

# Particular Redemption, Mission

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes the sovereignty of God in salvation and the transformative power of the Gospel in the lives of believers.*

**Duration:** 1:02:54

**Scripture:** Psalm 37:9, Isaiah 6:3, Isaiah 53:7, Acts 15:14, Acts 15:17, Romans 1:16, Ephesians 1:4

**Topics:** "Effective Evangelism", "Divine Empowerment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of simple preaching and the need for humility in delivering the gospel. He shares his experience of preaching a simple message that attracted a large crowd and led to opportunities to speak about his beliefs. The preacher also discusses the importance of relying on the power of God rather than eloquence or intellectual arguments. He then delves into the biblical story of Peter's vision, highlighting its significance and the lessons it teaches about God's cleansing power.

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## Transcript

It's a privilege for me to be here and to be with you and to be discussing such high and lofty themes that are not beyond us. God has given us His Spirit. He helps us to understand these things in part.

Not only are they not beyond us, but they are not impractical. They are not high themes for men in ivory towers, but literally have become the foundation for my own personal testimony of my life. And they can turn the most fragile soul into someone very, very stable.

They can turn the most timid man into someone courageous, knowing that there is an all-sovereign God, knowing that an army of nations could amass outside this building, and yet they cannot touch one hair of my head unless God so ordained. That we are immortal until we finish our purpose here on earth. And that, no matter how dark the world may seem, it is only manifesting what it has always been.

And God has always saved men and will continue to do so. We think in our society today that it is becoming so much more wicked, but listen to what we are saying. It is not becoming more wicked, it is just the manifestation is freer of wickedness that has always been there since Adam.

I remember one time a story about a boy who is enchanted and follows this, what he thinks to be a goodly prince into this cave. And the goodly prince, before the boy's eyes, the boy is hiding behind a rock, turns

into a dragon. And the boy runs out and he tells an elder who was watching over him, the young goodly prince has become a dragon.

And the elder said, no my son, he has always been a dragon. He was hiding in the form of a goodly prince. What we need to understand is that in America today, many people are seeing a lot of the problems that are going on.

And most, believe it or not, have not learned from history. And most certainly have not learned from scripture. Think they actually want to turn this country around by a conservative political movement, when in its heart it is just as wicked as any other movement.

Others trying to put the Ten Commandments and plaster them on walls. My dear friend, the Ten Commandments were designed not to save, but to expose sin. And unconverted men, when they look at the Ten Commandments, will kick against them even harder.

The world needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ has died, and Jesus Christ has risen, and Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God. Now I want to speak, before I get on to my text, I want to speak for a moment about some very simple things.

Well, complex things, simply put, possibly. You know, friends of mine, people who sometimes come hear me preach, they're always, you know, I do not preach a lot on Calvinism. I don't consider myself a Calvinist.

I consider myself a follower of scripture and of Jesus Christ. Now I embrace some of the doctrines that Calvin set forth, regarding salvation especially. But so many people come to me and they'll say, you know, why this issue? I mean, it's just not important.

Look, we just all need to be out there telling people about Jesus. The problem is, there's a lot of Jesuses out there. Who has the right to be at one? Also, we need to understand that we live in a world today, in a country where 65% of people claim to be Christians, and yet we have all these Bible teachers and stuff saying the church is in such a terrible condition.

There's just as much fornication in the church as out of the church. There's just as much adultery in the church as out of the church. There's just as much drug abuse and homosexuality in the church as out of the... That's not true.

It's not. It's not. The problem is, what people are calling the church today is not the church.

The church doesn't have a remnant of godly people within it. The church is the remnant. And this is an issue that deals... that could be solved by understanding salvation.

That salvation is not simply a human decision by which someone raises their hand or prays a prayer. It is a supernatural work of God, a greater demonstration possibly of the power of God than the very creation itself, by which if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. These issues are seen in Calvinism.

When you have a view, a high view of salvation as a work of God, then you begin to also see that He who began a good work in each person will finish it. And there is no such thing as a continuously carnal Christian because God will not allow it. Because it cannot happen.

Because that person has been transformed by the power of God. He just did not make a decision to jump out of the line going to hell into the line going to heaven. He's become a new creature who cannot do what he did before.

And these are issues. I want to, just for a moment, explain a few things. Some of the things that I tell people because I preach a lot in Eastern Europe and in different places where literally Calvinism is just spoken very harshly against.

It is because someone has set up a straw man, tore it down in front of them and convinced them that anyone who is a Calvinist or believes in sovereign grace is a lunatic or a very angry person who does not like people. Well, here is what it comes down to. If you are ever talking to someone about this issue of the sovereignty of God in salvation, about election, it all comes down to just one question.

Only one. Are all men radically depraved? That is the only question that has to be answered. You answer that one question and the only thing you are left with is the sovereignty of God in salvation.

And it is something like this. Dealing with friends of mine, with people, people I get in conversations with, they say, "I am a Christian." I say, "Okay, wonderful. Do you have friends who are lost?" And they will say, "Yes, I work with people who are lost." "Okay." "Have they heard the Gospel?" "Yes, they have heard the Gospel." "Okay." "Why do they not believe and why do you believe? Just answer that question.

And usually you will get, "Well, you know, I just really saw the need." "Okay, so you are more spiritually enlightened than them?" "Well, no, no, no." "I could see Jesus as the answer." "So, you are more intelligent than them?" "Well, Jesus just appeared to be beautiful to me." "So, you are not as depraved or wicked as them?" "Well, no, no, that's not." "Alright." "Why do you believe? If all men are spiritually dead and all men are radically depraved. Now in radical depravity, you have got to understand something. Sin in Scripture is defined more, well, not so much by what we do to each other, but in our relationship to God.

Why is it that you are sitting here right now, if you are just as spiritually dead and radically depraved as anyone else in the world, as the greatest God-hater, protester in the world, why are you sitting here now? If you believe that all men are equally radically spiritually dead and radically depraved, the only reason you are sitting here is because God intervened. Something or someone from the outside. If you have two people who are equal, equally dead spiritually, equally radically depraved, then neither one can get the hedge on the other.

They are both in the same place. So if we find one still hating God and one now loving God and rejoicing in his Son, there has to be something or someone from the outside that acted on one of them and did not act on the other. That's all there is to it.

You cannot say, "Well, one heard and believed and the other heard and did not believe and that's the difference." No, because they are both in the same place. They are spiritually dead, radically depraved, God-hating. Now we use the term God-hating very, very much.

And here's something you need to understand. Sometimes people ask me, a pastor will say, "Will you come teach on the attributes of God?" And I say, "Pastor, I don't know if you really want to go there. I don't know if you want to divide your church." And he goes, "What do you mean? Divide the church?" I said, "Listen, here's what's going to happen.

If I start teaching on the attributes of God, we're going to get into the holiness or maybe the justice of God or finally the sovereignty of God and here's what's going to happen. Some of the sweetest little old people who have been members of your church for 50 years are going to stand up as angry as angry can be and stomp out of that church saying, "That's not my God. I could never love a God." You see, what we've got to understand is everybody is born hating God.

Now when I say that at a university, I'll have people say, "No, I've loved God ever since I was born." And I have to tell them, "No, you did not love the God of the Bible. You loved the God that you made by your own imagination and the reason why you love Him is because you made Him in your image. But the real God of the Bible you hate until you are regenerated." You see, we have a wicked heart.

We are born with a wicked heart. God is holy. In the same way that holiness can have no part with wickedness, wickedness hates holiness.

It really does. And until that wicked heart is transformed by an outside force, and that force being divine, being God, it is going to continue to hate God. Now, let me give you another illustration.

Let's say that the Word of Revelation comes from a Greek word, "Apokalipsis." Now, the word means literally "to run the curtain." Let's imagine that you had a big curtain here and someone was standing behind it. Say, "The Lord, God, was standing behind that curtain." Now, I'm going to show you the different degrees in which God has to work in order for a person to be saved. All right.

First of all, you're sitting there. The curtain is here. If you're ever going to see God, God has to be the one who yanks the chain and opens the curtain.

You can't do it. Do you agree with me? Everyone agrees. Okay.

So, what will some people do? They'll go only to that point. "Well, you know, I was in darkness, but God pulled the curtain back and revealed Himself to me." And they say, "That's how I was saved." No. It takes much more than that.

Why? Well, let's say God is standing behind the curtain. He pulls the chain. The curtains open up.

The man is spiritually blind. So, not only does God have to pull the chain, open the curtain, reveal Himself, God has to give sight to the blind so that they can see Him. And you say, "Okay, that's what God did."

I don't have any problem with that. God pulled the chain, opened the curtain, He gave me sight, and I saw Him." And they stop there. No, that's stopping too quickly.

There's another problem. God's pulled the chain, opened the curtain, given you sight, you see Him, but with your eyes, you hate Him. Everything you see about Him, you hate Him because He's holy and you're not.

And with those eyes of yours, the only thing you're going to do is hate Him. You understand? You know how people will say sometimes, Calvinists will say, "You know, a lost man can't know God at all." That's not true. A lost, unregenerated man knows enough about God to hate Him.

In order to hate Him, you've got to know something about Him that you dislike. Now, in order for someone to truly be born again, what has to happen? God has to pull the chain, open the curtain, reveal Himself. He has to give them sight so that they can see.

Then He has to transform, regenerate their wicked heart, take out their heart of stone, and put in a heart of flesh. He has to transform their heart, make it righteous, so that that righteous heart will love that righteous God. That is what has to happen.

And if that doesn't happen, no one is going to see the Kingdom of Heaven. Now another thing that you need to understand, and I use this a lot in Eastern Europe, because there's such an aversion to the sovereignty of God and salvation. I'll always play with the guys.

I'll go, 'Okay, let's imagine there's a dead man right here. He's dead.' Okay? And then I'll ask him, 'Where's the nearest hospital?' And they'll say, 'Well, you know, it's over there if we're in Bucharest in Romania or somewhere in Ukraine. It's about, you know, ten kilometers from here.' I go, 'Okay.'

Now everybody with me. Here is a dead man.' Now, I walk over him and I go to this dead man, I go, 'Hey, you! You! I'm talking to you. I understand you're dead.'

Well, listen. Get up and follow me. We'll get in the car.

You don't have to walk. It's a hospital over here. Okay? And what they're going to do is they're going to take you over there and they're going to put these big electrode looking things on your chest.

They're going to hit you and you're going to come alive. Okay? Great. Come on.

What? You want to stay dead the rest of your life? Come on. Don't you want to be healed? Don't you want to walk? Don't you want to be with your family? You're dead for goodness sake. Get up and let's go to the hospital.' And they're all just laughing their heads off.

They say, 'Well, Pastor, that was the stupidest thing I've ever heard.' And I said, 'Well, then why are you preaching it?' If he is dead, he can't get up. He can't give you his hand. He can't meet you halfway.

He can't do anything. He cannot respond. He can't even respond to God's command.

You know, let's imagine that me and your pastor. Let's go back 2,000 years. We're just kind of walking around.

Here are some people crying. We walk over there. What's going on? Mary comes out.

'My brother's dead.' I walk over there to the tomb. 'Hey, Lazarus, get up. Come on out of there.' He must not hear me.

'Pastor, come over here.' We're screaming out. 'Lazarus, get up.' 'What's wrong with you? You sleep all day?' What's the problem? We can command him to do something. But he needs more than a command.

He needs a resurrection. It's the same way. Jesus walks up there.

He just didn't say, 'Lazarus, come forth.' He resurrected him so that he could come forth. Okay? So that he could come forth. And this is a major issue.

If men, so-called evangelists today, simply believed this truth, it would transform everything we know about evangelism. First of all, what do we recognize? That when I go out to preach, no one is going to be saved unless a supernatural work on par with the creation of the universe occurs. And I do not have that power in my pocket.

Now, that's the first thing. Second thing, when I'm preaching, what have I learned from Scripture? That God does not use eloquence. He does not use power of the mind.

He uses the simple preaching of a simple Gospel. So as a minister of the Gospel, I walk up to that pulpit with a great deal of fear. Not of, "Hey, am I going to be able to speak well enough?" No.

Am I going to be able to humble myself and set forth a message? A message that unless the power of God comes upon men, they will call me a fool. A simple, tiny message. Standing before all these university people, they're expecting arguments about evolution.

They're expecting some whiz-bang apologetic. And I'm going to stand before them like a sheep about to be sheared, like a lamb led to the slaughter, and say, "I am here today to give testimony of one thing. Jesus Christ has died and risen from the dead." But if I don't do that, I will never see the power of God.

Do you see how a proper understanding of the sovereignty of God and salvation would change preaching? What would you have? You would have a bunch of humble, fearful, little men proclaiming a message that not all the false scholars in the world could carry. Now, I want to talk to you also about something that's very important. I just want to catch a bunch of things here before I go into what I want to do today.

And that is the thing of men are unable to come to God. Okay? Now, that is a true statement, but it's often very, very misleading. You make a statement like that in a group of philosophers, and man, you just wrote them a ticket.

You're going to go, "Okay." Cannot, therefore no responsibility. Man is a victim. God is a cruel tyrant demanding man to do something he cannot do.

And that's a valid argument. It is. It's a valid argument they're making.

It's because sometimes we're not giving enough clarity to what we mean when we say, "Man cannot come to God." And it's something like this. Do you remember Joseph's brothers? They could not speak a kind word to him. They could not.

Now, they had mouths, they talked, physical ability, everything they needed, but it says they could not speak a kind word to him because they hated him. When we talk about men unable to come to God, it doesn't mean that we have these groping victims searching for the light. We say, "Men cannot come to God." They cannot come to God because they hate him so much.

Have you ever told someone, "You need to forgive that person." They go, "I can't because of what they've done to me." Look at what they're saying. It's an inability, but it's not physical. It's moral, and they'll be judged for it.

Always preach and always teach this Calvinism in a way that man appears exactly as he is. Not some groping victim, but a God-hating culprit. A God-hating culprit.

One other thing about this. True doctrine of salvation will destroy all self-righteousness. All of it.

To the point where maturity in Christ, sometimes we think Christian maturity is almost this ability now to live without God. You're just so mature that you're not down on your knees all the time just asking God to help you. Maturity in Christianity is not growing strong and becoming independent.

It is recognizing weakness, deeper and deeper and deeper weakness, causing you to cling to Christ and cherish Him more and more. One of the most important things today that we have to see is that, and if you have children, I would really recommend they study logic. They don't teach that anymore.

Why? Because no one wants you to think. No one wants you to think. So the young people are here.

This is extremely important. I was speaking in a university town and all these kids came and after I spoke about Jesus Christ being the only way, a young Jewish fellow walked up to me so mad it was unbelievable. This kid was brilliant.

He was angry. He said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the way. I believe Mohammed is the way.'

And I believe that the Talmud or the law is the way. I said, 'That's a logical impossibility.' I said, 'There are only two possibilities. One of them is the way and the others are not or none of the three are the way. But all the three can't be the way because all the three are saying three entirely different things.' Now they can all be wrong or one of them can be right and two of them can be wrong, but all three can't be right.

One of the things, the reason why our education in the United States is so poor is it's the work of the devil. Bring in a dark age. We came out of the dark ages because of Scripture.

We will go back into them without the Scripture. Now let's look at some passages. Let's go to the book of John chapter 10.

There's just so much here and it would just take hours to go through, but I just want us to look at some things that are very, very important. John chapter 10, verse 25, 'Jesus answered them, 'I told you and you do not believe the works that I do in my Father's name. These bear witness of me.'

But you do not believe because you are not my sheep.' This one tiny statement destroys the logic, all Arminian logic, all popular evangelism today. This one simple statement destroys it. Now, just listen again to his words.

'You do not believe because you are not my sheep.' If this was written today by some of the most popular preachers alive, it would be totally and completely the opposite. It says, 'You do not believe because you are not my sheep.' And they would rewrite it as, 'You are not my sheep because you do not believe.' There is a major difference in these two things. And I'm sure you all have been well taught in this.

You understand this. But just again, look at the structure. Bear me out.

'You do not believe.' That is the statement. That is the foundational statement here. 'You do not believe.' Now he's going to give them the reason why they do not believe.

'Because you are not my sheep.' That's an amazing statement. Amazing statement. Evangelists today walk around, 'Do you want to be one of the sheep?' Well, then believe and the moment you believe, you'll become sheep.

But Jesus is looking at it from an entirely different point of view. The correct one. He's going back into time, into eternity.

He's going back into the idea of the electing grace of the sovereign God. And men fail to see that. Now we're talking about definite or particular atonement at this moment.

And I just want to now, let's read the text again. And then we're going to, let's read verse 26. He says, "But you do not believe because you are not my sheep." Now let's go to verse 14.

"I am the good shepherd, and I know my own, and my own know me. Even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." This is something very important. He just got through telling them, "You're not sheep." That's what He says.

There's no way around it, even if you don't go with the first part of my logic. There's no way around it. He says that He's looking at a group of people and He says, "You're not my sheep." And then He turns right here.

We come back. We've regressed. And He says what? "I lay down my life for the sheep." And what's the logical conclusion? There are some people out there for whom He did not lay down His life.

Now I do not understand for the life of me why this is a problem. I hear so many people today say, "I can accept all the points of Calvinism, four points except for this one." I look at them and I go, "That's a logical impossibility. This is not the problem point of Calvinism." Again, let's go back.

Depravity. If men are depraved, the only way they can be saved is by God doing it. If anyone is saved, God did a special work in their life.

That's not even the big point when it comes to debate. The big point comes to this, election. Election.

And that's what I want you to see. I hear people say, "Well, I believe God elected people, but," they'll say, "I believe Jesus died for everyone." Well, where's your problem? If you can accept that He did not elect everyone, you can also accept that He did not pay the sin debt of everyone. Are you following me? Now, I want us to look at some things that are very, very important.

We have these passages throughout Scripture which indicate that Jesus Christ, He died on that cross bearing the sins of His people under the wrath of God, and He did it for a specific people. Then we have all these passages in the Bible that are the most famous missionary passages that you can find all over the Bible. For example, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." There's these passages over here that say that Jesus Christ died for a specific people called His people, His sheep.

He died for them, these people who were elected for the foundation of the world. And then we have these other passages over here that say, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son." Or, turn with me really quickly to 1 John 2, and verse 2, "He Himself is the propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." And so people say, "Well, there's this contradiction. Either He really does love the whole world, or He doesn't."

Either Jesus really died for the whole world, or He didn't. Now, even among Calvinists, this is quite debated. But I think that the issue is solved if you go back to John 10. In John 10, in verse 26, we have this idea of particular atonement.

You do not believe because you are not My sheep. We go to verse 15, and He says, "I lay down My life for My sheep." That means some people are His sheep, some are not. He lays down His life only for His sheep.

And then He goes on. Now, how do we explain these passages about making atonement for the whole world, for God so loved the world? You go to 16, chapter 10, verse 16, "And I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock with one shepherd." I think this is key.

I think it is very key. And I think it's backed up in many, many other verses that we're going to look at in just a minute. First of all, you have to deal with a logical impossibility.

And it's this. If Jesus Christ carried the sins of the whole world on Him on Calvary, and if He was crushed under the wrath of God for the sins of the whole world, satisfying the justice of God against the sins of the whole world, then no one goes to hell. No one.

It's an impossibility. It is finished. It is paid for.

Now, here's the problem with evangelicals. They're just logically inconsistent. They'll say, "No, I don't believe that everybody's saved."

I believe there's some people going to heaven and some people going to hell. But in the same voice they'll say, "But I believe Jesus Christ paid for every one's sin." Well, if He paid for every one's sin, it's paid for. There's no double jeopardy here. It is paid for, and it is over.

It's a logical impossibility. And they say, "No," because the difference is this group over here believes and this group doesn't. So then, it wasn't finished on the cross.

If it takes my faith in order for that payment to be really paid, then what Christ did on the tree is not finished and has no power to save until I say so. That is scary. And what we have to do is we have to get into the mind here for a second of these disciples, of these apostles.

What was their biggest hang-up? Even after the ascension, what was their biggest hang-up? Well, let's just look. Go to Acts chapter 10. Acts 10, verse 9, "And on the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray."

And he became hungry and was desiring to eat. But while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance, and he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground. And there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds and of the air.

And a voice came to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." And again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy." And this happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky. "And while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate and were calling out." Hardly anywhere except the Apocalypse, except the book of Revelation do we see anything like a vision like this. Now think about this for a moment.

I mean, this is a vision of all visions in the New Testament. This is something, I mean, it's done three times. It is a massive vision.

What is the problem? I'll tell you what the problem is. They had not seen that this salvation from the Messiah, according to Isaiah, according to Jeremiah, this Messiah was going to be Savior not just of people in the nation of Israel, but the Gentiles were going to be brought in. And that is what all these passages, when these passages are referring to God loving the world, these passages are referring to a propitiation for the world, and all these things, it is cramming it into the mind of a biased people that God has always said He was going to make for Himself a great people, unlike the covenant He made with Israel when He brought them out of Egypt.

He's going to make a new covenant. He's going to write the laws, not on tablets of stone, but in their hearts, and not only in the heart of the Jews, but Gentiles. And out of these two people was going to form a church, a glorious, glorious church, a glorious demonstration.

And when you see it in this context, you begin to understand why Jesus said, "They will know you're My disciples by your love for one another." You see, He's going to bring all these groups that in times past had hated each other's guts. Racism is not new, folks. And in Christ, He was going to make them fall in love with each other.

And that would be the greatest demonstration of the power of God. And that's what He's getting at here. That's what He's getting at.

And the racism, the bias was so strong that He brings this immense vision, supernatural manifestation, to Peter. And why to Peter? Peter had been appointed as the apostle to the Jews. And God had to set some things straight.

That I am going to do a work. I am going to do a work. And I am going to incorporate into this glorious body, this glorious bride, the most ignoble, the most base, the most vile, so that no one will boast in them, but all who boast will boast in the Lord.

If there was ever a reason in you for God saving you, it was because you were the most ignoble, base and vile of humanity. So rejoice. And this is the thing that we've got to say.

Now, let's go on and look at something here. Let's go to Acts chapter 15, verse 13. This is the great counsel there in the book of Acts in Jerusalem, dealing with this problem of the Gentiles.

I mean, even after all this time, even after these great miracles of conversion, everything that had gone on, they're still saying, "Hey, whoa. Could this really be that God's view is a view of the whole world of calling forth a people from every tribe and every nation?" It says in verse 13, "And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, 'Brethren, listen to me.' Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this, the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, 'After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.' Do you honestly think this should be interpreted that God has done all this believing, God believing, that every individual on the face of the earth was then going to seek Him? No one would interpret that passage that way.

When He says, "In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord." No one in their right mind would say, "Well, God's a liar. God failed. He said that the rest of mankind was going to seek Him, and well, the majority of mankind doesn't seek Him." That's not the way the passage is interpreted.

It's interpreted this way, that from the whole of mankind, there would be individuals from the whole of mankind, not just the Jews, seeking the Lord. And He says, "The whole of mankind seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name." Ah, who are going to seek Him? Well, let's look at something for a moment. It's called a Hebrew parallelism.

Let me show you how it works. Hebrew parallelism is when something is declared and then repeated. For example, when you and I, as Americans or whatever we are, when we want to emphasize something, we raise our voice.

If we're writing, we might put it in bold letters or underline it or something. In Jewish literature, if you want to emphasize something, you repeat it. I'll give you an example.

"God is holy, holy, holy." Notice it never says, "God is merciful, merciful, merciful." Notice it never says, "God is nice, nice, nice." It says, "God is holy, holy, holy." Let me make up a proverb for you. "The wicked shall not dwell in the land, the wicked shall be destroyed." That's a Hebrew parallelism. I've said the same thing twice, changing it just a little to add emphasis.

Okay? Now, many times in a parallelism, one declaration is made and then the second declaration follows in order to define exactly what he's trying to say. So, look at what it says. Verse 17, "In order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord." Now, who's the rest of mankind? All the Gentiles who are called by My name.

All He is saying is not that all of mankind is going to come. In the same way, not that He died for all of mankind. The idea is this, that among the whole of mankind, among all the nations, all the tribes, all the people groups, what would God do? He would call a people and He would give them His name.

And the ones that would come would be the ones that were called, and the ones that were called were the ones that were sheep, and the ones that were sheep were elected sheep before the foundation of the world. That's what He's saying. Now, I want us to go on to Revelation chapter 7, verse 9, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches, were in their hands.

And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!" Now, probably the most important word in that whole thing is "our," "oh, you are." Why? These are people from every tribe, every tongue, every nation. Just for one moment, take 300 years and try to do it. Just try to write down on a list all the gods, false gods of all the nations that have ever existed.

We're talking thousands and thousands and thousands of false gods. Okay? You've got gods over there in India, more than you can count. You've got gods in Peru.

You've got gods in Manhattan. You've got gods on the far islands of the sea. You've got gods everywhere.

Everybody's got a different god. All these different nations, all these different gods. And what's going on here? They're all standing there and they're talking about, "This is our God." All these different peoples, all these different cultures, "Our God." All of us together, we have one.

That's why this passage, in my opinion, is the greatest explanation of John chapter 3, verse 16. This is what it's saying. "All the world, people from all the world." Now, let me say something for a moment that's very, very important.

It's this. Unto us, many, many. I don't know if you know this or not. It comes as a shock to some people.

There are many secret things of God that have not been revealed to you. I know that must come as a shock, but it is true. Sometimes we are so busy trying to investigate the secret things that don't even belong to us that we are not obeying the things that have been given to us.

Let me tell you something, and this happens many times. I get a phone call at the office from Peru, let's say. Mario Salinas is working in Condorpanque with the Aguarunas.

He says, "He's back in Suyana, northern Peru. He's got to a phone. He's just met with Angel Cominatas, who's also over all that area." And they have found out that there's a Wambisa tribe that's really close to the Aguarunas, and there's no gospel in the whole village.

Now, the Wambisas, there's gospel among the Wambisas, but many villages are still without the gospel. And they say, "Brother Paul, you know it's without the gospel. We need this and that, and we need to make a try to send in a preacher in there, and we need to—" I don't sit around going, "Well, I wonder—" No, no.

I need to figure out whether or not there's any elect in there. I need to figure out whether it's God's will, and then spend six years trying to figure it out. I'm going to go.

If the door's open, I'm going to go. If the door closes and a window looks open, I'm going to go. And if the window's closed and there's a crack in a wall, I'm going to go.

Until everything is sealed up. There is one sense in which we should be scholars. There is another sense in which we should be children.

We have been told. It is not unto us to figure out when, where, how, this or that, but if the opportunity arises and it is in your hand to do good, by all means do good. And if you get out of the will trying to win a village to Christ, I'm sure He'll forgive you.

Sometimes Calvinists are just so stuffy. I remember Homer Crane, just a wonderful missionary in Peru. He went to a Calvinistic meeting and he was there and he was kind of off to himself and everybody was discussing Calvinism and he was kind of just standing over there.

And someone walked up to him and said, "Brother, I see you over here by yourself. Aren't you in our camp? Aren't you a Calvinist?" He said, "Yeah, I'm a Calvinist, but I'm not mad about it like the rest of you." You see, here's the thing. I get ostracized for this.

I don't know why. A person's got ten minutes to live and they don't know Christ. Don't contemplate the theological ramifications of witnessing to a wrong person.

Witness to them. Plead with them. Do not manipulate.

There's a difference between manipulation and pleading. Plead with them to come to Christ. You've got the opportunity to do good.

Then do it if it's in your hand to do it. The whole philosophy that I've carried my life on and the mission on is this. If a door opens up, an opportunity to do good, and it is in my hand the power to do it, do it.

Just do it. And don't sit contemplating. Well, yeah, I know that there's those areas in Siberia where the gospel isn't being preached, but God's a sovereign God.

And my friend, God is a sovereign God. And that is true. All you're saying is true.

But your attitude is totally wrong. Your heart's not right. Your mind's in gear, but your heart's not right.

If that had been the attitude of Paul the Apostle, you know, "The man from Macedonia, come and help us." "Yeah, I will when it's God's will." No, he said, "Okay, all right, I'll help you." And then if, here's the thing that I love to always tell the detractors on this. You know, door opens up, it seems like. The power to do good, to witness, to go to a tribe, or this or that, or send somebody there, seems to be all there.

And you go and you head in that direction and you get nine-tenths of the way there and the door slams straight in your face. And then all the Calvinists just begin, "There you go, trying to do everything and not resting on God's will and not trusting in His sovereignty." That's pathetic. If a door opens up to do good, we should go.

If the door stops us, if it closes, we should do our best to keep enduring, suffering hardship, whatever it takes to get through that obstacle. But then at the same time, if the obstacle cannot be passed, and God gives you a sense of peace, then you rest. Then you rest.

We need to be very, very careful. I'll never forget one time some two pastors came to Dwight L. Moody because there were apparently some evangelists that had come to Chicago, a couple of young guys, and they were out in the streets witnessing and they weren't doing it just right and everything. So these guys came to Dwight L. Moody and said, you know these pastors, and said, "Man, these guys are out there witnessing in the streets and they're not witnessing right." And Dwight L. Moody looked at them and said, "Well, I like the way they're witnessing a lot better than the way you're not witnessing." And another thing to close with.

If I was preaching to a bunch of Armenians, I'd really be hitting them hard. But when I preach to Calvinists, God wants me to hit them hard. You know, in Peru for a while, a lot of missionaries, they labeled me a charismatic.

I'm trying to figure out why am I being called a charismatic. So I talked to them all one day and they said, "You know, you have those Pentecostals in your house. You go over and visit that Assemblies of God preacher.

You know, they've even asked you to preach in their church and you've gone over there." I said, "Yeah." "You're charismatic." I said, "Let me ask you a question. Do you think every one of those guys is lost and going to hell? Every one of those preachers?" "Well, no, they're not, you know, they're not going to hell, but I mean, you know, they're just, their doctrine is—" "Okay, now let me ask you a question. Let's say I have a wife beating, child molesting, drunk Satan worshiper living across the street.

And I walk across the street to witness to him. What will all you guys say about me?" "Well, we'll say, you know, you're, praise the Lord, you know, you're doing evangelism. You're reaching out to people.

You'reÖî ìOkay.î ìSo I can go to a wife beating, child molesting Satan worshiper and try to get him to know more about God and you'll honor me. But I can go to someone who you've even admitted with your own lips is probably a brother in Christ who is wrong in their doctrine in some areas. I can go across the street and try to lovingly help them and teach them the truth and it makes me a heretic.

Then I treat them with common human decency. I don't attack them. I try to find common ground and then I try to teach them.î ìI would say the same thing about many Calvinists in America.

You know, most people may become a Calvinist. You ought to lock them in a prison somewhere for about six years so they won't hurt anybody.î ìIt's the truth.î ìThe thing about it is, is what do you have that you have not received? If you have received it, why do you boast? You believe in this revealed truth stuff? Okay. You know the truth has been revealed to you.

Alright?î ìI'll never forget. I was in a big, real serious Reformed conference in Detroit a while back and we all went out to eat at some kind of Cheetos or Charlie's or something up there. And we're sitting down and I had a Bible open and we're all talking, you know, all these serious theologians.

And all of a sudden our waiter shows up. Now he's one of those guys, you know, that he's got like his hair's kind of blonde and it's kind of flipping out everywhere and he's got like 600 bracelets on his arm and he's just, you know, and so he walks up and he walks up and he goes, ìDude!î ìWell, yeah.î ìDude, you've got a Bible!î ìI go, yeah.î ìHe goes, ìMan, I found Jesus last month.î ìI said, ìReally?î ìHe goes, ìYeah, I found Him. I found Jesus and Jesus, Jesus, I found Jesus.î ìI said, ìMan, that's something, that's something.î And I knew what every one of those stinking Reformed theologians were thinking.

This is what they were thinking. That guy's no more saved than a goose in a hailstorm. He's lost.

He's just another American, you know, result of American Christianity. I looked at him and I said, ìYou know, it's a lot better to have it and not know what to call it than to know what to call it and not have it.î I said, ìSure, he doesn't have it.î I said, ìGentlemen, do you know what theology is?î ìTheology is simply teaching people clearly about what God's already done to them.î I said, ìIt's obvious. I mean, the boy's talking about Jesus to everybody who walks in here.

He's probably got in some group that really doesn't know a whole lot about theology, and he probably couldn't explain to you very much of what's happened, but God's done a work in his heart, and instead of just sitting there talking about how bad American Christianity is and how lost this kid is, somebody needs to go love him. Reach out to him and teach him the right way.î You see, I have seen many Armenians live above their theology, but I've never met a Calvinist who lived up to his. We've got a high standard to live up to.

Now you understand why I preach in a lot of Reform conferences only once. We, of all people, ought to be humble even in the truth we know. Also, let me tell you something.

I was invited to a church a while back, and the pastor said, ìYou know, Brother Paul, I'm just afraid that a great majority of the church is lost.î And I said, ìWhy?î He said, ìBecause they're all homeschoolers.î Now, I'm going to homeschool my children. He said, ìThey're all homeschoolers.î And I said, ìWhat do you mean?î He said, ìYou'll see when you get here.î Their banner was not Jesus Christ. It was homeschooling.

And I agree with him. I think they were lost. Any time your banner becomes anything other than Jesus Christ, you ought to be afraid of hell.

If your banner is, ìI'm a Calvinist.î If your banner is, ìI'm a homeschooler.î If your banner is this, that, or anything else, if you're rallying under any other name than Jesus Christ, you're in danger. You are in danger. I like the warmth and everything that we felt here.

I'm looking forward to tomorrow. I'm looking forward to the rest of the day. But you know why I'm sharing this with you? It's not because I've seen something here today.

The reason why I'm sharing it is because I have seen this in my own soul. Sometimes I get so mad at what I hear. The distortion of truth and even the distortion of what I believe.

My own words. Many places I've come to the point where I won't preach certain sermons unless they promise it'll be on paper or CD. Because words will be twisted.

But at the same time, be careful that you don't become this little isolationist sectarian, ìWe're the only ones with truth.î And God's work on the earth is about as big as our church. Because that's not true either. We ought to be the most loving, the most humble, the most friendly, the most outreaching people on the face of the earth.

I mean even to our minions. For they know not what they do. One last thing.

I look at where a person is and I do not try to shove them light years ahead with one conversation. I look at there are so many people who don't understand what we believe. First of all, no one can argue with the power of God.

Let me give you an illustration. And this is not because of my piety. Understand this.

Something that really happened but it's not my piety. I did not make it happen. It's just God uses the most ignoble and that's why I was there.

I'll never forget. Romania is one of the most Arminian places you can possibly imagine. The Baptists believe in falling from grace.

It tells you they're true, at least they're logical Arminians. Well, I'll never forget being there and being introduced to preach in a very, very large church. And the power of God fell down on that place.

And for the next entire week, the church was filled, the balcony was filled, the stairways were filled, street out in front, running down the street, filled with people. Now, I don't preach Calvinism, but every time I preach, Calvinism comes out. Those solid doctrines begin to emerge.

And I'll never forget the president of the Baptist Union in Romania coming with a group of men. He goes, ìWe've never seen in our life anything like this. How is it that your preaching is different? What is it that you believe?î He gave me a platform where I can go almost anywhere in that country and speak about what I believe now.

Because they can, you know, Arminian scholars can wrangle with you over words, but they can't deny the power of God. Now, I'm not saying that because of me. I'm saying that to prove a point.

Now, you go out there and be a mean-spirited, argumentative Calvinist who laughs at everybody who's not like you, and you're going to fit right into the mold that they've already set for you and not going to hear a word and be justified in rejecting you in a sense. Or you live up to these great truths that we have been taught and that we have come to believe. And you walk humbly as a servant to all men.

You love them. You bless them. You trust in the sovereignty of God in teaching.

So many Calvinists just go in and immediately, I mean, the moment they start talking to God, the guy makes one Arminian statement. Jump on it. Instead of saying, "Trusting in the sovereignty of God that we speak about."

Lord, please open up the door for me to rightly engage this person in a loving, tender way, to know when to go forward, to know when to back down, to be governed by the rule of love. You see? It is our life that must adorn, and our life should adorn this truth. You can't argue. You say, "George Mueller was Calvinist." What can you say? His life reflected his theology.

William Carey, on and on. That's the thing that we need to see. Even though Arminians disagree with their theology, they print their sermons.

And they write books about them. Why? For the same reason they should do that with us. They might disagree with some of the things we're saying, but they can't deny that in some way we are different.

More loving, more humble, more merciful, kinder. Because we realize that only by the grace of God, out of this mass of humanity, have we been made Calvinist. No.

Have we been bought by the blood of the Lamb. And that's our only boast. That's the only standard and banner we're under.

That's why when I'm walking down a hall and some guy's trying to catch up with me after a conference, he says, "Pardon, are you a Calvinist?" "Oh, no, brother. No, no, no." "But, no, listen, I'm not going to baptize an infant." "Just walk away." Don't allow yourself to be labeled. Tell them what you are.

Show them what you are. Let's pray. Father, I thank You for Your Word and I pray, Lord God, that today will continue to be used for the edification of Your people.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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