

New Life Baptist Church - Part 8

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the essential characteristics of true discipleship and the call to embody Christlikeness in our lives.

Duration: 1:23:41

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Christlikeness", "Discipleship"

Description

Paul Washer emphasizes the profound characteristics of true discipleship, focusing on the need for humility, mourning over sin, and a deep hunger for righteousness. He illustrates that genuine Christianity is not merely about external actions but about an internal transformation that reflects Christ's character. Washer challenges the congregation to examine their lives and relationships, urging them to embody gentleness and compassion, especially in their interactions with others. He reminds believers that true blessing comes from recognizing their dependence on God's grace and the importance of being Christ-like in their daily lives.

Transcript

A guest speaker, you want to introduce them well. I'll tell you what I know about Brother Paul Washer, okay? I know that his desire is to preach the Word of God, that God would be glorified. And I cannot think of a more wonderful introduction than to introduce a man of God to preach the Word of God.

So Brother Washer, if you will come. I would like to thank you for the great privilege that is mine to be here with you and to preach. And before I go any further, I would like to thank you for your hospitality, the place that you've prepared for me.

I thank you for the snacks that were left and just your kindness. The pastor asked me, he said, well, is everything suitable to you? I said, Pastor, you're talking to a man who's lived in a tent. Anything is suitable to me.

But it is wonderful and I thank you very, very much, very much. Oye, hermana, como estas? Bien? Ah, que bien. We have almost a family, I guess.

My wife is Latin and it's such a blessing always. It's good to see you here. Good to see you.

All right. Before I go any further, I'd like to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I come before you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

And I have nothing except Him. And He is sufficient. Father, I renounce all hope in piety, all hope in devotion.

Lord, I have come to know that I can't even sing of my love for you because it's such a pitiful, fickle thing. I rejoice. I disdain what I have done and I rejoice in what you have done for me.

I thank you for your mercy that's new every morning. I thank you for your grace that knows no bounds. I thank you for your kindness.

And I would pray, Lord, that you would work in me and change me, work through me. And, Lord, I am well aware that the only reason I stand here tonight is because I am the most vile, the most base, the most thing that is not, the weakest. You always use the weakest.

And I praise you. In Jesus' name, Amen. I want us to go to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5, verse 13.

You know, before I read this text, it's important to understand that although we must preach what God has laid upon our heart to preach, that very often what He's laid upon our heart to preach cannot be separated from what He's doing in the preacher's life. And I do feel led of the Lord to preach on what I'm going to preach, but I want you to know that this passage is not just something that I have exegeted or studied, and I'm going to relate it to you, but it is something that God continues to use in my life to break me into a million pieces. And the only reason I have authority to preach this is because it's true, and because God's used it as a hammer in my own life.

It is not because I have succeeded in these things or am an example of these things, but these are the very things that the Lord is bringing to mind to show me that I'm not as Christ-like as I would suppose. Let's read verse 13. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its taste, how should its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Now, this passage is often read about how the church and Christians ought to come out of the salt shaker and be poured out on the earth. This passage is often taught in a militant sort of way that we ought to go out there and we ought to affect our culture and we ought to change our culture. We ought to have a purifying effect upon it, a preserving effect upon it.

Our lives should be such that they add flavor to the dull fallen world around us. And all that's true, but that's not the main point of this passage. It's talking about something much more profound.

And it's this. There are certain elements or properties that make up salt. That's just all there is to it.

Now, you take those properties out, you no longer have salt. Even if you take those properties out and replace those properties with some other things that are very splendid, it still doesn't matter. Salt has certain characteristics and you take those characteristics, those properties, those elements out and you no longer have salt.

That's the point he's making here. True discipleship, true Christianity, true Christlikeness has certain properties, certain characteristics, certain elements. You take those out and even replace them with good

things, you no longer have Christianity, you no longer have Christlikeness.

You have some perverted, deformed monster. But you no longer have what Christianity is really all about. Now, the question is, what are these elements? What are these characteristics? Now, I could go all through the Bible in proof text, I could pull out verses here and there, but there's no need for that.

Because in the context, he teaches us what are the basic building blocks, the basic characteristics, the defining demonstration of true discipleship, of truly following Christ, of a Christlike character. He says this in verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You know, I was preaching in a place one time that desperately needed a pastor. The church had been destroyed by a renegade of a man. He had pastored them for many years, almost two decades, but he had acted like he was some sort of God or Lord over them.

He had despised them, he had abused them, he had done all sorts of things. And I got up to the pulpit, I'll never forget, one Sunday morning, that Sunday morning, the first Sunday morning, and I preached, and afterwards, after preaching, God seemed to tremendously move in the sermon and the service. Afterwards, I stepped down from the pulpit and a great group of people came forward and said, you need to be our pastor.

And I looked at them and I said, are you out of your mind? And they said, what do you mean? I preach one sermon and you think I'm qualified to be a pastor? You see, I've heard people say, Paul Washer is a man of God. How do you know that? I mean, how do you really know that? The devil speaks well and can wear every sort of mask you can imagine. What is the defining characteristics of a man of God or a woman of God or a child of God? Is it their ministry? The fact that a lot of people come to hear them? Or God has used them to send out missionaries or this or that or some other thing? Is that the defining rule to tell us that they're truly Christ-like? Absolutely not.

Absolutely not. Here is where we see what we are. Right here.

This tells us whether we're walking with God or not. Whether we're filled with the Holy Spirit or not. Whether we're growing in Christ-likeness or not.

Maybe whether or not we're saved. Because the old Puritans used this text as a means to grant assurance to believers or to take assurance away from false professors. You see, because the test here is this.

Not all the things we know. Knowledge is very important. I study the Word of God.

It's my job to teach the Word of God. Theology is extremely important. And the reason why Christianity in America is in such a state as it is is because of a lack of good theology.

But at the same time, it's not just what you know. I was teaching a group of students a while back and I said, you've already got more truth in your head than you'll ever be able to obey. And it's not just doctrine.

It's not just ethics. Pharisees have ethics. They have more rules than they've got paper to write them on.

It's not just homeschooling. It's something much deeper. The true Christ-likeness that is described here.

You know, I heard a preacher years ago. It was Leonard Ravenhill, actually. He said, the world isn't looking for a new definition of Christianity.

It's looking for a new demonstration of Christianity. But you know, we've even messed up the idea of what that demonstration is supposed to be. Is it just supposedly powerful preaching? Or is it supposedly miracles or this or that or some other thing? Or is it character? Is it Christ-likeness? Is it looking like Him, talking like Him, acting like Him, loving like Him? You want to know whether or not I'm a man of God? Look at the way I treat my wife.

How loving and compassionate and kind and merciful I am. That will tell you what I am. Not a sermon that even the devil could preach.

You see. So, let's look at this passage. First of all, I want you to see something.

In verse 1, it says, Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. Now, I don't know if you've ever been to Israel, but it's really difficult to find a mountain. Why does He say mountain? Well, it could be called a mountain.

It's the infallible Word of God. But there's a much deeper reason why He uses the word mountain. There's one other mountain, very, very important in the Bible.

It's found in the Old Testament. Moses went up on it. And when He came down, He came down with the law of God written with the finger of God.

And that mountain always is an expression of authority. Here is the law. Here's the big stuff.

The important stuff. The stuff that's been given by God. It is not a vain thing, Moses would say.

It's your life. Well, guess what? That's why Matthew is using this terminology. Remember, Matthew was writing to the Jews who held Moses up above everything.

And he's saying, well, one greater than Moses has come. And now He sits on that mountain. And He opens up His mouth.

And He teaches His law. And so many people think that in Christianity and in the New Covenant that the bar has supposedly been lowered. Boy, I'm glad I didn't have to live back in those Old Testament times when it was really difficult to serve the Lord.

Oh, my friend, you're so wrong. The bar was not lowered with the coming of the one greater than Moses. The bar was raised.

Moses talked about tithing. Jesus talked about possibly giving everything you have away. Moses talked about loving your neighbor, your fellow Jew.

Jesus talked about loving the very ones who crucify you. It's a completely different world now. It's not external.

It's not just doing the right things. It's being the right person. It comes from within.

And that's frightening, isn't it? Sometimes we think too much of men. Do you realize that? We think, boy, there are some special guys out there that have really got it on the ball. Well, I've yet to meet one.

And I've met some of the big ones. I've yet to meet one. Do you realize that you would not want your entire life exposed, even the last week of your life exposed? Every nook and cranny of it, every moment of it.

Do you realize that? You'd do anything to keep that from happening. Guess what? So would I. You see, don't call anyone Christ or Father or Great Teacher. The only thing you are are brothers.

That's all you'll ever be. And there's no great one among you except for Jesus Christ. And all's we are are brothers and sisters and Christ.

And the one who is going to preach to you is just as needy, if not more. God can't work. As long as we live in this delusion, then what did you come out here to hear tonight? An expert? I want to be like Jesus.

Do you? I'm not like Jesus, but I want to be. Verse 2, it says, well, let's stay in verse 1 for a moment. He went up on the mountain and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

His disciples came to him. His disciples will always come to him. To him.

They will not be satisfied with anyone else. They won't. They won't.

And even though he'll say things to them that they will not understand, they can't go and just walk away shaking their head because they know they've got to understand it because they know that he alone possesses and teaches the word of life. Disciples will always come to him. I know so many people in America today, it seems like they run to and fro throughout the land looking for a teacher.

To and fro throughout the land, lifting up men, finding something or someone. Your only hope is to run to the teacher, Jesus Christ. And if you're a disciple, a true disciple of Jesus Christ, you will not be satisfied with anyone but him.

No man is to stand as your priest. Not even the pastor. You have one priest, Melchizedek, the one who has been lifted up on high, Jesus Christ, and unto him you must run.

He's the only one who can explain this passage to you. He is this passage. These are not just his words, these are an accurate description of him.

He says in verse 2, And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Wouldn't it have been something to have been there on that day? A wonderful privilege, a terrifying privilege. To whom much is given, much is required. You know there's danger in us going any farther.

You know that preaching is an extremely dangerous thing. Did you know that? It's dangerous for me because if I'm wrong, I'm found to be a false prophet, and on the day of judgment I'll undergo greater condemnation. It's dangerous for you if I tell the truth.

Because you'll be held accountable for it. You will. Now, before we go on, I want to say one other thing, and it's this.

We live in a culture of doers. And we basically judge ourselves and judge others based upon how we perform. And that is why in Christianity today, it's all about ministry.

What you do, the size of your church, how well you perform, what you've done. That really has very little significance in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. In the kingdom of Jesus Christ, it is this.

What you are becoming. The way your character and your life is being transformed. And when I say character, be very, very careful.

Because this is not just about doing a character study. This is not just about trying to add on to your life certain qualities. Because even that can become legalism and death.

It is about drawing near to God through Christ. It is about Christ being the vine and you being the branches. It is about not your ability through the power of your own will to live a certain way, but to be connected to the vine and the life of Jesus Christ being lived out through you.

There is a big difference. One is legalism and the other is spirituality. And over all these things is love.

When I was driving here this afternoon, I had the radio on and I was listening to a lot of the hearings and things that were going on. And there were a lot of men who I consider rather wicked, speaking wicked things. And I won't say that the Lord spoke to me because I didn't hear a voice.

But just a question popped into my mind. One of the speakers who I considered most vile in politics was speaking. And a question popped into my mind.

Do you love Him? Do you love Him? Do you care for Him? Do you care for His soul? Do you think that you would be any different from Him if it hadn't been for my grace intervening? What do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast? Who do you think you are apart from me? Do you love Him? Do you love Him? You see, over all these things, love. Unconditional, self-defacing, sacrificial, washing feet of your enemy, love. Now, let's look at some of these characteristics.

First of all, the word blessed. What does that mean? I really don't know. And I'll tell you why.

It's just too big. It's just too big a word. There are so many ways of looking at it that we could literally spend the entire week just going over what does it mean to say blessed.

It's like a great big bag with everything good from God put in it and handed to you. It's a state before God, a relationship with Him. It's reconciliation.

It is peace. It is approval. It is intimacy.

It is blessing. It's everything. Who is blessed? The one who's done a lot? Or the one who is like Jesus? He goes on and he says... Let me stop there.

Let me say something to the young men. Young men, when I became a Christian, I can't tell you how many times through the night I would pray with tears. God, I want to be used of you.

God, I want to preach your word. If I could go back, I would have changed all those prayers. I would change all of them.

I don't care so much now about being used by Him. I don't care that much for preaching. There's a greater thing that I missed.

All the prayers I prayed about being used of God, I should have prayed, Lord, make me like Jesus. The rest of the stuff would just take care of itself. Make me like Jesus.

And after all, young man, why do you want to be used of God? What's the reason? So that you'll be something? So that you'll not have to hang your head on the day of judgment? Instead of praying, oh Lord, use me, maybe it would be better to pray, Lord, use my brother and let me carry his bags. Exalt my brother. And make me his helper.

Oh, don't esteem things that the world esteems. Esteem that which Christ tells you to esteem. It says, blessed are the poor in spirit.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Does it mean to be sad? Well, no, not really, but it could, but not really. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? It is having nothing. It is recognition that apart from his grace, apart from his unconditional love, apart from his kindness, you would be the vilest creature ever made.

And that even now, if he did not sustain you in what he has done for you, if even one fraction of a second before you entered into glory, he were to take his hand off of you, you would deny him. That you have nothing of which to boast. Nothing except Christ and Christ alone.

I used to tell young preachers, you need the power of God on your life to preach. Now I tell them, you need the power of God on your life to breathe. Did you bring yourself into existence? Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps? No.

Do you sustain your existence? Breathe in, breathe out. Who gave that to you? The things that you've accomplished, who gave you a mind and hands that work? And the gains you've made in Christianity, what enabled you to do that if they were indeed gains? The grace of God. If you have any other boast, you're going to hell.

I had a preacher call me a year and a half ago and he said, I want you to come preach in my church because I'm very afraid that many of the members are lost. I said, what makes you suspect them? He said, they're all homeschoolers. I said, oh really? I said, I homeschool my little boy.

What are you talking about? And he said something that terrified me. He said, you make anything other than Jesus Christ your banner and your boast and your pride. You've departed from the faith.

He said, I've got people in my church, if you tell them to get up and give their testimony, it will start off like this. Five years ago I learned about homeschooling. He said, I fear for their salvation.

Is that not true? It is true. You can cross every T, dot every I and your child will become a two-fold son of hell apart from the grace of God. Don't you realize that? Don't you realize? Nothing in our hands do we have, but that God be merciful.

One time God moved in a place and people were coming forward. And I went down and this young boy was crying out to God. And I thought, well, I'll just go down there and pray beside him.

And he was crying out, oh God, I just want you to give me what I deserve. I tapped him on the shoulder. I said, no, no, no.

He said, why? I said, no, no. Don't you ever do that again. Because the only thing you deserve is hell.

And if He were to give you what you deserve, and He just might if in your heart you want Him to give everybody else what they deserve. Do you understand? Give those politicians what they deserve. Okay? Would you like to stay in the room while I do that? Because you'll be included in the bunch.

What are you? You will never be anything except a recipient of the grace of God. Add to it undeserved. Undeserved.

An old preacher, one time I heard him say, you talk about passing through the eye of that needle. You'll not pass through the gates of glory with one shred of self-righteousness on your back. As a matter of fact, that's what God does when He saves a man.

Sometimes I have young people come to me and they'll go, you know, the Lord converted my heart. He saved me. And I was just like walking with Him and it was just so wonderful.

And I wanted to read my Bible all the time and I wanted to pray all the time and I wanted to witness all the time. And now it's just like I have struggles reading the Bible and I have struggles praying and I have struggles and I'm becoming what I hate. I said, you're not becoming what you hate.

You've always been that way. God is just showing you what you are. You see, when you're converted, He'll give you a short time there of holding your hand and helping you a great deal.

And then what He'll do is He'll begin years and years of working death in you. Boy, I'm never going to become a TV preacher with a message like that, am I? He's going to spend years and years of working death in you, of destroying every bit of self-confidence, every bit of confidence you have in the flesh, He's going to destroy, but He will not leave you with despair because as He takes away each shred of self-confidence, He will replace it with more and more knowledge of the perfect work of Jesus Christ. That's what God's doing in the lives of many of you.

And young people, if you are in the faith, that's what God will do with you because He can do nothing with you until He does that to you. You start off, a young man like me, I was converted, the next day I'm preaching, a couple of weeks, and then I'm street preaching and I'm just like a flaming, breathing, walking John the Baptist. Boy, I thought that I was something.

Then I began to see that I couldn't do what I was telling other people to do. And I had no strength in myself. And He began to kill me.

Why is that necessary? I had a young guy come to me a while back and he writes me this long letter and he's a very godly young man. He's writing me this letter and he's saying, you know, I'm ignorant of the things of God. I don't have any zeal.

I'm just so ungodly and unrighteous. And so I wrote him back. I said, dear brother, you are much more ignorant and much more ungodly than you now realize.

I have the gift of encouragement. And he called me up on the phone and he goes, thanks? And I said, let me tell you something. I said, it's very possible that you are more godly than I am, but I'm happier than you are.

He said, what do you mean? I said, if you wake up in the morning and you cross every T and dot every I throughout the day and do all the things you're supposed to do, have that quiet time of yours and witness and do this and that and everything, how do you feel about yourself at the end of the day? He said, well, I feel pretty good. And I said, well, when you get up and you don't do any of that, how do you feel? Well, my joy is all gone. I'm just shaken in my confidence.

I said, young man, God's trying to save you from idolatry. He says, what do you mean? I said, young man, your joy and confidence comes from your performance. My joy and my confidence comes from the finished work of Jesus Christ on that cross 2,000 years ago.

I've lost all hope in the flesh. Poor in spirit. Poor in spirit.

Father, it's waking up in the morning and opening your eyes and realizing with fear, I better not move a quarter of an inch to the left or a quarter of an inch to the right without your power, lest I deny thee. I need you every hour, most gracious Lord. If I have anything that is good, it has come from you.

If I am something different from the fallen worldly men around me, it is only because you separated me and put me in your corral and you keep me there. I can hold no disdain in my heart because if it had not been for your grace, oh God, I'd make Hitler look like a choir boy. You see? Even when we see the world so wicked and twisted and perverted and powerful, so undeserving of love, so deserving of wickedness, and you cry out for them to get what they deserve, you laugh at their downfall.

I'll never forget I was preaching at a Christian university when the whole scandal broke loose of Bill Clinton. And I'll never forget, I went into the men's restroom, had to go preach. I went into the men's restroom and I heard some professors there talking and they said, we got him this time.

There's no way he can get out of it. I mean, we got him this time. And I went to them and I said, is that even Christian? Is that Christian? You got him this time? Should your heart not break in a million pieces and you fall on your face and cry out to God? Convert his heart, oh Lord.

Have mercy upon him, oh Lord. Protect his daughter, oh Lord. The shame she's going to have to bear.

No, we got him this time. That's not the Spirit of Christ. That's the Spirit of Rome in everything.

Well, I do this. That other family, they have no biblical principle. And what makes you different from them? If in fact you are, you may be worse.

God will take a bumbling parent and bless his child over a very, very knowledgeable, self-righteous one any day. He hates pride above everything. He hates pride.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Poor in spirit. If you were to walk up to a man or a woman or a young person who truly was poor in spirit and to suggest that there was something in them noble and good apart from Jesus Christ, they would become so nauseous as to vomit.

They would cry out, flee from me. They would hide their faces. Nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross I cling.

We need Him. We need Him. Whatever is done in our midst, whatever wickedness is around us, there is only one that makes a difference between the most vile and the most noble, and it is Jesus Christ and His work on that tree.

What should that make us? Full of appreciation. Full of gratitude. Full of joy.

Full of compassion. Full of mercy. Full of grace.

Oh God, save the Madonnas of the world. Oh God, watch the news only to pray, to bless. When was the last time you blessed an enemy? When was the last time you asked God to bless someone who you know is working to bring persecution down on your head in this country? When was the last time you mourned for families that aren't biblical instead of scoffing? You see? It's a whole other world out there.

A whole other world. Jesus' love is very radical. Very radical.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What is this kingdom? Well, it's kind of the yin and the yang of Christianity. I used to say that when we studied theology there in the seminary.

Why? Well, it's an unusual thing. It's kind of like a train. You know, if you're standing there going to catch the L in Chicago or there in London.

The train has come. At least the engine. It's come, but it's still coming.

All the cars haven't arrived. There's a kingdom and it is present. It's not something just future.

It is present. It is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is a kingdom that opposes Rome and all kingdoms like Rome.

It's not a kingdom made of metal or spears or bureaucrats, thank God, government in the sense as we know it. It's not something that can be brought about by human will or force or even voting. It is a kingdom that He has brought about by His own right hand.

It is a kingdom where He reigns and He is Lord and those who belong to that kingdom are children. One of the things I love to work with wood and sometimes I'll go up to a lumber mill that's run by the Mennonites and the one thing that I really appreciate about the Mennonites, one of the things of Mennonites is childlikeness. It's to be childlike.

To be simple and childlike. In this kingdom of Christ, there are no great men. They're children.

Now, there's something wonderful about children. I have a little boy that's four and another one that's two. And they really don't have much concern about reputation.

They haven't learned that evil yet. They don't even know what it is. They're so free.

Even though they're fallen and even though they must be regenerated, they must be saved, they are so different still as children. They are not about all the things that seem to creep into Christianity. They're playful.

They make no boast about what they make or what they can do. They just are. What is your Christianity like? What's it like? Is it just a whole bunch of right stuff that you do? Could it be described ever as an explosion of joy, of life, childlikeness? I go hunting.

If I don't kill something, I'm all upset. Come back home, sopping wet, covered in snow and everything else. My son, he's sitting in the blind.

He's just happy to be there. He doesn't care if he sees a deer, a turkey, anything. He's just happy to be here.

What does your Christianity look like? Let me ask you something about your life before your children. Do they see a poverty of spirit in you? Or do they see a brokenness? A tenderness in the sense of quickly noting sin in your own life? A dependence upon God? A dear friend of mine that's forgot more about God than I'll ever know, he's got a sermon on the violent taking the kingdom by force. And he makes a very, very important statement in there.

He goes, when I say that violent men come and take the kingdom by force, enter into it with might. Many people misunderstand thinking that here we have some of these strong-willed men who say, bless God, I'm going to enter into the kingdom. No matter what happens, I'm going to do it.

He said that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about men who are violent because they are so desperately needy. They know there's no other hope but to be in the kingdom.

Do your children see, parents, that have come to some solid realization that Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone is the only hope we have or ever will have. And that although all the other things we do are good, and our lifestyle can be biblical, still all of it in the end is dirt and dust, lest God move and be gracious to us. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are those who mourn. Over what? Well, we've already touched on part of this.

Mourning is simply an expression of poverty, of spirit in one sense. But mourn over what? Over what? Over ourselves. When was the last time you went to someone else? Well, let's make it personal first.

When was the last time you wept over your sin? When was the last time, sir, you wept over the fact you did not treat your wife with tenderness? When was the last time you wept over the fact that you were self-centered? You see what I'm saying? You see, here's what we do. You remember, for years and years, decades and decades, they tried to break the four-minute mile. You realize that? I mean, it was just an impossibility, they said.

And then what happened? One guy broke it. And then what happened? A couple weeks later, another guy breaks it. And then another guy breaks it.

You set something up as a standard and you never go any further. I'm afraid that one of the things that's wrong with the church today is we've set up the Ten Commandments and some external rules and say this is the standard. And no one goes any further.

You say, well, I'm a righteous man. Why? Well, I don't have false gods. I keep the Sabbath.

I don't take the Lord's name in vain. I don't make images. I honor my father and my mother.

I don't steal. I don't commit adultery. But you see, it goes so much deeper than that.

That's the bones of the thing. It's not the real thing. It goes so much deeper.

Do you mourn over the fact that sometimes when a brother's approaching you in your heart, you're thinking to yourself, oh gosh, I wish they weren't here. Does someone begin to pour out their heart to you and you think, I've got other things to do, this person. Are you ever rash? Are you ever hard? Self-centered.

I mean, it just goes on and on and on. There's so much to mourn over. And for men, I would probably say the greatest thing over which to mourn is treating our wives as an extension of ourselves and not as their own person who will receive a name that only they and Jesus will know.

They're their own individuals. Laying down our lives for them. Treating them as Christ treats the church.

You see, there's so much that you can do outwardly. But inwardly, it's not that good. Blessed are those who mourn.

Mourn over what? First of all, they mourn over their own sin. Now, let me show you something about Christianity, the way it works. If you remember when Jesus comes in the book of Mark chapter 1, He comes and He says, the time is fulfilled.

The kingdom of God is at hand. And what is your response? Repent and believe the Gospel. He described the Christian life there.

Those are both present tense imperatives in the Greek. What He says is the kingdom of God is at hand. Now spend the rest of your life repenting and believing.

That's what the Christian life is. Repenting and believing. Now, how does it work? It works this way.

Because you have to understand there's a difference between repentance unto life and a repentance unto death. Judas had a repentance unto death. Peter, a repentance unto life.

And it works this way. The moment you become a Christian, how do you become a Christian? You have a revelation of God, of His holiness, of His righteousness. You have a revelation of your sin and you repent.

But if that's all it is, then you're left in despair. There's a righteous God who's going to judge you and you're a sinner. But it's not left there.

Because not only does God reveal His righteousness and His holiness, but He reveals His grace in the face of Jesus Christ. And so with this new glimpse of God's holiness and righteousness, this new glimpse of sin and self, you are cast into repentance, but repentance does not lead to despair because Christ is revealed and the grace of God in Him is revealed and so you're lifted up with joy. And then what happens? Well, you wake up the next morning a greater revelation of God's holiness which leads you to a greater revelation of your own sin, which leads you to greater repentance and mourning.

But with that comes a greater revelation of God's love and His grace which lifts you up to greater stages of joy. And that's what he's talking about here. Blessed are those who mourn.

Blessed are those who have begun on this path of salvation. A path where they are constantly knowing more about God. A path where they are constantly knowing more about self.

A path where they are constantly repenting more and more of self-trust and self-reliance and self-righteousness, but a path where they are not cast down because they are seeing more and more of

my grace and are lifted up with greater and greater joy until the end. You have an old saint at the end of his days. He's a thousand times more holy than when he began, but he sees himself as a thousand times more unrighteous.

But he is not cast down with despair. He is a thousand times more joyful because the revelation of the grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ is so complete. It's never about arriving.

It is just the opposite. I see so many people, they wouldn't say it this way, but it's like they all think, one day I'm going to reach that level. And boy, I'm really going to walk with Him.

You reach that level, you're a Pharisee. You ever come to the realization you've reached some level, you are in mighty big trouble. Mighty big trouble.

It is a journey. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. When was the last time you mourned over your sin? When was the last time you truly felt God Almighty comforting you? Now, how does He do it? He doesn't do it like modern psychology or like Pharisees either.

Let's take Isaiah, for example. Isaiah, you know, in the year the king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple, and above Him stood the seraph, and each one having six wings, with two they covered their face, with two they covered their feet, and with two they did fly, and one cried unto the other, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.

And the post of the door moved, and the voice of Him has cried, and the house was filled with smoke. And then said I, what? Woe is me, I'm undone. Literally in Hebrew, cut me off, kill me.

Somebody please step forward and kill me. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. Modern psychology.

Oh, Isaiah, look, you're taking this too hard. You're really not that bad. Oh, come on.

Let's go have ice cream. You shouldn't think these things about yourself. They're so negative.

Modern psychology. Modern Phariseeism. You're right, you piece of scum.

You just need to get down there, and I don't think you're ever going to get back in our fellowship again, because you just don't qualify. You blew it, buddy. You went one step too far, and don't say I didn't tell you.

Right? And then God's way. Okay. Yep.

Yeah. You are a man of unclean lips. And yes, you do dwell among a people of unclean lips.

One of you angels go over there and get a coal. We're going to cleanse this man. And then we're going to raise him up and send him out.

You see? You see? A broken piece of cane. He won't throw away. Right? Smoking wick.

He will not snuff out. What does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. Little kids going down to the river.

They didn't have Wal-Marts back then. You had to make your own toys. Go down the river.

You get a piece of river cane. Down at the Jordan. What do you do? You whittle it out a little.

Makes a great flute. There's only one problem. Fragile cane in the hands of bumbling little fingers.

They're going to break. Cane breaks. Kid looks at the cane and goes, it's broken.

Throws it away. Why? He's not going to mend that thing. There's trillions of other pieces of cane around here.

I mean, there's cane everywhere. I'm not going to go back and get that broken thing. Just throw it away.

There's more where that came from. And then you walk into a house. When I was a little boy, we would have these ice storms.

Just terrible ice storms. And we'd have no electricity. No heat in the house.

Be 10 degrees below zero. Dad would put wood on the fire. We'd have these kerosene lamps.

And he'd say, boy, those people in the north are very backward, aren't they? We'd have kerosene lamps. And the worst thing that could ever happen during an ice storm was this. That the oil burned out of one of those lamps.

Because when the oil burns out of the lamp, you know what happens? The wick starts burning. You've never smelled anything quite so bad as the wick burning. And the moment it happens, you grab the lamp, you grab the wick, you grab the whole thing, throw open the door, and throw it out in the snow.

Stinks up the entire house. Stinks the whole thing up. Can't even live in there anymore.

Throw it away. Okay, that's not what Jesus does. Somebody's all broken.

The cane's all broken. Can't play music out of it. Just makes noise.

Sounds terrible. Ruins everything. Seems like everywhere that fallen believer goes, he's just making noise and making ruin.

It's horrible. Get him out of here! Jesus goes. A broken cane, He will not discard.

Brings it back. Fixes it. Believers grieve the Holy Spirit.

Done some atrocious thing. Stunk up the church. Stunk up everything.

Jesus goes. Cleans out the smell. Cleans out the lamp.

Cuts on the wick. Lights the thing. Fills it full of oil.

Gets her all going again. Now, I believe in church discipline because it is not punitive. It is for the restoration of the fallen.

I believe in all that. Don't think I don't. What I'm talking about is this.

The man who is poor in spirit and the man who mourns is going to be gracious and in that sense is going to be Christ-like. Is going to be Christ-like. Now, I want us to look at a few more things if we can get on

down here.

Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Now, I know you've all heard, well, this says meek doesn't mean weak. That's true.

It doesn't mean weak. Moses was meek and he wasn't weak. Jesus was meek and He was not weak.

What does meek mean? Something that we have forgotten. You know, back in the 70's, we went from John Wayne to Alan Alda. You know, from John Wayne to Donahue.

And I mean, the idea of what a man is became effeminate. But I want to tell you something. As a spirit-filled Christian, you go back and watch some of those John Wayne movies.

And you see how fleshly and self-centered and ungodly that man was. That will get you whooped in Texas, but I still have to say it. Look how self... It is so amazing how self-centered he is in those movies.

How thoughtless... It's unbelievable. There is so much flesh in there, it's unbelievable. It's not Alan Alda, but folks, it's not John Wayne either.

The word meek in this context, the best way to communicate that would be something like gentleness and tender-hearted. Gentle. Gentle.

Are you a gentle person? Now there are times when... Well, you're just not supposed to be gentle. I know that. I was raised on a cattle ranch.

Raised Charlotte cattle and quarter horses. You jump off a horse onto a steer to put him in the ground. You're not going to be tickling him under the chin.

But I'm not supposed to handle my wife like cattle. And I'm not supposed to handle other believers like that either. I am to be a man who in one sense will draw a line in the sand and say, ah, it stops here.

Stand my ground. Fight for righteousness. Have convictions.

But at the same time, I'm to be a man who is gentle. A man who is gentle. One of the greatest problems that we have many times is we think that everything just revolves around us.

Now women do this too, but especially men. Just everything revolves around us. The man is the head of the home.

That is true. I love teaching on that, especially in places where they don't like to hear it. But the fact of the matter is my wife is not an extension of me.

She is a person in her own right and she is not like me at all. If there's one thing I've learned after 12 years of marriage, my wife is not like me at all. And that's why I've got to be careful not to give her what I think I would want.

I don't need gentleness. I really don't. I need someone to help me skin a deer.

Hold this part right here while I cut. I don't need gentleness. My wife does.

Isn't it amazing that in that famous Ephesians passage the Bible does not command the wife to love her husband? You know what's amazing there is this. I do not need my wife coming to me several times a day saying, I love you, I love you, I love you. Oh, did you know I love you? I don't need to open up my lunchbox at the office and get a little note, I love you.

I mean, once in a while, sure. But I mean, my goodness, guys are going to start talking. But if my wife does not respect me, I'll collapse.

I need her respect. What does my wife need? She needs to hear, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. I don't need gentleness.

I have two boys. They were raised in the swamps on the Ohio River. I take them there all the time.

They are wild men and I want them to be wild men. They've got to be wild if they're going to fight all those dragons that are out there. There's nothing gentle about me and my two boys.

Ask the cats that live in the area. But see, my wife does need that. What I'm trying to say, this goes much farther than just family.

Gentle. We are like a bull in a china shop so many times with other people. So cold.

Now, I've been talking about the man. Let me talk about the women for a minute. Gestapo homeschooling moms.

Yeah. They're the worst. I'll never forget one time.

I'm sitting there. My wife and I go to a restaurant. One day, just one day.

It wasn't even one day. It was like half a day. My son had a pacifier in his mouth.

If you're homeschooling, you don't let your kids use pacifiers. And this lady comes out of the bathroom. I'm sitting there waiting for my wife.

She's going to the bathroom. I've spent most of my life waiting for my wife. And I've got that little buggy there.

And this lady comes out and she looks at my son and she goes... And then the daughter comes out. The girl's six years old and she goes, Oh, mother! And I'm like, He's not that ugly. Mother.

A pacifier. I know daughters, just some people don't know. I literally want to go over and smack her.

It's like, what are you doing? Here's the thing. When you get to this thing about gentleness and love, and that maybe there's people out there more messed up than you are and who can't do all the things that you can do because you're just so talented and spiritual. It's about looking at what you are and realizing apart from Jesus Christ, I'm dead and I'm worse than dead.

It's about looking at what you are and mourning but not in despair because you look at the grace of God and the face of Christ and you know what? You realize I'd be in hell if He wasn't kind to me. Maybe that's a clue that I need to be kind to other people the same way. I'll never forget this lady who did horrendous things in our church.

I'm not the pastor there, but she did horrendous things and she was disciplined. And she came back and one morning she came back and even myself, she went forward and was weeping and I thought, I don't know if this is genuine or not. And I told my wife, and everyone just sat there and the lady was on the front there and she's just weeping and everyone's just looking at her.

And I thought, isn't there any Christians in this place? And so I told my wife, I said, I'm going to go down. And I went down and I knelt down beside her and I began to pray with her. And people got so mad at me.

And somebody said, how can you do that? And I said, because if there's no hope for her, we all go to hell. All of us go to hell. You see, the gentle fathers teach your son to be men, teach him to wrestle in the dirt, kill squirrels with a BB gun, all those sorts of things you're not supposed to do nowadays.

Teach him to do it all. In season, but do it all. But teach them also to be gentle when being gentle is appropriate.

Now we'll go with one more here. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Most of you probably have never heard of T.W. Hunt.

He's a man very famous for writing books on prayer and teaching on prayer. And he was a mentor of mine years ago. And he did something for me.

The man was quite amazing. He prayed three hours a day just for his students. And one day I walked into his office.

His name's T.W. Hunt. And one day I walked in his office and I look like something the cat had drug in. And he'd always look at me and go like this.

What's wrong, Paul? And I just, you know, Dr. Hunt, I'm just so unrighteous and I'm just so wicked and I don't know how to pray and I'm so ignorant and I'm just all these things. And I'm sitting there in the chair and finally when I ran out of breath, I just kind of slumped over. Sing that old hymn.

God, you're holy and I'm a worm. Step on me and watch me squirm. I just had lost all hope.

And Dr. Hunt walked over there and he came up behind me. I thought he was going to strangle me. I thought he had enough.

He came up behind me and he laid both hands on my shoulders. And he said, in the name of Jesus Christ, I pronounce you blessed. And went and sat down.

And I had kind of like that deer looking in the headlight look like what did you just do? And he said, you don't understand what I just did. And I said, no. He said, have you never read, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Paul, listen to yourself. No man could be any more blessed than you are at this moment. You walked into my office.

You're beside yourself. You are so hungry and thirsty for righteousness. You find no peace.

You're looking after it like it was the last morsel of food left on the planet. Paul, you feel as though if you don't become more like Christ, you're going to die. God pronounces you blessed.

And Satan is using a great thing to condemn you. Paul, I would be fearful for you if you walked in here satisfied. You see, so many times, believer, you'll look at yourself and you'll just go, I'm just so unrighteous.

I'm just so this. I'm just so that. I want to be more.

When is it going to come? And then Satan will take that and condemn you with it. When what you ought to realize is you're blessed. You are hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

And you will be filled. You will be satisfied. And not just in the parousia.

Not just in the second coming. And not just when you step over in glory if you die before Christ comes. But there will be throughout your life times of visitation from the Lord when He will allow you to see glimpses of growth and glimpses of His working in your life.

Now, you're probably thinking, well, this has all been for believers tonight and that's good. We needed to hear this. Okay, but it's also for people who think they're believers and they're not.

Let me ask you a question. It's a word that will literally transform your life. Every time you study something in the Bible, ask yourself, reality.

Is this a reality in my life? Number one, are you trusting solely and only in Jesus Christ and the grace of God revealed through His perfect work? Are you clinging? Are you like a man shipwrecked at sea with only one board to cling to and that is the cross of Jesus Christ? Are you a person who lives without any dependence whatsoever upon Jesus Christ and His finished work? Because that's the difference between a believer and an unbeliever. Maybe you go to church, but let me ask you a question. Is there a reality that Jesus Christ is everything? He's all that I have.

Apart from Him, I go to hell. Blessed are those who mourn. Number two, when was the last time you really took sin seriously? When was the last time God showed you sin and worked repentance in your heart and broke you? And maybe you had to go confess it to someone you'd sinned against or an attitude or something.

When was the last time God dealt with you about your lack of conformity to Jesus Christ? When was the last time? You know, the Holy Spirit, one of the ministries is He'll convict of sin. Not just the world, everybody. Is there a ministry of the Holy Spirit in you convicting you of sin? You know the difference.

It's amazing, and I share this in another sermon that I've often preached about assurance, is that it's amazing that when God begins to work in a church and deal with people and people maybe start weeping or seeing their sin and mourning over it, it's always amazing that the people that are broken in the church are always the most godly people in the church. And the people who are carnal and wicked and uncaring sit back there cold as a stone as though nothing was said. Why? You're seeing the difference between the believer and the unbeliever.

The true believer is not sinless. The true believer has a reality of their sin and mourns over it. Now, gentleness.

Is Christ making you gentle in the ways that you need to be gentle? How gentle is Jesus Christ with His church? How gentle are you? Father or husband with your wife, how gentle do you seek to be? Mother

and father with your children, how gentle do you seek to be? You know, it's an amazing thing, and I found this in my own life. When you're not gentle with your children, it's usually because you're not disciplining them properly. I know that sounds like two just total contradictions, but it's true.

I'm not going to be here for long, so I'm kind of following rabbits every once in a while. But if you find that you're becoming exasperated with your children, it's because you're allowing them to get out of line and you're not disciplining them. You discipline them, and they begin to walk correctly.

Then there's the room then for a spirit of gentleness to break forth. If you're exasperated and angry and tired of your children, it's because they're running out of line. And they're running out of line probably because you're not teaching, exhorting, disciplining.

But also realize this. I see so many guys say, I'm a disciplinarian. Well, are you a lover? Because you have to be a disciplinarian in the context of being a lover.

You see, people ask me all the time, man, you spend so much time playing with your boys. I go, yeah, why? So I can beat them. And they say, what do you mean? And I say it that way just to prove a point.

I say, look, when I spank Ian, he knows that the guy who's spanking him is the guy who plays with him, loves him, can't wait to see him, takes him deer hunting even though I'll never kill again a deer as long as I live because my son makes more noise than a train going through the woods. He knows this dad is crazy about me and therefore if he does discipline me, it's out of love. See? So you can't be a disciplinarian unless you're a lover.

Now, are you hungry and thirsty for righteousness? Or are you pretty much satisfied? Have you pretty much arrived where everybody else just pretty much ought to kindle their own flame in your fire? Come on over here. I'll show you how to do this Christianity stuff. Have you got it down pretty good? You done alright now? Or are you still hungry and thirsty for the righteousness of Christ? You know, it's amazing.

I preach in a lot of churches, some of them very large, some of them very liberal. And when I go there, I would preach nothing like what I'm preaching to you. I would preach to them on rules, precepts and commands, what the Bible says about biblical families, clothing, all sorts of things.

But God didn't send me here to preach to the choir. You all agree with most of that stuff. You want to have biblical families.

You want to do the right thing. So in order to make you guys mad, I need to preach on something completely different. We all have weak spots and usually our strengths are our weaknesses.

A person very serious about having order and walking in godliness with the entire family sometimes needs to be reminded about mercy and mourning and gentleness. You see, I don't know where this week's going. I don't even know where tonight's going.

But this is what it means to be like Jesus. Not just the rules that you got down. This is what it means to be like Jesus.

Maybe if I have time, I'm going to teach on the legacy I want to leave my boys. And that is a legacy of just life. I know it's hard to imagine, but when I'm on the farm where I live, I wear bib overalls.

I've always loved bib overalls. I don't know, maybe it's because I watched Green Acres when I was a kid. I have no idea.

The legacy I want to leave my children are this. Both those boys looking out the window at dad in the middle of that bean field and looking at mom going, mom, why is dad dancing out in the middle of that bean field? And mom, I sure am glad we don't have neighbors because our dad would be locked up. And for that mom to say, your father was a very wicked man at one time.

He was lost by his own hand. He was a rebel. He was bound for destruction.

God's made him a prince. He's a prince. And that's why he dances.

That's why he's happy. You see? Life. Let's pray.

Father, I pray that You would help us, Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen. Pastor? Some of those things about gentleness. Some of those things about meekness.

And I'm sure there's many of us who need to hear that and a lot more. Church, I want you to bow your heads with me for just a moment. We'll let Kim play through a few standards of a hymn for choosing.

If the Lord spoke into your heart tonight, as Brother Paul made very clear, this is not just for Christian people. If you're here and God's revealed to you that you're not a Christian, and you've seen your guilt before Him and you know that you need mercy, we have counselors that are ready and excited to speak with you and show you from the Word of God Christianity. If you're here this evening and you are born again, if God saved you and He's dealt with your heart over some sanctification issues, and He's dealt with your heart over some love issues, take this opportunity to do business with your Heavenly Father.

Confess sin. Be restored in a right relationship if something has been severed. Dads, maybe you haven't been kind.

Maybe you haven't been gentle. Take some time to ask God to grant you repentance. However God has dealt with your heart this evening, would you respond to Him in the next few moments? Father, we thank You for Your Word.

We pray, Lord, that You would empower Your Word this evening. Lord, that You would mark it on our hearts the things that we've heard tonight. Father, we ask that You would conform us into the image of Your Son.

Father, we thank You, Lord, that You would bless us and that You have reminded us that the law was easy, and grace is difficult. Father, help us to be gracious in Christ's life. Lord, we know that You've called us to be conformed to the image of Your Son.

And Father, we ask that You would do those things in us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/13/SID13240.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-washer/new-life-baptist-church-part-8/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net