

Jesus Took Our Place

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the profound implications of Christ's sacrifice and the necessity of the Holy Spirit in understanding and living out our faith.

Duration: 1:19:02

Scripture: Numbers 6:23, Isaiah 64:6, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Propitiation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the story of Abraham and Isaac from the Bible. He describes the dramatic moment when God stops Abraham from sacrificing his son and emphasizes the profound love God has for humanity. The preacher encourages the audience to respond to this love by taking action and not wasting their time. He challenges them to continue running the race of faith and not retire, as there is an eternity to enjoy the rewards. The preacher also addresses the importance of loving God and acknowledges that it is not something one can force themselves to do, but rather something that happens to them through experiencing the awe-inspiring presence of God.

Transcript

There are times when you're called upon to preach, you know exactly what you need to say. I feel like I know exactly what I need to say this morning. The only problem is it's in two sermons.

We really need the Lord's discernment this morning to know. A pastor or preacher can come before you with more than one burden. So let's ask that God would help us.

Father, I come before you in the name of your Son. I praise you, Lord, for all that you are, for all that you have done for us in him. I am so often, Lord, so sad at the way I respond to the love you have shown me.

But, Lord, never, never do I despair because the face of your Son is too powerful for any of that. Father, I praise you and I worship you and I adore you and I magnify your name as the Savior of the chiefest of all sinners. Lord, nothing in our hands do we bring.

Our best works, Lord, are like filthy rags. Our hearts are not true. We're driven by so many things that are not pure.

I praise you, Lord, that we have a broad-shouldered Savior, a great and mighty Redeemer. And I pray, dear God, that he would be exalted here this morning among us. And I ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Open your Bible to Second Corinthians, chapter five, verse 21. While you're opening, I just want to say that usually when I go to a local church, I always try to go to the Sunday school because it tells me so much about the church.

And I was so pleased this morning to sit in a Sunday school class where the teacher sought to expound the text and did expound the text, who sought to find out what was in there and communicate it to God's people clearly and truly. And it's such such a blessing, such a blessing. Let's read our text, Second Corinthians, chapter five, verse 21.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Do you realize that prophets and wise men, men and women much nobler than ourselves, longed all their life to understand the things that are contained in this text, and they did not. They searched the Scriptures and tried to discern the times and the seasons and exactly the meaning of the words they groped as one groping in darkness, as one who sees by moonlight to discover what would this Christ be like? And that creates in me a tremendous burden because of all the things they hoped for and far more have been revealed to me and to God's people through his word.

And yet there are so many things in this world that tantalize us, that draw our attention, not just secular things, but even in the realm of religion, even in the realm of evangelical, Orthodox, reformed Christianity. There's so many things that seem to vie for our attention. But really, there is only one thing that is truly necessary, and that is to know God as he has revealed himself in the redemptive works of the person of Jesus Christ.

You and I should be struck to the heart that we are not at this moment either leaping for joy or weeping on our faces because of the passage that I have just read. Men and women gave their lives to even get a glimpse of the Everest that has been shown you just in reading these few words. I just do not want you to know truth or to hear truth, but that the spirit of the living God, if you are not Christian, that he would regenerate your heart.

And if that you are Christian but prone to a cold heart, that the spirit of the living God would do something for you, that he would help you. That has become language that is so foreign to all our correctness. But you can have all the truth that a man could comprehend in his mind and still be dead as a stone.

We need the spirit of the living God to enliven our hearts, to illuminate our minds. We read a text like this and it does not shake us to the very core. It's not a call for despair.

We should not allow the devil to creep in with false accusations or for our conscience to overwhelm us. But it should be a call to prayer. Oh, God, how much more do I need the spirit? How much more do I need to be enlivened, illuminated, quickened by the spirit of the living God? We need outpouring after outpouring, manifestation after manifestation of the spirit of God.

Does this language scare you? It would not have frightened our early fathers. Of course, they didn't have to put up with all the mess that we have to put up with today. Most of what is taught about the Holy Spirit today is terrifyingly incorrect.

It is heresy of heresy, but we commit another heresy of being afraid of not realizing how much we need his life and his fire and his power. So every time I read a text like this and it doesn't just grab me again, it doesn't lead me to condemnation or moping or mourning, but it's a call to prayer. God, give sight to these

dull eyes.

Let me actually know what I think I understand. Cause it to move me. Because when it comes down to it, there is only one motivation that is true.

There is only one genuine prime mover in the Christian life, and it is what God has done for us in Christ. If you do anything, even the most righteous deed for any other reason than what God has done for you in Christ, it's idolatry. You need to be more godly than you are.

I don't have to be a prophet to say that you need to be more devoted to Christ. You need to be more given to mission. You need to break away from many of the things that's tantalizing you in this world and holding you check.

You need to run from the sin that besets you. But all the manipulation in the world will not make that happen. It will be a greater and greater realization of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is one sense in which I hope you to be free. There is another great sense in which I wish you were the greatest slave. When Paul said he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, he was not merely referring to Roman chains.

God had already shown the primitive church that he could take the chains off of a prisoner and open up doors and get him out of there anytime he liked. Paul was a prisoner of the love of God revealed in Christ. He was constrained by it.

It made him loyal. It made him faithful. It made him driven.

He no longer had his own life, not because he and his self will made some great transaction with God. No, he was overpowered by the love of God, and therefore there was no glorying in his flesh. Even when he gave his own life, he had to he had to give his life.

Why? Because the love of Christ constrained him, not his love for Christ, but Christ's love for him. He was a prisoner. Let me ask you a question.

Do you have a sense in which you are not your own? Do you have a sense in which you have no rights whatsoever? You should. That's what a slave is, or is every day of your life marked by your own will, by your own dreams, by your own needs, wants. I pray that every one of us would be consumed, enveloped in Christ.

Before I get on with my text, another thing, I will be 50 this year. Young people, listen to me. It's as though I were nine yesterday.

I will be dead tomorrow. Those of you who are my age and older. Will you still be so foolish as to not discern what the will of the Lord is? To walk circumspectly in this life, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to do the will of your master.

Some of you are still going up the hill. Some of you are going down. Those who go up realize that you will be going down much quicker than you think.

Therefore, while you have the strength of youth, serve Christ with everything you have, because the days will come evil days when you will not have the strength to do so. And those of you who are going down,

look back at how much you've wasted. And how much you are wasting.

Don't stay there. If you stay there, you'll be condemned. If you stay there, you'll be swallowed up in misery.

But look back at what you have wasted and waste no more. You are headed toward the finish line. Don't even talk to me about the blasphemous idea of retirement.

Are you finally getting to rest? What's wrong with you? Go toward the finish line with everything you've got left in you and stop puttering around for nothing. We have an eternity to enjoy our rewards. We have only a moment's time to earn them.

Now, what can move us toward that? What can set us on fire? You know, preachers are really wonderful at telling us all the things we need to do and then not telling us how to do them. You need to love God. Yes, you need to love God more.

Yes, but how are you supposed to do that? How do you get up in the morning and make yourself love God more? Loving God more is not something you do to yourself, it's something that happens to you. When I go out in the morning and I see an absolutely gorgeous sunrise, it's not that I make myself stand in awe of the sunrise. I don't do that.

It's something that happens to me. The sunrise overwhelms me. Its beauty takes hold of me and shakes me to the core.

It's the same way with the love of God. How can you love God more? You can't ramp yourself up. You can't fire yourself up.

You can't go to a conference and get it. How can you love God more if your heart has truly been regenerate? You will love God more to the degree that you know more about God. You see, the wicked, the more they know of God, the more they will hate him because he's altogether lovely and good and righteous.

Everything the wicked is not. But the more the regenerate see of Christ, of God in Christ, the more they are drawn to him. Drawn to him, overpowered by him, wrestled by him, mauled by him, broken by him.

As Christ invaded this planet 2000 years ago, we are in constant need of invasions of the Holy Spirit of God to do the work I just described. One of the saddest things for the preacher is to know that all of this is beyond his means. The greatest words, the greatest sermons, the greatest force of delivery, none of it will avail in spiritual matters.

It's the spirit of the living God. You desperately need the spirit of the living God to do greater and greater works in you. Now, let's take a look at our text.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. He, that is God, made him Christ who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf. Now, the first thing that I want you to notice is how dull our senses are.

Look at this statement. He knew no sin. In our many decades of having to defend the deity of Jesus Christ, many times his humanity has been swallowed up.

And we forget that he was a real man and he faced the temptations as a man in the power of the Holy Spirit. You see, if you just say he was able to do this because he was divine, you are missing the picture. It is there.

That is a foundational truth. But what you have to understand is he is Christ Jesus, the man. And what he did, he did as a man.

This is amazing. He was without sin. I was talking to a man one day trying to witness to him, and I came across this man who believed that he had not sinned in 13 years.

And I thought that was that was amazing. You've not sinned in 13 years and it didn't matter what command I gave him, he could redefine it. And show that he had not sinned in his own eyes.

But then I asked him, I said, sir, what do you think the greatest sin might be? Well, he said, I don't know. I said, could it be to break the greatest commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? And he said, yes. I said, OK, have you ever loved God as God deserved to be loved? If he said no, he would prove himself a sinner.

If he said yes, he would prove himself a blasphemer that a man could say, I have loved God as much as he deserves. Now, I want you to think about this. There has never been one moment, one fraction of a moment in all our lives, any of us that we loved God.

As God deserves, that we loved God as God ought to be loved, not one moment. Now, think about this. There was never one moment when Jesus did not love the Lord, his God, as the Lord, his God deserves.

I mean, you talk about raising the dead, walking on water, casting out demons, all those sorts of things. The most amazing thing to me is this man, Christ Jesus, every moment, every breath loved God exactly as God ought to be loved. We're to do everything we do, even the most minor task, whether we eat or drink for the glory of God.

There has never been one moment when we've done that fully and truly. There was never one moment that he did not do that. Every breath he took, every beat of our Savior's heart was utmost for the glory of his father.

This is amazing. He knew no sin. You and I drink down iniquity like it was water.

We were born in sin and sin did our mothers conceive us. We can no more tell the pain of sin than a fish can tell the pain of water. Yet he knew no sin, but it says he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.

Some of the greatest scholars, Calvin and others, give us great warnings when we come to this text. If they themselves were afraid to touch it, what does this mean? Does it mean that somehow on the cross, Christ's nature devolved into some horrid, corruptible thing? Did it mean that somehow Christ in himself became wicked, that his nature became twisted, that he became full of spots and dark and blemished? No, he was always the lamb, the spotless lamb. Then what does it mean? Well, we find our answer in the second part.

He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. Now, what is righteousness? The moment that a person believes in Jesus. We have this idea of

righteousness enters through the door, but what does it mean? Does it mean that the moment a person believes in Jesus, they are totally and completely changed, they are infused with grace and they become a perfectly righteous being? No, if that were the case, you would not continue in sin at all.

What does it mean, then, that when you believe in Christ, you are declared righteous? There's the word declared righteous. It is a forensic or a legal term. What does it mean? The moment you believe, as Abraham believed in the promises of God, God declares you legally.

Forensically, to be righteous before him. It is a declaration from the bar of God, it is a declaration from the throne room of God that because you have believed, God declares you to be righteous before him. I know that most of you understand that, but now I want to throw in another word that is oftentimes not used with enough frequency, not only when you believe.

Are you declared righteous before the throne of God? But now here's the very important word. You are also treated that way. You are treated as righteous.

And this is an amazing thing for a believer to grasp. You see, it's not just that he declares you righteous and then works with you as a semi righteous individual who's righteous sometimes and not righteous other times. No, he declares you to be righteous and then he treats you as righteous.

It's how God now relates to you. He responds to you as a righteous creature. Now, let's go back to Christ on the cross.

When he's on that tree, the sins of God's people were imputed to him, so it's as though he is legally declared guilty. But now here's the word and he is treated as such. God treats you as righteous, but your sins have now been imputed to Christ.

And God treats him as unrighteous. He stands, as John Gill used to say, in the law place of the sinner. The guilt of the sinner is heaped upon him and he is treated as you ought to be treated.

Does that terrify you? Treated as you ought to be treated. One of the reasons why we cannot appreciate the cross is because we do not realize how we ought to be treated before God. And we do not realize that because the doctrine of the radical or total depravity of man is not explained.

As a matter of fact, in many churches, it is altogether avoided. But you see, if you do not understand the depth of human depravity. And what ought to be done to you, you cannot understand what God has done for you on the cross.

I was preaching in Europe a few years ago and I went into this university and I knew the whole student body was against me. And I'm praying, Lord, what what do you what do I do? I mean, Lord, help. These are radical secularists, they've come here to eat a Puritan.

I knew that anything I throw out there is going to be mocked. As I walked out there, it seemed like a pathway was made and I looked at the congregation and I said, I am going to tell you the most terrifying thing that is recorded in the Bible. Oh.

Are you ready? Yeah, we're ready. No, no, you don't understand. I am going to tell you something so terrifying that it goes beyond anything you could ever imagine if you are a thinking man.

They said, OK, what is it? This is it. God, God is good. And they all went.

And what's so terrifying about that? You're not, you're evil. Now, what does a good God do with someone like you? The answer. Is not just found.

In the corridors of hell. The answer is found on the cross now in Christ, bearing sin. You've got this is so difficult for me to get into my mind to explain, so difficult for anyone to understand, because we look at so many things from our perspective.

We don't see sin as utterly sinful. We don't see how vile and heinous sin truly is. Then here we have the Son of God that throughout all eternity dwelled in a perfect love relationship with his father.

God did not create the world because of some need. He created the world out of the superabundance of his relationship with his son. He created it for his son.

Everything he's ever done, he's done for his son. Everything God will ever do, he will do for his son and everything the son has ever done. He's done it for his father.

I'm sorry you don't fit into the equation as much as you think. I'm sorry to tell you, you're not the center of all this stuff that's going on. And this son who always delighted in the father and the father always delighted in him.

And even though equality, there was a sense in which the son always looked up to see his father smile. If there is no triune relationship with the father, son and the spirit, we can't even say that God is love. Or at least his love cannot be an eternal attribute because it can't be poured forth on anybody if no one's there.

This amazing relationship that would take the most intimate relationship on our side of the veil, the most intimate relationship between father and son or father and daughter and make it look evil. And yet on that tree that was broken, you say, yeah, Brother Paul, but you know, it was imputed sin and your point. It was imputed guilt, yes, but it was real guilt, it was real sin.

He was really treated by his father as though he were the most vile of all of creation, as though he were you. Imagine for a moment, I mean, some of you ladies maybe are like some of the daughters of Israel. Your foot has never touched a dusty path.

You've been protected from every evil in this world. Imagine for a moment, did you decide to go to downtown Tulsa or Chicago, hand out some tracks amongst the prostitutes who work there? And all of a sudden the police come and they grab you up and they take you with those prostitutes. They include you in with those women, the women are sitting there in the paddy wagon, they're laughing, they're painting their nails.

They're calling their lawyers. They're sharing Texas on the cell phone. Doesn't bother them a bit.

They've been through this a million times. This is commonplace. You, on the other hand.

You can't even breathe. Your agony cannot be described by the greatest poet. Thoreau has no pen for you.

There's no way to describe the anguish, the pain and the shame that doesn't even begin to describe what happened on that tree. This is one who knew no sin. He knew no sin.

Now, as he's on that tree, it says he was made sin. But we have to understand that with that comes the curse. With that comes the curse.

Cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them. That's you. That is you.

It's Moses coming after you in the name of God with God's blessing. You are cursed and not cursed by some witch doctor or Wiccan. You're not cursed by something like that.

You are cursed by the one who is altogether good, curses you. Because you have violated every expression of his goodness in your evil, cursed. That's you with Christ absent, cursed, that's you separated from Christ, that's you without Christ, cursed.

And what I want you to see is I don't want you to take this and somehow get out of it, thinking that I'm just preaching some puritanical God that actually isn't in the Bible. Nor do I just want to lay this at the feet of God and say he's the only one in agreement with the fact that you ought to be cursed. I want you to know this without Christ on the day of judgment, you have been so vile, not only before God, before the holy angels, before the saints in heaven, before every creature that dwells in the presence of God.

You are so vile that the last thing you will hear when you take your first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding, cheering God because he has read the earth of you. Cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them all the things written in the book of the law to perform them. You say, oh, brother Paul, you know, you are you.

You're angry, you're hurting me. Yes, I'm hurting you and I'm painting the darkest picture of you that I can. And if I were to use and go and get words and bring them back to speak with you, I would still not be able to paint a picture dark enough of how vile you are.

But then here's the thing. I do not wound you without reason. In the same way, a medical doctor does not tell someone they have cancer or a mortal disease just for telling them that they do it so as to save their life.

I'm telling you, you are not what the secular psychologist and anthropologist tells you. You are not what the media tells you. This is not society's fault.

You cannot blame society, society blames you, you are an individual before God who has broken every law that God has ever given and therefore rightly deserve to be cursed. Look at the people you've lied to, the people you've hurt, look at the selfishness in your heart. Same time in Europe, when I was preaching, some boys jumped up and started causing a ruckus, laughing at this Puritan idea of sin.

And I said, you young man, how many young girls have you used only to laugh later on in your apartment? How many daughters have you taken against their father's will and ruined their reputation? I'm not just speaking about sins against God, I'm speaking about sins against one another. We are a sinful race. Even those of you who are most holy in this church, who have walked longest with Christ, recognize that within you there is still something that eats away.

You must fight against it every day. It is not some fault in evolution. It is exactly what the Bible says, the remnant of sin.

And for those of you who have not Christ, it is not a remnant of sin. You are nothing but a mass of sin to be done away with on that final day if you do not repent. But now here's the good news.

After Galatians 3, 10 tells us that Christ redeemed, that cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them. It says Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. The disdain of heaven shifted off of you and fell upon one man.

Now, think of this, that in your sin, all of creation would applaud if God rids the earth of you. And yet that disdain fell upon Christ. I want us to go to a moment, just go to Matthew.

Chapter five, the Beatitudes. Verse three, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted, blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Within this text, we find, as in other places of blessing in the Bible, both the Old Testament and New, we find probably at least second, the second most difficult theological problem in all the Bible, the impossibility of a good God blessing someone like you.

Regardless of any attempt, you might make it piety, all our society is in an uproar because of a woman who may have killed her child. And yet she was blessed by freedom. You see the problem.

How can God declare blessing on the likes of you? If he's a good God, he cannot bless you. He must condemn you. You see how quickly we are to point at someone who ought to die.

It's wrong to set her free. And it may be wrong to set her free, definitely if she is guilty. But she carried the same theology over to yourself before God.

The greatest problem in Scripture is that God is good and God is love. God cannot bless the likes of you. So how did he do it? Your guilt was thrown upon Christ and the only reason scripturally you can be blessed is because he was cursed.

Let me read for you something I've written, the blessed are granted the kingdom of heaven, the cursed are refused entrance. The blessed are recipients of divine comfort, the cursed are objects of divine wrath. Christ was refused entrance.

He became an object of divine wrath, the blessed are satisfied, but the cursed are miserable and wretched. I am not a man, I am a worm, he says. The blessed receive mercy, the cursed are condemned without pity on the cross, divine justice condemned him without pity.

The cursed shall see God and the blessed shall see God and the cursed are cut off from his presence. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The blessed are sons and daughters of God, the cursed are disowned in disgrace. Now, to carry this further, you must, if you're going to understand the cross, if you're going to understand that we, our sins were atoned for, not just because the Romans beat up Jesus.

It's not what the Romans did to Christ, it's what God did to Christ. In the twenty seventh and twenty eighth chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, I don't turn there, we don't have time, but we have two mountains. We have Mount Gerasim and Mount Ebal from Mount Gerasim.

All the blessings were to be proclaimed upon those who would keep the laws of the covenant. And on Mount Ebal, all the curses would be proclaimed upon the man who broke the laws of the covenant. The only man that has ever lived that had the right to Mount Gerasim was Jesus of Nazareth.

He obeyed his God in all things. He is the only covenant keeper. He is the only true servant of Yahweh.

He is the only true witness of Yahweh. There is no other. But upon him, upon Christ, was heaped all the curses of Mount Ebal.

Now, I'm going to read those curses, but I am going to show you how they fell upon the head of Christ when Christ cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The father called back the Lord, the Lord, your God. Damn you, the Lord, send upon you curses, confusion and rebuke until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, the Lord smites you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart. And you will grope at noon as the blind man gropes in darkness with none to save you.

The Lord delights over you to make you perish and destroy you. You will be torn from the land. Cursed shall you be in the city.

Cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall you be when you come in. Cursed shall you be when you go out.

The heavens, which is over your head, shall be bronze and the earth, which is under you, iron. You shall be a horror. You shall be a proverb and a taunt among the people.

Let all these curses come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the Lord, your God, by keeping his commandments and his statutes, which he commanded you. That was the reply from heaven when Christ cried out, why have you forsaken me? That is what you should hear every day of your life. But in order for him to call you blessed, someone had to be cursed.

He was cursed as a man who makes an idol and sets it up in secret. He was cursed as one who dishonors his father and mother, who moves his neighbor's boundary mark or misleads the blind man on the road. He was cursed as one who distorts the justice, do an alien orphan and widow.

He was cursed as one who is guilty of every manner of immorality and perversion, who wounds his neighbor in secret or accepts a bribe to strike down the innocent. He was cursed as one who does not confirm the words of the law by doing them. That's what it means when it says that he was cursed for you.

It says in the book of Proverbs, like a sparrow in its splitting, like a swallow in its flying. So a curse without cause does not alight. Well, then, how did that curse alight upon the branch? It's because on that moment, at that moment, the branch was not covered with snow.

Was not full of leaves, but he bore the filth of your evil, of every wicked thing you have done before a holy God. Of every vile thing you have done to one another. He bore it, and so the curse.

Fell upon him. David said this. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, how blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

Yet on the cross, the sin imputed to Christ was exposed before God and the host of heaven. He was placarded, as Martin Lloyd-Jones used to say, before men and made a spectacle to angels and devils

alike. The transgressions he bore were not forgiven him and the sins he carried were not covered.

If a man is counted blessed because iniquity is not imputed to him, then Christ was cursed beyond measure because the iniquity of us all fell upon him. Do you see, my dear friend? Look, I am not a religious man. I am not necessarily a rule keeper.

I don't dot eyes and I don't cross teeth. They don't bother me much. But a prisoner, not morality for morality's sake, not to be a do-gooder, not to be religious, not to find a home in heaven.

All of that is rubbish and idolatry and less than rubbish. It is because of this. How can we escape what he's done for us? This is the prime mover of the Christian life.

My dreams are about missions, but missions cannot be the thing that moves us. I want to be a good husband and father, but that cannot be the thing that moves me. It must be this, this dark thing that no one wants to talk about anymore and therefore there is so little power.

Men, where are you? Play around with all the little trinkets of this world and your hobbies and all the little things that captivate you. Grow up. Stand and look at the one to whom you must pledge your loyalty.

Good, just look at us, concerned about trucks and cars and houses and debt and hobbies and this and that's all in the shadow of this tree. Where's the loyalty? Where's the captivation? Where are the men in the renewal of the Mosaic Covenant and Moab? An amazing thing is stated. Now, I believe that biblical theology is very, very good, very important, very essential.

But sometimes I'm I'm bothered by the fact that they seem to separate the Bible into many pieces. It is a unified document. It is 66 books, but it is it's all written by the same author and it all they can laugh at me for my Puritan views of the Song of Solomon.

I don't care. It's all about Christ. And if they tell me no song of Solomon's about marriage, I go marriages about Christ.

It's all about Christ. And when we look at that renewal of the Mosaic Covenant, there's something here that tells me this is pointing to something more. Listen to what it says.

This is how the covenant breaker is warned. He is told how he will be treated. The anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against that man.

And every curse which is written in this book will rest on him and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. And then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel. Listen to that.

The Lord will single him out for adversity, for the purpose of causing him adversity from all the tribes of Israel. According to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law. Oh, the Messiah, the Christ, the only covenant keeper was singled out as the covenant breaker.

He was called from the herd. He was from our herd. He was from Adam's stock.

He was one of us. He was our brother. The whole lot of us, the whole lot of us should have just been poured into hell.

But he called from among us our elder brother, the only one. It was said that David was worth thousands of soldiers to save David. It was worth losing thousands of soldiers, it was said in Israel.

Yet this is the one David calls Lord, the only clean one among us, the only righteous one, the only right one. The rest of us vile and untimely, but he was singled out and the curses fell upon him. I want you to go just for a moment to Numbers chapter six.

Again, I want to look at something that is a theological problem that had to be answered. I believe it's some of the things that Paul was thinking about when he wrote Romans three about God passing over sin and his forbearance. Number six, chapter six.

Verse 23, the priestly blessings speak to Aaron and to his son saying, thus, you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to him, the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance on you and give you peace. This is wrong. Don't you see that? This is not right.

You see, we've got it all backwards in our society today. When someone tells us that God is going to judge, we all get upset about it and we start putting forth all these conferences to answer all the ethical problems with God judging man. In fact, it's just the reverse.

The ethical problems occur when God doesn't judge man. When God blesses man, that's when heaven starts scratching its head and wondering what's going on. How can a righteous God do this? That's when the accusations of Satan begin to rail against God.

Where's your justice? They all should die. How can you bless them? How can this be said of us? Because when Christ was on the cross. He heard the very opposite.

The Lord curse you and give you over to destruction. The Lord take the light of his presence from you and condemn you. The Lord turn his face from you and fill you with misery.

I have heard preachers say that God looked down from heaven at his son and turned away because he couldn't bear to watch him suffer. God turned away from his son because he lacked the moral fortitude to bear with his sufferings. He turned away from his son because his son bore our sin.

All those little tracts of yours that say God is holy on this side and man is unholy. He's a sinner and the two can't be brought together. How can that breach be closed? Someone had to suffer outside of the favorable presence of God.

Now, notice I say favorable presence of God just to throw this in. Because I do not want you to think that hell is hell because God's not there. Hell is hell because God is there.

But his presence is not favorable. It is wrath, but Christ suffered. The wrath of almighty God.

Now, I know we've gone on, but this is important. I make no apologies. Listen, let this cup pass from me, let this cup pass from me, let this cup pass from me.

What was in the cup? I have heard preachers say that it was the Roman with that Christ could look forward in his omniscience and see the cat of nine tails being brought down on his back and the long nails

driven into his hands and his feet. My dear friend, even though the sufferings, physical sufferings of Christ are absolutely essential, that it had to be a bloody death. Do you honestly think that the captain of our salvation was so full of anguish in that garden that he was sweating drops of blood? Let me show you how foolish that is.

After Christ's resurrection and ascension for the next three hundred years, thousands of Christians were crucified. Some of them were crucified upside down. Others were crucified and covered with a crude form of oil or brea and they were set on fire to provide lights for the streets of Rome.

It is recorded in the history of martyrdom that many of them went to those crosses singing hymns full of joy and counting it a privilege to die with their chest out and their shoulders back. Are you going to tell me that the followers of Christ face the Roman cross with such tenacity while Christ weeps in a garden full of such anguish that he sweats drops of blood? What was in the cup? Psalms seventy five for a cup is in the hand of the Lord and the wine foams, it is well mixed and he pours out of this. Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Jeremiah, for thus the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, take this cup of wine of wrath from my hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. They will drink and stagger and go mad. What was in the cup? The wrath of almighty God was in the cup.

His hatred. Of evil. His anger against evil, who's evil, who could have done such things, yours, you.

You and I should be crushed under the wrath of God. Why? Because he's good. You see, and I'm going to discuss a lot of this during the conference this upcoming week.

But you see, it's amazing what we demand for ourselves that we will not allow God to have. You hear a story about a little child that's been kidnapped and tortured for days and finally strangled, killed or kept a prisoner and a slave for years in somebody's basement. You read the newspaper and you burn with righteous indignation at the evil that you see.

If you did not burn, your friends would think you were just as much a monster as the person who committed the crime. If you being evil can burn with such righteous indignation and call it just, then now you understand why the psalmist says that God is angry every day. And the only way for that anger to be appeased is for his justice to be satisfied.

And the only way that can happen is an eternity of hell for you or Christ dying on that tree, having suffered the wrath of almighty God in your place. Now, I want to quote something from my favorite, favorite Puritan writer, John Flavel. If you want to read something, read *The Meditorial Glories of Christ* and John Flavel, first volume.

I've every time I read it, I weep. He says he writes as one who writes only by moonlight, he does not see clearly, yet his moonlight is greater than my midday. Flavel, he said, oh, fair Christ, one of his writings, he says, oh, fair flowers, but fair Christ.

Oh, fair valleys and mountains and hills, but fair Christ, oh, fair sun. And moon, but fair Christ. And then he says, no, no, I wronged him in saying it that way.

Oh, twisted and black flowers, but oh, fair Christ. Oh, darkened moon and sun, but oh, fair Christ. All you need to propel you for an eternity of piety is a glimpse of Christ.

He is so beautiful that if you were to catch one glimpse of his glory, apart from being supernaturally strengthened, his beauty would drive you mad and set you free. Because in this world, it is quite a healthier thing to be a madman than to be called sane by the people who walk this earth. I want you to imagine for a moment a giant dam a thousand miles high and a thousand miles wide.

Your village is like an eighth of a mile at the bottom of it. And all of a sudden you come out of your house and you hear a crack deafening like the world has been blown into and the wall of that dam has been pulled away and all that water is rushing down upon you. It doesn't matter how fleet you are afoot, how strong the swimmer, nothing matters, nothing will avail you.

Not only will you be killed, there will be nothing, not even a memory of you left. And right before the deluge even touches your shoe, the ground opens up and swallows the whole thing down so that you're not splashed by even a drop of the killing flood. That's what Christ did.

He opened himself up and he took the deluge of God's wrath. And by the way, that Christ himself agreed with, he agreed that it was right to kill us all. He was at one with the father.

It is amazing the nature of God's love, that he can be entirely against you and entirely for you and save you from himself. That's worth an eternity of thinking. Here's Flavel.

This is one of this is my my most favorite thing ever written by a man apart from the Bible. I call it the father's bargain. Flavel says this here, you will suppose the father to say when driving his bargain with Christ for you.

The father and Christ talking in eternity. The father says, my son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to my justice. Justice demands satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them.

What shall be done for these souls of preachers? Would only talk this way today, even many people who have who genuinely are converted. Have little sense of what happened on the cross, that justice, God's justice must be satisfied, not like these silly evangelists who say that instead of being just with you, God was loving because if they'd study classical logic, even in the fourth grade, they would have understood then God's love is unjust. God cannot act in love at the expense of his justice, he must satisfy his justice, that he might manifest his love.

And then the son replies, oh, father, such as my love to and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their guarantee. Bring in all by bills that I may see what they owe thee. Now, look at this, I hear so many young men, they're so in love and then they get married and six months later they come back to me and they say, what have I done? If I had known it would have been this difficult, I would have never said I do.

That's not Christ, he went to that tree knowing every bill that had to be paid for his people, he said, bring in all the bills that I may see what they owe thee. And this is my favorite part, and if you if you get this, you'll set you free. Lord, bring them all in that there may be no after reckonings with them.

Do you see that you don't see it because you're not going wild right now, you don't see it. No, after reckoning, Lord, bring in every bill they owe you that they will owe you ever, ever. Oh, you bring them all in.

I'm going to pay for them all and they will never be addressed again. There will never be an after reckoning. No one will ever have to pay for this sin again, this sin will no longer have any effect whatsoever.

Ever. We are so free. We are so free at my hand, shall thou require it? I will rather choose to suffer the wrath they deserve than they should suffer it upon me, my father, upon me be all their debt.

And the father replies, but son. If thou undertakes for them, thou must reckon to pay the last might. Expect no abatements, son.

If you enter into this contract, this bargain with me and you take their place. Do not expect any privilege. Do not expect any lessening of my hand.

Times on Amazon when you've got an open boat, doesn't matter really how big it is. And you see a deluge coming down the river, a storm. And you're trying to make it to the shore and you don't know if you're going to make it and the rain is filling up the boat.

You're praying for an abatement, you're praying that the rain will abate, that somehow it will subside, that it will stop, that it will be less than what you think. He says, son, don't expect that from me. And then here's the most chilling thing ever written by the hand of a man.

Says this, thou must reckon to pay the last might, expect no abatements, son. If I spare them. I will not spare you.

Behold, what manner of love is this? You see, folks, it's not so much everybody's gospel hardened is the preachers are gospel ignorant. We're not preaching the gospel. This is not Jesus loves me, this I know.

This is not pray a prayer. And you're in this is explaining, expounding the gospel content, father, the son replies, let it be so. Charge it all upon me.

And this is this statement. He says, I am able to discharge it. Who can say that? That's why I say he's a deep chested Christ.

Can you just see him charge it on me? I am able. To discharge no angel, not all angels, not seraphim, not not anything. Only God could discharge this.

Don't I mean, don't you like to see him and think that he's just utterly amazing? He's just beyond. I remember one time I was out in a field and I said, God, I hate to preach. It's such a pitiful enterprise.

You you fail every time. Lord, grant me that when I step over into glory, let me stand in a glorified body one last time and finally preach him as he ought to be preached and immediately no voice, nothing. But I knew, son, even then you will not preach him as he ought to be preached.

You will fail. But I love what a burden. The gospel preacher carries to explain something that cannot be explained.

This magnificent Christ, I am able to discharge it, and though it prove a kind of undoing to me. If that is not the understatement of the universe, you see, love is like that. You know, all this talk about the glory of God, it's true.

And I think God has used Dr. Piper and that message more than any person on the planet. I mean, it's just amazing. It's such a gift.

But in all our talk about God did send his son for his own glory and the son died for God and all these things, it's all true. It all underlines the gospel, the foundation of it. The gospel would have never occurred if God did it for any had tried to do it for some other reason.

But never forget, Christ died because he loved you. He really did love you. Yes, I know it was for his glory and I know it was because of him and not because of you and all that stuff.

But don't let that dampen the fact that when he went to that tree, his heart was blazing with love for the sinner. For his bride, he loves you, he loves you. You know, the most difficult task you will ever have as a Christian, the most difficult, insurmountable, the Everest of the Christian life, the most difficult thing you are ever going to have to do as a Christian is to believe that God loves you as much as he says he does.

That's a wonderful problem to have. We'll finish. I want to finish just with a narrative.

God comes to Abraham. And he says, now tell me that Christ is not in this passage. He says, now take your son, your only son whom you love.

Tell me he's not looking forward to something else, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there is a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you. And the old man, his head bowed. He's sad, but believing that God can even resurrect the dead.

He ties up his son. We see no mention of struggle, which again points me to Christ. Doing his father's will.

And the old man pulls back that knife. To slaughter his son, his only son, the son whom he loves. And at the moment when his will gives into God's, God stops him.

He says, Abraham, Abraham, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him. For now, I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me. Abraham turns around and there's a ram in the thicket caught by his horns.

God has provided a ram and we all breathe a sigh of relief. Wow, what a beautiful ending to that story. But here's the problem, it's not the ending, it's the intermission.

Generations and generations and generations pass and the curtains open up again. And there hanging in the darkness is God's son. His only son, whom he loves and is all of creation looks on astounded.

God takes the knife out of Abraham's hand and slaughters his only begotten son. It's like we can say, God, my God, I know you love me since you have not withheld your son, your only son, whom you love from me. It just makes you want to just do something, doesn't it? Just you don't know what to do.

You don't know whether to cry or to laugh, to dance or to fall on your face. All hail the power of Jesus name. Let angels prostrate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem, crown him Lord of all, crown him with many crowns. Well, to go home now would be OK. What does anything on this earth matter anymore? The things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

You just feel like it's just almost ready to pull you apart. This love of God, the beauty as a Christian, what must you do? Go to Christ. Seek him as a lost man.

What must you do? Go to Christ. Seek him. So I want to be saved.

You want to be saved. You truly want to be saved. You can be saved.

Anyone who wants to be saved, whosoever will, whosoever will may come. Come, come all, come everybody, come the whole world. God never told me he couldn't save the whole world at one time.

Come, everybody. Come, every soul from sin oppressed. Well, what must I do? Repent of your sins.

What does it mean to repent of my sins? It's very simple. Change your mind. You say, is that it? Yes.

The only problem is we have a superficial definition of mind in America. Change your mind.

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