

No Greater Truth (Part 2)

by Paul Washer

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the central message of Christianity, and understanding its importance and significance is crucial for our salvation.

Duration: 57:27

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1

Topics: "The Gospel", "Justification"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the gospel of Jesus Christ, stating that there is no greater theme to preach or cause to defend. He highlights that the gospel is not just a basic truth learned at the beginning of one's Christian life, but a truth that will be pursued throughout eternity. The preacher also discusses the concept of being justified before God and how it is a question asked by every religion. He references 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, which explains that the gospel includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for our sins. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the pain of the cross and the significance of Jesus dying forsaken by his father and under his father's wrath.

Transcript

In First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses one through four, first Corinthians 15, one through four, you stand and read God's word. Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preach to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved. If you hold fast the word which I preach to you, unless you believed in vain, for I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures.

Let's pray. Father, I pray, Lord, to sustain this preacher in the midst of an impossible task to preach the gospel of your dear son. Open up the hearts, Lord, that they might receive.

In Jesus name, amen, may be seated. We studied verse one and two this morning and verse three, for I delivered to you as a first importance. You know, my dear friend, you can go through every supposed Christian TV station in America.

You can surf the channel, surf the nets, look at ministries. You can listen to missionaries preach. And I want to tell you something far and wide.

You will have to travel before you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. And yet Paul says here, for I delivered to you, delivered it as a messenger, as a faithful carrier, as a first importance. There is nothing more important than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no greater theme to preach. There is no greater cause to defend than the gospel of Jesus Christ. And as I said this morning, it is not some little truth that you learn at the beginning of your Christian life.

It's the great truth you chase down and will chase down throughout all of eternity. This gospel, for I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received. Paul is making this statement.

And why? Because there were so many who claimed that Paul was not that much of an apostle. And do you want to know why? Because for people who look at things in the flesh, he was born at the wrong time, he wasn't in the inner circle at first. And if church tradition tells us anything, he didn't look like the man that you would want in your pulpit.

Some say I've heard scholars say that it has been supposed that maybe he was four foot nine, bow legged, very large nose and not a hair on his head. We understand from different passages in scripture, he seems to be a sickly man. Not someone you want to build a big church around.

Beware. Whom you choose to fill this pulpit. Appearances are very deceiving.

I preached one message and a lady came to me and said, surely you are a man of God. And I said, surely you are a woman who does not read the Bible with one sermon. You lay a mantle on a man.

Paul would have never been asked here. He had no great speaking ability. But he delivered the message and he was faithful to that call.

He said, I delivered to you as a first importance, the one thing that I love about Spurgeon is that when the gospel message was crumbling around him by so many preachers that turned their back on the truth of scripture, he stood there like a beacon. And you say, yes, it had mighty success. Have you studied his entire life? For in the end, he knew what it was to suffer for the cause of truth.

He knew what it was to have everyone turn their back on him. He said basically this, he says, I know that now the message I preach is being eaten by dogs. But one day the truth I preach will be vindicated.

And it was and it was. So what we're looking at here is a man who delivered to the people as a first importance, not seven ways to have a successful life, not 13 ways to balance your checkbook and not 10 steps to self-esteem. But he delivered to them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is the bomb in Gilead. That is the healing power. That is the strength and the only strength of God revealed in a message preached by men.

He says, for I delivered to you as a first importance what I also received, that Christ died. For our sins, according to the scriptures. And that he was buried, what does Paul put emphasis there? Why does the spirit put emphasis there? For this reason, there were so many who said Christ did not die, even until today, there are liberal theologians and pseudo scholars who claim that he simply passed out on that tree and came alive in the coolness of the tomb, rolled a who knows how many hundreds of pounds stone out of the way and took off for northern Galilee, never to be seen again.

No, he died. And not only is this a proof of death, his burial, but it is a sign for us that everything death could do, our Christ suffered, but only to strangle death out of death and rise again. He died, he was buried and he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures.

Paul saying this is not a new message I bring to you. This is according to the scriptures. And when he said according to the scriptures, he was not speaking about the New Testament.

When he said according to the scriptures, he was talking about the old, that which had been written hundreds and thousands of years. But it doesn't matter how long it takes for God to fulfill a promise, you can count on this, it will always be fulfilled and always in the most unusual of ways. Now, Christ died.

What does that mean? Christ died for our sins. What does that mean? I want us to go to Romans chapter three, and there is several months of preaching in this one text, Romans chapter three, verse twenty three, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All have sinned.

That doesn't terrify you. It should. As the Puritans would say, you have not sinned against some inferior prince, you have not broken the laws of some some domestic governor.

You have not violated the rules of a tiny mayor of a small village in a strange place, but you have rebelled against the very lord of glory. Then asked me one time, a reporter, he said, why are these these meetings? You're always telling the people to be afraid because they ought to be afraid. There are some things, sir, that you should fear the extent of our sin.

How vile is it? How can we know we're a people of unclean lips and we dwell among the people of unclean lips sin? Around us, men drink it down like it was water. It's the common practice of the day. Commercials are based on sin.

Marketing strategies are built upon sin, revel in sin, laugh at sin, love sin. What is it to rebel against God on the day he stood? On that first day of all days, he said, stars. Put yourself there and move in this direction until I give you another command.

And they bowed their head and said, yes, sir. He said, planets, put yourself to this spin and dance to my song. They obeyed him with trembling.

He said, mountains be lifted up and valleys cast down. See, you will only go this far. Yes, sir.

And then he looks at you and says, come and you go. No, the vileness of sin will never be understood by man, at least in this century. The sinfulness of sin, as the Puritans would say, the lunacy of sin, the insanity of sin, all words used by theologians down through the ages, and they don't even begin to tell us the vileness of sin.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It is very common to take this passage today and and make it so man centered, fallen short of the glory of God. To many today, that means that God had this marvelous purpose and this marvelous design and this wonderful image of us and that we have fallen short of all the great things we could have been.

That's not what this passage means. Because you define a passage, its meaning in the context of the passage, fallen short of the glory of God. What does it mean? Listen to this, for even though they knew God, they did not honor him as God, fallen short of the glory.

It means that you were made for God and you only find meaning and you only find life in serving that purpose. You were not made for any other reason. And to rip yourself out, to dislocate yourself from the purposes of God and try to be something you were never created to be will only leave you in futility.

And that's where we see most people today. And even most people identify themselves Christianity. Have you ever noticed we are the wealthiest, most protected group of Christians in the history of Christianity? And yet you go into a Christian bookstore and half the books there are written about how empty we are.

And why is that? We are empty for the same reason. Jesus Christ was never empty. He had food to eat that we know not of.

His food was to do the will of his father who sent him. Fallen short. I was born in the country.

I do things like someone in the country. I'm a hunter. I make my own bows that I shoot with.

You can you can take down an elk with a bow I make, but you can't play a song on it. It makes for a great hunting weapon. It's very terrible, terrible instrument for music.

But it wasn't made for that, was it? And to try to play music on one of my bows, you would just be frustrated. You would end just pitifully where you weren't created for doing many of the things you're doing. You weren't created for being many of the things you're being.

You were created for him, for him and only for him. Everything for him. I'll have fallen short of the glory of God now in verse 24 being justified.

This is the thing of every religion being justified. What does it mean? How can someone be declared right before God? Isn't it amazing that every religion in the world asked this question? How can a man be declared right before God? That automatically tells us that every man in the world has a guilty conscience. We know something's wrong.

We can put it out of the back of our minds. We can do everything to stomp it out. But it is there.

We know we are not right. And we know that somehow we have to be made right. That's what this means being justified, speaking about believers.

They are justified. Now, what does that mean? Does it mean that believers are righteous? No. To say a man is righteous is to say that man is sinless, that man is perfect.

There's not a righteous man in that sense in this room. But when the Bible talks about righteousness or justification, it is talking about forensic justification, legal justification. God has declared you to be right legally in the courts of God, in the mind of God.

You, if you are a believer, you have been declared right with Him. That's what it means. It's a legal declaration.

I desire to be righteous. I desire to be holy, but I'm not. I still sin.

I still have wayward thoughts. I still have need of brokenness and repentance. I hunger and thirst for righteousness, but I'm not completely satisfied.

But I am declared righteous before God. He says, being justified as a gift by His grace. Now, this is redundant.

He's saying being justified basically as a gift, as a gift, as a gift, as a gift, as a gift. Now, why is that? I'll tell you why. Men hate grace.

What is grace? Unmerited favor. Men hate it. You think, hold on, why would anybody hate grace? I'll tell you why.

To receive grace is to acknowledge need. To acknowledge need is to humble yourself before God. And that's one thing men do not want to do.

If you were to open the doors of hell at this very moment and promise every man there a free trip out of hell forever, if only they will bow their knee to God, they would slam the door in your face and stay in there. That's how much men hate God. We don't like grace.

That is why if you do a... I tell students sometimes, I say, you probably would enjoy a class with me in comparative religions. And they say, why? I say, because there's only two religions in the whole world. There's a religion of works and a religion of grace.

And that is it. I was back there this morning, as some of you know, witnessing for an hour and a half to a couple who walked into this church. A Hindu couple.

And it was simply a battle between works and grace. Them being made right with God through their own virtue and merit. And me being right with God through the virtue and merit of another, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, what he says here is being justified as a gift. Now, this is the same word. Have you read in scripture where it says they hated him without a cause? Did Jesus Christ ever give anyone a cause to hate him? No.

Well, in the same way, you gave God no cause to declare you right. Sometimes when people will be singing, there's certain songs that are written. And, you know, it's basically this question.

I just can't figure out why God would save someone like me. I feel like a school kid in the back of the church going, oh, pick me, I'll tell you. I know exactly why he saved you.

For his own glory. And because he is love. And it had absolutely nothing to do with you, because the only thing you could ever motivate a holy, just God to do would be to condemn you eternally.

So it says being justified as a gift by his grace. Amazing thing. Through the redemption, there are certain words in the Bible, you talk about loving God's word.

There are certain words in the Bible that only ought to come off of your lips. With a bit of trembling. This is one of them.

Now, I'm going to speak humanly for a moment, I'm going to give you a human illustration, apply human things to God. This is not a theological treatise. I'm just using this part for emphasis.

What do you suppose run if we spoke of God in human terms, what do you think would run through the mind of God every time he heard this word, the son of God, his son, his only begotten son, bearing the guilt of his people, crucified over a garbage dump outside of Israel, outside of Jerusalem and crushed under his feet. What do you suppose would run through the mind of God every time he heard this word, the son of God, his only begotten son, crucified over a garbage dump outside of Israel, crushed under the fierce fury of God's holy hatred against the sins of men. You see, words might not mean much to our culture, but they should, especially when they're words about him on my computer.

I have a thing that goes across my screen, a screensaver. And it's a quote from Bernard. Every conversation that doth not have Christ as its theme is absurd.

You say, should this be so consuming? It should be all consuming. Everything you do, whether you eat or drink or the most menial of tasks, you do it all for the glory of him. And he bears that right on you by creation and by redemption.

Not only has he made you, he has bought you, and not with silver or gold, not with vain things of our fathers, not with sacrifices, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but he has purchased us with the blood of his only begotten son. Redemption. It means more than deliverance.

A liberal theologian will tell you it means deliverance, but it means deliverance through the payment of a price. The satisfaction must be given. Now, this is redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Have you ever read the first 14 verses of Ephesians? You realize that every time Paul makes a great and glorious statement, he comes back by saying, in Christ, in Christ, in him, in the beloved, in Christ, in Christ. Why is that? You have nothing outside of Christ. Nothing.

And in him, you have everything. He goes on and he says in verse 25, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation. The cross was not plan B. It wasn't an accident.

And I'll go so far to say the cross was not so much necessary because of the fall, but it was necessary to have a fall so that there would be a cross. Because only through the cross of Jesus Christ is the glory of God revealed in such a way that it astounds angels. The cross is not a focal point in history.

It is history. It's everything. Absolutely everything.

And it was the will of God. God decreed it. God predestined it.

God elected it. It was his doing. Yes, by the hands of wicked men.

Yes, but according to not only foreknowledge, but a predetermined glorious decree. Now, whom God displayed publicly. Why? Why publicly? He could have put this thing in a closet.

He could have done this great work in the wilderness. Why is it that Christ was portrayed at the crossroads of the greatest religious city in the world being hung over a garbage dump? What is God's purpose? Because God, through the cross, is going to reveal something about himself. And every time he does that, it must be center stage.

We are going to learn some things about God through the cross that we could learn no other way. And not only that, but in the cross of Jesus Christ, God. You've always heard how through the cross, God justifies man.

Well, then listen to this. Through the cross, God justifies himself. The word that Martin Lloyd-Jones used, through the cross, God vindicates himself.

Now, what do we mean? Propitiation. Now, if you can grasp this tonight, you will have learned some things that many do not know. The why of the cross.

The reason for the cross. The what happened at the cross. Propitiation.

What does it mean? A sacrifice that enables a just God to be merciful. Now, you say, I don't fully understand the problem. I want you just to listen.

Just listen to something. I'm going to show you the greatest problem in the entire Bible. Yea, it is what the entire Bible is written about.

This is it. If you want to know the center, the Acropolis, everything, it's right here. Now, just listen.

I'll give you the verse in a moment. Just listen. He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike, are an abomination to the Lord.

Now, let me shorten it. He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. It's the greatest problem in the entire Bible.

Do you realize? What do we sing about in this church all the time? We sing about how God justified us. How God justified the wicked. And yet the Bible says anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination before God.

You see, here's the problem. This is what it is all about. And if you miss this, you miss the cross.

It's what it is all about. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. If God is just, He cannot forgive you.

Let me give you a horrid example. Let's say that you go home tonight and find your entire family slaughtered on the floor and the assassin is standing over them with blood on his hands. And you throw the man to the ground and you carry him off to the police and the police present him before the judge and the judge looks down upon this horrendous criminal, this fiend, and says, I'm a loving judge.

I pardon you. Go free. What would be the response coming out of your mouth? This is wrong.

This is vile. You'd write the Congress. You'd write the Senate.

You'd get on the television. You'd write the newspapers. You'd get on the radio.

You would say that there is a judge on the bench more vile and more wicked than the criminals he pardons. Would you not do that? You see, because a judge does justice, how much more shall the judge of all the earth do justice? If God is holy, if God is just, he must pour forth justice upon those who have broke his law. To give way to pardon is to turn his back on sin and not to do justice in the world.

The greatest question in all the Bible, with the Old Testament sacrificial system and everything else, what it is all written about is this. If God is just, how can he pardon the wicked? That's what it's all about, folks. That's it.

If God is just, he cannot forgive you. Because you have broken the law of God and the wages of sin is death. Have you ever heard someone say, instead of being just, God was loving and he saved you.

Do you realize what they're saying about God when they say that? That we have an unjust God with an unjust love. No, my friend, there can be no contradiction in the character of God. God is both just and loving.

So how can a just God demonstrate love and forgive the wicked? Again, verse 24, we were boasting, we were reveling in the fact that we have been justified. Even though we were wicked, we have been declared legally right. That's not right.

That's wrong. How can God look at the wicked and declare them legally right when they are not? That's what Paul is dealing with here. Now, whom God displayed publicly as a procreation.

Christ was a propitiation. How can the just judge of the universe pardon the wicked? By taking off his robes of glory and becoming a man and living a perfect life on this earth. The son lived in perfect submission to the law and will of God and then going to a cross and on that cross he carried the guilt of his people and then, and listen to me carefully, the son of God was crushed under the wrath of his own father.

There was a great disturbance when the movie *The Passion* came out. I don't know how many emails I got from pastors and theologians and such that were either some for it, many against it. Well, I have no bones to pick with anybody.

But it doesn't matter how true the film, I didn't see it, doesn't matter how true the film might have been, it cannot demonstrate to you the pain of the cross. The pain of the cross is not found in a Roman whip. The pain of the cross is not found in a beam laid across his back.

The pain of the cross is not found in nails a fourth of an inch in diameter. The pain of the cross is that the son died there forsaken of his father and under his own father's wrath carrying the sins of a wicked people. Let's go to the Garden for a moment.

Just think about this. Jesus Christ is in the Garden and He says, let this cup pass from Me. Let this cup pass from Me, Father.

Let this cup pass from Me. I've heard so many preachers say, Christ trembled at the fact of being crucified. Christ trembled at the fact of being thrown off to the Romans to be beaten, to be hung on a tree.

Rubbish! Let me tell you something. Is our Captain not greater than the ones who follow Him? How is it that we hear about martyrs who have been burned at the stake singing hymns? How is it that we hear about martyrs who willingly walked out of their house and said, here, place the cuffs on me. Carry me to the tree.

All for the sake of my Lord. And they trembled not even by their lip. And yet our Captain trembles in a Garden? Was it a cross? Was it nails? Was it a crown of thorns that made the omnipotent God shudder like a babe? No, it was this.

He said, let this cup pass from Me. What was in the cup? I was teaching at a classical Reformed school several years ago. In the front row were kindergartners.

On back. And I asked that question. And a little girl stood up.

I said, what was in the cup? She said, Sir, the wrath of God was in the cup. That's why when I got all those letters about people mad about the film from Mel Gibson, I would write them back and say, well, I probably have a problem with some of his things he does in there, but I have a greater problem with Southern Baptist preachers and the way they preach the Gospel. I heard a man during this movie who had this great big radio program who actually said, I'm going to tell you the true meaning of the cross.

And he never got to it. Not once. He preached a romantic, emotional, sentimental version of the cross that has no power.

The power is that when Christ was on that tree, He bore the wrath of Almighty God. He bore the curse. Turn with me for a moment to the book of Galatians.

Chapter 3, verse 10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them. You're not afraid.

Well, then I suppose I should tell you what it means to be under a curse. It means this. That if you are not converted, you are so vile, so loathsome, so detestable, not only before a holy God, but a holy heaven, that the last thing you will hear when you take your first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because He has rid the earth of you.

You see? Oh, to give this church, to give this preacher a sensitivity to sin. Are you shocked? Go to verse 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us.

Do you understand what I just read? You were shocked that sinful humanity would be considered so wicked that the last thing it would hear when it takes its first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God? Well, then be more shocked that the thrice holy Son of God would bear your sin and become the curse before His Father. A serpent lifted up in the wilderness. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Do you not understand what He just said? Are you like the liberal theologian that says Christ at this moment realizes He's not the Christ and gives His last cry of despair before He dies? Or are you a true believer that realizes that in order to be a true believer, in order to be a child of God, the holy Son of God was forsaken by His Father and then crushed under His own Father's punishment. You say, oh, brother Paul, you've gone too far now. Have you not read Isaiah 53.10? It pleased the Lord to crush Him.

Take a 10,000 pound millstone and put another on top of it. Put a grain of wheat between them and see what you've got when it comes out on the other end. Take a dam 100,000 miles high and 100,000 miles wide and have it break in front of you.

And as the torrent of water rolls down towards you to engulf you, to destroy you, all of a sudden the ground opens up and drinks it down and not one drop splashes to your feet. And so Christ raised His hand up to heaven and took the wrath of God, that great cup, and drank it down. When He cried out, it is finished, He turned it over and not one drop came out.

He drank the wrath of God and satisfied justice and appeased wrath and therefore God can now be just and justify the sinner. This is what He's done. This is what He has done.

Go to Psalms 22 for a moment. Verse 1 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer and by night, but I have no rest.

This is the complaint of the Messiah on that tree. You see, you and I have lived so much out of the presence of God. We're not like the Son who's in the very bosom of the Father and to be ripped from that bosom.

To have that eternal, beautiful vision darkened. That's His complaint. And then in verse 4, He gives an argument.

In You our fathers trusted. They trusted and You delivered them. And to You they cried and were delivered.

In You they trusted and were not disappointed. There has never been a time in the history of the covenant people Israel that a righteous man has cried out to God and God has turned His face away. And the Son says, But I, Your Son, I hang on a tree.

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? And then He gives the answer. Verse 3 Yet You are holy. Verse 6 But I am a worm.

The Greeks, the Greek fathers called Christ Triagion the thrice holy. Notice that it never says in the Bible God is merciful, merciful, merciful. And it never says God is love, love, love.

But it does say He is holy, holy, holy. And that holy one born a virgin become a man. That great shepherd of our soul goes to a tree.

And on that tree he who knew no sin becomes sin. And the Father's favor is turned away. You know all those little tracks.

Has God on one side and man on the other and sin in the middle that there's separation between us and God because of our sin. Well, someone had to pay. And so Christ died separated, abandoned, forsaken of the Father.

And not only that, He died under the Father's wrath. Who can die for us? Is the blood of bulls and goats sufficient? The one who died for us had to be a man of like nature of those who committed the crimes. Man has sinned.

Man must die. The Son of God became a man. The one who died had to be God in the flesh.

Well, first of all, salvation is of the Lord. Jonah learned. And that's why the doctrine of the Jehovah Witnesses if you're here tonight and you're a Jehovah Witness I am not saying you are an abomination.

I am saying what you teach is. That's why the doctrine that Jesus Christ is nothing more than a mere creature is such an abomination. Because if He is a mere creature then our Savior is not God.

And salvation is not of the Lord. Why did He have to be God? Who else but God can withstand the wrath of God? Mountains turn to wax. Man one time said, I won't bow before Him.

The man who's been such an influence in my life looked at Him and said, Son, You will melt before Him like a tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace. Who else but God could withstand the wrath of God, drink it down and rise again? Another thing, who else has life to give? He said, well, I would lay down my life. It's not yours.

It's borrowed. Go to an angel. Ask him the source of his life.

It's borrowed. Only Jesus has authority to lay down a life and Jesus has authority to take it back up again. And then, my favorite, I almost trick students into asking me this.

I love it when some college student pops up and says, How can one man dying for a few hours on a tree save a multitude of men from eternal destruction? Do you want to know how? Because that one man on that tree was worth more than all the others put together. You take everything that there is, everything in existence. You take crickets and clowns and moles and mountains and stars and galaxies and planets and trees and rocks and dust.

You put it all on the scale. Put Jesus on the other side and He outweighs them all. That's how that one who died was of infinite worth and His sacrifice is of infinite power.

He died. Yea, He died. If you were in one of the early churches, if you were in the primitive church, you would have probably heard a pastor walk before you in a little house church and stand before you and say this, The Christ has risen.

Only to repeat to Him, Sir, He has risen indeed. One of the great problems in Christianity today is that we're not preaching the cross and then we turn it back around and we're not preaching the resurrection either. He has risen indeed.

I will dance. As the Irish would say, I'll dance a fine jig on the lid of that box they put me in one day. He has risen.

He has risen indeed. Took death at its own game. Strangled the power out of sin and made us right with God.

Rose again from the dead. My older brother was killed in a car accident. My father died in my arms in the middle of a field.

Ten years ago, I preached my sister's funeral. But one day, a trumpet will blow and I'll mock death. I'll laugh.

Where's your sting? And that power of yours, where is your hold? Lost your grip, have you? Because the Christ, but not only risen, He's ascended. Look at Psalms 24. This is called an ascension psalm.

Psalms 24 verse 3, Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord and who may stand in His holy place? Modern vernacular, who can go to heaven? Who can go to heaven? You want to know who can go to heaven? Well, I'm about to tell you. Verse 4, He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Anyone here qualify? Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and not sworn deceitfully.

Anyone here qualify? No. I give you the desire to repeat the words of Job. Oh, that there was someone, an umpire, a mediator, who could lay his hand on us both.

Job, don't despair. There is one who has died and yea, has risen. And then, 40 days after, he ascended.

The early church fathers used verse 7 through 10 to describe that ascension. Now, remember, when Paul writes to Timothy, he says there is one mediator between God and man. The man, Jesus.

Now look, he says man. He's not denying the deity of Jesus Christ. He's just making a point.

Man has sinned. Man must die. And the one who lays his hand on us both must be God and man.

And there must be a man, a second Adam, one greater than Adam, that does what Adam cannot do and brings restoration. There must be a man who can go there for us, Christ ascends. It's heaven as usual on the other side of those gates.

Heaven as usual. And then all of a sudden, everything in heaven is stopped. Because outside those doors, they hear this.

Verse 7, Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. And all of a sudden there is a reaction. Who is this? No man has ever approached these gates.

No man has ever dared lay his hand to the latch. Who is this King of glory? And then they hear an answer back. They say, Who is this King of glory? And they hear, The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. And for the first time in the history of history, those doors are opened. And Christ the man.

Can you imagine that day? Oh, hail the power of Jesus' name. Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all.

Every angel in heaven, everything that we can't even begin to imagine, it falls before the Christ in worship. The vicar of God. Imagine when He walks up to His Father.

His Father looks. Take your seat. Father, my seat I will take.

Son, is it finished? Father, it is finished indeed. And this same Jesus, who was crucified, who died in weakness, one day a trumpet will call and the dead in Christ will rise. And then we who are alive and remain will meet Him in the air.

And we will see the glory of glories, the King of kings, the prophet, the priest, the king, the Messiah, the treasure, the life. And that will not be our end. It will be our beginning.

Now, what are you called to do? Repent of your sins and believe the Gospel. You say, what is repentance? Well, let me just give you an illustration instead of a theological treatise. Let's say that you came here tonight.

No desire in your heart to hear anything from God. Maybe you came from all the wrong reasons. And right now, the only thing in your heart is that I'm preaching too long.

Can you be saved? No. You cannot. And if you remain in this condition, you will die in your sins and you will go to hell without repentance.

There is no salvation. Or maybe you came here tonight and you had no thought of anything of God in your heart at all. You cared not for the things of God, the Word of God.

You just wanted to get through the worship and through the message. But maybe as the worship was going on, your heart was somehow strangely warmed and you began to hear a voice within a voice. Yes, my dear friend, that can happen in worship.

And then when the preaching came, it was like an iron. It was like a call. It was like a beacon.

Something began to stir in your heart. You began to see the holiness of God, the wretchedness of your own virtue. You began to hear things about Christ and what He's done for you.

And the only thing you can think about right now is I will do absolutely anything to be saved. That is repentance. You lack one thing.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Now, the Puritans spoke a lot about repentance not only from sin, but repentance from good works.

You say, what do you mean? There is a real sense in which repentance is simply this. You give up from trying to justify yourself. You just quit.

You see that every one of your most righteous deeds is nothing more than filthy rags and you detest them and you throw them to the floor and you stand there before God and say, unless you move on my behalf, I am damned. And you believe. You believe.

You trust. There is a deacon in my church back home. A little church in the middle of a cornfield.

And I love this man. He's walked with God longer than I've been alive. And he remembers telling me one time he told me about his conversion.

He said, I was a good fella as fellas go. He said, but the preacher said something that morning and it stirred my heart and I thought, what does it mean to believe? What does it mean to believe? He went up in his hayloft and he's just walking around. He said he found himself finally with his toes hanging over the edge of the loft.

Just kind of standing there. He said all of a sudden it just dawned on me. This is what he said.

Lord, I am going to trust, place my confidence exclusively, only in what Your Son has done for me. And if that very thing, if what He has done for me is not strong enough to save me, then I will go to hell because I will not trust in another thing. Right now, if this preacher died, he would go to heaven.

Not because I spent years in the jungles in the Andes Mountains of Peru. Not because of piety, devotion, or Bible study. Not because of denominational affiliation, baptism, or participation in the Lord's Supper.

If I died right now, I would go to heaven because 2,000 years ago the Son of God shed His blood for this wretched man. And that is my hope. And I expect that that scarlet thread is strong enough to hold me when I swing out into eternity upon it.

Let's pray. Father, I come before You in the name of Your Son. And would that You would be gracious to us, Lord.

That You would help us. That You would strengthen Your people through the word preached. That You would convert the lost.

Oh, Father, no one will ever preach Your Son as He ought to be preached. The King of Zion is simply too glorious. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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