

New Life Baptist Church - Part 4

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the necessity of true conversion and regeneration in the Christian faith, challenging modern misconceptions about salvation and the church's role.

Duration: 1:28:28

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 25:35

Topics: "True Salvation", "Gospel Power"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the problems he sees in America today. He highlights the poor understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has been reduced to a simplistic formula for salvation. He emphasizes the need for the true power of the gospel to be preached, rather than relying on church growth techniques and manipulation. The preacher also emphasizes the transformative nature of true salvation, where a person's heart is changed and they no longer desire the sins they once loved.

Transcript

It's a great privilege for me to be here this evening with all of you, and it was a privilege to hear the worship as you sang in the special music. It was very, very beautiful. It's one of my favorite songs, of all the songs, I would suppose.

Tonight, we're going to turn in our Bibles to the book of Ezekiel, the book of Ezekiel chapter 36. One of the things I dislike about being itinerant preacher is this. Almost in every place you go in America, the problem is the same, and so I find myself with a great deal of frequency preaching on the same things.

What are the greatest problems in America today? First of all, very poor understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been reduced down to nothing more than four spiritual laws or five things God wants you to know, with a little prayer at the end that if you pray correctly, you will go to heaven. None of that is biblical.

None of it. We are not saved by praying a prayer and asking Jesus for a place where America is with regard to assurance of salvation. People believe themselves saved because one time in their life they prayed a little prayer and asked Jesus to come into their heart, but that is not the evidence of salvation.

The evidence of salvation is the fruit that one bears. We are not saved by works at all, but the fruit of our life is evidence that God has done a genuine work of conversion. Another place where Christianity has

gone awry in America is understanding the idea of conversion.

Isn't it amazing we almost never use that word anymore? When someone describes their salvation, they'll say something like, well, I was saved, or I asked Jesus to come into my heart, or something like that. But very rarely do we hear people say, I have been converted, because converted not only implies, but demands change. And the evidence that someone has truly come to know the Lord is that their life changes, begins to change, and continues to change, and never stops changing.

Finally, one other thing that's necessary to say is this, a very poor understanding of ecclesiology or the doctrine of the church. Let me give you an example. Have you ever heard someone say, the church in America is just is just horrid.

It's going through so many problems, the church in America. I mean, it is so sinful. It is so dark.

There's just as much adultery in the church as outside of the church. There's just as much lying and immorality in the church as outside of the church. The church in America is in a terrible state.

That's a lie. It's not true. If it is true, then all the new covenants in the scriptures, in Ezekiel and Jeremiah are false.

It's not true. The church is not in bad shape in America. In America, the church is broken and humble and following her master.

And although she sins, she confesses her sin and she is growing in holiness. The problem is this, what you're calling the church is not the church. There's recently been a panel put together of so-called evangelical experts to explain why so many young people who are Christians, when they make it to college, they abandon the faith.

That statement in itself is asinine. It is not biblical. Because if they abandon the faith, they are not Christian and they never were.

Twenty-five years ago, discipleship, personal one-on-one discipleship became tremendously important in the church. People began to talk about, we need to personally disciple people. And why is that? Because we've got as many people going out the back door as we have coming in the front door.

And the reason why they're leaving the church, the reason why they're leaving Christianity, the reason why they're not growing is because they're not being disciplined. That's not true. That's not what the Bible says.

Jesus said, My sheep, they hear My voice and they follow Me. Paul said, He who began a good work in you will finish it. You see, the problem is this, we don't understand conversion.

What we've done is we've basically taken a supernatural work of God, whereby more of the power of God is manifest than in the very creation of the world. We have taken the supernatural work of God in converting sinners and reduced it down to a mere human decision. Decisionism.

The problem is most of the people getting saved under the preaching of most evangelists are not getting saved. They're just being manipulated into some silly, humanistic, superstitious decision. Let me give you an example.

And this is not made up. This is true. The evangelist, after coaxing several people forward, he says something like this to one individual.

Would you like to go to heaven? The person says, well, yes. All right. Then would you like to ask Jesus Christ into your heart? And the person said, well, I guess so.

Well, if you do, then ask Jesus to come into your heart. The guy says, well, I feel kind of uncomfortable saying that in front of everybody here. Well, then ask him silently in your heart.

Well, I really don't know how to pray. Well, OK, I will pray and you repeat after me the words. The guy says, well, I just don't know.

And then the evangelist says, well, I'll pray to God for you. And if it's what you want to say to him, squeeze my hand. Behold the power of God in modern day evangelism.

My dear friend, listen to me. In so many places around the world, places where I have served in South America, everybody thinks they're Christian because when they were infants, they were baptized. Well, I want to tell you something.

The evangelical community in the United States of America is no better because the vast majority of people in America believe they were Christians because one time they repeated a prayer. Let me just give you an example. Someone says, let me just give you an example of modern day evangelism.

Sir, do you recognize that you're a sinner? Guy says, yes. So what do you do? You go on to the next question. Well, would you like to go to heaven? Person says, well, yes.

Well, you go on the next question. Would you like to pray and ask Jesus to come into your heart? Well, yeah. OK, did you pray? Yes.

Did you mean it? Yes. You're saved. OK, now let's just look at that biblically.

Sir, do you know that you're a sinner? He says, yes. So are you ready to go on to the next question? That answer of his means absolutely nothing. Go ask the devil if he knows he's a sinner or not.

He will say, well, yes, I am. Thank you very much. The question is not, sir, do you recognize you're a sinner? The question is this, has God done such a work in your heart while you were listening to the preaching of the gospel that the sin you once loved you now hated? You now hate.

That's the question. Has repentance been wrought in your heart? Not just do you recognize you're a sinner, but has God done such a work in your heart that you now hate the sin you once loved? That's the question. Second question, do you want to go to heaven? Have you ever had anyone say, why no, I would rather go to hell, to be honest with you? Have you ever heard anyone say that? My dear friend, everybody wants to go to heaven.

They just don't want God to be there when they get there. Really? It's not a question, do you want to go to heaven? That's very humanistic. I mean, everyone wants something good for themselves.

Everyone wants to be saved from judgment. I mean, you catch a field on fire. Every copperhead and water moccasin in that field will flee from it, but they're still vipers when they come out of it.

The question is not, do you want to go to heaven? The question is this, the God that you have hated and ignored, do you now love and cherish? Do you desire the Christ you have spurned? Has God done such a supernatural work in your heart that you now desire Him? And then, would you like to repeat a prayer and ask Jesus to come into your heart? You would be very hard-pressed to find anything like that in the Bible. You don't find it anywhere. You don't.

Honestly, you don't. It's just not there. What is there? God commands all men to repent and believe the gospel.

That's what's there. And you do not have the authority to tell someone they're saved, just because you've walked them through that little Roman road of yours. You have authority to tell men how to be saved.

You do not have authority to tell them they are. Only the Holy Spirit has that authority. Men are walking around assured of their salvation because some preacher who should have spent a whole lot of, should have spent less time preaching and more time studying his Bible told them they were saved.

They believe they're saved and they know more bare fruit than a goose. But they know they're saved and you couldn't convince them otherwise because some preacher told them they were because they repeated a prayer. That's pathetic.

The evidence that one is a Christian is that they enter into a process of sanctification. A real recognizable process where little by little they begin to change and become more and more like Jesus Christ. Desiring the things of God and following the things of God.

Now, what we're going to look at tonight is conversion or a very important term, regeneration. You've heard the term in John chapter 3, being born again. That word means born again or born from above.

But I'm afraid to use that term nowadays. Why? Because what we have is born againism. Sixty-five percent of America claims to be born again.

And how'd they get that way? They prayed a prayer during an evangelistic crusade, went home and were not changed. But they're born again because they made their decision. Being born again is not a human decision.

It is a supernatural work of God. And the fruit of that supernatural work is repentance and faith. Regeneration, to regenerate, to make alive that which was dead.

The Scriptures say that all men are dead in their trespasses and sins, spiritually dead. And for them to respond to God, they must be made alive by His power. There is no other way.

So let's look at this passage. Ezekiel chapter 36, verse 22. 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. 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.

I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. Now let's look, starting in verse 22. 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.

Why does God save men? It's a good question. Sometimes I hear misguided singers singing songs like, I don't understand why He loves me. What worth did He find in me that He would save me? Well, let me give you the answer.

He found absolutely nothing in you that would cause Him to save you. As a matter of fact, the only thing He ever found in you was reason to condemn you, because you have broken every law He has ever made. The only thing an unrighteous man or woman or child could ever motivate a holy and just God to do is to condemn them.

That is another great problem in American Christianity. We don't want our gospel to be offensive to men. As a matter of fact, we almost market churches by saying, we're not offensive.

The fact of the matter is, men are born depraved, void of a love for God, void of a love for His commands. Men break all the laws of God. Everyone is guilty.

God is holy and God is just. And the only reason that a holy and just God would save wicked men is for His own namesake. He says it in this passage.

It's not for your sake, O Israel, that I've saved you, but for my holy namesake. If I were to look deep into the counsel of God in the Scriptures, I would see two primary reasons why God saves men. He does it to demonstrate His glory, His goodness.

He does it because He is love. Not that man somehow evokes that love, no. Man only evokes the wrath of God upon himself.

God loves because He is love. And it does not spring forth from anything. It is not drawn out by some inherent goodness or worth in you.

I know men hate that. I know no one likes to hear that. I rejoice in it.

I rejoice in it because it tells me what kind of God I have. You would have to be blind or hypocritical in the innermost part of your heart not to recognize that the only thing you've ever done against a good God is sin. It is a delight for a man like me to hear that there is a God who loves because He is love and needs no motivation coming from me.

Because I would be destitute and without hope if God did not love in that form and in that way. He says, not for your sake have I saved you, but for mine. That's another reason why when God begins a work of salvation, it will never fail.

It's the reason why He who began a good work will finish it, because His reputation is on line, at stake. Now, it goes on and He says this. Verse 23, 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. This is very important. Whenever God truly does a work of salvation, even the unbelievers who do not understand that work, but witness that work, recognize the power of God.

God says, when I save you, even the unbelieving nations will recognize that I am the Lord and I do mighty works on the earth. When He saved Israel from Egypt, why did He go through all that He went through with all the plagues and everything else? So that Egypt would know who God is. Not Ra, not Pharaoh, but Yahweh.

When someone, listen to me, this is very important, when someone in our modern day context is truly saved, although the unbelievers around him might mock, might misinterpret what's going on, at least they will recognize something real, unexplainable has happened to their friend. But not anymore, not in America. And you know why? Because of the preaching that goes on in this country.

If Jesus Christ came back today, He wouldn't cleanse the temple, He'd cleanse the pulpit. Why? I'll tell you why. Because we're always telling people they're saved when their lives never change.

And Christianity is a mockery among the unbelievers. Is it not true? Now look at the church, it's full of hypocrisy, it's full of this, it's full of adulterers and liars and thieves. And it is.

Why? Because preachers are more worried about building gigantic churches on the bones of unconverted church members than they are serving Jesus Christ. That's why. Church discipline, unheard of doctrine nowadays, isn't it? Oh, that's because we love.

Yes, we don't obey Jesus' commands because we love people more than He does. Have you ever looked at the nation of Israel and see how much they suffered, how much they were bruised, how much they were persecuted? And you want to scream to them through the pages of the Old Testament and say, Can't you understand? You suffer like this, you look like this because you don't obey the Lord. Can't you see you can't do these things? And I want to cry out, Physician, heal thyself, because I say the same thing to America.

Why is the church in such a state? Why is this going on and that going on? Because the very fundamental, basic doctrines of Christianity are no longer being taught. We're placed with little gimmicks and little tracks and five things someone's supposed to do. Now, we go on.

And he says this, in the beginnings of his work, in verse 24, he says, I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. I will take you from the nations. When God saves a man or a woman or a child, what is one of the first things that you will see? Separation.

Unheard of word, I know, nowadays. Most of the good doctrines of Scripture are unheard of. Separation.

I will take you from the nations. I will separate you from the unbelieving world. It doesn't mean that when someone's saved, they go out from among everybody and go to live on a mountaintop somewhere with their legs crossed singing a mantra.

That's not what he's saying. What he's saying is this, when someone is genuinely saved, you will begin to recognize a work of God separating them and making them holy. Pulling them out of the fallen world and

the fallen ideas and its fallen doctrines and its fallen attitudes and its fallen actions and behavior.

Separating them from things. And it is the separation in which the person is so changed in their heart that they don't grudgingly say, oh, I've got to leave the world now in order to follow Jesus because I don't want to go to hell. No, they've been changed in such a supernatural way that they look at the world that they once loved and they now hate it and they walk away from it willingly.

He says, I will separate you from the nations. But not only that, it isn't that when God saves a person, He simply separates them from all the things they should not do. But He separates them from the unbelieving nations, from the fallen world and its mindset in order to bring them unto Himself.

I will separate you from the nations in order to bring you into your own land. Now, let me ask you a question. Is that a reality in your life? Is it? I mean, don't just say yes or this.

Think about it. If someone were to look at you, would they say, even though they might not be able to explain it, would they say that something strange has happened to you? That you are distant from all the things that the world loves? That you no longer think like you used to? You no longer enjoy the things you used to enjoy? You no longer revel in the same things that the world revels in? That it seems like you've been pulled away from all those things? And that your heart's been turned to new desires? And you desire and care about and seek after new things that they do not understand? Has that happened to you? Is it a reality in your life? You'd be surprised how many people attend church every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and it is not a reality in their life. They have no idea of God separating them.

Because they can go to church on Sunday, and they can go right back home, and they can live just like anyone else. But God says, everyone whom He truly regenerates, He's going to do a work of separation in their life, separating them from the things He hates, and bringing them into the things He loves, and they are going to willingly follow, and this is a process that will continue on all the days of their life until they step over into glory. Is that a reality in your life? Can you look back since your supposed conversion, and see the hand of God separating you from the things that contradict the Scriptures, and drawing you into a new way of life, a new land? Can you? Is it a reality in your life? Now let's go on.

He says in verse 25, Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Now look at that. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.

Do you notice anything here? The divine initiative? The divine fulfillment? This is not hopeful speaking? This is not divine wishing? This is not some little God up there on a paper mache throne with a tin cap on His head, wringing His hands going, Oh I saved them, if I could only make them, if I could only change them, but they just won't do it, they won't cooperate. We don't see any of that, do we? He says, Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will see to it.

See, it's amazing that God's the only all-sovereign creator of the universe, and yet He can't exercise His sovereignty over men. Isn't that amazing? Well, God can't do that because God can do absolutely anything He wants. Anytime.

Well, you know, He can't open up the door to my heart because the handle's on the inside. He can kick that door down if He wants to. You see, you, like many others, have heard so much contemporary.

If I could bring back the preachers from a hundred years ago, they would storm the pulpits of America with such rage that you would be afraid to walk into a church building. Because the preaching of today is

nothing of the preaching of yesteryear. And you say, Oh yes, those Baptists or those Calvinists, or, no, listen to me.

I could bring back John and Charles Wesley to Armenians, and they'll out-preach any preacher today, and they'll agree with everything I'm saying. All this twisted, little, pitiful preaching that's going on today is worthless. Preachers come on television to advertise their churches.

They're 40 years old, 44 years old like me, and they got their hair moosed, and they're wearing some kind of weird shirt because they want to show everybody how relevant they are. You're not relevant because you're like the world. You're relevant because you're not like the world.

You're not relevant because you've reduced down the call of the Gospel, and the claims of the Gospel, and the challenge of the Gospel. You're relevant because you preach the truth, no matter if it gets you crucified or not. The power of the Gospel.

There is no power of the Gospel that's preached in America today because the Gospel's not preached. We've substituted little church growth techniques, and manipulation, and everything else to get people to come into a building, but they won't make it to heaven. They must be born again by the power of God.

And the power of God is revealed when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached. And that Gospel, in the Greek language, it's called hoiskandalon, the scandal. You go into a church where the Gospel is not scandalous and offending people, you're not hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It goes on. He says, I'll sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Now, let's just go back for a moment.

I want you to look at something. I want to give particular emphasis to the personal pronoun, I, first person. Verse 24, I will take you from the nations.

I will gather you from the land. I will 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 I will 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 I will put my spirit within you.

And I will cause you to walk in my statutes. And you will be careful to observe my ordinances. Do you see sovereignty in those lines? They're everywhere.

God has ordained to call forth a people, and He will do it. And not all the powers in heaven, earth, and hell can stop Him. This God that's preached in America today, is nothing more than a souped-up version of Santa Claus.

But the God of the Bible, He's not a tame lion. He's not a tame lion. Now, He says, then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.

Now, a lot of people will take this text and say, well, yes, this is referring to our justification, our position before God, that the moment we believe in Jesus Christ, we're declared righteous, forensically, legally.

And that's what it means. It doesn't mean that He really does cleanse us in actuality.

No, my friend, it means both. It means that, yes, by the blood of Jesus Christ, you are legally declared righteous when you believe in Jesus Christ. And you have a right relationship with God through the blood that was shed on that tree.

But, the Bible does not separate positional sanctification from sanctification as a reality in the believer's life. If He really has justified you and declared you right through the blood of the Lamb, He is also working to cleanse you, and sanctify you, and change you. That is why the Hebrews writer can say, without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

Well, that's not preached very much, is it? Because nowadays, you can see God, whether you're holy or not. He says, I will. I'll do it.

Just like I always share that I was raised on a farm, and you can always tell a farm boy when he's little, because every crevice of his body, there's dirt. And I would come in playing after a whole day in the field, and come in, you know, late at night after capturing lightning, bugs, and everything else, be absolutely filthy, and my mom would always say, take a bath. When I was feeling about eight or nine years old, thinking I was pretty much grown up by then, I'll never forget one day I said, Mom, I'm just not going to take a bath tonight.

And my mom, her voice changed entirely. And she said, you will take a bath. And that was back in the days when it was still legal to kill your children.

She said, it's legal to kill your children now, isn't it? And she'd look at me and she'd say, you will take a bath. And the discussion was over. You will take a bath.

Isn't that amazing? My mother has more power over my human volition than God, according to most preachers. My mom can make me take a bath, but God can't. That's just absurd.

I almost said stupid, but I promised my wife I wouldn't use that word anymore. My mother, she worked on the farm. She could haul hay like a man.

Her hands were so calloused and so tore up that it was just like sandpaper. I'd go in there and take a little bath, and a little dab will do me, and get a little water on me, come out, the towel would be black, still have just dirt running off of me, and my mom would say, get back in there, now I'm going to bathe you. When my mom got done with me, I came out of that bathtub like the Shekinah glory of God upon me.

She'd take five pounds of skin off, and you had been cleansed. This poor deity of ours, so sad. If his people don't cooperate with him, there's nothing he can do.

What a pathetic God most people preach and believe in. Because this God of the Bible, He says, I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. And then He says, exactly from what He will cleanse us, He says, now I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

I'll cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols. God in His wisdom has ordained to do that through the full process of our life. Many people ask me, well, when God saves us, why doesn't He just all of a sudden take care of the whole thing? Because probably you would become the most self-righteous human being on the face of the earth and deny the grace of God.

It is a continuous process in our lives so that even though as we age, we grow more and more like Christ, we put less and less confidence in the flesh. And in the end of our days, we are trusting in Christ and Christ alone. And we acknowledge that all cleansing, all sanctification, all growth is 100% a result of God's grace and has nothing to do with the human endeavor.

So in the end, we have nothing to boast of except Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone. But He will cleanse you. He will do it.

And He says, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness. Boy, I tell you what, He sure could have used a more appropriate word, less offensive. When was the last time you heard a preacher say, you're filthy and you need to be cleansed? My goodness, we can't say something like that nowadays.

God says, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. What is God doing in the life of the true believer? Constantly working throughout the full course of their lifetime to little by little cleanse them from all their filthiness and from all their idolatry. God will do absolutely everything necessary to work this into the life of His child.

And regardless of what many TV preachers will tell you, He will take away your health, He will take away your wealth, He will take away family, He will take away everything. He will crush you and grind you into a million pieces if it is necessary, but He will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols. The question is this, America, what would you rather have, holiness or your comfort? Everything that comes upon a believer is for his good.

If through prosperity and health God can make you for a time more like Jesus Christ, He will grant that to you. But if through taking it all away and dashing you on the rocks, He can make you more like Jesus Christ, He will do it. Because although it seems like Christianity America today is all concerned about temporal happiness, God is concerned about eternal holiness.

If His own Son was perfected through suffering, how much more shall we be perfected with the same? Do you want that? If you are a true believer, you will. You may fear it a bit, you may moan and whine a bit when it comes upon you, but in the end you will rejoice in His blessing and you will rejoice in His discipline because you have a heart after His. You desire more than anything to be like Christ.

He goes on. Well, let's talk for a moment about idols. He says, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

What is an idol? Well, simple question. What do you think about most? That's your God. What enralls you the most? What's your passion? Now, don't give me the spiritual answer.

If someone was looking at you from the outside, what would they say was your passion? Your delight? What do you talk about most when you get around your friends? Behold, your God. We have this terrifying ability to transform even the best things into nothing more than idols. We can take the very gifts that God gives us and turn them into idols that are more important than the one who gave it.

We can even take God's law and turn it into something of an instrument of sin and death. Now, just a moment here that's a great encouragement. I know this seems like a great conviction, but he says, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols.

This is a great promise at the same time. Think about it. Most of us who are believers, you know, we can mark that we seem to have overcome certain besetting sins in our life, that we're making progress into holiness, but there just seems to be some things we almost come to the point where we think we're never going to be free from them.

Well, it's just something I'm going to have to live with. But what does God say here? I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and all your idols. Does that mean that God will make a believer perfect on this side of heaven? No.

But there is a great difference between struggling with sin and having a besetting sin in your life that conquers you and over which you have no victory. He is saying that He will work and work all the days of our life to free us from filth and idolatry. And that no sin, no habit is too strong for Him.

Now, He goes on. The whole basis of everything that I've spoken about thus far is found 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 give you a heart of flesh. Now, what does this mean? This is something that is so important to understand. Literally, if you do not understand the doctrine of human depravity, rarely can you understand anything in Christian doctrine.

Men are born depraved. They are born with a spiritually dead heart. They are born hating God.

They are born, as Martin Luther said, under the bondage of their will. Someone says, well, if that's the case, then man's not guilty. I mean, if he's born that way, how can he be judged? What you need to understand is this.

Men cannot obey God. Why? Because they hate Him. Why? Because their hearts are evil.

Let me give an example. Joseph's brothers could not speak a kind word to him. That's what it says.

They could not speak a kind word to him. They had mouths, they had tongues, and they could speak Hebrew. It says they could not speak a kind word to him because they hated him.

You ever heard someone say, I can't forgive them? Yeah, they could. Why can't they? Because of the hatred and the bitterness in their heart. Men cannot see God because they will not see God because they hate God, and they hate God because God is holy and righteous and men are wicked.

That's the reason. That is the reason. And in order for a man to be saved, something supernatural must happen to that man.

God must come and take out that heart of stone that cannot, will not, respond to God and replace it with a heart of flesh that responds to divine stimuli. Something alive, recreated according to the book of Ephesians chapter 4, recreated in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness. Salvation is not a mere human decision.

It is a supernatural work of God whereby the very nature of a human being is transformed in an instant and made alive. That is salvation. It cannot be manipulated.

It cannot be coerced. It does not come from just getting someone to repeat a prayer. It is a supernatural work of God.

On par with the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. Go to Romans 6, you'll see that. If we had time, we would.

Now, 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. Just use the example of a statue.

It's made of stone. A statue of a man. It's made of stone.

You can pinch it, prod it, kick it, poke it, do whatever you want to it. It will not respond to any stimuli because it's stone. It's inanimate.

It's dead. But you put the biggest man in this county up here on this platform with me and if I grab him under the tender part of his arm and pinch and twist with all my might, he is going to respond. Why? He is living flesh.

Some of you will recognize this in your own conversion. You sat in church for years, possibly. You heard sermon after biblical sermon.

It never even affected you. They could preach on hell, preach on heaven, preach on the cross. It's like you didn't even ever hear it.

And then one day or one night, a message is being preached and it might not even have been a message of that direct with regard to the gospel. And all of a sudden, it's like your ears were opened up, your eyes were opened up. And not only that, you loved what you heard.

You were so drawn to it, you couldn't resist. It's like, as I've said so many times, I take this from Charles Spurgeon, if someone were to have a pig in the back here in the church and I put a plate of fine food on this side and a plate of garbage on this side and someone loosed the pig, where would he go? He wouldn't go to the fine food. He would go to the garbage.

Why? He's a pig. That's what pigs do. That's his nature.

He goes to the garbage because he's a pig. But if in one second I have the power to transform that pig into a man, what's going to happen? The moment he is transformed into a man, he's going to throw his head out of that bucket. The very thing that he was eating down, he's going to puke up.

He's going to be disgusted. He's going to turn around. He's going to be ashamed.

He's totally transformed in his nature and a man cannot, literally cannot eat what a pig can eat. I just described your conversion, if you've been converted. You loved sin.

You loved to eat it down. Like it says in Job, drink down iniquity like water. Not only that, you boasted in it.

You were admired for it. You were proud of it. And then one day you heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Something happened to you. You were awakened, your eyes, your ears, your heart. And the very sin that you loved, you now hate.

And the very sin you were proud of, you're now ashamed. And even though a true believer can be deceived and can go back and stick their head in that bucket, the moment they do, they will become so nauseous they'll be pulling their head out of their vomiting and ashamed. Why? Because they just didn't

make some human decision to jump out of the line going to hell in order to jump into the line going to heaven.

They were transformed by the power of God. Let me give you another example. Men will say, well, if you have a group of lost people, all you have to do is preach the Gospel to them.

Well, that's all men have to do, but that's not all God has to do. How does it work? Let's say that we had a large curtain here and behind that curtain stood Jesus Christ. Some preachers would say, and all of you were unbelievers, let's say.

Some preachers would say that all we have to do is pull the cord on the curtain, draw back the curtain, and when those unbelievers truly see Jesus Christ like He is, they'll come to Him. Not if everyone in the congregation is blind, they won't, because they won't see anything. So you say, oh, that's right.

Not only do we have to pull back the curtain, but God has to give them sight. And if He gives them sight and they see the beauty of Jesus Christ, they'll come to Him. No, they won't.

Because when they look at His holiness and His righteousness and His beauty and see it as it is, with that wicked, God-hating, sin-loving heart of theirs, the only thing they'll want to do is kill Him. So it's not just we've got to pull back the curtain. It's not just that God's got to give sight to the blind.

God has to take out that wicked, God-hating heart that would do nothing more than cry out, Crucify! And replace it with a new heart created in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness. And when that brand new heart recreated in the image of God sees the perfect image of God, Jesus Christ, it is irresistibly drawn to Him. Because all they can see is beauty.

Do you ever wonder? I hear people say, I just can't understand why they can't see the beauty of Jesus. For the same reason you would not be seeing it if God had not done a supernatural work in your heart. Now, it goes on.

He says, I will put My Spirit within you. My, it's amazing. I will put My Spirit within you.

Some theologians say, based on a few passages in Ephesians and Colossians, that if the genuine believer had not been truly, magnificently and supernaturally strengthened by the power of God, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit would kill them. This is supernatural work that's going on. Isn't it amazing? I use this illustration quite often.

Let's say I arrive, you know, late. The pastor's all mad. He says, You just show up any time you want? Don't appreciate the opportunity to preach here? I say, Oh pastor, my tire went flat out on the highway and I was changing the tire and a lug nut rolled out of my hand and rolled into the middle of the highway and I wasn't thinking and I ran out and I grabbed the lug nut and I stood up and when I stood up, five yards in front of me was a 30 ton logging truck going 120 miles an hour and it ran me down and well, I just, you know, that's why I'm late.

He could only come to one of two conclusions. I'm either a liar or I'm insane. And when I began to wager with him and debate with him and say, Why are you saying that I'm a liar? Why are you saying I'm insane? Why are you saying these things about me? He'll say, Don't you understand? It is impossible to have an encounter with a logging truck that weighs 30 tons going 120 miles an hour without being changed.

Then why is it so many American Christians say they have an encounter with God and there's no evidence of transformation whatsoever? Again, behold the power of the Holy Spirit. Well, He can't. Yes, He can.

Yes, He can. And I'll show you that. Look what it says.

And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. The Hebrew word here, make you. I will make you walk in My statutes.

I'll make you. No, God can't make me do anything. I heard one man stand up one time in the church where a man was preaching that and he said, well, if God can't make me be saved, He can't make me go to hell either.

If your God is that impotent, then I don't have anything to fear. Look at what it says. In some translations it says, make.

I'll put My Spirit in you and I will cause you, I will make you. The Hebrew word is very strong here. I will make you do what? This is what He says.

I will make you or cause you to walk in My statutes. Walk means a style of life. Not just intermittent sort of obedience every once in a while.

No. I will put the power of My Holy Spirit, the very indwelling of My Holy Spirit in you, and you will walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. Here we're seeing a person who's genuinely been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And what happens? One of the things you will note about them is that they're walking as a style of life in the statutes of God and they're careful to follow them. Jesus said in Matthew 7, depart from Me. Speaking to people who professed Him as Lord, depart from Me.

Depart from Me. Those of you who practice lawlessness, lawlessness is just the opposite of this. This is saying that they will walk in His statutes and be careful to keep His ordinances.

Lawlessness is a person who lived as though Jesus never gave a law to obey. Basically, what He's saying there in Matthew 7 is depart from Me. All of you who professed to be My disciples and yet you lived as though I never gave you a law to obey, you lived as though I never gave you a statute or wisdom to follow.

And again, He's not saying that salvation is through works. He is saying that salvation is a supernatural work of God whereby the very nature of a human being is changed, and that nature will produce new fruit. That nature will desire to come to Christ.

When the Bible, when theologians sometimes talk about irresistible, that the calling of God upon His people is irresistible, it doesn't mean that God grabs someone against their will and He forces them to come. It means that God changes their nature by His supernatural power and with that new nature they have a new will and they look upon Him as beautiful and they willingly follow. You know, I hear people talk all the time about free will, free will.

There is no such thing. That is such a silly free will. Or better yet, let's put it this way.

You've got free will. If you're not a Christian, you have free will. The problem is, you don't have good will.

And with your free will, you only do evil. And until God changes your nature, your free will will be nothing but evil and will do nothing but reject God. You say, well, I've never heard anything like this because you do not read old books.

The theology of Christianity in America. Let me just share something with you to help you out because I think some of you are kind of in shock. If I stand up here and tell you that I'm preaching to you the truth.

And a modern day preacher is standing over here who preaches just the opposite of what I preach tonight. And he tells you, I'm preaching the truth. And then I say, well, I'm preaching the truth because this is what the Bible says.

And he says, well, I'm preaching the truth because this is what the Bible says. I mean, we could go on forever. What do you do? Well, here's one of the principles of hermeneutics or Bible interpretation and it's this.

You always do your theology in the context of the church. Now what does that mean? It means this. If I interpret a verse a certain way and then I study back through 2,000 years of Christian history and no one else interprets it that way, interprets the Scripture that way, as a matter of fact, they interpret it just the opposite, who's probably wrong? Me.

But if I interpret a Scripture a certain way and then I go back 100 years and see that's the common interpretation of all the godly men and women who studied the Scripture, and then I go back 200 years and 300 years all the way to Augustine and on, and the full course of Christian history is agreeing with everything I say, I'm pretty much probably OK. I want you to know most of what's in modern pop American preaching cannot be found in Christian history. It's true.

Because we've adopted this. I don't want none of that theology stuff. I just want Jesus.

The problem is, theology comes from two words, theos and logos, a discourse about God. You're saying I want Jesus, but I don't want to hear any discourse on God. Don't want none of that doctrine stuff.

Hebrew word leka means teaching. I don't want to be taught. My dear friend, there's wildfire out there today.

Noise. Hoopla. TV programs in churches, they look like the six flags over Jesus.

It's pitiful. The truth is scriptural, and it stings, and it's offensive, but it heals and brings salvation. It is true.

Now, I want us to look at the last part of this text. He says in 28, you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers, so you will be My people, and I will be your God. He will make you His, and in making you His, He will zealously and jealously guard over you.

He will be an ever-present fire and a pillar of smoke. He will not let you go. Have you ever seen people profess to know Jesus Christ, and yet they can do anything they want? Live in immorality.

I mean, every sort of thing, and God never seems to touch them. Why is that? According to Hebrews 12, it's because they're illegitimate children and not true children of God. If you're a true believer here tonight, you will be able to say, sometimes God just seems to hem me in.

He seems to cut me off in front and in back and beside me, above me, below me. He's all over. I mean, I step out of line.

He's right on me. You ought to rejoice. That is the sign of sonship.

God will not leave you alone. Now, I want us to go for a moment to Jeremiah 31. And I want to show you some things.

Jeremiah 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. This is talking about the new covenant.

It's talking about what He's going to do at the advent of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus Christ, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension up into heaven, the pouring forth of the Spirit. He says this, It's not like the covenant 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.

God says with the coming of the Messiah, He's going to do something so much greater than what He did in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt that it's going to be called something entirely new. Something spectacular, unheard of. I want to tell you something.

You probably didn't recognize this, but this has a lot to do with the Lord's Supper. Jesus is sitting around there. They're getting ready for the Lord's Supper.

They've made all the preparations for the Passover and everything else. And the disciples are there with expectation, wondering what's going to go on. And all of a sudden Jesus goes, This is the blood of the new covenant.

Now that doesn't mean much to you. When He said new covenant, I can assure you those disciples began to tremble. And one of them looked at the other one and said, Did He just say what I thought I heard Him say? Do you mean what we've been waiting for for 700 years? He's come upon us this night.

This new thing that would so supersede the deliverance of Israel from Egypt that that thing would not even be talked about again. Something so great that our ears would tingle and our heart would burst. See how much you miss in Scripture? They were waiting for this for over 700 years.

And He goes on and He says this, 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 hearts I will write it. What did Israel have coming out of Egypt? They had a tablet, two tablets, carved out of stone, external and hard.

Rules, regulations, commands, cold, put your face to a stone, you'll feel no warmth. But He says in this new covenant, I will not write My laws with My finger upon two tablets of external stone, but I will write My laws upon their very heart. My law and their heart will become one, intertwined.

They will be My tablets. And I will write on their heart. And because I write My law on their heart, men will be able to read My law by looking at their lives.

And then He goes on and He says this, And I will be their God and they shall be My people. Many theologians, and I agree with them, would say this, The whole story of redemptive history is about this one thing. I will be their God and they will be... And then He goes, 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, declares the Lord.

Now, listen to this. What is this talking about? This supernatural writing of the law of God upon the heart of every true believer? This indwelling of the Holy Spirit who according to John 14-16 would be teaching every believer? What is it? You take a brand new believer and he knows a brand new, truly, regenerate, converted babe in Christ, and he knows more about the Gospel and more about the person of God than the unconverted theologian who's been studying for 60 years. And when that person hears truth, they just respond to it.

I'll never forget a few days after I was converted to the University of Texas. There was this group and they came on campus and I was just walking by. I didn't even know where Philippians was in the Bible.

I didn't know anything. I was a brand new believer. And I was walking by and they were singing all the songs that we sang at the church where I had been attending.

So I drew near. Oh, my goodness. It's wonderful out here in the middle of campus.

Praise the Lord. And as I began to listen to the same music and then listen to some of the things they started saying, I got so afraid and I didn't even know why. I just knew they were wrong.

And I ran back to one of the young men who had been instrumental in teaching me the Gospel. I ran back and I said, this and this happened. Why am I so scared? I mean, I weighed 235 back then.

I was pretty strong. I wasn't scared of anything. I was terrified.

I said, what's happened? He goes, what group was it? And I said, and they go, that's probably the biggest cult in Austin, Texas. I can turn on so-called... this is an oxymoron, kind of like jumbo shrimp. I can turn on Christian television.

I can turn on Christian television and just with a pad of paper out in front of me, write down. If you give me probably less than a day and I sit in front of that thing, I can write out every major heresy in Christianity that has been known in the last 20 centuries. And yet people give their money and do their stuff constantly.

Follow like sheep. I'm not saying all. There's some good Bible teachers.

You have your Charles Stanleys. You have different men, yes, of course. But I can turn on those things and just start writing.

I mean, you can almost go... Like if I'm teaching a group of seminary students, it would like be, okay, we're going to be working on this heresy that was found in the 5th century. It's kind of really gnostic. Okay, normally we would go to the library and look up some ancient manuscripts, but you guys are really struggling with your Greeks, so I want you to go to Christian television today because there's this certain guy preaching and he says the same thing.

The lie never changes. It just evolves. And he says this, that there will be a knowledge of God among the people.

I was preaching one time at a First Baptist Church and they asked me, they said, well, would you maybe go to the youth group and teach a bit? Would you please do that for us? I said, well, I would love to. I mean, if I have time, just... So I go in and I start teaching and the young guy who was directing the whole thing, he kind of left. He looked kind of angry.

Then the pastor comes down and after I get through teaching, he goes, Brother Paul, we need to go to the office. And I say, what's wrong? He goes, well, you've been accused of teaching heresy. I thought, well, okay.

So we go in there and I sit down and I knew the pastor, he knew me, and the youth guy sitting there and the pastor said, okay, what did Brother Paul say? And the youth guy, you know what they look like, mousse in their hair and everything. He goes, Pastor, he said that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. And the pastor went, what? He said that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh.

And the pastor goes, well, He is God in the flesh. The boy brought up in church all his life and I knew the pastor, good preaching. But he'd gone through those evangelical hoops and prayed his little prayer and got into kind of a southern Bible culture in which everything's going around the church and there's so many wonderful activities.

Well, of course, it's going to attract young people. Isn't that what we want? Without any knowledge whatsoever of God. Can be promoted through the ranks, to be a leader among the youth.

Doesn't even have a clue who God is. But you'd never know it because of the way the church is done nowadays. It goes on.

What will be the greatest knowledge that these people will have? It goes on to say this. I will forgive their iniquity and their sins. I will remember no more.

Believers, even brand new believers, the one thing that a brand new believer... He might not be able to explain to you the Trinity because, well, after 23 years, I can't do that. He will tell you this. My sins have been forgiven.

My iniquities, my sins, He remembers no more. And He'll tell you why. Because Jesus Christ shed His own blood for my soul.

And that is the only reason. Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to the cross I cling.

I trust not in my church nor my baptism nor my piety. I trust in Christ and Christ alone. Now, just quickly, over to the next expression of the covenant in chapter 33 of Jeremiah.

And look at this. Oh, I love this so much. This is one of the most beautiful things.

He says in chapter 32, verse 37, Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath, and in My great indignation, and I will bring them back to this place and I will make them dwell in safety. Does that sound familiar? Right up there with Ezekiel, isn't it? They shall be My people and I will be their God. There we go again.

The great goal of God and His providence in electing a people for Himself, for His Son. And then He says this. Now look at this.

Look, I want to straighten you out theologically tonight, okay? And I will give them one heart in one way. And I want you to understand something. You turn on modern pop Christianity and what are you going to hear? Songs and preachings about what? We just all need to be one.

We just need to throw out all these denominations. The problem is when you throw out a denomination and you start a non-denominational church, you just started another denomination. Did you know that? We just need to throw out all this stuff and we just all need to be one.

The church is not one. You know, we need the church to be one. Well, now I've got to make a decision when I hear you say that.

Either God's lying or you are. Because God said over there in John 17 when Jesus prayed, Jesus asked to make them one. Are you saying the Father denied Him? And then here in the New Covenant promise for the church He said, and I will give them one heart.

Now what does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. Let me give an example. Many years ago when I was serving in Ceja de Selva in Peru.

Ceja de Selva is the eyebrow of the jungle up in the north. It was during terrorist times. Sometimes the sendero luminoso had control.

It was a red zone. We weren't supposed to be up there. We smuggled ourselves up there in the back of a grain truck.

We jumped out at night. We made our way up into the jungle because there was a church that was suffering persecution and was scared and we knew we had to get up there. Alright, I make my way through.

I've got a poncho on and a big hat. Boy, did I look funny. I've got this big hat on and I'm trying to look really short.

And we make our way up this trek. It's about 12 hours, like going up a 45 degree angle in two feet of mud. It's horrid.

Just wore out. We make it to this one town, but we had to go to Ingenio and then Tamboli. But we couldn't make it that far, so we stopped over in this one village.

We're waiting there, me and a guy named Paco, there on the outside of the village and I'm going, you're shorter than me. You go in. Because we didn't know if the terrorists owned the village or not.

So we sat there. Okay, we'll both go in. We go in.

It's pitch dark. It's about 10 o'clock at night. There's no lights, no electricity.

We see this guy standing over there. Paco walks up to him and goes, ¿Hay hermanos por aquí? Are there brothers here? And the guy is kind of a little bit drunk and stuff and he goes, ¿Por ahí, vieja? Over there. The old lady.

So we walk over there. Knock on the door. Little old lady.

Nazarene. Little old Nazarene. She opens the door.

She sees me. I'm about 8 feet tall compared to her. She's about this big.

And I say, Somos pastores. Necesitamos ayuda. We're pastors.

We need help. She grabbed me and Paco like this. Pulled us in the door.

Run us down into this carved out piece of like cave looking thing which was her basement. Stuck us down there. Ran out.

Killed a chicken. Cut up Yucca. Called some other brothers.

They came over. They're all looking out the windows and making sure no one knows what's going on. And they keep us down there all night.

And they feed us. And they give us water. And they care for us.

And they watch the house all night. Now, theologically, me and the little Nazarene lady would disagree on some things. Okay? We would.

But do you see what God's done? She really is a Christian. We had one heart. Jesus' prayer was answered.

What you need to understand is I can get on a plane flying to Romania, sit down by a Calvinistic Baptist and talk to him about Jesus and walk away thinking I don't even think that guy's saved. And I can sit down by some wild Charismatic and talk to them and think that guy's not saved either. But I can go and sit down by another Charismatic or Assembly of God or a Baptist and sit down with them even though I might disagree with a few things in their life.

If they are trusting in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, if they are clinging to Him, if they are loving Him, if they are risking their life for Him, if they adore Him, if they boast that all their iniquities and all their sins have been forgiven because Jesus Christ died for them on a cross, we're just one. We're just one. He really did give His people one heart.

He really did. And yeah, I can still be from a different denomination and I can still disagree, but I can't fight. We really are one.

He gave us one heart. And one of the ways in which we have one heart, we know we have one heart is because it also says He'll give us one way. That little woman was concerned about holiness.

She was concerned about doing what? I was hungry and you fed me. Let me just share with you something. I'm going to run a lot of rapids because I'm not going to be here.

I might not be here after tonight, but I'm not going to be here very long. Let me tell you something. Have you ever heard that passage? I was in prison and you didn't visit me.

I was hungry and you didn't feed me. I was naked and you didn't clothe me. So we all decide we need to get clothing ministries and prison ministries and everything else going on.

Well, we need clothing ministries and we need prison ministries and we need to feed the poor, but that's not what that passage means at all. So stop using it out of context. You say, well, it works.

Yeah, but you can't do that. Just because it works doesn't mean you can use it that way. This is what it means.

Because Jesus tells people there, the sheep and the goats, He says, I was in prison and you didn't visit me. I was sick, you didn't visit me. I was hungry, you didn't feed me.

I was naked, you didn't clothe me. You're going to go to hell. Does that mean if you don't have a prison ministry or help the poor, you're going to go to hell? What's He talking about? This is what He's talking about.

I understood this really well when I went to Peru. In most prisons around the world, when they throw you into prison, guess what? They don't feed you. They don't clothe you.

They don't give you anything. They don't even give you water. Yeah.

And so if someone from the outside doesn't come every day and bring you food, and bring you water, and bring you clothing, you're going to die. And what Jesus is talking about is this. He's saying, we've got these unbelievers.

They're meeting one night in the catacombs there in Rome. Roman soldiers break the door down. They come in and they grab a few of them, the two pastors, and they take them and they throw them in the prison there.

Now, the body of believers that weren't carried away, that weren't discovered that night, they're sitting there going, two of us are in prison and they're going to die. Okay, who's going to go? The guy says, I'll go. Alright, look, I'll go.

Look, you know, I have a wife and two children. So when I go, I'll go take care of my wife and my children. Okay.

Here's the food. Here's the water. Here's the extra clothing.

Oh, here's that ointment that the one needs for the whip marks on his back. Okay. Goes up there, makes his way through all the families that are visiting criminals, through the bars and passing them food, and he goes up to the two believers.

And he goes, brother, here's food. And here's the clothing. And before he gets to the eye salve, he's hit in the back of the head.

He's struck down and he's drugged inside the prison and he's thrown in because the Roman soldiers that were looking at him, they said, oh, we got us another one now. What it's talking about, if you're not willing, if you have sacrificial, even dying love for someone suffering because of My name, you go to hell. And it doesn't mean, again, that you're saved by doing sacrificial works.

What he's saying is if I have truly regenerated your heart and given you a new nature, if I have truly put My Spirit in you, you will not allow another believer to just rot away in prison, but you will go to Him even if it costs you your own life. And that's the way everyone will know that you are truly My believer. See that little verse that you really like? Everyone will know you're a believer by the love.

It gets a little costly when you look at it through the eyes of something other than American, doesn't it? It gets a little dangerous. That's what he's saying. And that's what is happening here.

What is that one way? I'll tell you what that one way is. Sacrificial love. Washing the feet of the saints.

Caring for them. Not robbing your brothers by all that you own. Living as a sacrifice.

Make my life a living sacrifice. It's more than a song. It's a verse.

And it's to be obeyed. Now, look at this. It's beautiful.

It's beautiful. He says, and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear Me always. He'll give them a heart that will fear Him always.

It doesn't say fear Him part of the time and then fall away. Fear Him always. This new heart that a true believer receives, it will fear Him always.

And it will be for their own good. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and it is for our own good. But not only this, this is the only promise in the Bible to believers who have children.

They may fear Me always and for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I don't know if my children will be converted, but I do know this. God has done good to my children by giving them a father who has a new heart and not giving them a father that was like he was before he was born again.

If your father and your mother in all their perfection and everything else truly love the Lord and truly fear Him, young person, you need to get down on your knees and realize that God has been good to you. And then, this is my favorite part, verse 40, I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good. Okay? Look at that.

And all the Baptists are going, yep, security of the believer. He's going to make an everlasting covenant with us and he'll never turn away. Guess what? That's right.

That's what he says. The problem is, Baptists always stop reading. Look at the rest.

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. You see the difference? Here's how God keeps a man saved. It's not just by saying, okay, I've saved you, now live like hell.

You know, like most Baptists say, I'm saved. I don't go to church, I don't read my Bible, don't care about missions, cuss out the pastor, cuss out like a sailor, do everything I want, I'm immoral, you know, Bubba Christianity. Bless God I'm saved because once saved, always saved.

Well, once truly saved, always saved. But the evidence that you have been truly saved and He is keeping you is that He puts His fear in your heart so that you will not turn away from Him. And every time the Bible warns of apostasy, of falling away, it is a proper warning given to His children.

They will not fall away when they hear that warning because He has put His fear in them. You see, it's a beautiful text. I make a covenant with Him, I will not turn away from Him, but they won't turn away from me either because I'll put my fear in their heart.

Isn't that beautiful? And then look at this, verse 41, my goodness, we're going to stop here. I will rejoice over them to do them good. You know the way this is used in other places? Like a bridegroom rejoicing over his bride on the night of their honeymoon.

I don't know about you, but I was pretty excited. I don't think I've ever been so excited in all my life. I don't think I've ever been happier.

My beautiful wife. I mean, to wait so long and there she is. Wow! God says, I will rejoice over them.

And I will rejoice over them to do them good. People have this idea, you know, most Christians, if I wrote a hymn about the way most Christians think it would be to God, You are holy and I am a worm. Step on me and watch me squirm.

They have this idea that God just, okay, I've saved you, but don't ask anything else because really you make me sick. I've saved you, but you're just a mess. He says, I rejoice over you to do you good.

I can't wait to do you good. I'm excited about doing you good. I live to do you good.

Nothing makes me happier than doing you good. That's an exciting thing to know, isn't it? And then he says this, and I will faithfully plant them in this land, look at this, with all my heart and with all my soul. It doesn't say that anywhere else in the Bible.

I will faithfully accomplish absolutely everything I promise to my child and I will do it with all my heart and all my soul. Every bit of divine being will be poured into accomplishing every promise I've ever given you. And that's why I dance.

That's why I sing because I'm happy. I sing because I'm free. One of the greatest revelations that I have ever had regarding God, and I don't mean that I saw anything, but in a battling with massive depression years and years ago, working 18 hours a day as a missionary, just hoping that somehow God would think I was okay, that He would be proud of me, and just literally running myself straight into the ground where I... In Peru one day, on the third floor of an old building where we had church, I just collapsed on the stairwell and actually said this, God, I fear hell and do not want to go there, but I have failed You so miserably I am ashamed to go to heaven.

If only You could prepare a place for me where I would never have to look at Your face. The reality of being totally unable to please God in my own power, and then like light breaking through, all of a sudden, it's like God... I could imagine in heaven, okay, we finally got Him where we want Him. Now, open up the doors.

And to realize in one second that I don't have to move one thirty-second of an inch to the right or to the left to be loved of God. That the love of God cannot increase because it is perfect, cannot decrease because it is all powerful. That He rejoices over me to do me good.

That He loves me, and that in spite of all my failure, in spite of all the things that I do wish I had not done, in spite of every weakness, in spite of... Believer, listen to this, because you don't really know it, you don't really believe it, so listen to it. If you truly are born again and truly are a child of God, the first time you see Jesus, He will not have a scowl on His face.

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