

# Paul Washer in Romania

by Paul Washer

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*The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not just a simple message of forgiveness, but a message of transformation that requires a deep understanding of Scripture and church history.*

**Duration:** 1:07:11

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:105, John 1:23, Acts 2:38, 1 Timothy 4:1, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Salvation Message", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of God's Spirit in saving individuals through the preaching of the gospel. The sermon highlights the process of salvation, where individuals become aware of their sin and the holiness of God, leading to a crisis and a realization that their own goodness cannot save them. They then place their faith in Jesus Christ, who becomes their life. The preacher also discusses the importance of understanding the true message of the gospel, emphasizing that it is not just a brief introduction to Christianity but the very essence of Christianity itself. The sermon also addresses theological concerns raised by the movie 'The Passion' and emphasizes the significance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the ultimate payment for sin.

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## Transcript

Romans 1.16 says For I am not ashamed of the evangelization of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first of all of God, and then of the Greek. Amen. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, I come before you in the name of the Son. I pray that you would work among us, that you would teach us, that you would transform our understanding of you, that you would teach us the most precious message ever given. Father, I pray that you would give wisdom, and power, and all in the name of grace, in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. There is so much that I would like to say this evening, but I need to do some foundational work prior to speaking about the rest.

I want to speak for a moment about history. The reformers of the 16th century and on had a saying in Latin. The reformers of the 16th century and on had a saying in Latin.

Semper reformata. Semper reformata. Which means, always reforming.

And why do we always have a need to reform? And why do we always have a need to transform? Because although the true church is made up of regenerate people, whose natures have been changed, and they have been given the Spirit of God, there is still a great battle with the flesh. There is still a great battle with the flesh. And we see throughout history to have this tendency to walk off the path.

Also from the outside, the church is constantly bombarded. Paul speaks about this in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Paul speaks about this in 1 Timothy chapter 4. Where he says, in latter times. And the latter times began with the death and resurrection of Christ.

That some will fall away from the faith. Paying attention to deceitful spirits. And doctrines of demons.

And doctrines of demons. Paul tells Timothy what he ought to do to stand against that. He tells Timothy that as a minister, his life is to be literally absorbed by the study of God's Word.

He tells Timothy that as a minister, his life is to be literally absorbed by the study of God's Word. In Romans 12, we hear something also for every believer. We are to renew our mind with the Word of God.

We can go into the Old Testament and we see that the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet. Now I say all that to say this. The church is bombarded by many things today.

And one of the areas where we are most attacked is with regard to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What has happened? Some of us call it the Gospel Reductionism. Basically it began in the West and it has made its way throughout the rest of the world.

That we have taken the Gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to almost nothing. And thus we have lost the power. And because we have lost the power of the Gospel, we have to make the church a place of entertainment.

Almost like a circus. Meeting everyone's felt needs or they will not return. But that is not church.

That is not the Gospel. And it is extremely dangerous. Now I want to step back one more step and talk to you about hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics is simply a big word that preachers talk about in order to make themselves look very intelligent. But it refers to the science of studying Scripture. Now one of the principles is this.

You always do your theology in the context of the church. Now what does that mean? When you study Scripture and you interpret Scripture and you form doctrines, you need to go talk to the rest of the church throughout history. You need to compare what you have discovered with what everyone else has discovered throughout history.

If they are in agreement with you and you disagree with all of them, you are probably wrong. In America today, there is a Gospel preached that has nothing to do with church history. It is a modern phenomenon.

And it has nothing to do with the Scripture. We have taken the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to little steps. And if we can get someone to say yes after each question, we convince them to pray a prayer, and if they pray that prayer, we tell them they are saved.

That is not in the New Testament. It is not in church history. But it is very prominent today.

It says here in verse 16 that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God. Salvation is not merely a human decision. It is not merely a decision of the human will or emotion.

You cannot manipulate someone to be saved. You cannot coerce someone to be saved. Salvation is absolutely impossible.

Apart from the work of God's Spirit. Let me just give you an example. Today we look at a man and we say, you know you are a sinner, don't you? And if he says yes, we go to the next question.

Wouldn't you like to go to heaven? If he says yes, we ask him another question. Would you like to pray this prayer? If he says yes, we pray with him. And then after we pray with him we ask him, did God save you? If he says that he doesn't know, we tell him, of course God saved you.

You prayed the prayer. You asked it to come into your heart. If he didn't save you, he's a liar.

Because he said behold, I stand at the door and knock. And if anyone opens that door, I'll come in to him. Now let's look at all of this for a minute.

First of all the question, do you know you're a sinner? If a man says yes, it means absolutely nothing. Go ask the devil if he knows he's a sinner. He'll say, why yes, I am.

And a mighty fine sinner at that. You see, we live in a culture that drinks down sin like water. We make fun of sin.

We laugh about sin. When you as a Christian ask a pagan if he knows he's a sinner, it means nothing if he says yes. It is your job as a preacher of the gospel to take him through the scripture and show him what that means.

Because the question is not do you recognize you're a sinner? The question is this, as you have been listening to the gospel, has God worked in your heart in such a way that the sin you once loved you now hate? And the sin that you once followed after you now want to be free from it? It's not a question of whether someone recognizes they're a sinner. It's has God done a work in their heart? Did you realize that in the scripture salvation is one of, if not the greatest demonstration of God's power? The universe was created out of nothing. Out of nothing.

But when God saves a man, he takes something corrupt and vile and depraved and he takes it and turns it into something holy. The conversion of a man is compared to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That the power of God is manifested and lives are changed and that is not in our evangelism today.

Do you know what one Romanian brother told me several years ago? He said, all you American evangelists who come over here, I said, they're not mine. But he said, all those American evangelists who come over here and they talk about thousands and thousands of Romanians who were saved. He said, if what those Americans say is true, then every Romanian in my country has been saved four times.

You know that's true. Isn't it? My dear friend, Ernesto Zacarias, in Peru, one of the most wonderful pastors in the world. He came to me one day in my office there in Lima, Peru and he said, I'm never having an evangelistic crusade again in my church.

Now this man loves souls and knocks on doors every day so I said, why aren't you going to have an evangelistic crusade? He said, because we just had one and a hundred people were saved. I said, that's

great. He said, not one of them came to church on Sunday.

You know that's true. How much commotion and activity but after all the dust settles, very little has been changed. Think about it.

What is the gospel? Now, if we ask a man, do you know you're a sinner? And he says, yes. We quickly take him to the next question because that's what the practice says to do. And we say, would you like to go to heaven? Have you ever had anyone say, well no, I'd rather go to hell.

Let me share with you something. Everybody wants to go to heaven. They just don't want God to be there when they get there.

Let me give you an example. Several years ago, there was a film made called What Dreams May Come. It was about an agnostic doctor who dies and goes to heaven because everyone in Hollywood goes to heaven except Christians.

So he goes to heaven and he meets an angel and he says to the angel, there's a heaven. The angel goes, yeah. He goes, well, is there a God? And the angel said, yeah.

Well, where is he? He's up there. Now, I want you to think about that. God no longer has place in our world.

To suggest that man is not the center of the universe would make everyone mad. Even though everyone says there's a God, we realize he's way away and cannot speak to us. He's in heaven.

But then we get to heaven and we've moved him one step further up. My dear friend, all men want heaven. But that's not the question.

Back in the jungle, when they're burning off a rice field, when that field catches on fire, snakes run out everywhere. But there's still snakes. Salvation does not mean that you just want to save yourself.

Salvation does not mean that you just want to sit down and remain the way you are. Because the question is not do you want to go to heaven? The question is this. The God that you have ignored and even hated has he done such a work in your heart that you want him? You want him even more than the forgiveness of your sins? You want him even more than self-preservation? So the question is not do you want to go to heaven? The question is do you want God? And then if someone says yes, I would like to go to heaven.

We say, well, pray this prayer. It will only take five minutes. We have an insurance company in the United States called Geico.

And apparently it's really easy to buy the insurance from them. Because they say Geico Insurance. So easy a caveman can do it.

You know what makes me nauseous? It's when I see church signs all over America now. It says salvation. So easy a caveman can do it.

That's a contradiction of Scripture. A contradiction of the Gospel. And a contradiction of everything every man of God has ever preached in two thousand years of Christian history.

The Bible says salvation is impossible. And only God can do it. Only God.

Only God can create a world. Only God can recreate man. Now just let me share with you something for a moment.

The idea of getting someone to just pray a prayer. Throughout the New Testament beginning with John the Baptist on through Jesus and on through the apostles. John the Baptist came to Israel crying out repent.

John the Baptist came to Israel crying out repent. In Mark chapter one Jesus comes to Israel and he says the time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the Gospel. On the day of Pentecost when Peter got up to give the first Gospel message the words that came out of his mouth were repent. Turn from your sin and throw yourself upon Christ.

Faith in Christ alone. I just, theologically I just want us to look for a minute just think about the prayer. Behold I stand at the door and knock and if anyone hears my voice and opens up the door I will come in to him.

There's a problem. Jesus is not talking to lost people. He's also not knocking on the door of anyone's heart.

He's talking to a church that was not following him and he's knocking on their front door. I have gone to many evangelists and I've said you believe in biblical interpretation, correct? And they'll say yes. I said you know that when you interpret Revelation 3.20 in that way you're taking it totally out of its historical grammatical context and overwhelmingly their answer is this.

Yes, I know it's not what the text is saying but it works. You don't do things because they work. You do things because they're biblical.

That's one of the problems today. This church has 20,000 members. So, is it biblical? Is it theologically sound? He's got the biggest church in America.

Okay. Okay. But he says that in his church he's never going to preach against sin.

I think I could have a big church if I did that. The gospel has always been in Greek called the Scandal. Oh, a scandal.

A scandal. But we have tried to take the scandal out of the gospel. It's no longer offensive and it no longer has power.

It won't get you crucified in this world. Not the way we preach it today. Now, many people will go to Romans chapter 10 and they'll say, well, it's clear here.

Verse 9 says that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. That is true. That's true.

But what does it mean? Does it mean if you just throw a prayer up to God he's going to save you? We have taken this text out of its context and we basically say that if at the end of witnessing the people we can get someone to say they believe in their heart and then confess with their mouth we can declare him saved. But this is not just a moment in time. The idea here is a confessional person who has been saved

is a person who confesses Christ as a lifestyle.

It affects everything in them. It has grabbed a hold of their life and totally changed them. In America we will hear preaching like this often.

You've got a great life and you've got a beautiful home and you've got a great job and you've got beautiful kids your life is wonderful. You just lack one little thing. You need Jesus too.

And if you had Jesus he would just complement everything. That is not the gospel. The gospel is everything you have is rot.

You are walking in death. This world is passing away and Christ is your only hope. He is not a little accessory you add to your life.

He is your life. That is why he said unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no part with me. What he is saying is unless I am the very sustenance of your life you have no part with me.

Let's just look at Romans 10 for a moment in another historical context. Let's say that 20 of us here are carpenters and we're living 2,000 years ago in Rome and we've been working very hard and it's lunch time and we're resting. We're happy.

We're eating but then all of a sudden we hear a drum. It's a drum and we all begin to tremble because we're Christians and all of a sudden we look coming down the road and there's a group of Roman soldiers and they're carrying an altar on their shoulders and it has a little bowl of incense and a fire and they come right in front of us and they say Confess Caesar as Lord We stand up We line up in front of the altar and we stand there The first Christian says Jesus Christ is Lord He confesses Him with His mouth because He believes in His heart and He is killed and then the second one says Jesus is Lord You see how you can take a text and Americanize it Turn it into a thing that only takes 5 minutes How are we saved?

One way By the power of God's Spirit Working through the preaching of the Gospel They are made aware of their sin and they are made aware of the holiness and justice of God and they experience a crisis They are confronted with a scandal Their entire hope in their own goodness is destroyed and they throw themselves by faith on Jesus Christ He is not one little thing added to make their life better He becomes their life and they are willing to die Now let's look at the message When I was graduating it seems like a hundred years ago with my Masters I was talking to two professors about working on my PhD and they said well what do you want to work on? and I said the Gospel and they said well you know that's been done I want you to think about that for a moment Do you want to know one of the things you are going to be doing throughout all of eternity?

You are going to be trying to track down the glory of God revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ The Gospel is not this little introductory message to Christianity that takes five minutes to share The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Christianity It is the greatest theology in all of Scripture that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself A few years ago Mel Gibson came out with the movie The Passion and a lot of theologians all over the country were writing e-mails back and forth and I was getting e-mails almost everyday and I was getting help from preachers about the great problems they had with that film and there are serious theological problems but I wrote them back this I am not as bothered about Mel Gibson's film of the Gospel as I am bothered about your preaching of the Gospel

A very well-known preacher in our country he got on the airwaves he got on the national radio and he said I am going to take an hour to explain to all my viewers the Gospel turned up the radio so excited felt great so he began to talk about the Gospel he talked about the crown of thorns on Jesus' head he talked about the nails in his hand he talked about the spear in his side he talked about the way the Romans beat him he talked about Christ carrying the cross up to Golgotha and he talked about Christ in the garden trembling trembling and sweating drops of blood because he did not want to be crucified because crucifixion is so horrible he entirely missed the point of the Gospel as a matter of fact he did not even say anything about it now before I explain myself let's go to a Germanic

seminary in Europe and I have just finished about 5 lectures and I'm really tired so I go into the library that's what boring people like me do and so I'm looking around at all these books in German trying to find something I can read and there was a book called The Cross of Christ now it wasn't John Stott's book because John Stott's book is really worth reading but it was by an author and it was called The Cross of Christ so I opened it up and just began to go through it when you read a lot of books you learn how to get to the place where the author is really telling you what he believes this is what he said God the Father looked down at Jesus on the cross and saw all the suffering that was inflicted upon him by the Romans and he counted that as payment for our sins he looked at the

nails in his hands crown of thorns on his head the spear in his side and he counted that suffering inflicted upon Christ by the hands of men as payment for our sins if I could resurrect all the dead classical theologians from 2000 years of Christianity that would be scary and they were sitting right here and John Calvin over there by himself do you know what they would say to what I just spoke to? they would all jump up and scream heresy, heresy, heresy in the Latin world and in Spanish we call it El Evangelio Romantico Romantic Gospel because it doesn't even begin to get to the point of the Gospel if you are saved here tonight you are not saved because Christ was martyred you are not saved merely because the Romans beat him up and you are not saved because they nailed him to a cross you

are saved because when he was on the cross he bore your sin and God the Father crushed his only begotten son under the full force of his holy hatred for sin you see here is what you have to understand and again if you don't believe me read all the old books the first thing you have to understand is man is a sinner that is not just a little mistake or a violation it is an abomination it is the vilest of things it is an attempt to knock God off the throne and slaughter him let me put it this way the Bible says curses every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them do you know what it means to be under a curse it means that the sinner is so vile before God and before a holy heaven that the last thing that sinner will hear when he takes his

first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because he has rid the earth of him that is classical Christian theology why is it not preached anymore why big churches are better aren't they I mean we are all having such a good time why spoil man is a sinner and before God that is vile beyond description now the popular evangelist will also say this the first thing I want to tell you is God is not an angry God well the first thing I want to tell you is that God is an angry God and is angry every day read Psalms chapter 7 and Psalms 11 and you might want to throw in Psalms 5 now what is the point I am trying to make God is holy God is just and God hates wickedness and that is the word that is used in Hebrew he hates it and he comes with wrath against it the

Hebrew word for wrath refers to the nostrils the flaring of the nostrils now one time I had someone stand up and say God does not hate because God is love and I said no God is love therefore he must hate do

you love Jews you must hate the Holocaust do you love children you must hate abortion you see if God truly loves all that is righteous and pure with an almost infinite love he must also hate wickedness do you read in the newspaper about a little child raped by a pedophile are you happy about that are you neutral about that or are you angry about that and that is why scripture says God is angry every day and God's wrath would pour out on the world and finish it if it were not for the love of God restraining his wrath he says I hold back my wrath I extend my hand to a disobedient people

but he constantly warns us something that preachers in America don't talk about anymore one day he will pull back his love and the only thing left will be the wrath of God as it is written the great men of the earth will cry out for the rocks to fall upon them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb God is holy God is just and this presents the greatest problem in the Bible and some of you have heard me say this one million times the theological problem in the scripture is this if God is just he cannot forgive you you say but why not that just shows that you are a product of your culture you don't understand justice a man kills your entire family he is caught by the police red handed they take him to the judge the judge looks down at the man who has murdered your family and he says I am a

loving judge you are free to go you are going to scream out I demand justice you are going to communicate with the authorities that there is a judge on the bench who is more wicked than the people he lets go so what is put forth by the apostle Paul in Romans 3 is this how can God be just and forgive the wicked because if he forgives the wicked he is no longer just as it says in the book of Proverbs 17 15 he who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God so if God justifies the wicked and that's us he becomes an abomination how can the problem be solved the word is propitiation it is a sacrifice given that satisfies divine justice and makes it possible for a just God to forgive wicked men and still be just and that's what God did in Christ God became a man and he walked on this earth as

the God man and lived a perfect life and then according to the predetermined plan of God he went to the cross on the cross he bore our sin what does it say in 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians he who knew no sin became sin he became the serpent lifted up in the wilderness he became the abomination he became the curse remember what I said cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law but the following two verses say but Christ redeemed us from the curse because he came he became a curse I've heard preachers say that God turned away from his son on the cross because he couldn't bear to see him suffer that's not true Jesus said that God had forsaken him and in Hebrew in Psalms 22 the word means to forsake or abandon the father forsaken him on that tree you

have sinned you deserve to die outside of the presence and favor of God someone had to die in your place outside of the favor and presence of God Christ stood in your place and the father forsaken him and then remember Jesus in the garden take this cup from him three times he prayed that I have heard preachers say yes Jesus was fearing the nails and the crucifixion no let me just point something out to you for a moment after Jesus ascended up into heaven since that time countless followers of his have been crucified most of them were crucified upside down and covered in tar covered in tar and lit on fire while they were alive yet most of these Christian martyrs went to the cross singing hymns joyfully so here we have the disciples of Jesus Christ dying on a cross singing hymns as they

walked to the crucifixion and yet the captain of their salvation Jesus is there crying in a garden do you honestly think that our Lord and Savior the captain of our salvation was afraid of a Roman whip and that's not what he dreaded he knew that when he went to that tree he would become sin and the father would forsake him what was in the cup Father let this cup pass from me you don't need to know Hebrew just get

a concordance look up the word cup let me summarize the prophets for you God says this because of the wickedness and rebellion of the nations I will hand them the cup of my wrath I will make them drink it until they are drunk and they will stumble and they will die on the cross Christ took the cup of God's just and holy wrath and he drank down every drop in the place of his

people and when he cried it is finished he turned the cup over and not one drop came out let's go to Mount Moriah Abraham is there with Isaac his only begotten son is laying on a pile of limbs the old man grabs a knife lays his hand on the brow of his son his only begotten son and as he is about to bring the knife down he stopped and you say what a wonderful ending to the story that's not the ending that's the intermission thousands of years later God takes the knife out of Abraham's hand God lays his hand on his only begotten son and God slaughters him under the full force of his wrath against sin have you never read the scriptures Isaiah 53 10 it pleased the Lord to crush him to crush the Messiah because someone had to die that way under the full force of God's holy wrath and justice

and when Christ died he paid it all once after a lecture a student stood up it was a secular university and they were coming after me anyways and he said this he said I've got a problem with that he said how can one man suffer for a few short hours and save a multitude of men from an eternity of suffering I said oh son I'm so glad you asked that question that one man Jesus Christ could suffer for a few short hours and save a multitude of men from an eternity of hell because that one man was worth more than all of them put together he could take everything there is and put it in a scale put stars and planets put crickets and clouds put men and mice put everything that there is on this side of the scale and put Jesus on the other side and his value outweighs them all and that is why he

could die and save you from your sin and on the third day rise again he was raised by God and it demonstrated that the sacrifice he gave was enough it was God's public declaration that it is finished and this Christ who was raised he ascended up to heaven where he sits down at the right hand of God and the apostles tell us this God commands all men everywhere to repent to count their worth as worthless to count their good works as filthy rags to count their best morality as filthy rebellion and to throw themselves on Christ by faith it is not Jesus plus you it is not 99% Jesus and 1% you Christ has done it all trust in him stop trusting in your own work and trust in Christ and the one who believes in him shall be saved and those who come to him will not be disappointed and if you say this

very night I believe know this that countless millions of people say the same thing and their life never changes why? the Bible speaks of a faith that is no faith and a faith that is vain and a faith that cannot save you say well how will I know? you will know them by their fruits you are saved only by faith but when a person is saved if any man be in Christ he becomes a new creature all the old denominations and the old preachers said the same thing and it is what the preachers are not saying anymore go to the Baptist go to the Presbyterian go to the Congregationalist go to the English Methodist go to them all all the theologians and this is what was said in the days of old you are saved only by faith but if you have been saved you have a new heart and you are a new creature and if you

truly are that new creature you will bear fruit if you trust Christ and you walk out of this building and your life does not begin to change nothing happened to you tonight the last century in America the theology taught in America this last several decades is nothing like the theology of its greatest preachers we've got all these new ways we've packaged the gospel message it's so easy a caveman in Europe that's why there is no power and that's why in many cases churches look more like a circus than they do like an assembly of holy people are you trusting in Christ alone? has your life changed? is it changing? because if

you repented a long time ago unto salvation the evidence is that you're still repenting today and if you believed a long time ago and were saved the evidence is that

you're still believing today as these flowers growing in holiness let's pray Father I come before you and I pray that you would use this for your glory and for the benefit of your people in Jesus name and in the name of Jesus Amen

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