

# (Missions Conference Shoals) - Part 3

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the necessity of genuine conversion and God's sovereign work in salvation for His own glory.*

**Duration:** 1:06:12

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 2:19, Ezekiel 36:23, Ezekiel 36:27, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Genuine Conversion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of preaching the word of God in a way that truly reflects the power and glory of Yahweh. He criticizes the current state of preaching, which often reduces the gospel to a simple formula and fails to address the sinfulness of man and the holiness of God. As a result, many converts are not truly transformed and the world does not see the power of God in their lives. The preacher emphasizes the need for a genuine encounter with God, where he cleanses and transforms believers, giving them a new heart and spirit, and empowering them to live a godly and fruitful life. The sermon references Jeremiah chapter 2, highlighting the emptiness and lack of true transformation in the professing church.

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## Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to Ezekiel, chapter 36, Ezekiel, chapter 36. I'm going to try to cover many different aspects of salvation and the working of God tonight and genuine conversion. We're going to begin here.

Ezekiel 36, verse 23. But before we read God's word, let's pray. Father, I come before you in the name of your son.

And I know, Lord, that apart from him, I would have no part with you. It is upon his merit and his virtue that I stand. And Lord, I boldly come into your throne, grace your throne room.

And I ask, Lord, for these bones that they might live. Lord, would you please grant my request for the sake of your own glory? To vindicate your own name, take out these hearts of stone and replace them with hearts of flesh. In Jesus name, amen.

We'll begin in verse 22 of chapter 36. He says, Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God. It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you

have profaned among the nations where you went.

I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when I prove myself holy among you in their sight. There are several things that can be said about this passage, but we don't have time to stay here and dwell on a passage that's worth weeks of preaching.

But I will say a few things about this that are extremely important. First of all, everything that God does, he does for the sake of his own name. Everything that God does, he does for his own glory.

And you say, well, I don't like that. Men don't like that. Men will stand up and say, well, I want God to do something for me.

I want God to do something because of me. And that is your greatest error. The one thing that we must understand that I have been hammering out this week and that your pastor has spoken about much is this.

The only thing that your character, your nature, your deeds could ever motivate a holy God to do would be to come with judgment and wrath. If God were to take a lantern and to search the world through every heart, every soul, every mind, he would not find one man among us worthy of saving. And that is why we rejoice when we truly understand the sinfulness of man.

We rejoice in the fact that God does what he does for his own glory and for his own namesake to go out there and get a name for himself among the nations. He has done this work of salvation. Another thing that you need to understand about God when he is working salvation is what is said here in verse 23.

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord. And God truly saves an individual or a nation. It is a testimony to his power and a testimony to the truth that he is definitely the God of the universe and the God of the nations.

Let's go back to Egypt for a moment. When you look at Egypt over and over, God could have brought the children of Israel out of Egypt with one swift move of his hand. And yet he brings plague after plague and demonstration of his power after demonstration of his power.

Why? So that in the salvation of Israel, the nations would know that Yahweh was the Lord of glory and the King of nations. Now, let's take this for a moment and take it to modern day preaching and apply this to modern day preaching. Because of the way that preachers are preaching today.

Because the gospel has been reduced down to four little laws that do not deal with the important factors of salvation, the sin of man, the holiness of God. And because we introduce people into the kingdom by getting them to repeat a little prayer. And because the great majority of them are never changed.

The world looks at our converts and never does it declare, behold the power of God. But instead we hear what we hear in the book of Romans because of you. The name of God is blasphemed among the nations.

When a church is gathered together as a converted church. When every member in the church can walk up to this platform and give testimony with their life and their word to how God has changed their life. It is in that that we are a demonstration to the world.

Christianity in America today, many churches in America today are nothing more than a six flags over Jesus. A machine that must keep going and going and going. By organization, by management, by activities and by entertainment.

But when God is truly moving among a people, even the scoffers will turn to see the fire that burns. Even scoffers will turn to see the fire that burns. When God moves on behalf of a people, he does it for his own glory.

And when it is truly God, no one can deny that it is the work of God and not the manipulation of men. He goes on and he says in verse 24. And I want to read this and I want to put special emphasis on the personal pronoun I. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.

And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. And you will be careful to observe my ordinances.

Do you see even the smallest measure of doubt in these words? It is very popular today to teach a salvation in which God does all he can. But if you don't cooperate, well, the whole plan of God goes down the tubes. Or God does all he can to get you saved.

And he so much wants you to be holy. He so much wants you to love him. And he so much wants you to turn away from all your idols.

But he can't make you do that. That's what's being taught today, but that is not biblical. Let's look at this text.

He says, I will take you from the nations. He doesn't say, I have a wonderful plan and I hope you will join with me. And he doesn't sit up there on the throne, twisting his hands and weeping, saying, there's so many wonderful things I want to do, but I just can't possibly do them because I can't get anyone to cooperate.

No, God says he stands there at the edge of the universe, at the open door of heaven, and he swears by his own name, lifting up his own right hand, saying, I will do a work of salvation in this world. I will get glory for myself. I will call forth a people and they will come.

He says, for I will take you from the nations. That means that God throughout the world is calling forth a people to give them to his son for the glory and good pleasure of his son. That also means that when God has truly saved an individual, he also has the power to separate them from the world.

This idea of the continuously carnal Christian, that a man can be born again and yet live in carnality for 30 years of his life and then go on into heaven is an absolute abomination theologically. The God who has the power to create the world and the God who has the power to defeat his enemies and to bring about salvation, that same God has the power in conversion to change a man and to make him new and to change the desires of his heart because he has changed his heart. And he brings that man out of the nations.

He calls him out of the world and the man willingly follows. He says, for I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Not only does God have the power to save, not only does God have the power to separate the true believer from the world and bring him out, but God also has the power to introduce that new believer into the promised land, into a life of the Spirit, into the life of bearing fruit, into a life of a godly, godly, happy, joyful, full believer in Christ.

There's a scripture that I've been memorizing for a while. It takes me a long time to memorize scripture. It's in Jeremiah chapter 2. It says, what injustice did your fathers find in me that they went far from me and walked after emptiness and became empty? If I were to describe the professing church, and I'm not saying the converted true church, but those who profess to be part of Christianity in America today, I would say that the great majority of them are empty, and I can prove it by all the books on emptiness in our Christian bookstores.

The great majority of them are empty. And why are they empty? Because they walk after emptiness. And why do they walk after emptiness? Because they have not truly been converted.

Because the God who has the power to put away sin through the death of His Son, and the God who has the power to bring about repentance and faith in their heart, also has the power to remove them from these worldly carnal things and bring them into a land of fruitfulness and blessing and wholeness. Many people don't need counseling. They need conversion.

Many people do not need discipleship. They need salvation. Now we go on in verse 25.

Absolutely phenomenal promise of the new covenant. He says, then I will sprinkle clean water on you. Now look at this.

And you will be clean. He doesn't say, I will convert you and then I hope you cooperate with your sanctification. No, the Bible says, pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

If God is not doing a work of sanctification in your life, it's because you are not born again. If you do not desire holiness, it's because your nature has not been changed. Because he says, then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.

And he is not speaking simply of positional righteousness before God. So many people will say, well, you know, the true Christian positionally is righteous before God because of the blood of Jesus Christ, but in practice, they're not righteous. And that's OK.

That's the doctrine of the carnal Christian. But that's not what God says. Because he goes on to explain what he means by sprinkling and making clean with the next phrase.

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Do you know one of the greatest evidences that you have truly been born again? Now listen to me, young people. Listen to me, old people.

One of the greatest evidences that you are truly born again is that you can see throughout your life, God faithfully working to cleanse you from all your filthiness and to tear all the idols out of your life. I have been preaching now for over 20 years. I have been feebly walking with the Lord for over 21.

If I were to describe my life, it would be a life of discipline, not my own, but God's loving discipline on my behalf, constantly working in the life of Paul Washer to cleanse me from all my filthiness, my carnality, my worldliness, my self-centeredness, and to tear away all the idols in my life so that now I find myself after 20 years, like Jacob coming back into the promised land, limping, that God has wrestled me. Have you ever read, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated? Now that word hated there means hate. If it meant something else, they would have translated something else.

Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated. Now, in what way, I ask myself, in what way did God love Jacob, and in what way did the hatred of God manifest itself towards Esau? Well, if you look at Esau, he was blessed by God, tremendously blessed by God, to such a point that when Jacob came back into the promised land and wanted to give Esau a gift, he needed no gift. God had so prospered Esau that he needed no gift from the one upon whom the promise rested.

So God took care of Esau. God blessed Esau. He protected him.

He fulfilled the promises he made concerning Esau. So how is it that God hated Esau, and yet loved Jacob? They were both blessed. The only difference between the two is this, there is never even a sentence or a word in Scripture that indicates that God ever disciplined Esau.

He cut the rope on Esau and he let him run. He let Esau do whatever his wicked heart desired. God is faithful, though all men be liars.

God fulfilled his promises with the man, but God touched him not. Well, how was the love of God manifested towards Jacob? Every day of Jacob's life, God beat him. Every day of Jacob's life, God disciplined him.

Every left turn Jacob made, God was there bringing discipline. Bringing discipline. Bringing discipline.

To the end that he wrestles with God and God touches his hip and he comes back into the promised land, how limping and broken and contrite, no longer trying to manipulate his own fortune, no longer trying to manipulate God, no longer boasting of great things or trying to steal anything from any man, but just recognizing that God is his God. So many people today profess to know Jesus Christ as Lord and claim the Father of our Lord to be their own, and yet when I look in their life, I see no working of God's discipline. I see not God breaking them.

I see not God molding them. I see not God hemming them in on every side, before and behind, beside, above, below. I see not God.

They run unrestrained. They live in the world and they love it. They do the things of the world and then they practice their religion on certain days and God touches them not.

And yet I see saints of God who for one moment steps off the path of righteousness and God is there to meet them. And to bring them back. The one thing that a true Christian will say about himself is that he will often feel to be a prisoner of love.

A prisoner of the concern of God. A prisoner of the concern of God. Now he says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean.

He promises here in the New Covenant that there will be a work of sanctification and it will be successful. He who began a good work in you will finish it. If there is no finishing to the work that began, no work ever began.

He says in verse 26, Now how will all this happen? What is the basis for all this great work that God will do? It's in verse 26. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Now usually when we hear the word flesh in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, it is referring to carnality of men. But not so here. It's used in a positive manner.

He's drawing a contrast between a heart of stone and a heart of flesh. Now what's the meaning here? Take the strongest man among you here, the tallest, strongest, bravest man. Let's say that we make a statue of him.

Make the statue out of stone and we place the statue right here. Right here, beside me in the pulpit. This magnificent granite carved into the image of this man.

And I reach over and I grab him by the sensitive part under the arm and I twist with all my might. What is that statue of stone going to do? Absolutely nothing. I pull out a sharp blade and I poke him under the arm or I cut him deep.

And what's he going to do? Absolutely nothing. Why? He is stone. He is an inanimate object.

He cannot respond to stimuli. There's the word. He cannot respond to stimuli.

Why? He is inanimate. He is dead. And so no matter what you do, you can prod, cut, insult, no matter what you do to this man, nothing will happen because he's nothing more than a statue of stone, an inanimate object that cannot respond to stimuli.

But if you bring the man himself up here, the man of flesh, no matter how muscular, no matter how strong, no matter how enduring, if I grab him in the sensitive part under his arm and twist and pinch with all my might, you'll hear him scream. Why? He is alive. He can respond to stimuli.

You cut him and he bleeds. You poke him and he screams. There are so many people here today in our country that call themselves Christians, and yet they show no ability whatsoever to respond to divine stimuli.

They can hear a thousand sermons on holiness and yet live in sin as comfortably as a fish lives in water. They can continue attending church Sunday after Sunday. They can say all the right things, but they can go to their home and they can do all sorts and all manners of evil.

They can live with the wicked and enjoy their company more than the people of God. They can watch things they shouldn't watch. They can do things they shouldn't do.

They can wear things they shouldn't wear. They can go on and on and be just as much a part of the world as someone who claims to be a part of the world. And when they sit under preaching, they respond not at all.

Why? Because God has never done a work of salvation for them. They still have a heart of stone. And what must happen to them? God and God's supernatural power, working out in salvation, must remove that heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

And every person on the road to heaven, every person who is truly a believer, every one, every last one of them, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. If any man, every one who is truly a Christian has undergone this supernatural work of God that demonstrates more power than creation itself. Of taking out the heart of stone and giving them a brand new heart that responds to divine stimuli, is sensitive to the Word of God.

One of the tests in 1 John to true conversion is this, that a man will acknowledge his sin and confess it. That's one of the greatest evidences of conversion, is a recognition of sin and the confession of that sin. Now, all the pastors that are here tonight will nod their head and understand the truth of what I am saying.

In every church I have ever been in where the Spirit of God has truly moved, it is amazing. When we begin to speak about sin and holiness, it is amazing what happens every time. And what happens every time is this, the most devout, most holy, most dedicated, most Christ-like people in the church are the ones who come forward weeping over their sins, broken, and openly confessing their need of grace, while the most wicked, carnal, worldly people in that congregation sit there as cold as a stone.

That is frightening. Well, it is frightening for some, because for some it's a sign of condemnation and death, but for others it's a joy. If you're a Christian who breaks at the slightest crack of God's Word, if you're a Christian who mourns over their sin, if you're a Christian who finds yourself contrite and broken over your need of grace, then rejoice! Not only are you not far from the kingdom of God, you are in the kingdom of God.

And he says here, he says, Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And then he says, I will put my spirit within you. Now look at this.

I will put my spirit within you. How is it, as I'm going to share later on, how is it that so many people can claim to have had an encounter with God, and yet the God with whom they have had that encounter seems to have no power? Salvation, as I said in the first sermon I preached in this church, is not simply you getting a ticket to heaven. Salvation is not simply you stepping out of the line going to hell and deciding to step into the line going to heaven.

Salvation is a supernatural work of God through which the very nature of a person is changed. And not only that, but the spirit of Almighty God, the very same spirit that hovered over the waters, is now hovering in your heart, dwelling there with the fullness of his power. And yet he has not power to change you? That's not what Scripture says.

It says, I will put my spirit within you and now look closely at this word. I will put my spirit within you and cause you. That word can be translated make you.

These preachers that God can't make anybody do anything. Isn't that amazing? He's the only sovereign Lord of glory or the only sovereign Lord anywhere who doesn't have power to rule over his subjects. Isn't that amazing? The way he is preached today.

He's Lord! The same preachers that will stand there and give you a discourse on the sovereign Lordship of Christ will turn right around and say, but he can't make anybody do anything. Now you don't have to study the law of non-contradiction and classical logic to understand that's just simply not right. He is the Lord of glory.

He has called forth a people not for them, but primarily for himself and for his own glory. He has done such a work in them. He has put his spirit in them and he says, I will cause them.

I will cause them. I will exercise my sovereignty over them. You see, don't use words like sovereign if you're not going to bite the entire apple.

If you're not going to take the entire truth in. Don't turn attributes of God into nothing more than cliches you sing about in contemporary Christian music or cliches that you write on the back of Christian t-shirts. He says, I am sovereign and I will call forth a people and I will put my spirit within them and I will cause them to do what? He says, I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes.

Now look at this next verse and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. It says you will. The people I save will follow me.

The people that I save will be obedient to me. And God says, I will see to it because I will have glory even out of the nations that hate me and I will have glory when they see my people because in my true people the power, my power, will be manifest. Now having said that, I want us to go to Matthew chapter 7. Enter through, verse 13, the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it and the way is narrow that leads to life and there are few who find it.

The one thing that I can say about my denomination, of those who in the denomination claim to be conservative and believe the Bible, the one thing I can say is that we have held up and been ridiculed for holding up the fact that we believe that Jesus Christ is the only way. We have done that as Southern Baptists in Judea. We have done that.

We say it's not multiple choice and not all roads lead to Rome. Jesus Christ is the only gate. The only door through which a man may pass into eternal life.

We have done that. But my dear friend, to only teach half a truth is more dangerous than teaching an out and out lie and we have taught this as a half truth that the gate is small but he says the way is narrow. If I were to look at my own denomination today and many leaders would agree with me, I would have to say this.

What would I have to say? If I were to rewrite this verse based on what I see in Southern Baptist life, evangelical life in America, I would say this. The gate is small and the way is broad but I'll tell you something. I'll tell you why.

Because many of them are building their visions on the bones of unregenerate church members and if they were to start preaching the truth, they'd have a mass exodus from their congregation and all their little plans, hopes and dreams and little kingdoms would fall down in the dust. I would like to say to those men, I'll show you whom you should fear. For the gate is small and the way is broad.

Few who find it. That's terrifying. Few who find it.

Oh, if I could hire an angel that would fly from one side of this earth to another and I could give him one message, I think I would tell him to cry out, few are those who find it. Few are those who find it. Oh, that an angel or a demon would come to you tonight and scream out your name and say, few are those who find it.

Few are those who find it. Now, let's interpret this passage correctly lest we grow dull. What do I mean? When this passage is taught, even the way I have taught it, for the most part, men will say this and believers or the church will think this.

Yes, that's true. There are few who find it. I mean, there's those of us who congregate in Jesus' name, those of us who call ourselves Christians, we're the few, and then we look outside at the world and those who do not profess faith in Jesus Christ and those who do not claim to know Him, and there are so many of them and so few of us who profess to be disciples.

That's what this text means. No, it most certainly does not mean that at all. What does it mean? It means this in the context.

Among those who claim to be my disciples, among those who profess me to be Lord, among those who call me Savior, few of those will find it. That's what the text means. How do I know that? Just look in verse 21.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. You go on down, verse 22. You see, religious people, many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, verse 23, then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you worker of iniquity. Jesus is not setting the professing church over here and saying that it's a few in number and that all the world over here is going to hell and those who profess him to be Lord are OK. No, he's saying among those people who claim to be my disciples, who call me Lord, among them, among that group, few of them will find eternal life.

That's what he is teaching, my dear friend. You see, when you truly get into the word of God, it's frightening. When you truly get into the word of God, you're standing there with your feet hanging over the ledge, swinging out into eternity.

It's a frightening place to be, but better now than when you stand before him on that great day. Now, he says in verse 15, beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. As I told the young people yesterday at the school, your best friend is the one who tells you the most truth.

Your best friend is the one who tells you the most truth. Do you want truth? Because according to the scriptures, Romans, the first three chapters, few are those who want truth. The great majority of even professing Christianity spends most of its time on purpose being so active and so busy that it will no longer have time to hear truth.

Now, he says, verse 16, speaking of the false prophets in the immediate context, but in the wider context, this refers to anyone of the unregenerate. He says this, anyone who is not truly a Christian yet professes to be a Christian, he says this, you will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? You will know them by their fruit.

Have you ever heard someone say you can't tell a book by its cover? Jesus didn't say that. As a matter of fact, I have to believe that it originated with Satan because it directly opposes what Jesus taught. And he's the father of lies, and it's a lie, so it must have come from him.

Usually when I get to this text, someone says, judge not, lest ye be judged. He said, twist not Scripture, lest ye be like Satan, because that's not what that text means. He said, you will know them by their fruit.

You will know them by what they do, not by what they say, not by what they feel. You will know them by the activity of their life. Now, I'll give you an illustration that I give quite often.

Let's say that I showed up for preaching looking like this, hair combed, clothes in order, and I showed up an hour late. And I run up here to the pulpit, and all of you are put out with me. What, don't you appreciate the opportunity to speak here? What, you just treat this as something vulgar, something common, you don't realize it's a privilege? And I say, oh no, no, please, please, don't take me wrong on this.

When I was coming here, I had a flat tire, and as I was changing the tire, well, a lug nut rolled out into the highway, and well, thoughtlessly, I ran out to grab the lug nut, and when I did, well, I looked up, and there was a 30 ton logging truck going 120 miles an hour, 5 feet in front of me, and well, it ran me over, and that's why I'm late. You would become more incensed and more angry with that explanation. You would conclude that I was either a liar or insane.

And when I pressed you on the point, no, that really happened, you would finally get fed up with me, and you would say, that can't happen. I said, what do you mean it can't happen? It really happened. No, it cannot happen.

You're either deranged or you're lying. Well, why not? I say to you, and you say, well, it's impossible to have an encounter with something as large as a logging truck going 120 miles an hour and not somehow be changed. Then why do you profess to have an encounter with God and you're not changed? Has God become smaller than a logging truck? Wake up, man.

This is heaven and this is hell. Wake up. You claim that God has redeemed you.

You claim that He's converted you. You claim that He's regenerated you. You claim that He's come to live inside you.

Is there evidence of such an encounter? Is there evidence of such a working? Jesus was a master. He was a master debater. You want to learn how to debate? Study Jesus.

He could catch men. And He did catch men. And He wants us to catch men.

He looked at them and He said, Figs. You don't get figs from thorn trees, do you? And they answered, well, of course not, Jesus. I mean, you're a carpenter, but everybody knows that.

Well, then thorns. You're not going to find them on fig trees, are you? There you go, Jesus. You've got the logic.

You're right. That's true. Jesus, if anyone ever comes to you telling you they've got a fig tree and it's got thorns on it, or they've got a thorn tree that bears figs, Jesus, they've got something to sell.

They're either lying to you or out of their mind. Don't listen to them. Then He looks back at them and He says, Well then, anyone who claims to be My disciple and doesn't bear the fruit of a disciple, is either out of their mind or a liar.

Now, in verse 17 and 18, is probably some of the deepest theology in the entire Bible on soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. The deepest truths. So then, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

Now, what is this simply, is He saying? You will know them by their fruit. If their fruit is bad, it's because they're a bad tree. What is He saying? If you do not have the fruit that is described in Scripture as Christian fruit, then you're not a Christian.

And He goes on in verse 18. And this is incredible. I mean, this is one of the most phenomenal texts in the Bible.

A good tree cannot, can not produce bad fruit. Nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Now, as Southern Baptists, again, we teach half of this.

We will tell lost people, until you're saved, you can have no good fruit. We tell them that all the time, and we're right in saying that. We're right in telling people, look, you can't work your way to heaven.

You can't produce good fruit. You can't change your life until you're saved. Because only a good tree can bear good fruit.

But what we don't tell them is this. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit. Because we're calling people good trees, and they're constantly producing bad fruit.

Dissension, envy, decision, dissension, carnality, worldliness, sensuality, fornication, adultery, pornography, all these different things. And we call them Christians struggling with ethical problems. When Jesus would say that they should be afraid, that they should go and make their elections sure.

Because there is a great possibility. They know not God, and God knows not them. We go into verse 19.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Look at what he's saying. He doesn't say, everyone who does not profess me to be Lord is cut down and thrown into the fire.

No, that's not the test. He says this, everyone who does not bear good fruit is cut down in the judgment of God and thrown into hell. Then he says in verse 20, so then you will know them by their fruit.

He repeats himself. He's built a parenthesis here. He begins by saying you will know them by their fruit.

He ends by saying you will know them by their fruit. And why is that? Because in Christianity we are so prone to spiritualize things, to romanticize things. Well, I feel in my heart that I am.

Well, the Bible says your heart is deceitfully wicked. Who can know it? Desperately evil. Who can know it? Well, in my mind, I know that I know that I know that I am.

The Bible says this, there's a way that seems right unto a man and it leads to death. Jesus said, you will know them by their fruit. Not by what they say, not by what they do.

I mean, not by what they say, not by what they feel, but by what they do. About hell. Usually whenever I am at some academic, pseudo-academic place and I begin to speak about hell, people are appalled.

Do you actually believe in hell? Yes, I do. Or when I ask men, why aren't you preaching about hell? One man's response, a very, very well-known TV preacher, has said this, well, we don't preach on hell because we just want to preach the words of Jesus. We just want to preach the love of Jesus.

We just want to preach what Jesus wants to communicate to people. You know, the person who said that is either a liar or has never read the Bible. And I'll tell you why.

If you go through the entire Old Testament, you will find very little on the doctrine of hell. If you go through the book of Acts and all the epistles, you will find very, very little on the doctrine of hell. The Christian doctrine of hell comes almost completely from the words of Jesus.

Isn't that amazing? Jesus spoke more about hell than all the other biblical writers and prophets and apostles put together. I have set it upon myself to preach as a dying man to dying men and to preach to them as though I shall never see their face again. I want eternity on my eyeballs.

I want men to look at me and see. I want them to think about the deep things, the problems of life and sin and holiness and salvation. I will not stay up at night, as I have said before, because your checkbook is not balanced.

It will not bother me because you are suffering from a low self-esteem. The one thing that may keep me up tonight is this, when you stand before Him on that great day will you hear heaven or will you hear hell? Because there is a hell. There is.

Verse 21, Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now, when a Jew wants to emphasize something, he repeats himself. God is holy, holy, holy.

Here we see that Jesus is saying, not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, what does that mean? Not everyone who emphatically declares Me to be Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Do you see what that is saying? He is not talking about some shy person who denies Christ. He is not talking about some person who never even mentions that Christ is Lord.

No, He is saying, not everyone among those who emphatically and boldly and outwardly and clearly declare Me to be Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. That is what He is saying. He says, But he who does the will of My Father, that is the one who will enter in.

John MacArthur said this one time. It struck me like a bolt of lightning. He said this, Do you want to know what your profession of faith in Jesus Christ is worth? He said, I'll tell you.

Absolutely nothing. Because here we see people professing Jesus Christ to be Lord emphatically, more emphatically than many who claim to be believers. Here we see people emphatically professing Him to be Lord and He says, No, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The test of discipleship, the test of conversion, of regeneration, of salvation, my dear friend, is not what comes out of your mouth. The evidence of conversion is what you do. The evidence that you have truly passed through the small gate is that you walk in the narrow way.

When I preach this often, people will say, Well, my goodness, that Southern Baptist is teaching a doctrine of works. He's teaching that, you know, by staying on the path, you save yourself. No, I'm teaching you Southern Baptist doctrine as it was before liberalism.

What I'm teaching you is this, salvation is only by grace, by faith. Only, only, only. You are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone.

But, that salvation that is yours is a supernatural work of God that changes your very nature and you will, because you are a new creature, you will walk in a new path. And the evidence that you have truly passed through the small gate is that you are walking in the narrow way. And when you step off the narrow way, God comes and disciplines you and puts you back on the path.

But if you can claim to have passed through that small gate and yet you wander in the broad way all the days of your life without biblical, godly, divine discipline, you're lost. And it's evidence that you're lost. All these boys, they ought to spend less time preaching and more time studying their Bibles.

They ask people if they want to go to heaven. When they say yes, they say repeat this prayer after me. If the person isn't bold enough to repeat the prayer, they say, well I'll say it for you and you repeat it after me.

If they're not, have enough gumption to do that, they'll say, well I'll pray the prayer for you and if it's what you want to say to God, squeeze my hand. And then after the prayer, they'll say, did Jesus enter in your heart? And the person will say, I don't know. And then the evangelist will say, well either he did or he's a liar because he promised that anyone who called on his name, he'd enter into their heart.

That's what he says in Revelation 3.20, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, I'll enter in. So did you call on him? Well, yes.

Well, then he entered in. Would you call Jesus a liar? No, I'd never call Jesus a liar. Then you're saved.

Now what you need to do is you need to go to the back of your Bible, take an ink pen, I'll do it with you right now, write your name, write the date, and every time the devil comes to you trying to make you doubt your salvation, you show him the back of your Bible. That goes on in Southern Baptist evangelism every day that we breathe. It is pathetic superstition and nothing more.

And it keeps going because men desire more the glory of men than the glory of God. They'll come here and preach for you and 150 people will be converted and they'll go down the road and brag about 150 being converted, but on Sunday, you won't find a one of them. My dear friend, it pains me to preach like this.

I don't enjoy it. But it's true. And if I love you, I must say these things.

And the reason why God wrote these things is because He does love you. And God does not desire the death of the wicked. Not at all.

And He says in verse 22, many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name cast out demons and in Your name perform many miracles? What evidence of unconversion here? You say, in what way? Again, God cannot deny His own. He cannot. He loves His people and He's faithful to them.

But let's just give an illustration. Let's say that a true, true Christian on the day of judgment stood before God and God said to him, depart from Me. I never knew you.

Now that's not going to happen. Again, this is just by way of illustration. Would a true believer look into the face of God and say, but Lord, I prophesied in Your name.

I cast out demons in Your name. I did many miracles in Your name. I did all sorts of religious things.

Lord, I went to church. I read my Bible. I did this and I did that.

Lord, You have to let me in. A true believer would never say anything like that. What would a true believer say? But Lord, I have cast my hope upon Your Son.

Nothing in my hands I bring. But Lord, to His cross I cling. Lord, I am desperately evil and wicked, far beyond my own ability to know.

But Lord, Christ shed His own blood for my soul. I have swung out into eternity, Lord, on that one scarlet thread that Christ shed His own blood for my soul. No boasting in religion.

No boasting in works. No self-satisfaction. Throwing themselves upon the mercy of God through the blood of Christ.

Now we go on. The most terrifying words in verse 23. And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

If I were to walk up to the White House tonight and try to get in, and when they stopped me I said, Well, I know George Bush. It would do me very little good. But if George Bush walked out of the White House and said, I know Paul Washer, I'm going in.

So you see, when these people tell you the most important thing is that you know Jesus, that's not really true. The most important thing is that Jesus knows you. And this word know here, taking it not so much from the Greek as taking it from all the Old Testament.

This know is an intimate relational knowledge. I know this one. One of my favorite Old Testament passages.

This one was born in Zion. This one I know. This one walked with me.

And I walked with Him. This little girl here, she would cling to me by hope and by faith. She would call on me in the night watches when she was afraid.

True believer know this, that on that day when you enter into glory and you look up in that face, a face you have never seen before, it will not be the face of a stranger. You will say, I have known this one all my life. And He knows me.

That's why all the terror will flee away. But for you, who superficially claim to know Him, who substituted deity with religion, who went to church as a cultural duty, you will look in the face of that one on that throne and you will flee with terror. You will cry out for the rocks to come and fall upon you, to hide you from the wrath of the Lamb, because He will look at you and say, depart from me.

I never knew you. And then He goes on to say, depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Now this word lawlessness comes from a negative particle, ah, Greek word *namas*, no law.

Now I'm going to give you, now if you miss this part, you've missed the entire sermon. I'm going to tell you something, that if there is any sensitivity at all in your heart, any spiritual life whatsoever, any drawing or working of God at all, this will terrify you. It is this.

Free translation, verse 23. And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, those of you who called yourselves my disciples, but you lived as though I never gave you a law to obey.

I just described the great majority of professing Christianity in America today. They call themselves His disciples, but when I stand before them and say, tell me the law by which you live, tell me the wisdom and the precepts and the commands of God that direct your daily life, they don't have a clue. Depart from me, those of you who called yourselves my disciples, but you lived your life as though I never gave you a law to obey.

You raised your families, but you never even looked in my Word to see how I commanded it to be done. You went out and got for yourself employment and spent your money, and you never looked at what I commanded you as a disciple in Scripture. You watched things on television that I absolutely loathe, and you loved it.

You never saw the commands where I told you to take your eyes away from that wicked thing. You were sensual, and you were carnal, and you were worldly, and you loved the world. You never knew of my commands of piety and holiness.

You never knew that I gave you commands with regard to the way you're supposed to speak. You never knew that I gave you commands with regard to the persons with whom you were to have fellowship, and no one ever told you I gave you laws about clothing that you're supposed to wear and not supposed to wear. I said that because no one's saying it anymore.

And many times I go into churches, and as a man of God, I have to go to the pulpit covering my eyes so that I do not grieve the Holy Spirit before I get there to preach. Then he says, Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house, and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and slammed against that house, and it fell, and great was its fall. If ever there was a verse twisted in modern day preaching, it is this one.

You know how this passage is taught? Preachers get up all the time, and they preach it this way. Now, Christians who hear the Word of God and build their life upon it will have strong and joyous lives. But Christians who hear the Word of God and do not act upon it will have unstable lives and will not experience the joy that God has for them.

That is not at all what Jesus is saying. Jesus is saying there is a group of people who will hear His words, they will act upon them, and when the floods of divine judgment come in that final day, their house will stand. And there will be other people who claim to be disciples, they will hear His words, they will not act upon them, and when the floods of divine judgment, when the fires of wrath come, they will be consumed, and they will perish.

You say, where do you get all this? Again, from the context. Again, from reading men who wrote books a long time ago. Let me just give you a clue to understand the context.

In verses 13 and 14, what do we have? We have one small gate and many others. That one small gate leads to heaven. All the others lead to hell.

We have a narrow path that leads to heaven. We have a broad path that leads to hell. Then we have two trees.

A bad tree that bears bad fruit and is cut down and thrown into the fire. A good tree that bears good fruit and brings forth fruit to the glory of God and is saved. Then we go on.

What do we have? We have someone who says, Lord, Lord, to Him, and yet there is no evidence of that profession. Their works are null and void and they go to hell. We have others who say, Lord, Lord, and yet there's evidence of their profession that it is true through what they do.

And then we come down to this. There are those who hear the Word of God and act upon it and they are saved from divine judgment. There are others who hear the Word of God and only hear, but do not act.

And when divine judgment comes, they are destroyed. Hear then, hear then, the Word of God. Hear, people, the Word of God.

To some of you who hear this Word tonight, it will confirm your salvation. You will see the working of God in all that has been preached. You will see it worked out in your life.

And you will leave here rejoicing. Others of you will hear this and it will make you angry. And then you'll go out these doors and yea, even before you reach those doors, Satan will have come and stolen this Word from your heart so that by the time you get to the car, you'll be wanting to go to Shoney's.

And eternity, heaven and hell will no longer be in your mind. Know that when that happens, it is a fulfillment of what I've said. Then there's others of you who are troubled in your heart and you're saying, I know not whether it is well with my soul.

I know not whether it is well with my children. To you, I will give this Word of encouragement. You are not far from the Kingdom of God.

Because if this Word has struck your heart and made you worried about eternal things to the point of acting upon that worry, that concern, then I would beg you to flee from the wrath to come. I would beg you to hearken to the voice of your Master and run to Him tonight. Cry out to Him, Oh God, save me.

Oh God, I plead the blood of Christ. I throw myself upon Your mercy. I've lived a religious unconverted life and oh God, if I died right now, I'd die in my sins and I'd go to hell.

Oh God, save me. And those who do call upon the name of the Lord, they will not be disappointed. They will not be disappointed.

Pastor.

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