that's right, Brother Paul, He rose from the dead.

Yes, He rose from the dead, but that's not what I'm talking about. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for some 30 odd years, okay? And what did He do those 30 years? Did He sin? No. But He just wasn't neutral either, was He? He was full and abounding in good works.

He perfectly lived every second according to the will of His Father. Every time the Father looked down at Him, what did the Father say? This is my Beloved in whom I am well pleased. Now, let's go to Joseph back in the Old Testament.

What got him in trouble with all his brothers? Well, one thing that got him in trouble is he had a multicolored coat. You remember that? Did he share it with his brothers? No. But Jesus is one greater than Joseph.

When He was on the cross, Jesus, the one greater than Joseph, took your garments of filthy rags upon Himself and was crushed under the wrath of God in your place. But the moment you trusted in Jesus Christ, He not only cleansed you of all your sins, but He took His coat of perfect righteousness. Every good deed He ever did, a life lived perfectly in the will of God, He took that coat and He dressed you in it.

Every time God looks at you in all your failure, like my failure, in all your bumping up against your own flesh, in all your fight with sin, in all your struggles, in all the things that make you doubt everything, He does not see that. He has dressed you in Christ, so every time God looks at the child of God, the only thing He says is you are altogether beautiful. My darling, do you think Christ is beautiful? Let me put it this way, theologically.

Now, this is an inference, but I think it's well-founded. Christ is so beautiful at this moment in glory, that if you were to gaze upon Him for a fraction of a second, that beauty would so overwhelm you that you would go mad. And the only way you will ever be able to gaze upon the beauty of Jesus Christ, Him being so gorgeous, is to be supernaturally changed and strengthened by God.

Try to look up at the sun for even a minute. You do and you'll damage your eyes. That sun is a pale nothing blackness.

If you were to gaze upon the beauty of Christ for one second, you would go mad because your mind could not comprehend such beauty. And yet, every time God the Father looks down at you, He says you are altogether beautiful. My darling, this isn't poetry, it isn't mythology, it isn't hopeful thinking.

It's what it means to be justified. Because of what Christ did for you, based upon the virtue and the merit of another, Jesus Christ our Lord, you have perfect peace with God and perfect fellowship. When He looks down at you, He says that you are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you.

Not one, because if there were, if there was one blemish in you, you would be cut off. Like Adam, like Eve, cut off. But there's not.

Why? Christ. Christ. That is why we use the word Christocentric.

Our hope is Christocentric. Everything in our life, every hope flows from the perfect person and work of Jesus Christ. Now we go on and He says, Come with Me from Lebanon, My bride.

May you come with Me from Lebanon. Journey down from the summit of Ammanah, and from the summit of Sennir and Hermon, from the den of lions, from the mountains of leopards. Now, He's calling to His bride.

But let's make this individual. He's calling to you. Now, where are you, first of all? As a believer, remember what I said, we still have this tendency.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. And where have we gone? It says here, He says, Journey down from the summit of Ammanah, from the summit of Sennir and Hermon, from the den of lions, from the mountains of leopards.

We are in a high and lofty place, but in a bad way. Any straying from Christ, any breaking of our dependence upon Him, any declaration of independence is pride, haughtiness, and all of us are guilty. I used to tell young preachers, in order to preach, you've got to have the power of God on your life.

Now I tell them, in order to tie your shoes, you have to have the power of God on your life. You and I can do nothing. This is part of what it means to say, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It is a person who recognizes that Christ is the vine. They are the branch. Apart from Him, they can do nothing.

And any time we begin to live a life somewhat independent of Him, not thinking on Him, not drawing from Him, not looking to Him, we become those who are in a quite dangerous place. Because if you notice, He says there are lions there, and there are leopards there. The safest place a man can be is humbled and absolutely dependent upon God.

A man humbled before God, clinging to Christ, has nothing to fear. I teach my little boys to be woodsmen. I mean, sometimes when they are two years old, give them little flashlights, send them out in the woods at night.

Daddy would be close, right by their side. But I had one that was a strayer. Ian liked to go out on his own.

So I'd take him out into the woods. Actually, we had this place. It was kind of like this swamp.

And we'd go in there and have a good time. And I'd take Ian in there when he was about three years old. And he'd go in there and I'd say, Ian, stay by my side, stay by my side, stay by my side.

He was always wandering, wandering, wandering. So one day, I let him go. Just let him go.

Now, I was keeping track of him. No coyote was going to grab him. No mountain lion was going to get him.

I was kind of staying behind each tree. Hiding behind a bush here and there. And he just kept going and going until all of a sudden, he was lost.

And it dawned on him. He did not know where he was. And he turned around.

Dad! And I did not answer. I stayed behind the tree. You say, oh, you're a cruel father.

No, I'm not. I'm a very loving father. And I waited until I saw a tear.

A little breaking of the heart. A trembling of the lip. Dad, I stepped out.

Have you learned your lesson, son? Did my love diminish at that moment? Did my attitude toward him change? No. What you have to realize is the love, the attitude, better. The disposition of the Almighty was fixed regarding you.

He will never, ever come to you again as a judge. He will never, ever come to you again in anger. Only love, even when He allows you to break with Him a bit, so as to learn that you cannot live without Him.

The believer is in such a wonderful love relationship. It's absolutely phenomenal. And you can't believe it because you can't understand it because you've never seen anything like this before.

The greatest task of the believer is to seek out and try to discover how much God loves them. And the hardest thing to believe is the way He does. Now, some people will say, as they told the Apostle Paul, oh yeah, tell that to the church and they'll run wild.

No. Tell that to the church. Well, let's use the word church loosely.

Tell that to a group of people on Sunday morning and here's what will happen. The carnal, unconverted church member will hear that and use it as a license for sin. Well, then, that's a good deal.

Let's just go on. The true converted Christian will say, if He loves me so, I want to be for Him what He wants me to be. It will drive the true Christian to holiness.

Not in slavery, but in joy. It's like you take two women and both of them seem to serve their husband frantically. Just serve the husband, clean the house, prepare the meals, all these different things.

Absolutely the same. Identical. Just almost a pure devotion and dedication.

And you look at both of those women, but they are not the same. For one of them, one of them does it with a bitter heart and with awe and with fear and with doubt because she does all these things so that her husband will love her. But the other one, with joy and a song, she does these things because her husband does.

Unconditionally. Now, he says, come. Come.

Believers, the Lord is such a lover. Listen to me. That's why when you hear these people, well, I was saved 25 years ago.

They have not grown. They've had no encounter with the Lord. They do not love God's people.

They just come to church every once in a while. Their heart is as dead as a stone. They are not believers.

God pursues His children constantly. He loves them so much. He's always calling them, come, come, come.

And He makes sure they will. Not by coercion or manipulation. Sometimes the word irresistible is used.

It's not good language because it misleads people. But it's like this. Here's what happens.

You have an evil heart. You look at God and you cannot come to Him. Not because you cannot come to Him.

You cannot come to Him because you will not come to Him. Now, God irresistibly draws people. He doesn't do it against their will.

He changes their heart. And when He changes their heart for the first time in their life, they look up and see Christ so beautiful that they cannot but come to Him. If God has changed your heart, Christ is beautiful to you.

And you will want Him to hell with any religion you have that does not cause you to passionately love Jesus Christ. Because the real religion is not about morality. It's not about doing the right thing.

The real religion is He saved me. I want to know Him. I want to please Him.

That's why, as I've said before, this yuppie preaching of these seeker-friendly churches nowadays, telling people, young couples, you've got a great education and a great job and a wonderful car and a beautiful home and you live near the golf course and you're up and coming and your life is just wonderful. You lack one little thing. It's called Jesus.

That's a lie. You have nothing. Your life is rubbish apart from Jesus Christ and a passion for Him.

Don't you come in here thinking that Jesus is like a little accessory that you put on, a button on a shoe or a belt or a purse to complete your life. He is your life or He is nothing. Now, I want you to look at verse 9. This is God speaking about you, believer.

This is what He says. You have made My heart beat faster, My sister, My bride. You have made My heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes.

I don't know if God is going to hear me. I don't know. You know, I don't know.

I know. This is what He's saying. Believer, I know.

I'm not talking about lost church members. I'm talking about believers. We've already been through that.

But believer, I want you to know. You cut your eyes toward heaven, His heart beats faster. You cut your eyes toward heaven and His heart beats faster.

That's how much He loves you. So many people have this idea, well, He loves me because that's what He has to do because, well, you know, all this happened and now the transaction's been done, so therefore He loves me. No, He's passionate about you.

Remember what I read from Jeremiah? He says, I will rejoice over you to do you good. I will bring you into Your own land with all My heart and all My soul. He passionately desires you.

Some people say the sin of the church is passion. No, the sin of the church is a lack of it. You don't know the way He looks at you.

And I hate that. Because He looks at you in such a way there is no flaw. And every time you cut your eyes at Him, it's as though the heart of deity beats faster with joy.

Boy, that will make you want to pray. You've made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride. You have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes.

And then He says, with a single strand of your necklace. A necklace is an adornment. She has an adornment on her that is beautiful to the king.

And do you want to know why it's beautiful? She was basically a peasant girl before He met her. Did you know that? Peasant girls don't have adornments that are delightful to kings. I mean, they have little necklaces made out of clay.

But this king of kings looks down at this peasant girl and he says, with a single glance of your eyes my heart beats faster. And with the sight of your necklace. You see, here's what He's done.

He's taken off your filthy rags. He has cleansed you whiter than snow. And then He has dressed you in the robe of His own righteousness.

And He has adorned you with His own beauty. And that is why every time He looks at you, His heart beats faster with a single glance. You have no idea what Christ has done for you.

Because if you did, I suppose we'd all be Pentecostals and running across the top of these benches right now. Angels long to look at the very things that have been done for you, believer. He goes on and He says this, verse 10.

How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride. How much better is your love than wine and the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of spices. You know, this is so amazing to me that my love is beautiful to Him.

It's something that He cherishes. Now I want you to look at something. You know how the song goes, Oh, how I love Jesus.

I find it very difficult to sing that song. Tremendously difficult. I'm not trying to be super spiritual or anything.

I just find it very difficult to sing that song because when I look at how pitiful Paul Washer's love actually is, I don't see much to sing about. I'd rather sing about, Oh, how much He loves me than how much I love Him. But I have to be careful here because the love I have for Him is beautiful to Him.

You see, He does practice what He preaches. Our God, this God of ours. He says love covers a multitude of sins.

He loves you so much that the love you have for Him is flawed and is imperfect and sometimes proud and self-centered and yet His love covers a multitude of sins. I remember one time, I walked into my little boy Ian. He was about, I don't know, one and a half or something, two years old.

And I came around the corner upstairs and he was laying there in bed and he just woke up. And the moment I came through the door, he just went like this. And I just began to weep.

Why? There was not a doubt, not one doubt in that boy's mind that when he threw those arms open wide, his father was going to come to him. There wasn't a doubt in his mind. Am I a better father than God? I love that little boy.

He knows it. And therefore, there was no doubt in his mind that when he threw those arms open, I was going to come and grab him and whisk him away. And yet, you throw open your arms to God and you doubt that He is going.

But you don't understand. No, you don't understand what He's done for you. What He's done.

He goes on and He says this. Verse 11, Your lips, My bride, drip honey. Honey and milk are under the tongue and the fragrance of your garment is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Prayer. How much God delights in prayer. One of the greatest tragedies of ministers is ministers are sucked away from God by the ministry.

Your pastor didn't ask for me to do this. I won't spend much time on it, but sometimes when churches are without a pastor, they'll ask me to come and explain to them what kind of pastor they ought to be looking for. But first of all, I ask them some questions.

How many days a week do you want your pastor to work? Seven? Well, no. Well, then how many? Six? Well, five, five and a half, six, I don't know, somewhere. Okay, put that down.

Okay, how many hours a day do you want him to work? 24? And they go, no, not 24. Okay, six? No, more than six. Okay, how many? I don't know, eight, ten? Ten? Hours a day? Okay.

How much do you want him to study the Bible every day? And they go, well, we never thought of that. I said, well, the Bible says it's the foremost task of your pastor. Now, how many hours a day do you want him to study? You want him to study 15 minutes a day? Well, no.

Well, an hour a day? Well, what do you recommend? Well, an hour a day is good for him to feed on the Word himself so that he'll be a man of integrity and such. How much time do you want him preparing messages? You know, the kind of things that are going to determine whether your child goes to heaven or hell. How long do you want him to be working on that? And they go, well, I don't know.

Two hours? Well, yeah, two. Some say three. Some say, well, I know my children.

Can he work eight hours a day? I go, okay, you want him to be in the Word, you know, feeding on it for about an hour. You want him to be studying the Word for about two, three hours a day. Okay, we're up to four hours.

How much do you want him praying for your soul? Fifteen minutes? Twenty? Thirty? Well, Brother Paul, if you knew my soul, can he stay up all night? Okay, how much do you want him praying? And then they start clicking. I said, yeah. You want your pastor to run all over and do all kinds of things.

Fix the windows. Mow the yard. Make sure the plumbing is okay.

Do all this other stuff. One time I was preaching. And I'll tell you something.

Some of you elderly ladies, and I know that there aren't any elderly ladies here tonight, but sometimes elderly ladies are as sweet as they can be and just full of Jesus. Other times they're mean as snakes. And you know who you are.

And I was standing at the back door one time after I had preached, and this little lady came in, the pastor, of course, standing right beside me. And she goes, that was so wonderful. We never hear preaching like that.

I just wish that, oh gosh, I wish we could hear preaching like that. We never hear preaching like that. And I said, well, if all of you weren't so carnal driving your pastor half crazy, making him go to tea parties and visit you every five minutes, maybe he'd have time to study the Word of God.

And she just went, walked out the door. You see, I got to this point. Please don't tell my preaching professor I'm preaching like this tonight.

Because I'm going all over the place. But the whole point is, devotion to Christ is everything. Not just for your pastor and your music director and whoever else is on staff.

Sir, you can't leave your home apart from this without devotion and prayer and believing these things that when you look up, He looks back and with delight. And that He's calling you to prayer. And He's calling you to come.

And He's calling you to feed on His Word. And He's calling you. You can't be the man or woman you must be to reflect and live this Christian life.

There's so much in this Song of Solomon here. Now he goes on, verse 12. A garden locked up is my sister, my bride.

A garden locked. A spring sealed up. Now what is this? Holiness.

Holiness. He is saying, He's literally talking to a woman. I mean, He's talking about a woman here.

A bride. His wife. His future wife.

And He says, He describes her as a garden locked up. A garden locked is my sister. A garden locked.

A spring sealed up. You see, when I got married, when my wife asked me to marry her, not only did my relationship with my wife change, my relationship with every other woman on the face of the earth changed. And it will remain changed until we get to heaven.

So, you see, it wasn't just a change of relationship with my wife. It was a change of relationship with every other woman. To every other woman, I am a fountain sealed.

I am a garden locked up. To every other man, my wife is a fountain sealed and a garden locked up. Now, the moment you came to know Christ, not only did your relationship with Christ change, your relationship with the entire world changed.

You now belong to Him. You don't belong to the world. You don't belong to other loves.

Now, let me say this. Augustine, and I can't quote him directly, although I should be able to, he said, you're not a godly man because you can basically hide in a cave and not enjoy any of the delightful things God has given. A godly man, a godly woman, is someone who can enjoy the delightful things, but they do not become loves.

And Jesus teaches us, if they do become loves, then we need to amputate them radically. If your right eye offend thee, pluck it out. If your right hand offend thee, pluck it out.

That is, if it causes you to stumble. But the whole idea is that when you become a Christian, you are shut off to the world to give your love to God in Christ. Now, again, I'm going to stray.

Many rabbits to run here tonight. Young person, this is to be you, whether you're male or female. You are to be a garden locked up and a fountain sealed.

Only one person is ever to enter in to your garden and drink from your fountain, and that is your future spouse. Only one other person. No one else.

That is why I want you to know something. Now, you'll probably just set you all ablaze. The most unbiblical thing going on in this church probably is dating.

And you're killing your children because you're allowing it. Recreational dating is a thing that belongs, started in the 20th century and has done more to damage the lives of men and women and marriages than any other thing on the face of the earth. I do a whole thing on biblical courtship, but I just wanted to mention this right now.

It's true. It is true. Let me just give you an example.

Quickly. And again, don't worry about me. I'm not tired.

I'm just saying all these different things because I don't have a lot of time with you. The week's almost finished. I want to touch on as many things as I can to help you.

Let's say that I came here from Illinois. If I came here from Illinois and not moved to Muscle Shoals, I would, of course, need something of a hotel or an apartment or something. And so let's say that the pastor found a little apartment for me near the church and that's where I was staying during the day.

And then one day the pastor and a few of the deacons, they decided they were going to come over and visit me, see how I'm doing there. And they ring the doorbell of an apartment and a 45-year-old single woman who's a member of the church opens the door and says, Well, how y'all doing? And your mouths drop, don't they? They should. And then I look.

Hey, guys, come on in. What's immediately going to happen? You guys are going to cancel the meetings, hopefully. You're going to grab me and you're going to say, What on earth are you doing? And I'm going to say, Well, what's the problem? Look, the stove's on.

We're making cookies. What's the problem? Are you out of your mind putting yourself in this kind of position? Don't you know how easy it is to fall and here you are alone with this woman that's not your wife? What's wrong with you? Now let me ask you something. What's wrong with you, Dad? I'm 45.

I fall. I've got a lot to lose. I lose my wife.

I lose my children maybe. I lose the ministry. Missionaries all over the world will probably lose their support.

I've got a lot more to lose than your 16-year-old. So if anybody's going to be alone with a woman and not fall, it's going to be me. After all, I'm 45.

I'd rather play badminton than be in a room like that with a woman. I don't care. Yet you allow your 16-year-old to do the exact same thing you're warning me about and wonder why they fall.

And it's not a question of if they'll fall. It's only a question of when. You allow two young people to be together long enough they're going to fall and that's why they all do.

See, that's why recreational dating is unbiblical. And that's why families and marriages and everything else are so messed up. You just can't be together alone long enough without doing things that aren't pleasing to God and that won't destroy your marriage even if it's not with that person.

So that's a whole other topic but I just wanted to warn you. You see, here's the thing. Churches today churches today the Bible says my people perish for lack of knowledge.

Churches today are so unbiblical and do so many things that can't be found in the Scriptures and do so many things that contradict Scripture and no one even knows it. And if someone comes in and starts teaching what the Bible says they throw him out on his ear. But they never throw him out on his ear with their Bible open.

They just say, I never heard of such a thing. This is too radical. The Christian life happens to be that way.

There are so many things that are being violated in families. You want a revival to break out in this church? Let's preach on the family for about a week. Just on how husbands are supposed to love their wives you'll see a revival break out in the church.

You see our whole life has to be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and His Word and you can't just do it half way. Everything. Every facet of your life.

I do not agree with everything the Puritans said. Especially the New England Puritans. I don't like them very much, a lot of them.

But, one of the things I appreciate about the Puritans is this. They sought to place everything in their life under Scripture. Remember what I said, Jesus will say, depart from Me, I never knew you.

Those who called yourself My disciples and yet lived as though I never gave you a law to obey. Oh, how much hurt could be saved if you would just be biblical. Now, this is where we're going to end.

Tomorrow night we're going to pick up and we're going to talk about losing our first love from the Song of Solomon. Losing our first love. And I'm not going to do it by beating you over the head and condemning you about how much you don't love God.

You already know that. And you could say the same about me. We're all burdened about the fact we don't love God as we ought to.

No sense in beating that horse. But what I hope to do is that God will increase our love toward Him by showing us how good a Savior and how good a God He truly is. Now, I said a whole bunch of stuff tonight.

Why? Well, again, I'm not about giving an invitation and getting a whole bunch of people to come forward because basically I want to tell you something. First of all, this is not an altar. These are steps.

We have an altar. It's the cross. Anyone who has another altar is committing blasphemy and idolatry.

And a lot of people will hear a sermon like this and they'll come up here for two minutes and it's almost a psychological thing. As Southern Baptists, we've been trained like Pavlov's dog. I mean, we just come up, we've been trained to come up, pray a few minutes, kind of release that thing and then go back and not be changed.

What I want you to do is take it home and pray about it and read the Word and talk about it. And I've thrown a lot of things out at you. Why? And I don't flatter anybody.

That's sin. But one of the reasons I'm doing what I've been doing here this week, throwing out a whole bunch of stuff is because I know you have a pastor who can go back and answer your questions. I'm stirring you up.

And I'm hitting you in as many things as I can hit you in. For example, I hope some of you go, what do you mean dating is not biblical? I mean, how do you get to know someone? Well, Scripture teaches that. Well, what do you mean this is wrong? Well, that's what I'm doing tonight.

I'm throwing out a whole bunch of stuff that maybe you'll hear it and start thinking, my life isn't quite as biblical as I thought it was. But now, this one final thing. Don't come up to me tonight after the service and say, boy, I tell you what, I didn't know my life was so unbiblical.

I just, I don't know what to do. You really stepped on my toes. That's the wrong attitude.

You should rejoice. If you have found something in your life that is not biblical, rejoice. Because that is the beginning of restoration and a new life.

That is the beginning of hope. Anytime you learn something new about God and His Word, it's exciting. It means the starting maybe of a new area in your life submitted to the will of God.

Because so many of you live the Christian life and you go, is this really all it is? I mean, my family isn't hardly any different than the other families and we have all these problems and everything. Is this really what the Christian life is all about? You have no idea how much better it is than what you know. Remember, my people perish for a lack of knowledge.

Tonight, if you don't know the Lord, here's what we're going to do. After this service, you come up and talk to me. Okay? That's what we'll do.

Some people say, well, Brother Paul, I believe if the iron's hot, you need to strike while the iron's hot. Well, if God's the one heating up the iron, you don't have to worry about it cooling off. Alright? I'm not manipulating anybody.

As a matter of fact, after some of the greatest revivals in America, when Whitfield would preach and when John Wesley, the Wesleyan Arminian, would preach, they'd send people home. Just go home. Seek the

Lord.

He'll be found by you. If you need counseling, we'll stay here all night. We've stayed here almost every night.

In fact, I'm thinking about putting a tent outside. But that's it. Okay? Let's pray.

Father, I pray that You would work in Your dearly beloved people. I pray as Jude says, they will follow the command of keeping themselves in the love of God, that they would set it up on their heart to search out just how much You love them because of what Christ has done for them. I pray that they would be a rejoicing people, a whole people, a complete people, and a people looking for You knowing that You're looking for them.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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