

Internship Program Study Part 1

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our own sinfulness, seeking God's help to overcome it, and developing a right relationship with Him in order to avoid the consequences of sin.

Duration: 1:50:34

Scripture: Genesis 4:13, Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:18, Matthew 3:11

Topics: "Internship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of seeing God work in the lives of believers. He explains that although perfection may not be achieved in a short period of time, believers should be able to witness God refining, changing, blessing, and even challenging them. The preacher refers to the example of Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness, highlighting that God may lead believers into difficult circumstances and battles rather than avoiding them. He also emphasizes the cosmic and far-reaching nature of God's salvation, stating that it is a powerful and supernatural work that requires believers to be supernaturally strengthened and transformed.

Transcript

But the Messiah would bruise Satan on the head. It would be a crushing blow that would destroy him. And that is something that has happened in the cross of Jesus Christ.

The victory was won there. And whenever you're dealing with ideas and doctrines of the Satanic, you need to realize that he is not going to be defeated. He is defeated.

He is a defeated foe. That everything as far as work is concerned, in the greater sense, has been finished. Has been accomplished in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Now someone says, well, if in the cross of Jesus Christ he's a defeated foe, why does he seem to be so active? The best way to describe Satan is a cut flower. You cut a rose. Go out here in the garden and cut a rose.

The moment you do, it's dead. Now it looks pretty, doesn't it? For two, three days it looks pretty. But it's dead, and it is dying, and it is wilting.

Satan is a cut flower. Now, it doesn't mean we need to show disrespect to principalities, powers, and dominions. But at the same time, recognize that Christ is the conqueror.

This is one of the greatest, most important passages in the entire book of Genesis. Now, I also want to look at something very, very important. Something that's misunderstood often in Genesis 4, verses 3 through 5. And it is this.

The contrast between Cain's offering and Abel's offering. So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord, fruit of the ground. Abel on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering. But for Cain and for his offering, he had no regard. So Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

Now, what is very, very important about this is that many people think wrongly that, well, God had regard for Abel's offering because it was a sacrifice of blood. And He had no regard for Cain's offering because Cain's offering was just the fruit of the ground. But that is not the case.

In Hebrews 11, verse 4, it makes it clear that Abel offered his offering by faith. And there seems to be a contrast in the offering. In verse 3, it says, Cain brought an offering.

He brought an offering. There doesn't seem to be much in it, but when you look at Abel, he brought the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. It denotes that one had a faith relationship with God and the other did not.

One did it as an act of worship in faith and the other one just said, I've got to do it. So there is a despising there. Also, you see that Cain kills Abel, which is the first murder.

And when you get over into 1 John and it talks about the man who hates being something like Cain who killed his own brother, the word that is used there in 1 John indicates slaughter or sacrifice. There's a possibility. Now, you can't stand on this.

This is just a possibility, it seems, from 1 John. Since it uses in 1 John a word that seems to indicate slaughter and was often used as sacrifice, there's a possibility that what Cain did was this. He says, alright, you don't want my sacrifice? I'll give you a sacrifice.

He killed his own brother. Now, you can't argue the point strongly, but it could be in John's language. The point is we have a very, very vile man.

Not a man who just made a mistake. Not a man who, well, why won't God accept my offering? That's not what we have. We have a very, very vile man.

And the only reason his brother wasn't vile, as he, is the grace of God. The grace of God. Now, what is that? Maybe in verse 8 it says, Cain told Abel his brother.

Why is that there? What is that about? He told him what? That God didn't take my sacrifice? Well, the idea as it leads into is it's a possibility. It literally means said to his brother. Cain said to his brother.

And it came about when they were in the field. Probably the idea here is just simply it's Cain getting his brother to come out into the field. Cain talking to his brother about this whole situation.

There's probably in this somewhat of a bit of deception. Cain saying, come on out into the field with me. It is kind of unusual.

How did Cain know that God did not accept his offering? And he had accepted Abel's? Well, in 6, when the Lord said to Cain, why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? We don't know how much direct revelation is going on here. It seems as though God is speaking to these people. And now we don't know if that is in an audible voice.

We don't know if it's in a vision. We don't know what's going on. But there doesn't seem to be much difference between the contact that God had with Adam after the fall when He said, Adam, where are you? And conversed with him.

It seems to be the same type of thing going on here. It's rather amazing. Let's look at 4.7. Here's something very important for all of us.

It's a great passage of Scripture for the doctrine of sin. Verse 7. If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door and its desire is for you, but you must master it. Sin is portrayed as a beast.

It's personified as a beast crouching at the door and its desire is to have you, to consume you, to destroy you, and you must master it. There's also this idea here, if you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? It seems like from the very beginning, Cain is really doing the same thing Adam did. He's somehow blaming God.

It's a pity party. You won't accept my offering. You don't like me.

It goes on and on. Now, I want to tell you something. There's an attitude, especially in the West, especially as men are less men than they ought to be.

There's almost this attitude of people getting their feelings hurt and it's like, well, then I'm just going to take my ball and go home. You know that kind of attitude that I'm talking about? Well, I'll just go home and have nobody. Here's the problem.

When your pride or whatever gets offended and you get into a pity party and you want to play that game with God, and you just, well, then I'll just quit. Peter said, where do we go, Lord? You alone have the words of life. When you quit God's game, you go to hell.

I mean, it just doesn't work. And He doesn't come chasing after you. Like, oh, I'm sorry, look.

No, there's serious choices. And He's saying, look, do well. Your countenance will be lifted up.

I'm not ripping you off. I'm just... Just do what you're supposed to do. Don't get in a pity party.

Just do what you're supposed to do and your countenance will be lifted up. Now, this thing that you must master, this applies to all of us here. Sin's waiting at the door for all of us.

And there's specific sins that are waiting at the door. And sins that may be waiting at the door for me may not be waiting at the door for you. Everybody has holes in their armor.

The holes in my armor, my weak spots might not even be a weakness for you. And your weak spots, I might just be oblivious to. But the fact of the matter is all of us do.

And what I have seen, I've told many young men of God this, most men of God have certain things they must conquer before they really enter into their usefulness to God. And I've seen... I mean, it's just amazing. There are certain things you're going to have to wrestle with and certain things you're going to have to conquer.

Of course, we know the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of what God's done for us. The fact of the matter is you cannot have these hidden sins that you just kind of accept and say, well, it's just a part of who I am. You've got to overcome them.

Whether it's depression or whatever it is, it takes all sorts of forms. It can be laziness, it can be procrastination, it can be depression, it can be doubt, it can be all sorts of things. Master it.

Go out there and fight it. Overcome it. You see.

Now, in verse 413, Cain said to the Lord, my punishment is too great to bear. Now, I want to look at something and actually it comes from the notes in my Bible, but I was looking through here and I just thought it was absolutely amazing. It says that Cain's sin was virtually uninterrupted.

First of all, there was impiety in verse 3. There was anger in verse 5. Jealousy, deception, and murder in verse 8. Falsehood in verse 9. And self-seeking in verse 13. I mean, he never repents. And then when his judgment comes, he doesn't repent.

He just complains and tries to get the sentence reduced. You know, so in these first few chapters of the Bible, we're just seeing just basically man revealed. Now, while I'm talking, if you have any questions or anything, just shoot your hand up.

Yes. I've heard before, you know, that we're not sinners because we sin. We're sinners because we're born in Adam.

I mean, that's the clearest evidence anywhere. He is just living out who he is as a descendant of Adam. Look at Genesis 5-3.

When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image. You know, Adam was created in the image of God. Adam's son was created in the image of Adam.

Fallen Adam. That's very, very true. Now, I want to point out a Hebrew, something very common in Hebrew literature that will be very helpful in Bible interpretation.

It's Genesis 4-23. Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, you wives of Lamech. Give heed to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me and a boy for striking me.

Now, here's the question. Did he kill a man and a boy? No. That's not what he's saying.

This is very important, especially in the understanding of Hebrew poetry and things like that. He's using what we call Hebrew parallelism. It's a device, and if you understand it, it is very beautiful, it's very powerful in that there's Hebrew parallelisms throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and they have different purposes, different uses, but they are primarily to emphasize and to define or explain.

The writer will write one phrase and then come back and write a phrase almost identical with a little bit of twist to it which will add emphasis or define more clearly what the first phrase says. Let me make one up

for you that will sound like something out of the book of Proverbs. The wicked shall not dwell in the land, and the wicked shall be destroyed.

Now, I'm saying the same thing twice for added emphasis. That's very Jewish, very Hebrew. Then what I'm doing is the second phrase is just a little bit different and it comes in and it defines or adds more meaning to the first phrase.

The wicked shall not dwell in the land. What does that mean? They're going to take a vacation? No, it comes back and says The wicked shall be destroyed. Was Lamech being sorrowful in 24? Or was he being haughty? Haughty is the word, especially if we were in England.

It would be the word. He is being haughty. He is being just arrogant and it just shows again the further this line of Cain goes, the deeper into sin and grotesque self-will and independence.

I have killed a man. See, God would only avenge Cain sevenfold, but I'll avenge myself 77 fold. Would it be a misunderstanding to say it's almost his celebratory year? He's always bragging about it? No, he's boasting.

He's the man. And this is probably the passage upon which Jesus faces the answer to Peter. Not seven times, but 70 times seven.

He's reversing the arrogance of this man. Would it be completely different than this man? Let me tell you something. I remember when I was a little boy watching John Wayne.

And John Wayne was always just the hero, the big guy, pretty clean movies, everything else, just your good old American hero guy. Well, a few years ago I was at my mom's house and a John Wayne movie came on and my mom was watching it and I sat down and I thought, well, I haven't watched television in a while, I'll watch John Wayne. I almost puked my guts out.

No, there wasn't naked women and no, there wasn't immorality, but he was a seething cauldron of flesh. Of this. You know, I'm so and so, you mess with me, I'll kill you.

I mean, it was just flesh. It was just wicked flesh. I mean, you could watch it as a kid thinking, man, this guy's really something, he's a good guy and everything, but when you look at it, just a man who walked independently, God so He thought, I do what I want, I'll take the lives of others in my hand.

Do not honor a violent man. Do not seek to be like him, the Bible tells us. And we see this and we're so blind to it because the great sin of sins is self-will.

Doing things your own way. Who are you? You don't deserve it. You are a slave.

Who are you to decide where you're going to live, where you're going to work, what you're going to do with your money? It's not anything. You don't even own your socks. Now, let's look at Genesis 6. Genesis 6, 1 through 4. We have a really amazing text here.

Now, it came about when men began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them and the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the Lord said, My spirit will not strive with men forever. We have this thing of who are these sons of God and who are these daughters of men? And it has been taught by many people down through the ages that this is sexual relationships between angels and people.

And that as a result, the Nephilim came upon the face of the earth who were mighty men of renown. Well, the problem is it says the Nephilim were on the earth before and after this. So the Nephilim are not the result of some union between angelic beings and human beings.

I honestly believe, also some believe that the passage in Jude refers to this, but I don't think that's the case grammatically that it has to at all. I think what's going on here is that the sons of God is referring to the line of, who do you think? Seth. Not our Seth with us today, but another one.

And the daughters of men refer to what? Cain. Now, what's going on here is this. As you look through, before this passage starts, preceding this passage, there is these two distinct lines we see.

One of them is very ungodly and the other one has some godliness. They're calling on the name of the Lord. Their ancestors are walking with God, at least some of them.

And there seems to be a division and a remnant and some salt on the earth. God told Abraham, if I find even ten righteous men in Sodom, I will not destroy it. Alright, but what happens? Here at 6, I believe what you see is these lines cross.

Because after this you see what? In chapter 6, verse 5, Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously. And then it's a precursor into the flood. And I think that what had happened was there was just this convergence of the two lines.

There's no godliness left in the land. And there was destruction. Destruction.

Now, what does all this teach us? I mean, did God's plan fail so He destroys everybody and starts all over? No, there is no failing in the decrees of God. In the great mystery of Providence, man freely chose to do all the things he did. But in the great mystery of Providence, God was directing this in all of this.

Even though men are totally responsible and God is not the author of sin, all this scenario that we see is one more necessary portion in the education of the church. I believe God's done everything He's done for His Christ and for the people of His Christ. And everything written in this book was decreed and designed in order to teach us.

And what does this teach us? Apart from the grace of God working on this planet, it will run headlong into just abject moral corruption beyond salvation. That men are really evil. And that's the thing that no one understands.

All the problem in the Southern Baptist Convention, it's not about particular atonement. It's not about election. Do you know what the problem is about? The whole thing could be solved with answering one question.

Is man really depraved? Because when you answer that question, everything else falls through. And that's what Scripture is constantly screaming to us about. Now, I want us to go to 6.6 really quick.

The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. There are some in the Reformed view who would take this passage and really twist it. Really twist it.

That God cannot be grieved. And they have a good thing. I know what they're trying to do.

If God can be grieved, then it's like something outside of God is determining how God is going to be. Do you see what they're trying to do? They're trying to protect this idea of God, His all-sufficiency, His sovereignty, His power, His providence. But it's just not necessary.

If it says God was grieved, God was grieved. In fact, the matter is that God is in a reciprocal relationship. He's in a real, genuine relationship with men.

He really does love men. He really is all-sovereign. He's immutable.

And no one is over Him or can manipulate Him or change Him. But at the same time, He's in a real relationship. It is a reciprocal relationship.

And yes, He grieves over sin. The Holy Spirit can be grieved. So be very careful that you don't violate Scripture in an attempt to protect God.

You don't need to protect God. You just need to proclaim what's there in Scripture. Okay? Now, again, if there are any questions as I'm talking, just let me know.

Now, I want us to look at something very important in 6-9. These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time.

Noah walked with God. Now, do you honestly think that Noah was saved for his own piety? Maybe. If he was, he's the first man and last one in history to do so.

There was a sense in which what? Noah was that remnant God had. That Noah was indeed, as men go, a righteous man. That he was a God-fearing man.

But he was so by the grace of God, number one, and number two, it is that same grace that locked Noah up in that boat. Because as soon as he gets out of that boat, Noah gets drunk. And what I want you to see is that so many people, I mean, so many people in our churches believe that Noah was God's last hope.

That praise Noah, God was able to find a man so that the world wouldn't be destroyed. If there is one man left, that the world not be totally destroyed and the line of men cut off, it's because God preserved that man by His own grace. Noah should have died as well as the rest of his family.

Okay? Now, I also want you to see something. 618. But I will establish My covenant with you and you shall enter the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.

Now, I am not Presbyterian, even though I love many Presbyterian brothers and everything like that. So I'm not going to take a view of infant baptism. I'm not going to take a view of this strong idea of covenant and children and all of the such.

But I do want you to understand something. If you look especially throughout the patriarchs, you see that God blesses those associated with His elect. God saved Noah's family associated with Noah.

If you look at God's blessing on Lot, it was because of His association with Abraham. Now, I want to look just really quickly just at Jeremiah 32. Verse 38.

They shall be My people and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear Me always for their own good and for the good of their children after them. Now, you say, well, this

has to do with Israel. Yes, but it's the New Covenant of which we're part.

This is a passage all theologians, exegetes, students of Old Testament and New Testament recognize that this is a prophecy regarding the New Covenant. And look what it says. He says that they may fear Me always for their own good and for the good of their children after them.

That does not mean that the believers' children are going to be saved. But what it does mean is this. There is a sense in which the believer can say, I have more hope than most for my children.

There is. Not that they're all elect because they're part of the family of a believer. No.

But what it does mean is this. That child stands a greater chance coming under the influence of the Gospel and the blessings of it than they ever would in an ungodly family. And it does.

There is something there that's even more that no one can put their finger on. God has promised throughout Scripture, He promises to do good to the children of His people. And what I don't want you to do is I don't want you to go to one extreme and say, well, you'll be saved and your household.

That's not what that promise means. As a matter of fact, if you want to talk about the blessing on your household because you've become a Christian, this is a passage you can draw from. So, you know, do good to you and your children.

For the sake of you and your children. There is a mystery in the providence of God and in His degrees and in His sovereignty. But at the same time, I want you to recognize that He has made promises.

You can be very haughty, like you hear these TV evangelists and they're like, you bless me and God will bless you, you know, type thing. That's just such an abomination. But brother, there is a sense in which if you truly walk with God, even people associated with you will be blessed.

Even family members will be blessed. There is a real sense in that. There is.

You look at the line of Jonathan Edwards. Have you ever seen that work on that? They take Jonathan Edwards and then a great criminal or ungodly man of his time and they compare both lineages. It's absolutely phenomenal.

Out of the line of Jonathan Edwards comes ministers, missionaries, educators, congressmen, presidents. I mean, it's unbelievable. And again, hold this in a balance.

What I'm saying is it's not a sure guarantee that everyone that's around you and your family, they're all going to walk with God and be blessed. But at the same time, it means more than nothing. Okay? Okay? So hold that in a balance.

My goodness, the time is just getting away from us. I want to look at a few more things. Something very important.

Genesis 7-11, just quickly. In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the 17th day of the month, and on the same day, all the fountains of the great deep burst open and the floodgates of the sky were opened. Most people's idea of the Exodus comes from Cecil B. DeMille's Ten Commandments and not the Bible.

Well, most people's idea of the flood comes from old films like Noah and stuff. And we think, and the rain came down. Well, the rain did come down.

But the water, it wasn't just it rained, folks. I mean, the fountains of the deep burst open. Cataclysmic geological events.

I mean, I don't know this. Springs broke open. Mountains, maybe the tops of them blew off.

I mean, everything you can possibly imagine. You know, there is a ton of water under the land. You know that.

I mean, it all broke forth. It wasn't just the world flooded because some rain fell down. It flooded because, I mean, the fountains of the deep broke open.

And much of the geological, all that we have, record and things, seem to, not seem to, give great evidence towards these things. You know, the Grand Canyon, for example. Well, it took billions and millions and gazillions of years.

When Mount St. Helens blew up, in a matter of seconds it made a canyon that scientists totally ignore because they would normally be saying it took millions and millions of years to create this thing. No, it didn't. It took about a few seconds.

And all the upheaval, I think, that we see in this world, all the geological upheaval, all this stuff, what you need to understand is it wasn't just little stories about little kids saying the rain came down. I mean, it was like the world split open. The seams of the land split open in a million places.

And water comes busting forth. When we get into creation, I'll hopefully bring some films in here and let us watch some guys who really know what they're doing with regard to this. But that's something that I want you to see.

Also, 719-20, the water prevailed more and more upon the earth so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed 15 cubits higher and the mountains were covered. All flesh that moved on the earth.

The point about this passage I want you to see, many people say it's not necessary to say universal flood because you can look at things like the water prevailed more and more upon the earth. It could be land. But it is harder with this passage.

It is harder to say that the flood wasn't universal than just to accept the language that in fact it was universal. It was universal. And John MacArthur makes a great point again.

His study Bible is so good. It really is so good. He makes a point it's under heaven.

I mean, it was a complete cleansing of the earth. And it really is universal in scope. Now, I want us to look at 21-23 quickly.

All flesh that moved on the earth. And it talks about birds and cattle, every beast, every swarming thing, and all mankind. Folks, there is a sense in which you look at this and go, my goodness, the severity of God.

Yes, the severity, but the mercy and the economy of the thing. When you look at man as an eternal soul and you look at the fact that all flesh within just a few generations becomes so corrupt, everything needs to be destroyed. If you can't see the mercy in Him providing a family to remain, Noah, you're blind.

You don't understand how wicked men are. If God had destroyed absolutely everybody on the face of the earth, including Noah, He would not have had to give one explanation for what He did. But the fact that He spared somebody is why He has to give an explanation.

We wicked men look at what God did and say, you killed all those people. That's not right. Heaven looks at God and says, you saved one of them.

That's not right. Do you see the difference? The explanation is not necessary if God destroys absolutely every living thing on the face of the earth. It provides no means of redemption whatsoever.

There's no need for an explanation. The need for an explanation comes when God shows mercy. And that's something that I want you to see that's extremely important.

Now, yes? The land animals, was that part of judgment or was it incidental? And if so, why were all the fish just exempt? Well, we don't really know. We do know this. And the form guys possibly take this too far.

You've heard of the idea of federal head. Adam is our federal head. It's the idea that Adam was made head over all of mankind.

But there's a sense in which over all things. Because that goes back to when we get to Romans 5. How is it right that God would impute the sin of Adam to every one of His offspring? The fact of the matter is He was made federal head and when He fell, He took with Him all of His race, but at the same time, all of creation. Everything was confined.

In Romans 8, we understand that everything was subjected to futility. Now, why the fish were spared? Anybody guess. The fact of it is creation itself, everything was breath in its nostrils.

God, except what was on that boat. Now, one thing before we go on to Matthew. It's very important for you.

And I want you to see this. It's very important for me. 921, speaking of Noah, he drank of the wine and became drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent.

Now, what's so important about this? Well, you can add 2 Samuel 11, 1-4. David and Bathsheba. You say, well, what does David and Bathsheba and Noah have to do together? Well, Noah had experienced this great victory.

He was tremendously used of God. He had gone through the battle. He had fought the fight.

He had done what he had to do. He was mightily used of God. It was over.

He could now rest. Just rest. He had done what he was called to do.

Just rest. David is the one who goes out and fights all the battles of Israel. He does it as a young man.

Now he's middle age. He's a king. It's time for everyone to go out and fight.

He stays back in Jerusalem. He's already done the work he needs to do as a man. He can just rest on his laurels and he falls.

If you were to go back through the history of preachers and preaching, you'd find this happens so many times it would terrify you. Preachers usually don't fall when they're young. They usually don't fall when they're young and zealous and want to be used of the Lord and want to fight the Lord's battles and want to do all these things.

They fall after they've been mightily used of the Lord and they drop their guard and they begin to think that they're some kind of privileged person on the face of the earth because they've been so used of God and they don't have to really follow all the rules anymore that everyone else has to follow. You see what I'm saying? Guys, it's all throughout history. It's all throughout history.

So usually young guys full of zeal want to fight the Lord's battles and they want to be used. But it's later on in life. Now, anytime you look at any older, middle-aged, a minister who's reached about 50 on and he looks like he doesn't want to do anything anymore, pray for him.

He's in a dangerous position. But more than that, have pity. Why? Some guys are like that because they've been like that all their life.

Other guys are like that because literally they poured themselves out unto death. They're burned out and there's nothing left. And they know it.

And part of it is our system of sending one man to a finely mowed yard with a really nice brick building full of devils. And so when you see a guy wore out like that, it might not be because he's just never been zealous or he's never loved the Lord. He may be loved the Lord more than you do or ever have, but he's just eaten alive.

Burned out and he doesn't even care. He's just in survival mode. It happens.

It happens. And it happens to all of us to some degree. It really does.

Now, let's get over to the New Testament real quick. On Matthew's genealogy, I believe what's going on here is Matthew's genealogy is traced through Joseph, Jesus' legal father. Luke's genealogy in chapter 3 is traced through Mary, his blood relative.

Now, why is it this way in Matthew? In Matthew, it was basically written to Jews. It was basically written to Jews. It was important to trace this through Jesus' legal father.

Luke was written to Gentiles and it even was known among the Gentiles to trace genealogies through women. And so if there are differences, I believe it can be attributed basically to that. I want you to look at verse 16 in chapter 1. The very careful language here.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary by whom Jesus was born. You see the very careful language there? Very, very important. Very important.

Now, let me share with you something. One of the most asinine things you can do on the face of the earth. I mean it is literally a logical absurdity.

There is nothing hardly under the sun more stupid than this. And it is this. To say you believe in God, yet you can't accept the virgin birth.

Or what you're really saying, to say you believe in God, but you don't believe in miracles. It's asinine. Now, an atheist who says, I don't believe in God, I don't believe in miracles, he's logically consistent.

I believe he's wrong, but his logic is fine. His premise, he begins on a wrong foundation, but his logic is good. But if you say there is a God, then you've brought the supernatural into play.

And especially if you're among Jewish people and they'll say things like, yes, I believe in God, but I mean just the virgin birth is just an impossibility. If there is a God, there is no impossibility. Do you see that? And so it's not a problem.

It is an excuse. The virgin birth is not a problem. It is an excuse.

People just use it as an excuse not to accept what they already know to be true. Now, I want you to look at 1.19. Something that really has always bothered me. And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

Well, there's a problem with that. The law in Deuteronomy 22 demands that a woman who is engaged to a man, if she's found with child, she is to be stoned in order to purge the evil from Israel. That's what the law demands.

Do you understand that? So how is Joseph a righteous man? Because he's not obeying what the law said to do. You see, when you look at Scripture and you just read something and go, oh, that's nice. Well, maybe it's not.

Maybe it's a problem. Now, in no way affects, well, we believe the Scriptures are infallible. We're born again.

We sense the divine in everything written in this book. But these aren't problems that we have to solve in order to prove the Bible's true. They're theological problems, though, that we need to deal with to try to discover what's really going on here.

Now, here's one of the possibilities. And where most people go in this, Joseph's righteousness is seen in his mercy. You know, Jesus said in 9.13, I don't want sacrifice.

I want compassion. I want mercy. That inherent in the law is the idea of mercy and compassion.

But there's something else here also that I just want us to look at. I've never heard anybody else say it. It might be wrong, but I just want to throw it out at you.

Go to Deuteronomy for a minute 22. It's something that I've always just wondered about. Now, when it says that He was a righteous man and wanted to put her away secretly, people automatically go to Deuteronomy 22.

Verses 23 and 24. If there is a girl who is a virgin, engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone him to death, the girl because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

They're commanded to do that. Alright, that's Mary. She's found pregnant.

She's engaged. So there's two options. She's committed adultery, and if she has, she should be stoned in order to purge the evil.

Or, what is in her is a holy thing conceived of the Holy Spirit. Now, how is Joseph a righteous man by saying, I'm just not going to do what the law says? Or could there be something else going on here? And I want you to look at something. In verse 13, if any man takes a wife and goes into her and then turns against her and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her and says, I took this woman, but when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin.

Okay, if he does that, and it's really not true. She really was a virgin. She really was a reputable woman, and this guy is just defaming her for no reason.

It says in verse 18, so the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him, and they shall find him a hundred shekels of silver and give it to the girl's father because he publicly defamed a virgin of Israel. Could it be that Joseph believed her? And he's sitting here wrestling with this because as crazy as it sounds, I can't publicly do anything because I will be defaming the virgin of Israel. I will be defaming... He was actually sitting there maybe going, Mary's never lied to me.

She's always been this godly woman. I don't know what's going on, but I'm not just going to go out there and run off rashly and say she's had sex with another man when she says that the Holy Spirit has come upon her. I'm not going to defame a virgin daughter of Israel.

And in that, he was a righteous man. Now, again, don't go out there and say this is the way it is. I just want you to think that when things like this happen in Scripture, you need to go back and you've got to deal with this.

You've got to say what's really going on? Does anyone have any questions or comments? Yes? In the note, my study guide talks about or to divorce her. And then it also has that reference back to Deuteronomy 24. It talks about that idea of it said he may have been willing to sign illegal documents or something like that.

Well, he may have been willing, but you can't get around what the law says to do. The law indicates a purging of the evil from Israel. That these things, you just didn't put them away secretly.

Are you talking about the letters of divorce or signing the documents of divorce? Right, because in Deuteronomy 24, it says a man takes a wife and marries her. It happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her. He writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of the house.

And the reference in my study Bible said to send her away secretly. That could mean, because it says or to divorce her. So it's just saying that maybe he was debating about divorcing her or maybe it was just a struggle in his mind that he was thinking about.

It was a struggle in his mind. The point that I'm trying to put forth that is so important is we have one passage where it's specifically referring to a virgin who is engaged, who becomes pregnant and says to stone her. We have another passage over there.

Write her a certificate of divorce. Put her away. Now, when is one law applied and the other one not? What is Joseph really wrestling with? I mean, the other thing is they didn't have any other evidence.

They didn't have another man. Right. You know what I mean? So they didn't have like a, oh yeah, we caught these two in act.

And where is this other guy? Who is this other guy? So maybe as you said, he's sitting there thinking, well, I don't think there's another guy. Right. You know, I haven't seen another guy.

And we haven't caught another guy and I haven't heard any other guy. You know, and maybe as you said, he was just struggling in his mind. And then do you think maybe it's even a small picture of the New Covenant? You know, that on one hand you have the law on this side and then on the other side you have grace and as you said, well, that was definitely revealed in Christ's grace and mercy.

Yes. The one thing also we're looking at is if Mary had said to him, somebody raped me. There isn't a guy.

But look what she's saying. And the righteousness of this man is revealed in... A lot of men would have just rashly said, you're out of your mind. You're lying to me.

He would be so full of pride and so full of everything he wouldn't even sit down and reason with this situation. And here's Joseph. Is he going, hold it? You know, she's... Go ahead.

One thing to think about is if she really had such relations with another guy, she's going to be stoned. Wouldn't she be willing to bring that guy into the situation too? You know, sort of like, I'm in trouble, so that's what most humans are going to do. Since they're in trouble, they're going to bring that other person in because the passage in Deuteronomy says that both should be stoned, both the man and the woman.

So in that case, I thought she would be quick to say, this is who it was because he's going to be punished too. But now let's look at something. Let's look at Israel in the day of Jesus.

Let's go to John 8. They caught this woman in adultery, but the woman is the only one being stoned. Where's the guy? They could care less. It's kind of like, what is it in the Muslim world? If there's one witness to a woman committing adultery, she is to be stoned immediately, but to stone a man for committing adultery, you have to have like four witnesses.

So in every case, the woman gets stoned and the guy doesn't. And so the point is, look also at the Israel that we've got. You know, it was so out of whack in a sense.

I mean, they could have just grabbed Mary, thrown her down. They wouldn't even have asked about where's the guy. So I mean, in all of this, you've got this one man who's sitting there not acting rationally.

And whatever he's doing, whatever he's doing, he is seeking to act with mercy, with kind. He is seeking to do the right thing in the midst of all of this confusion. And I guess that's where my question was derived from because the language just seems totally different in to send her away secretly and to divorce her.

I mean, those seem like two just totally different... I mean, like the divorce is more of a non-merciful act where to send her away secretly. Maybe I'm just not understanding the idea of divorce. Well, to send her away secretly would have meant for him to divorce her.

At that moment, he could have gone and done some secret paper signing, basically. But my point is, if you did that kind of thing, is that righteous? Is that righteous just to kind of... Because what he's basically saying, okay, if he didn't believe her, he's saying, alright, she committed adultery. God has a way of dealing with this, but I'm just going to secretly put it away and sweep it under the thing because I love her.

So see, it's a complex thing. And a lot of times in a study Bible or something, you'll just get a real simple answer. Well, he was a righteous man because he wanted to practice mercy and put her away secretly.

But are you a righteous man if you try to put somebody away secretly when the law and justice demand something else? Let me give you an example. Somebody commits an act of pedophilia, molests a little boy in a church somewhere, and he's a deacon. And how many times, you know, this has probably happened, well, let's just get rid of the guard or whatever, let's just hush it up.

Is that a righteous thing? No. It's what the Catholic Church did. So you have to grapple with these issues and don't just try to kind of sweep.

The reason why I brought this to the forefront is not so much to give you an answer on this, but to show you, don't throw a pat answer down. Wrestle with the complexity of this thing. Okay, now, yes.

In verse 18, where it says that the birth of Christ was as follows, when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Jesus before they came together, she was found to be with child. This might be just modern day thinking of marriage and the honeymoon and whatnot. Were they married at that point? Betrothal back then, as it says in Deuteronomy there where we read in 22, if a woman was betrothed, like she was, to another man and she was found with child, she was to be stung.

Okay, so betrothal was a lot more than what we... Well, would divorce have been in that point? Yes, there was even a sense of divorce. Yes. I wonder how, you know, Catholic doctrine looks at this.

It seems to me like the language, even like what Scott just read, that before they came together, it seems to lend itself that at some point they did come together. And then later on it says, but he knew her not until she had given birth to a son. It says, you know, after that they did come to know each other physically.

How did they keep that doctrine? Mary never had sexual relations, never bore any other children, and so on and so forth. They just twisted it. They just twisted that preposition in verse 25 until it's so strong it's unbelievable what it means to change it.

And then we get down to Matthew 12, 46. Mary and Joseph had normal sexual relationships. Afterwards, had other children, brothers.

Catholic Church will say, well, back then everybody called everybody brothers. I mean, that's basically the thing. Or Joseph was married before, and his wife died, and those were his children and not Mary's.

Here's the way I deal with it, and it really will cause an explosion, but it gets the job done. When I'm in Peru, they say, well, you know, they say, well, Mary never had sex. Why? Well, I mean, she's married.

She didn't have sex and unclean and lust and all these things. And I look at them and see in Peru, in Latin America, a mother is really important. You can run around on your wife all day long, but if you treat your mother bad, they'll kill you.

So when they say that, I go, how could you talk about your own mother that way? And they go, what are you talking about? I said, how can you call your mother almost a whore? And they go, what are you talking about? And I said, well, you just said that if Mary would have had sex, it would have meant that she was lustful and immoral and wicked and unclean. How'd you get here? And they begin to start seeing what I'm talking about. The fact of the matter is, it's the whole idea.

I believe that the Reformers, I don't know how right they are, but they were more right than we are. There is a sense in which when Paul talks about the apostasy in 1 Timothy, the forbidding of men to marry and everything, Catholicism, I don't know if it's the great apostasy, but it's a forerunner or it's the precursor. It is apostate.

The Catholic Church is nothing but an apostate whore that will paint her face any way she has to paint it to deceive as many people as possible. That's why when people talk about church history, people say, well, have you ever taught church history? I said, well, there isn't any. And they go, what are you talking about? And I go, well, other than you've got the New Testament, you've got a few references in the 2nd, 3rd century, things like that.

Then you've got just small references of things down through history that you can't hardly put a finger on. And then in the Reformation, it seems that you see a resurgence of what we could call the church. But most of what you guys would be taught church history is not church history.

It's the history of an apostate whore. The Catholic Church has never been a true church. It was a political move by Constantine.

It is the continuation of the Roman Empire. Well, let's go on with more edifying stuff. Matthew 2.11. Very important when you're in a Catholic country.

The Magi didn't worship Mary. They worshiped the child. And you always see Mary and see a little statue of Jesus.

Little, little, tiny Jesus baby and a powerful Mary. I mean, it is the most hellish thing on the face of the earth. I've heard in my own ears a Catholic priest say in public, in a Catholic meeting, and Mary said, all powers, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

And Mary said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Is that more prominent in Latin America than it is here? I know there is some form of Mary. Here's what it is.

The Catholic Church will paint itself any way it has to paint itself to deceive as many people. The traditions and the superstitions are so ludicrous in certain parts of the world that they could not get away with that same thing here. It's the same.

It's just a different face. Yes. And, you know, can we not say the same thing of the Catholic Church as you can, like, you know, so-called Baptist churches, that there are Catholic churches that aren't Catholic in reality? They have fallen into the same error.

But they've actually gone more biblical and come out of Catholicism and actually become slightly biblical because they actually read the Bible and preach and people get saved out of that. But, you know, when people say, oh, you know, aren't there saved people in the Catholic Church? Well, they're really not Catholic Church. They don't actually adhere to the Catholic dogma.

You know, so, like, a Baptist church has gone wayward to call themselves a Baptist church, but they're not really. Right. I mean, you cannot be a Catholic and adhere to Catholic.

I mean, you cannot be a Christian and adhere to Catholic dogma. You can't. But at the same time, I mean, the only difference with regard to soteriology between the Catholic Church and many Baptist churches today is this.

They have infant baptism and we have pray the prayer. It's the same superstition. Repeat the prayer.

And there's no difference. And it's the great heresy of the age. You know, a friend of mine, a while back, I was preaching.

He says, I'm just so disgusted with all these Baptist churches taking Baptist off their name. And I said, I'm not. I'm glad.

And he said, why? I said, because they weren't Baptist to start off with. I'm glad they're taking Baptist off their name. There are no more Baptists than the man on the moon.

Praise God. I wish a lot more would join that movement. Encourage them to do so.

There won't be any Baptist distinctives left. Al Mohler said that. There won't be any Baptist distinctives left in another generation if we don't start getting serious about theology.

Now, how to win friends and influence people. Matthew 2.18 real quick. I want you to... This is an amazing passage.

Verse 17, Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled. A voice was heard in Ramah weeping. And greater than warning, Rachel weeping for her children.

And she refused to be comforted because they were no more. Now, you go back to this passage and you ask yourself, was that really a prophecy concerning this event? It's a prophecy of the children of Israel being carried past the tomb of Rachel as they're going out into exile. But what Matthew does is he takes things from the Old Testament concerning Israel and he applies them to the Messiah, the true Israel of God, the true servant of God.

But now here's something about this passage that is absolutely beautiful. I want you to see this. I want you to turn to Jeremiah 31 again.

Now, there's nothing beautiful about the slaughter of children. Whether it was 10 or 20 or 200 or however many children Herod had killed. But I want you to see what's really going on here.

Because if you just take this passage by itself, you have a bunch of children that died at the coming of the Messiah. And what happens to them? And that's it. They're dead.

Now, the first thing I want to point out to you, if you remember when Moses first came to Egypt, when he arrived to Egypt as the Deliverer, did things get better for Israel? It got worse, didn't it? When the Messiah comes, I mean, does it get better immediately? Children are killed everywhere. Slaughtered. How's that salvation? And I want you to see something in the working of God for a moment.

Now, this doesn't have anything to do with Jeremiah. But a lot of times when God begins to move, things won't get better. They'll get worse.

And part of that is to test the vision, to test our faith in that we've heard God. Because you can doubt a lot of things, but when a man comes to the point where he doubts God, then there's no hope for him. You know what's going on in Joseph's life, don't you? Think about this.

The pain wasn't that he was thrown in prison. The pain wasn't that he was maligned. The pain wasn't that he lied about.

The pain that Joseph had to deal with, did I hear God? That was the struggle. Did God really talk to me? Do you see that? Did God really promise that He was going to do... that you know, the moon and the stars are going to bow down to me? My mother and my father and my brothers were going to... Did God really speak? Because if He didn't, and that seems so clear. I can't trust anything anymore.

Do you see? That's the real battle. That's why sometimes it gets dark. And it's a test.

You hold on to, yes, He has spoken. But that's not the point of this. Now I want you to look at Jeremiah 17.

Absolutely... Sorry, I'm kind of displaced here. Jeremiah 31.15 A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children.

She refuses to be comforted for her children because they are no more. And that's what Matthew quotes. And now let's go further and see something.

Thus says the Lord, Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears for your work will be rewarded, declares the Lord, and they will return from the land of the enemy. We have some children slaughtered for the Messiah. I submit to you that right now they're standing beside the Ancient of Days.

And those same ones that were slaughtered will return in glory. Now, I know what you're thinking. Brother Paul, what are you doing? All babies go to heaven? I don't know what happens to babies.

But I know this. I know this. That in this passage, there seems to be a great indication of do not weep, Rachel.

Restrain your weeping. Because this thing, this last little ploy, this last nipping of the serpent taking out these children, your children you wait for, they will return. The Messiah will make sure of it.

Guys, there is something so C.S. Lewis going on. Now, C.S. Lewis, he's called the great mind of the evangelical community. There's some ways in which C.S. Lewis was a heretic.

He said some things that were pretty wild. Now, I love to read C.S. Lewis and I have great respect for him, but there is something so cosmic and phenomenal that's going so far beyond our little fundamental world, our little preacher boy world. Something that if you saw its grandeur would probably drive you mad.

Something so much bigger even than men. I mean, the redemption even going beyond men into all the created order. A cosmic working of salvation by the Messiah that takes in everything from men to crickets.

That absolutely everything that was lost to death shall be resurrected and brought into glory except for those men and those devils who chose to rebel against Him. We're talking about a liberation of everything.

We're talking about every wrong being undone.

We're talking about a redemption that covers the world like water covering the sea. It almost borderlines... I know it's going to sound heretical, but it almost borderlines on magical. Such a mystery.

And what I do not appreciate are little preacher boys, even if they're 80 years old, in their little tiny worlds, that the only thing they can think about is a street of gold and a gate of pearl and singing southern gospel hymns at the feet of Jesus. What I'm talking about is it is so cosmic and so far reaching, the salvation of our God. And that when you look at something like these infants being killed, and you say, well, lost that one.

No, the Messiah doesn't lose. Well, on that great day... Man, this is great. Messiah's back.

Messiah stands up, begins to explain the glories of His work, and says, you know, that thing that happened there in Bethlehem, I'm really sorry about that, but that was just a casualty of the Lord. That's not what He's going to make. He has victory over all of that.

Everything that is death. Everything that's ever happened. And that's an amazing thing.

It's an amazing thing. And it's sad because you can't even go on to explain what's going on because it's so great. Yes, John.

I always thought it was incredible that the Messiah is supposed to be born in Bethlehem and then they go down and slaughter all the kids. There's like only one kid left that's possibly going to be the Messiah. It kind of narrows down the possibilities.

Yeah. It does. Yeah.

But I wish I'd brought this in. I did a study one time that proves I've got it. I need to bring it in.

Just the timing of the cross coming. That if Jesus was not the Christ, then you can literally go to an Orthodox Jew and show Him that every promise of God is totally fake. I need to bring that study in here because it's amazing.

In the fullness of time, He sent His Son. And what that really means. It's literally phenomenal.

I'll try to remember that. Let's go to Matthew 3.10 real quick. I want to look at something.

The axe is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. This is the Word for today.

This is the Word for every... I can't call them church, but every ecclesiastical organization in this country. This is the Word. This is the Word for every Reformed church.

This is for every seeker-friendly church. This is it. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

The axe is laid at the root of the tree. This is the Word that needs to be preached, in my opinion, above just about everything. If you do not bear fruit, it is because you are lost and the axe is already laid at the root of your tree and you are going to be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Do you see that? This message of John the Baptist here is so amazing, but isn't it so apropos to our culture, to our generation, to the Southern Baptist Convention? He doesn't come and say, how many of you prayed a prayer? Was there a point in time in your life when you asked Jesus to come in? That is not the question. The question is this. Do you bear fruit in keeping with repentance? Because if not, the axe is laid at the root of the tree.

And that's what needs to be proclaimed. Above everything. Above Calvinism.

Above everything. We were talking yesterday, it's just amazing how in the beginning of John's ministry as well as Jesus, the first thing that they said was repeated. I've got that in my notes.

And the first exhortation that Peter gives after his explanation, the first exhortation he gives to the people is repent on the Day of Pentecost. It's repent. It hasn't changed.

But it's never heard. Except God is raising up a generation of preachers who will do that. Now, Matthew 3.11. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance.

But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, the fire thing I want to just touch on for a moment.

With regard to His enemies, the Messiah will in a sense baptize them in fire. It says in verse 12, His winnowing fork is in His hand and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Man, I remember being in the jungles of Mindanao when I was about 24 years old.

Man, it was horrible. It was horrible. I didn't think I was ever going to come out of there.

And I remember going to these rice fields and they would, man, burn out the chaff. And it was already like 200-250 degrees out there. It was so hot in the jungle it was unbelievable.

And then you go out there and all these fires consuming in this field and they're throwing chaff into the fire. It was like hell on earth. The Messiah is coming.

And hell, my friend, is not hell because God's not there. Understand that. Hell is hell because God is there.

The smoke of their torment goes up in the presence of the Lamb. What do you think hell is? An independent fire? Hell is the unquenchable wrath of God. You hear that thing? Heaven's heaven because God is there.

Well, that's true. But the statement hell's hell because God ain't there is not true. His favorable presence is not there.

But His presence is there. Now, I want you to look at something. Let's go to Malachi right before Matthew.

And it talks about baptizing His people with fire. You know, people say, well, on the Day of Pentecost, fire was up above their head. I don't think that's what it's talking about.

I think that was a symbol of the reality of what He's talking about. And here it is in Malachi 3, verse 2, But who can endure the day of His coming and who can stand when He appears for He is like a refiner's fire and a fuller soap? He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine

them like gold and silver so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. So much for the carnal Christian.

So much for the idea of a continuously carnal man who's in good standing with the church. There's no such thing as someone who is a true believer who can live in a continuous state of carnality. Now, you might be saying, well, does that mean when God saves us, we're all going to be perfect? No, that means when God saves us, we're all going to suffer.

Suffer what? His purifying fire. You guys know if you're born again, some of you guys are in here and you're going, man, I just seem to do so many things wrong. And sometimes if some of these people saw me act the way I act and my anger or the way I talk to my wife or this or that, they'd think I'm not even saved.

Well, yeah, I would think you're not saved. Unless when you do those things, it feels like an elephant's stepping on your chest. And God's taking a big old horse rasp and running it across your back and scrubbing you so hard you think the literal flesh is going to come off your body.

Because that's basically how I would define my Christian life. I wouldn't define my Christian life as this super-spiritual, super-empowered preacher and all this. I would define my life as Ezekiel defines what happens to the true believer, the promise in the New Covenant which is this, and I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols.

And how will He do it? By rubbing you raw. By capturing you. You see, the thing about it is what it's talking about here is a process of He who began a good work in you will finish it.

But it's an amazing, powerful, supernatural work. I mean, who can endure the day of His coming? I would like to see that get back in our idea of what God's doing with us. And who can endure that? I submit to you that according to the passages in Ephesians and Colossians, that for Christ to even enter into your heart, you must be so supernaturally strengthened and transformed that if you were not, His presence in your heart would kill you.

Who can endure this? Who's sufficient for these things? God has come to work as a refiner in our lives. And I can see that. I mean, for example, well, I know John Green better.

I've spent more time with John Green than anyone else in this room. And in the few years I've seen John Green, I have seen God... Now, there's only one thing I can say. I have seen God work.

Okay? If you're around somebody for a lengthy time and they say they're a believer... Now, I'm not saying that at the end of four years you see perfection or you see... I don't know, but you better be able to see God work. Refining, changing, blessing, beating up all the things He does. And that's what is going to happen.

He's going to baptize His people with fire. And that's an amazing, amazing thing. Now, in Matthew 4.1, I want us to look.

And Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness. It's almost like He was... It's more than led up. He was cast out.

He was pushed. He was moved into the Spirit. That the Spirit of God is going to move you into circumstances and places that, man, are just the wilderness.

He's not going to lead you around battles sometimes. He's going to lead you straight into them. And in His wisdom, when Israel came out of Egypt, God, in His grace of giving a concession, He said this thing about Israel.

What did He say? We're not going to take them around this way. They won't be able to fight. They haven't learned war.

So He's very kind and very compassionate. He'll never put upon us more than we can handle. But the Holy Spirit will lead you into places where you'll think, oh my gosh, the Holy Spirit led me straight into an ambush.

Yeah, He will. He'll lead you straight into an ambush. But He'll also get you out of the ambush.

You see, that's how we learn that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Now, we're not getting to Bruda, but let's not worry about that. Let's go on.

4.4. Guys, none of us have arrived here. It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. This is what He'll be teaching you for the next 60 years or however long you live.

At least one thing. I think if anything in my life that I could point to, it's just the school that God has taken me in is that. Especially with the way that HeartCry has been done.

That we do not raise funds. We do not make our needs known and everything. That we could need \$30,000 in just a few days and not have a dime to our name and all of it show up without telling anybody.

And the school of what? The school of man shall live by every word that proceeds out of His mouth. He will live based upon not only His direction, but His promises. Christian, man of God, do you avail yourself of promises? Most men don't.

Do you know why? Because they're striving for themselves. They're taking care of themselves. They've got it worked out.

They've got the package. You want to learn to live. I might be wrong here, but I think the school that Ray McDill went to, that in order to graduate, John, you might know, in order to graduate, they would hand their students like about five pounds or something in England, which is nothing, and tell them, you've got to make a journey around the entire country of England.

You've got to hold meetings in all these different places and you cannot ask for money. You cannot do anything. This is what you get in a take-off, walking.

And when you come back, you've graduated. Do you want to be a preacher boy or do you want to be a prophet? You see? I mean, it's that type of living. Now, I want us to look at Jesus for a moment there in verse 1 as the true servant of Yahweh.

I wrote some things down here in my little notes. Like Israel, He's called out of Egypt, chapter 2.15. But unlike Israel, He fulfills all righteousness in 3.15. And He is always well-pleasing to the Father, 3.17. Like

Israel, He is in the wilderness, 4.2. But He lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, 4.4. And He prevails, 4.10. I mean, He goes through what Israel went through, but He prevailed. He is the Captain.

He is the only One who has ever prevailed. Now, Matthew 4.17. This is what we talked about earlier. Or let me say in Matthew 4.4, let me say this.

The incarnate Christ has this attitude, but we, well, you know, we don't need this like Jesus needed it. I mean, Jesus needed to live on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, but we're stronger. We can take care of ourselves.

Do you see what's going on here? The incarnate Son of God, as I taught last night, I don't know if any of you were in there, but I mean, He prayed. And He lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. And so often, we are such an exception to that that it's unbelievable.

We are such an exception to that. We're so active in so many activities. It's like one Japanese man said one time.

He goes, I don't understand you evangelicals. He goes, when I look at a Japanese religious leader, you know, from one of their eastern things, when I look at a Japanese religious leader, I think man, holy man. When I look at one of your preachers, I think businessman.

We almost look and act and live like administrating, organizing businessmen. Now, just quickly, 417, this is what Chad brought up a while ago. And it's from that time, Jesus began to preach and say, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Repent. Repent. Repent all over the place.

That's what it's all about. It's about repenting. That's the beginning.

Because we are wrong, we must repent. Yes? The kingdom of heaven is at hand. What implications would that have had to a Jew at that time? Messiah has come.

Messiah has come. And everything that has to do with the Messiah. Now, again, for Isaiah and Jeremiah, there would have been a more proper interpretation that Messiah has come.

And as you know, during Jesus' day, Messiah was going to be basically a political figure who was going to basically beat the Pegeebers out of Rome. They were looking for someone to come and literally kill all these Gentiles. What we got is someone who came to save them.

And that's why it was so hard. You see, here's the thing. The Messiah is going to come and when He does, He's going to get them.

You know, when the Messiah comes, He's going to get everybody. You see, God's people need to be saved. And that's what they couldn't see.

They thought they were right with God, but needed to be saved from their enemies and didn't realize God was their enemy. Like R.C. Sproul said, and I always say this all the time, when someone says, well, I've been saved, I always ask them from what? And they'll say sin. I say sin is an impersonal thing.

What have you been saved from? I'll tell you. You've been saved from God. Three statements you can make with prepositions.

You've been saved from God, by God, and for God. It was God who was your enemy coming against you. He saved you by Himself, and He saved you for Himself, and He saved you from Himself.

That right there, those three little statements, would clear up a big mess in the Southern Baptist Convention right there. Now, let's go on. Matthew 1. I want you to notice that the word mountain is used here.

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain. Now, do any of you suppose why? Why would He say mountain? I mean, if He said mountain, He's a mountain, but there aren't that really big... I mean, they could also have been called hills. Why? Because He is setting Jesus up as the new and the greater Moses.

MacArthur does a thing where he looks at all the important mountains in the Bible. Well, the law of God was given by Moses from the mountain, and now the One greater than Moses comes and gives His law. One of the most overlooked passages in the entire Bible is Matthew 5-7.

It is called the Christian Manifesto, and rightly so. But it is basically and by and large overlooked, especially by us as Baptists, either because, well, it's not that practical. You can't grow a church on it.

You can't make big numbers on it. It's not church-grophy at all. As a matter of fact, it's just the opposite.

It's so radical to turn people away. The second reason, by guys who are more theological-minded is, well, I'm theological-minded. I'd rather think about it than live it.

And so we've got very, very radical, some of the most radical things ever said in this Sermon on the Mount. And I wonder, do Reformed evangelicals take it seriously enough? Now, 5-13. Let's look at that really quickly.

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. This passage is usually taken as a reason for being a militant evangelical. Out of the salt shaker, you know, into the world.

Let's go knock on doors. Politically, let's be the salt and let's do all these things. Well, all of that is kind of caught up in this passage, but I don't think it's the main thrust of this passage.

What is he saying? Salt has certain properties. You take those properties out, it's no longer salt. Or you take them out and even replace them with good things and they're no longer salt.

The point of the matter is, what does it mean to be the salt of the earth? Is it necessarily militant activity? It is character. It's not so much what you do, it's who you are. And the properties of this salt of discipleship, of Christianity, is found in the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn for sin and their own weakness. On and on and on and on and on.

The merciful, those hungry and thirsty for righteousness. You want to know what the true characteristics of Christianity is? The sermon on the mount, the Beatitudes were also used as a means of either giving

assurance or taking false assurance away. It should be used so today.

The question is, is there any reality of poverty of spirit in your heart? Is there any reality of mourning or having contrition? Is there any reality of gentleness? Is there any reality of hungry and thirsting for righteousness? Is there any reality of being merciful or being pure in heart or seeking to be a peacemaker? Is there any reality of persecution for righteousness? You see, those were things that were actually used to determine whether or not a person was born again. How far we have fallen. Now, I also want you to look at something that is very important.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It's not saying that through the work of being poor in spirit, you will earn heaven. The characteristic of those to whom is the kingdom of heaven is that they're poor in spirit.

It's what you need to see. The characteristic of one who is comforted by God is one who mourns. These are characteristics of a work of grace.

Now, the word blessed, I want you to look at this for a moment. Try to define that. How do you define that? What does it mean to be blessed? There's nothing in the English language.

I've always said it's like a great big bag full of all the best things. How do you describe this term? It's that which comes from a right standing with God. But as I was looking over this text, I began to see something.

Why, according to this passage itself, why is a person called blessed? They're blessed because theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What does it mean to be blessed? You're blessed because yours is the kingdom of heaven. You're blessed because you're comforted of God.

You're blessed because you will inherit the earth. You're blessed because you will be satisfied with righteousness. You're blessed because you will receive mercy.

You're blessed because you will see God. You're blessed because you've been brought into sonship with God. You're blessed because yours is the kingdom of heaven.

You're blessed because your reward is great. That's what it means to be blessed. That's the way the text defines it.

You say, what does it mean to be blessed in this context? It means this. That's why I'm blessed. Because those are the things I have.

Those are the things that have been given to me. Now, I want us to look at 5.17. Before we get there on 5.13, we were talking about this yesterday. Is it safe to say that if the salt has lost its saltiness, that it was never truly salt at all? Is it safe to draw that out? I was looking at, it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled.

That seems to be a statement of judgment. Am I looking at that right? It is judgment. It's the judgment of the wrath of God.

It's not just discipline or not just men aren't going to like you. But it is a manifestation of the wrath of God. And we do know that if they lose all their saltiness, they never were salt to start off with.

But it's not necessary for this passage. We don't have to bring that in every time. It's like someone saying, well, God loves me.

Now, you know I said that because Christ died for me and it wouldn't be that He loved me for any reason inside of myself. And the other day I was praying and man, I just felt like God heard me. Now, you know He heard me and it wasn't because of my own righteousness.

There are certain things that we know to be true. Like if they fell from this, they were not really of it. But we do not have to bring it in to the passage every time.

The fact of the matter is, you've lost these things. Judgment. These things are not enduring in your life.

Now it doesn't mean they show up every day. But if there's not an enduring work of God in making these things realities in your life, your life has nothing to do with this stuff, then yeah. Or even if you sprang up quickly with great joy and seemed to have some of these things, but when persecution or tribulation came, they were all gone and they never really returned and there wasn't any chastisement about it, you're lost.

That's the point that should be made. 17 and 18. If there is anything that's probably going to split reformed Baptists who are more reformed, it is going to be Matthew, this passage right here.

5, 17 and 18. Do not think I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished. Now, we all agree with that. But boy, there's a lot of things being said here that's really hard to work out once you get into the epistles.

You know, like the Sabbath. What do we do with that? A lot of things. I mean, what does it mean? What does it mean that it will not pass away? What does it mean until all has been accomplished? There's a new thing among many people, Brother Reisinger and others, the idea of the new covenant theology.

And all that is a big debate right now. And it will probably continue to grow. But I just want to point out some things to you that are very, very important.

First of all, 5, 17. Do not think I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Jesus in the future, Jesus in His ministry would be accused of annulling the law because He would teach its true meaning and contradict the teaching and the supposed righteousness of the Pharisees. He was always being, you're breaking the law, right? What you teach is against the law. You break the Sabbath because you heal on the Sabbath.

You're allowing your disciples to eat grain, you know, pluck grain on the Sabbath. You're doing all these things, okay? And so Jesus, and here's something, ministers, that I want you to, those of you, I want you to think about. Now, Jesus seems to anticipate the objections against Him and He answers it before the objections are put out there.

That's a good thing to do. Anticipate the objections of your enemies and deal with them before they have a chance to rail against you with them. Cut them off before they have a chance to open their mouth.

Okay? Do you think, in a way, also, there's a judgment stored up for them in that because it just shows how they're not willing to actually seek in and see who Jesus is. They're willing to throw all these things against Him, but in a way, the testimony of before and those who've witnessed that and heard it and give testimony to it, in a way, can prove to them that they're just talking foolishness. So the Pharisees essentially actually listened and actually heard those things.

And so it makes them look like idiots really because they say a bunch of stuff that has been proved before and so eventually that will come back around and show you people that it's exactly what it is. It's exactly what it is. And exactly what goes on today.

We see it in the political arena. So much in the political arena today. It's unbelievable.

In what way? Let's say if I were to sit down at a round table, a televised round table, national television, and I would say, let us look at the misery, the miseries that are involved with the homosexual lifestyle. And let's say that I had literally just hundreds of medical statistics, hundreds of statistics on suicide, hundreds of statistics on what it costs the country, how much of the tax base in San Francisco is paid out to the venereal diseases, and just statistics. And just honestly and lovingly said, let's sit down and look at the scientific, historical facts, the homosexual lifestyle.

Would I even get a chance to pull out one statistic? They would just start railing homophobe, personal attacks, everything, and no one would sit down and look at the facts. I just described to you basically the Southern Baptist Convention. Let's sit down at a round table, publicize and talk about these issues with just, alright, let's open up our Bibles to Romans 9. Let's go down through there and debate each verse.

Let's bring in the historical context. Let's bring in the Baptist forefathers. Let's do all these things.

Let's just sit down and say, it doesn't matter that you say this is the issue, this is the infallible Word of God. The question is, what does it say? Is that going to happen? No. Fools.

And before anyone even listens, there ain't no one listening. You see, and we see this all throughout history. That's why, let me warn you, if someone comes to you with an Arminian argument, or someone comes to you with an argument about something that maybe it even kind of gets your dandruff, shut your mouth.

Open your mind. Listen to the person. Because you're wrong somewhere.

Don't you realize that? If everybody in the history of the world, including Spurgeon, was wrong in some of his theology, you're wrong somewhere. Don't be like the very thing you hate. Okay? It's very important.

Now, let's look at 18. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished. Alright? I'm going to just put in a very basic phrase what I think this means.

Christ would in no sense abolish the law, but He would fulfill that aspect of the law that was only intended to be a shadow of the reality or substance which would be revealed at Christ's coming. That's Colossians. He's the substance of the shadow.

Now, let me just throw some things out at you. Well, we know that Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law. The ceremonial law has passed away, but that which is not the ceremonial law still abides.

You've heard that, right? The ceremonial law. How many have ever heard someone talk about the ceremonial law? Okay, show me somewhere in the Bible where the Bible divides the law up in ceremonial law. That's a word that we put there.

All law was law. I mean, if you even violated the ceremonial law, you were going to be stoned. All law was law.

Sometimes we will really try to find simplistic solutions to what's being said and be very careful. What do we do with the idea of the Sabbath? These are questions that people are asking. You say, well, we have a Christian Sabbath.

Okay, let me ask you a question. What makes your Christian Sabbath anything like the Jewish Sabbath? What do you do other than go to church? You go out to eat. You maybe even watch TV.

You play ball. You go to lake. Let me give you an example.

Now, I'm not giving you an answer. I'm just throwing something out at you. I want you to think about it.

The Ten Commandments send us to Christ for salvation and Christ sends us back to the Ten Commandments for sanctification. That's a very popular Reformed Puritan idea. Now, what part of those Ten Commandments are you going to keep? Well, all of them.

What about the Sabbath? Well, it's a Christian Sabbath. So there is a Christian Sabbath. How is it to be carried out? Where does the Scripture talk about how we're to carry out a Christian Sabbath? It doesn't.

Now, what about someone who doesn't believe that there's a Christian Sabbath? Like, for example, Calvin and Luther. Now, here's the point that I want to make. Bill, I'll ask somebody.

Because some Reformed guys believe this. The Old Testament Sabbath is now just the New Testament Christian Sabbath and it is to be taken just as seriously, just the same way and everything. Okay, so I ask them a question.

If someone commits adultery in your church and they continue doing it, are you going to put them in a discipline? Well, of course. Of course we will. Okay? If someone does not keep the Sabbath, your Christian Sabbath, are you going to discipline them? Well, no.

I mean, that's a matter of conscience. Now, hold it. That's not what you said.

You said it was the law. So which is it? If it is the law, if the Deca Law, those ten commands, they're all applicable for today. You're going to have a Christian Sabbath.

A Christian Sabbath which you cannot define or tell anybody how to live because there are no rules in the New Testament telling you how to do that. And if someone commits adultery, you discipline them. But if someone breaks the Christian Sabbath, you don't.

You see the problem? Inconsistencies. John Murray one time had a guy come over to his house. John Murray, the great theologian, had a guy come over to his house.

And the guy arrived on Saturday evening and Sunday morning at about 4, it was very cold outside, very cold. And the guy wakes up at like 3 in the morning. He's freezing to death because John Murray forgot to

put firewood in the stove that heated the house.

And the guy is almost freezing to death. And he comes to John Murray and says, man, we've got to do something. I'm freezing to death.

John Murray said, no, it's a Sabbath. We're not putting firewood in there. The point I'm trying to make is again, it is so necessary not to just make these blanket statements.

Bless God, Sunday's the Christian Sabbath. Okay, it may or may not be, but my question is what does that mean? If you're going to say it, what does it mean? And what are the rules? And how is it obeyed? You see, there's all kinds of things that you need to think about. What are we going to do? Well, I'm going to meet with the guys again.

We'll try to figure out a better way to do it. It's just there's so much in the New Testament. There's so much in the Old.

We can meet at 5 a.m., but I'm not sure some of these guys would be alive until 7 a.m. I'm willing to do anything, guys, but I want your comments. Like I said, and Jeff and I have talked quite a bit, and it's this. Right now, this is an experiment.

We're trying to figure out with your time what we can do. So keep on your reading schedule. Do read the preface and the introduction to Grudel.

And we'll see you next Tuesday. We'll try to figure out a better way this afternoon.

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