

(Missions Conference Shoals) - Part 1

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the goodness of God and the supernatural work of God in the new covenant, writing His law on the hearts of believers.

Duration: 1:05:07

Scripture: Exodus 20:1

Topics: "New Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a personal story about a baptism in Evansville, Indiana. He is amazed by the testimonies of the new believers, who express a deep understanding of theology and the transformative power of God. The preacher then challenges the audience to examine their own knowledge and experience of God, and their desire to share and learn more about Him. He warns the young people about the fleeting nature of physical beauty and the inevitability of aging, urging them to focus on the eternal love of Christ instead. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having God's law imprinted upon our hearts and rejoicing in the truth of His word.

Transcript

I greatly appreciate the music and the worship and I greatly appreciate that song. I, I think I marvel most at how little I understand the things that I sing. I don't take that as something that condemns me.

The Lord knows my heart. He knows I'll be I'll never be anything other than a child who plays marbles with diamonds. Abraham Kuyper, the famous Dutch reform theologian, I was reading him, I guess it was last week or the week before that, and he was speaking about how Christ was the only man who truly died destitute and that his kinesis or his self emptying did not simply begin and end with the incarnation, but that as he went through his life, he kept giving away and he kept emptying himself until the final day when all loves abandoned him, when all friendship was gone and finally they took his garment and he was left to die naked on a tree, abandoned of men and forsaken of God.

And it is so amazing to me, the goodness of God, and it is that goodness that leads me to repentance. It is that goodness that humbles me and makes me want to be a better man before God, a better friend of God, a better brother to Christ and to his people. Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Jeremiah and we're going to talk about the new birth as seen in the Old Testament.

The new covenant promises of the Old Testament are absolutely fabulous. If I were to point to one thing that in the last years has given me the greatest encouragement, it is looking through the Old Testament prophets and seeing what God promised to his new covenant people. And we are that new covenant people.

And this will be for many people tonight. This will be for many needs. If you believe yourself to be a believer and you are not, it may expose you in love.

If you are a believer, truly so, it will encourage you. At least I hope it will, as these verses have encouraged me in Jeremiah chapter 31. Jeremiah 31, verse 31, chapter 31, verse 31, behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant, which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord.

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, declares the Lord, I will put my law within them and on their heart. I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

They will not teach again each man, his neighbor and each man, his brother saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin. I will remember no more. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Lord, such wonderful things you have spoken, such wonderful things you have promised to the most undeserving. Lord, there's a bit of sadness in my heart because I know. As all men know.

That there's no way to preach this as it ought to be preached. That human tongue, that tongues of angels are not enough to even begin to describe the wonder of our salvation. But Lord, I pray that by your good spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, that you would open up our eyes and our ears and our hearts and our minds.

To realize, Lord, that we are that new covenant people and unto us the end of the ages has come. Oh, Lord, help us to be otherworldly. Help us to be heavenly minded.

Help us to be filled with the joy of the Lord and that it would be our strength. Help us to rejoice in the goodness of our God. And Lord, for those who may be here that do not know you.

Oh, Lord, can these bones live? Can the dead rise again? Can the blind see? Can the deaf hear? You know, Lord. By your power, you know. Oh, Lord, we entrust every one of our hopes for this evening in you.

And oh, Lord, as Lord, for my own sake, I want to say before you, you know, Lord, what I am. My going in and my coming out, my lying down and my rising up. You know, Lord, that I am but dust and you know that apart from your grace, I'll be nothing more than a seething demonstration of flesh.

So, oh, God, help us, help us in Jesus name. Amen. In verse 31, Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

My covenant, which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. Much of what is being preached about the church today is. Well, it's wrong.

Let me give you an example, I have heard scholars. I have heard apologists, those who work in apologetics, I have heard preachers crying with great sorrow from the pulpit, saying that there is just as much fornication in the church as out of the church, just as much sin in the church as out of the church, just as much adultery and abortion and so on and so forth in the church as outside of the church. That shows that these men have an Old Testament understanding of the people of God and not a New Testament understanding of the people of God.

I want you to know something, the church of Jesus Christ has always been beautiful. The church of Jesus Christ has always been glorious. The church of Jesus Christ has always been broken and contrite.

The church of Jesus Christ has always followed its master. And when the church of Jesus Christ has stumbled, it is quickly rebuked and quickly brought back in love. You say, Brother Paul, how can you say these things in light of church history? Be very careful what you call church history.

I was flying somewhere and someone wanted to debate me a bit on the airplane and they said, well, what about the Inquisition? I said, what about it? They said, look what the church did. I said, no, look what an apostate religious group did. Not the church of Jesus Christ.

Or someone will say to me, well, there's just as much this in the churches out of it. No, my friend, your problem is your bad understanding of what the church is. The church is not a membership role.

The church is not a denomination. The church of Jesus Christ, everyone in that church is converted, regenerated by the power of God and walking with God and under God's jealous and zealous care. In the Old Testament, he talks about here in verses 31 through 32.

He said he's going to do something different under the new covenant that he did not do under the old covenant. Under the old covenant, he pulled the people out of Egypt and he gave them laws written on tablets of stone. Laws that they broke so many times that we cannot even count the extent of their disobedience.

But look what he says in verse 33. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my law within them.

I will put my law within them and on their heart, I will write it. One of the greatest demonstrations of true Christianity, of true conversion, is that there is a supernatural work regarding the knowledge of God in that person's life. And a supernatural work regarding the law of God written on their heart.

As I said this morning, that when a person is truly born again, they become a new creature. But not simply that. God takes that new creature.

He was a creature who hated God. Now he loves God. He was a creature who loved iniquity and hated righteousness.

But now he loves righteousness and hates iniquity. But not only that, God does a supernatural work. And with his finger, he writes his law.

Not on a tablet of stone. Not even on a book of parchment. But he writes his law on the very heart of the genuine believer.

It is a true work of God. Something more supernatural than just simply scripture memorization. It is a new heart given by God and on that heart, he writes the laws.

The people of Israel were always told to build a monument, cover it with plaster, write the laws upon it. They were told in Deuteronomy that the law should be written on doorposts. And when you come in the house and out of the house and all such sorts of things, you should see the law of God.

But God says, I'll make a new covenant in which all these things will be written supernaturally with the finger of God on the very heart of the true believer. Now, let me ask you a question. Is this a reality in your life? Do you have a real sense that the laws of God have been written on your heart? And those laws are your constant companion.

And they are like a light shining through your heart and lighting your path. They are laws that are inescapable. That if you do, for some reason, choose to rebel, those laws stand up in front of you and tell you no.

And then when you are looking for direction, those laws speak to you. Is there a reality in your life that the law of God has been written on your heart? That God's will is there. And not only His will is there, but the desire to fulfill that will.

Am I describing you? Am I describing you? You see, prior to conversion and here with the nation of Israel in the old covenant, these people, their hearts were not changed. And they looked at this law that God set upon them. And the closer the law came to them, the more they kicked against it.

The more they tried to ignore it. We see even with the pagans in Romans chapter 1, verse 18, that the truth of God, they suppress it. Are you like that? I know people, church members, who will come to church, but as soon as someone starts preaching biblically, now not fluff, not stories, not pulpiterring, but as soon as someone gets serious about the Word of God, you see a mass exodus from the church.

Why is that? I always find it funny that when I preach and people say, I'm never coming back, I always ask them, what did I say that was not according to the Word of God? And they'll say, well, that's not the point. I said, that's exactly the point. I had a young man come up to me a few weeks ago at a university and he said, I do not like your delivery.

And who do you think you are that you can speak that way? And I said, well, that's not the point. I said, if my attitude is wrong, if I'm proud, if I'm bold to the point of being rude, then I will receive the judgment for that. But young man, the point is this, what I said, is it true? Is it true? Because being against my personality will not defend you on the day of judgment.

The Word of God, was it true? What I said, did it conform to the Word of God? And if it did, why do you run so from it? You see, the genuine Christian, when the Word of God is preached, it will connect with them. It will be something of joy. It will be like a spark, a well springing up in their heart.

They will be drawn to it, attracted to it. Like attracts like. They love to hear the Word preached.

And why do they love to hear the Word preached? Because that very Word is written with the finger of God on their heart. And he goes on, he says, I will put my law within them. And on their heart, I will write it.

Now, the one thing you need to understand about Jewish literature, Hebrew literature, is that whenever Scripture desires to emphasize something, there's something of a Hebrew parallelism. Now, this is not a perfect example, but it needs to be explained. For example, let me make one up for you.

The wicked shall not live in the land. The wicked shall be destroyed. I've said the same thing twice.

I've changed it just a little in order to add emphasis. That's what he's doing here. He says, I will put my laws within them.

Not something external, but something internal. Something that's the very part of their being. The law of God is not something outside of them, but it has become literally a part of them.

And then he adds emphasis by saying this, on their heart, I will write it. I think it's amazing that when we come to the creation of Adam, the creation of Eve, we see this intimate working of God. Almost, I don't want to use a vulgar expression, but almost a hands-on approach.

An intimate working. I think it's quite amazing that the law of God given to Moses was written by the very finger of God. God touched that stone.

But now, in the new covenant. You know, there are so many phrases that we use so often that they become common, they almost become a cliché, and they lose their meaning. But God literally reached down and touched your heart.

With the very finger that carved ten words in solid rock, He now reaches down, touches your heart, and writes His law. It's imprinted upon you, so that when you hear it, you rejoice. When you hear it, you identify with it as something almost a part of you.

Do you do that, church? Do you do that? When the pastor is teaching exposition, when he's hard into the word, when he's doing everything possible to bring out the meaning of the text, is there something in your heart that says, yes, this is right? When you go to a place and you hear a man get up and he just tells stories and fluff and everything else, do you sit there and go, what am I doing here? I have nothing to do with this. If that's true, that's a sign of conversion and you ought to be encouraged. Now, he goes on and he says this, and I will be their God.

Through regeneration, God becomes your God. Through salvation, if you are truly converted, God becomes your God. This is an amazing thing.

You can't really marvel in this text without understanding the doctrine of radical depravity. That's why that doctrine is so important. We hated God and we hated His Word, but through a supernatural work of God, through the preaching of the Gospel, His laws are written on our hearts, hearts that are new that He has given to us, new hearts that love Him and love His law, and then He writes His law on it, and then this very God that we hated now becomes our God.

There's a young man that went to Peru with me several years ago, and I'm very, very fond of him. His testimony is one of the most spectacular testimonies I have ever heard in my life. He was God-hating openly.

He was angry. He was mean. He was violent.

This fellow actually went to a tool and dye maker and had a stainless steel battle axe made. He would have been voted most likely to become a serial killer in high school. He was angry.

He was violent. He was mad and he hated God. Anyone who came up to him to witness to him, he would literally go wild, turn over desks, anything.

And I asked him, I said, well, how is it that you came about to be converted? And he said, I was driving down a country road one night in my truck, an old beat-up pickup truck. He said, I was driving like this. I'm hanging out the window of the truck in the middle of the night, cursing God, blaspheming his name, using every vulgar word I could possibly use against him and challenging him to come down and fight with me.

And I said, well, then what happened? He said, you will not believe me. He said, but in a millisecond, I went from there. The next thing I knew, my truck was off the road and I was down in the floorboard of the truck, on my knees under the steering wheel, trying to get my hands up in the air, worshiping God with tears of joy and gratitude flowing down my face.

And I said, well, I guess God came down and fought with you and won. He said, that's a radical conversion. No less radical than yours.

If you have been converted. He went from hating God to a man who said, this is my God. This is my God.

Let me give you another example. Many times I'm asked to preach on the attributes of God. And it's a very frightening thing to do in a lot of churches.

Because you will begin to teach on the attributes of God. And when you get to doctrines such as holiness and justice, and sovereignty, you will have people who have been church members all their life, literally grow claws and become fiercely angry and say things like this. That's not my God.

And if I could never love a God like. The greatest hour of idolatry in America is Sunday morning. When people all over this country in fine evangelical churches gather together and worship a God that is a figment of their own imagination.

A projection of self. A God that looks more like Santa Claus than he does Yahweh of the scriptures. But when someone truly is converted and they hear a biblical message about the attributes of God, immediately in their heart they say, that's my God.

That's my God. Now another thing about this great work of salvation is this, and we'll see this later in Ezekiel. We are by nature born idolaters.

We are able to take absolutely anything and turn it into an idol. Anything. But I want you to know something.

When someone is genuinely converted, God comes in as their God. For so many years, our evangelism has been influenced by this thing of Christ in your life. Okay, Christ is in your life.

But is he on the throne of your life? My friend, if he's not on the throne of your life, he's not in your life. He doesn't sit anywhere else. He comes in as Lord.

Or he doesn't come in. And so he will be our God. But in a relationship, not of coercion, not simply in a relationship of a fiery Mount Sinai, but it is a pleasant thing.

I can think of nothing more pleasant than the fact that the God of the Bible is my God. And not only my God, but he is my Father. And oh, what love, what mercy, what compassion rolling down in endless waves.

My God, my God, who, because he forsook his only begotten Son, will not forsake me. Now he goes on and he says, and they shall be my people. What title do you desire? Let me ask you that.

What title do you desire? Do you want worldly titles? Do you want worldly esteem? Do you want worldly reputation? Do you want to be known among men as something among men? Do you know the one title that I desire? This one was born in Zion. This one is of my people. To be the people of God.

When we were estranged, when we were God hating and hating one another, when we were opposed to the will of God, he made us his people. Not dragging us, not coercing us, not manipulating us, but he made us his people. And we desire to be his people.

And not only do we desire to be his people, we desire to be with his people. And according to 1 John, that's one of the greatest evidences of having been born again. You desire to be with the people of God.

And he goes on and he says, and they will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them. and each man his brother saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them saying, many, many scholars, many, many theologians, many, many pastors are constantly railing and constantly lamenting over the ignorance of God in the church. And I have to remind them, according to the promises of the new covenant, it is the ignorance of God among church members.

If someone has been truly born again, their hearts and minds are open to the knowledge of God. They recognize the knowledge when they hear it and they rejoice in it and they desire more of it. Rampant ignorance.

In the church today in America is nothing more than a demonstration of many people in the church being unregenerate and not knowing God. I marvel, I literally marvel on the mission field at men who can't even write their name, barely can read a text from Scripture, and yet, and yet possess such genuine, real, childlike knowledge of who God is and God's working, that it's amazing. And yet sit with scholars.

I was on a panel last week discussing open theism, just over and over, all these theologians and their ideas of God not being omnipotent and God not being all-knowing. And I leaned over and David Miller was sitting beside me and he leaned over to me in a way that only he can and he said, Brother Paul, what do you think about all this? And I said, Brother Miller, I think there's a lot of people here who need to get saved. He said, My sentiments exactly, young man, my sentiments exactly.

I find it so amazing to talk. I was in Evansville, Indiana a few weeks ago and I was there during a baptism and during the baptism everyone has to give a statement or testimony and to hear these babes in Christ saying, God took out my heart of stone and gave me a heart that now loves Him. They were saying more theology than I learned in seminary.

Let me ask you a question. Do you have enough knowledge and experience of God and God's working to sit down and talk with someone? Do you have the knowledge of God in you? Do you desire to speak about that knowledge and to hear that knowledge being spoken? Do you desire to learn more about God, to know Him in greater ways and experience Him in greater measure? Is that you? Or are you sitting there

right now saying, I haven't a clue what that man's talking about. Fanaticism, just all fanaticism.

No, my dear friend, it's not fanaticism. It's Scripture. It's Scripture that the least of the brethren, the most simple-minded of the sons and daughters of Zion will have a genuine knowledge of God.

I'll never forget several, several years ago when I was about 23 years old, I was speaking in a large First Baptist church to the youth group. And I found out that after the meeting, some of the youth leaders were very, very angry with what I said and they went to the head pastor and they went and spoke with him. Charges of heresy was brought against me.

I was called into the office and I thought, what have I done? I kept going back in my mind thinking, what on earth did I tell these people that made everyone so mad? And the pastor sitting there and looked at the leadership and said, well now, you know, you've said things about Brother Paul and we need to get this out in the open. Just what was it that Brother Paul said that made you so angry? And the young student leader leaned over to the pastor with almost a shock on his face and said, Pastor, when Brother Paul was preaching, he said that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. And the pastor said, what? Yes, that's right.

Can you believe it? Brother Paul actually said, it's blasphemous. He said Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. And I saw that pastor, he just put his head down on the table and then looked up again and said, young man, Jesus Christ is God.

I heard an apologist a few months ago saying on the radio, we've got to do something about the young Christians. We've got to strengthen them in discipleship because 75% of the young Christians in America do not believe that it is important that Jesus resurrected from the dead. I wasn't astounded about his statistics.

I was astounded about his bad theology that he couldn't understand that whoever he's talking about are not Christians. Another thing that we need to understand, in the last 20 years, there has been a resurgence of discipleship, discipleship. Everybody needs to do discipleship.

And why is that? Because they've said that just as many people are coming in the front, going out the back doors of the church as coming in the front doors. Therefore, we need to do discipleship. My friend, discipleship will not take the place of a bad gospel.

You can disciple people all day long, but if they're not saved, they're not going to stay. They're going to go out from us because they never were a part of us. Now, should we do discipleship? Of course.

But first of all, they must be born again. They must be born again. Jesus said that His sheep, they'd hear His voice and they'd follow Him.

They'd obey Him. They'd follow Him. They'd hear Him.

I can remember so many times in Peru as a young missionary with very, very bad theology. You know, I would spot a family that I thought, man, this would be a family that could be used of the Lord. And I would go after them hard and heavy.

I'd witness to them. I'd visit them. Get them to make a profession of faith.

Get them to the church. Get them baptized. And then I'd have to go get them every Sunday or they wouldn't show up.

And then some stinky old guy from nowhere who I didn't even really want in the church would walk in one day, totally uninvited and get saved. And you couldn't kick him out. You could offend him.

You could not shake his hand. You could do everything. But he'd just be standing there looking at you saying, praise the Lord.

Why is it? He really got saved. Have you really gotten saved? He says, from the least of them to the greatest of them. And then he declares, for I will forgive their iniquities and their sin.

I will remember no more. Now, when I talk about having this knowledge of God, don't be sitting there right now thinking, well, I'm not this great theologian. There are many things I don't understand.

It's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a real, albeit childlike, knowledge of who God is and what He has done for you, particularly with regard to forgiveness. That the one knowledge that you hold most dear is that He has, as that beautiful hymn says, He has shed His own blood for my soul.

I believe that this idea of forgiving iniquity and remembering sins no more is directly linked up with this knowledge that He speaks about. It is a knowledge of forgiveness. Now, here is a key, I believe, to loving God.

Do you remember that woman who came to Christ? She caused such a scandal. And he said, she loves much. She loves me much because she's been forgiven much.

Now, look at this text in light of that. They have a knowledge of how much they have been forgiven. And so they love Him much.

I had a young man come to me one time and he said, why a little, I'll never forget it, a reporter. And he was, oh, that guy was mad. He said, why are you always preaching on sin? Why are you always preaching on sin? And I said, young man, it's because I want you to love God.

He said, what do you mean? I said, have you not read? She loved much because she's been forgiven much. Young man, you do not love Christ very much because you do not realize how much you have been forgiven. And you do not realize how much you have been forgiven because you've been raised on preaching that doesn't talk enough about sin.

It is only in the context of our radical depravity and the knowledge of it that we can truly fall down and worship God and love Him as He ought to be loved. And that is the knowledge here. It is a knowledge of forgiveness.

I have been forgiven and that is enough. I will never have the preaching ability of a Charles Spurgeon. I'll never have the mind of a Jonathan Edwards.

I'll never rise and fly with the great scholars and theologians of my day or days past. And I really don't care. There is one truth that holds my attention, that mesmerizes me, that is my magnificent obsession.

I am forgiven. And that is a rebuke to many churches today. Why? When did it happen that forgiveness was no longer enough to draw people? We have to turn our churches into six flags over Jesus with every kind of activity, every kind of thing in the world.

Why? They are not there for the right reason to start off with and so we've got to do all the wrong things to keep them there. But when you are here, sitting and standing in this pulpit and crying out, forgiven, all your sins can be forgiven, that will draw men who will be drawn and whom God is working. So, such preciousness.

I have walked with some of the dearest. I have known some of, I believe, the most special of the older elder saints of God, the old preachers, the old line. And to see all of them at the end of their days mesmerized by one great knowledge, Jesus Christ has shed His own blood for my soul.

And that is the thing that promotes godliness in the life of a human being. It is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. Every good and perfect gift comes from this Father of ours.

Therefore, I want to be holy. I want to pursue sanctification. I want to be obedient.

I want to be pleasing. Why? These overwhelming demonstrations of love in Christ on my behalf. We are literally, there's a kind of southern gospel sort of song.

And it says, I'll never get over the hill. Now, it's quaint and maybe a little cliché, but it's true. The true saint of God will be driven to respond because they are drawn, they are motivated, they are impelled by the cross of Christ.

I know a young man right now from Alabama. Good looking fella, about 23 years old. Graduated from the school he ought to graduate from.

Getting ready to go to the seminary he ought to go to. Dating the girl he ought to date who's going to become a great contemporary Christian singer. And one day with tears in his eyes, he said, I must go, I must go, I must go.

Sells everything he has and goes into a foreign land and lives in a tiny apartment with another Romanian and preaches the gospel every day. He said, oh, the love of Christ. Brother Paul, I've been forgiven, I've been forgiven.

Do you know what I feel, Brother Paul? I said, yes, young man. I stood in your shoes several years ago and walked into a jungle with a backpack on. For the same reason.

Forsaking all, everything. Oh, young Christians, young people, look at me. You young men are very, very strong.

One day someone will have to help you go to the bathroom. Your body will no longer be your friend. And you girls, some of you are so beautiful.

One day you will be terribly, terribly ugly. Did you know that? Hair growing out of every part you do not want it growing. Your breath will smell.

It will be horrible the life that awaits you on down the road. So why give yourself to these things? Why not be thrown upon this love? Why not be captivated by this love? A love so severe and so wonderful that many people have gone to the stake. And their body has been consumed by flames.

And the last thing heard coming from their mouth was this. Joyfully, he shed his own blood for my soul. Now we go on.

I want us to go quickly to Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 32, verse 38. They shall be my people and I will be their God.

Their hate goes back again. What is the worth of this thing? What is Christianity all about? I know this sounds like a cliché, but what it is all about is an intimate relationship with God. And I hate a Christendom, a churchianity, where God is not big enough or glorious enough to draw people.

And so we have to give them other things. Because the one thing God says, the one thing to promote holiness in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 is, they shall be my people and I will be their God. I promise to be your father.

Now separate from these things that do not help you. Separate yourself from the things of the world and follow me. Well, why should I, Lord? Because I will be your God.

I think most church members would respond, okay, but what else? What an offense. What an offense. One of the things that most drew me to my wife, the girl that I married, was she met me and we knew each other in Peru.

When I had nothing. I had nothing. And I remember going to her and saying, I have nothing.

I can't buy you an engagement ring. I can't, I don't even know where we'll live. I've got two pairs of pants.

I cannot give you anything. But I will give you me. And I remember her saying, tis enough, tis enough.

Oh, if God were to take this man that you're looking at right now and take my family away from me and dash my body against the rocks and have my tongue removed and my bones racked with pain to the point where I rotted into the dust, he would still be worthy of my last words being glory, glory, glory to his name. Because he has been my God and he has made me his people. Now look at this 39.

I will give them one heart and one way. God is so amazing. You know, this crosses denominational lines.

This crosses so many things. It crosses an institutionalized Christianity. I know that I can go to Africa tomorrow.

I can get on a plane. I can fly there. I can land.

I can meet with a group of brothers I've never seen before. And yet we have one heart and one way. Sometimes I can go across denominational lines, be talking to a Mennonite or assemblies of God.

And just like Baptists, many of them are lost. But I'll come across some of them. And immediately we are of one heart.

We are of one heart. I find myself at times drawn. I wanted to walk out here rather than be in the office this evening.

I walked out and I just wanted to talk to people. I wanted to fellowship with people. I got to meet with a few people.

Why? One heart. Drawn to one heart. Wanting to be with them.

My dear friend, do you have one heart? Do you desire, do you seek out Christian companionship and fellowship? And what I mean is fellowship centered around Christ, talking about your God, talking about being His people. I'm not talking about rules. You can dot every I, cross every T and not be a spiritual person.

I'm talking about do you desire to be with other believers in order to talk about Christ? He says, I will give them one heart and one way. One way. I have known people, Calvinists, Arminian.

I have found great brothers in Christ on both sides of those lines. The Reformed Baptists, the Presbyterian, the Holiness, the Wesleyan. And it's amazing how we might differ in certain things, but when you begin to talk with them, you begin to see that they are walking in the very same way.

A real law has been written on their heart. They're walking in the same path and they desire the same things. And you can sit down and talk about holiness and sanctification.

You can talk about your failures and need for forgiveness. And there's nothing that they don't say that you don't understand. There's nothing that they say that you don't understand.

And there's nothing you can say that they would balk at. You've walked in the same way. You've had many of the similar experiences, although to degrees.

Is that you? Are you, let me put it this way, are you that strange bird? Are you that one called out by God in such a fashion that it has changed your heart and your speech and your passions and your desires and your innermost being? And is God and His law pleasant to you? And he goes on and he says, and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me always. One of the greatest proofs of genuine conversion of all things divine is fear. The beginning of all wisdom and knowledge is the fear of the Lord.

The mark of true discipleship and true Christianity is fear. A mighty, strong reverence of the Lord. Being awestruck by the person and the work of God.

I fear Him. And when I pray to Him, I am not going before some inferior prince. I am going before the Lord of glory.

And the more I know Him, the more even I know His gentleness and His tenderness, His compassion and His undying mercies, the more I fear Him and am struck with awe in His presence. My words are careful now. I don't just go into praying.

I measure them, not as one afraid, not as a child who is afraid of a father who cannot be trusted. No, but as a child who is standing before His Abba Father. But His Abba Father is the God of glory.

Do you have a sense of the reverence of God? Do you have a sense of the fear of the Lord? Because that will be evidence that He has truly given you a heart. Now, this is a great passage here for parents, for godly parents. That they may fear me for their own good and for the good of their children after them.

This is an amazing passage, one of those rare jewels, one of those great comforts. He gives us a fear. He puts a fear in our heart for our own God.

Last year, my little boy, we were outside and we were walking around and there was a great big chicken snake. Out back behind the house. And so I thought, well, this will be a good lesson.

Chicken snakes, they can bite you, it can hurt, but they rarely do and they're not poisonous. I thought this would be a good lesson for my boy. I got him around to the business end of that snake and was showing him, son, there are some things you should fear.

Get close enough to see him just strike a bit, pull back. You see, son, see what daddy's doing? There are some things to fear. I take him down to the backwater where we hunt and do a lot of things down there.

Those of us river rats who live on the bayou, so to speak. I take him down, I put him out in the water a little bit, draw him back. I let him go a little step too far and he goes down and I grab him and I pull him out.

I say, see, son, there are things to fear. Why do I do that? For his own good. It is the fear of the Lord that has kept me from so many dangers and so many perils and so many pitfalls.

The fear of the Lord. Everything God does toward you, his people, is for your good. It is for your good.

When he gives you warnings, when he gives you commands, when he gives you precepts and he gives you wisdom, it is for your good. When he tells you, don't look at that, my children, it is for your own good. When he tells you, do not listen to that, my children, it is for your own good.

When he says, don't speak that way, don't walk that way, don't wear that thing. It is for your own good and for the good of your children. The greatest damage you can do your children, sir, is take the things of God lightly and not fear him, not fear him.

There is a promise that God has made to New Covenant people that gives me great encouragement. I do not know what will be the end of my two boys that I dearly love. I do not know what will be their end, but I do have this promise that God has taught me to fear him, not only for my own good, but for the good of my children.

And that brings me great comfort. Now, let's go on to the last part. This is my favorite part.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good. Now, one of the worst things you can do in theology is teach a half-truth. We as Southern Baptists have taught this Scripture and stood alone on this Scripture.

We will call it the security of the believer. Some would more correctly, I believe, call it the perseverance of the saints. And it says here, I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good.

That is true, but we have taken that and turned it into once saved, always saved, which basically means pray a little prayer, walk down an aisle, live like hell and you're okay. But let's look at the entire truth. He says, I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good and I will put the fear of me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from me.

It is true that once a person has truly been born again, they are kept by the power of God and by His power, they will stand before Him joyfully on that great day. But never forget this, it is a supernatural work of God within this promise. He promises not to turn away from you to do you good, but He also promises that He will put His fear in you so that you will not turn away from Him.

And if you can turn away from Him, it's because you never have turned to Him to start off with. And I love this passage, He says again, He repeats Himself from 39 to 40, He says, I will not turn away from them to

do them good. And how can we best define that? In closing, look in 41.

I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all my heart and with all my soul. He says, I will rejoice over them to do them good. Can you just take this picture for a moment, Saint? Take this picture, grasp it, pray about it tonight.

Don't allow Satan to steal this out of your heart. This is good stuff. Memorize this verse.

Paint it on your walls. He says, I will rejoice over you. If you are a genuine believer, it's just like my little boys.

I have one that's two and a half, one that's five months. Sometimes I'll get up in the middle of the night and I'll just go to their bed and I rejoice over them. I look at them.

I'm so excited to see them. I pray about them. I'm just like a mother hen in a sense.

I'm just so excited about those boys. And if I, being evil, can do such things for my children, how much more? Do you have a sense of awareness? Now Saint, if you don't, I don't know if I should tell you to repent or what I should tell you on this. But I can tell you this, you're missing out.

Do you have a real awareness that God is rejoicing over you? And rejoicing over you to do you good. That is one of the most exciting things in my life. That God is rejoicing over me.

Dear Christian, if you are truly Christian, this is not some pale salvation. This is not just get your ticket to heaven and go in. This is not just count by numbers.

This is not take a tag and wait in line. This is not the big guys get closest to God. Every one of his children, when you're sleeping tonight, Saint, he is standing over you rejoicing.

Don't you want to follow a God like that? Don't you want to be holy when you hear these things? Don't you want to separate yourself from the world and from all that defiles? When you hear about a God who rejoices over you and not only rejoices over you, but rejoices over you to do you good. The other day I bought my son Ian a Snoopy fishing pole. Went to Walmart.

I bought him a Snoopy fishing pole. I'd been preaching. I was coming home.

I wanted to get him a Snoopy fishing pole because he likes Snoopy. And I couldn't wait in that car. I just couldn't wait to get home.

And I couldn't wait to go. I got you surprised because that's the one where he knows what that means. And he will get, what did you get me? What, what, what? What is it? And he just jumps around and I can't wait to open up that thing and just give it to him.

And if I, being evil, can feel these things, then how much does your Father? You know, talk to the charismatics and forgive me for going a little long. Charismatics, I have a lot of dear friends that are charismatic. For a charismatic, the biggest thing in the world is to raise the dead.

You raise the dead, that shows you've really got faith. They were talking one day and I said, Raising the dead, that's nothing for a Southern Baptist. I mean, you can't even join one of our churches unless you do that.

I said, do you want to know what really requires the greatest of faith, the greatest act of faith? And they said, well, yes, what is it? For me to look in the mirror of God's Word, see all my failure, all my flaws, the lack of passion, the ingratitude and everything else, and realize that God stands there at that very moment rejoicing over me to do me good. That requires faith. And why does it require faith? Because we've never seen anything like this before.

Do you realize that? We've not seen this in men. We've not seen this in history. We don't know about this.

No one can paint this picture for us. We live in a world of condition, condition, condition, condition. But if you're a saint of God, you finally have come to a place where the question of whether or not you deserve something has been thrown out the door.

That it is all based upon the merit and the worth of Jesus Christ. And because of Him, God looks at you, dear saint. He looks at you and He rejoices over you to do you good.

And even when you're in the pit of despair, He stands there rejoicing over you to do you good. And then it says, I will faithfully plant them in this land. Dear saint, let me tell you something.

He will faithfully bring you home. He who began a good work in you, if He has, will bring you into the land. He will do it.

And look at this last part. This is a very unusual statement. Extremely, you have to search far and wide to find this anyplace else.

When I read this every time, I am amazed. When you study theology as long as I have, sometimes you lose some amazement. But this passage is one of those that's just shocking.

He says, I will faithfully plant them in this land. I will faithfully bring them home. I will faithfully do them good.

And I will do it, now this is God speaking, with all my heart and with all my soul. Now listen to me. This sermon did not at all go in the direction that I had planned.

But I have to sense that God has really done something tonight. It's not so much evangelistic, even though maybe God has convicted you of your sins and you know you need Christ and you need to come tonight. But this has turned out to be a comfort for God's people.

For people to realize that God is rejoicing over you. You know you have never done anything with all your heart and all your soul. That's one of the greatest sins, is that we just do not have passion.

We're like empty husks sometimes. We're like shells that feel nothing. God is saying, with the very, the full depth of all that is God, with the full measure of all that I am, with the full measure of deity, infinite Godness, I rejoice over you to do you good.

And a lost man who's carnal will take that and say, well then, let us sin that grace may abound. But a genuine child of God will hear that and say, oh how I want to please Him. Oh how I want to serve Him.

Oh how I want to bless Him. Oh, listen to me, oh how I want to turn away from all those little foxes that are destroying the vineyard. Oh how I want to turn away from all those other little trinkets that have caught my eye.

I want to throw them in the dirt. I want to step on them and squash them. I want them away from my eyes.

Oh, a love like this that God has moved with such love to bring such of a salvation to me. Oh how it motivates me. Oh how I want to be a better husband.

I want to be a better wife. I want to be a better son, a better daughter, a better father, a better brother, a better sister, a better mother. I want to be a better servant of God in the local church with the community of God's people.

I want to turn away from all that is wicked and I want to turn to all that God has. And above all things, I want His face. I'm very consistent, I guess you could say, in disciplining my son.

But I was speaking with a rather important man a few months ago. And I had my little boy here in my arms. And he hadn't seen me in a while.

And I was talking to him as we walked in the building. When this man came towards me, I began talking to him. And my little boy kept reaching up, grabbing my face and turning my face toward his.

Daddy? Daddy? Look at me, Daddy. Daddy? I just couldn't tell him no. That's the way I want to be with God.

Dad? Daddy? Father? Father, I appreciate your gifts. I appreciate the land in which you're going to bring me. But Father, it is enough.

Let me see your face. Let me see your face. Pastor?

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