

Peachtree Baptist Church - Part 2

by Paul Washer

God's glory and motivation are the driving forces behind His work in salvation, and true Christianity is marked by a continuous, enduring, and never-give-up work of sanctification.

Duration: 1:04:14

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:24-27, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the challenges and distractions that believers face when serving Jesus. He contrasts the ease of serving Jesus in comfortable environments with the difficulties that arise when faced with worldly temptations. The preacher highlights the importance of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and the message of salvation through biblical preaching to transform hearts. He shares personal testimony of his own journey of being cleansed from filthiness and idols over the years. The sermon concludes with a powerful illustration of a pastor's responsibility to protect and guide the congregation, using the example of a pastor encountering a young girl in a dangerous situation.

Transcript

This morning we spoke on the first three verses of the text that I read, and made it clear that God does everything that God does for his own glory, for the great love that he has for his own name. And if it were not so, there would not a man be saved among us. That if God were to look for motivation to love or to save from humanity, he would find no motivation whatsoever.

The only thing a fallen, wicked, adamic humanity could ever do is motivate a wholly just God to condemn them all. But he does them for his glory, his grace, and his mercy is manifested for that reason. That when we speak about God doing everything for his own name and for the great love he has for himself and for his own glory, many people will always object and say, well, what about love? You have to understand the most loving thing God could ever do is take center stage and do everything he does so that his glory might be revealed, because the greatest gift he can give unto a man is a revelation of himself.

And the greatest act of judgment God can ever pour out on an individual or a nation is to hide his glory from them. We also spoke this morning about holiness, just for a moment, that holiness is not simply separating from all that is evil. There is a real sense in which a Pharisee can do that and not have one drop of love in his heart for God.

You have to understand, understand me here, young men, this is very, very important. Things like external piety, things like theological knowledge, things like ability to speak can be all for self. They can all be used for self.

And there is great power in these things. If you know more, you will be asked to greater conferences. If you speak with eloquence, people will marvel at the mention of your name.

And all those things are for self. They're not for God. So you can even separate from all that is wicked and have for yourself a name that you are holy among men and yet have a God-hating heart.

Never forget, probably the most terrifying words in all of Scripture was that the Pharisees desired the glory of men and God in his graciousness, his terrifying grace, granted them their reward in full. To put it this way, you'll get exactly what that heart of yours wants. I hear young men so often and they'll be crying out, oh God, use me, use me, God.

I want to be used by you. And sometimes I'll tap them on the shoulder like I wish someone had tapped me on the shoulder and said, young man, why do you want to be used? Do you want to be great in Emmanuel's land? Do you want accolades? Do you want reward in heaven? Why do you want to be used? Wouldn't it be better to pray, oh God, use my brother and let me carry his bags? I wished I had not prayed so much to be a good preacher. I wish I had prayed more to be like Jesus Christ, for that is the greater thing.

A donkey and a rock can speak for God. A prophet who is false and does not even know God can be used by God to proclaim a word for God. But the goal is to be like Jesus Christ.

And when we talk about being drawn out of the nations, as Ezekiel talked about, it is in order to be drawn unto the things of God. A word that old theologians would use was God besought, just literally just saturated with God, to desire to do nothing. Desire not to wage great wars, not a desire to do great things, but this is one thing I ask of thee, to behold your presence.

And the person who has desired that has desired the greater thing, to know Him, because everything else can be false and an idol. Now, I want us to go on. He says in verse 25, that I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean.

Now, I want us to know something before we go any further. I want us to put special attention on the first person pronoun I. And in verse 24, look what he says. For I will take you from among the heathen.

I will gather you out of all countries. I will bring you into your own land. Look at 25.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes. Is that telling you anything about how salvation really works? The reason why there is no falling away of the truly converted, the reason why every child of God will make progress in sanctification and the reason why there is no such thing as a continuously carnal Christian is because it is God's work and it is God's reputation that is riding upon that work.

America birthed one of the most hellish doctrines that's ever been birthed and it didn't come from Jehovah Witnesses, it came from Baptists and it is this, the doctrine of the carnal Christian. Can a Christian sin?

Christians do sin. Can a Christian fall into sin? Most certainly.

Can a Christian fall into carnality? Yes. Can he stay there? No. And we see here a work of God.

You should burn with a zeal for the glory of God, not for men primarily. And you see things preached that are not preached correctly, it should make you almost fierce inside. Just recently I heard an extremely well-known author today speaking about someone who had read one of his books and was marvelously, supposedly, put back on the path.

A lady who was basically giving herself to prostitution and heroin addiction and everything else, crack and everything. And the reporter asked him, you know, how did this come about? And he said, well, now, first of all, you need to understand that woman was born again when she was about eight years old. The fact that she lived 25, 30 years in absolute immorality has nothing to do with it.

When she read my book, she just rededicated her life. That's pathetic. That is pathetic.

But that is the course of the day. I hear preachers stand before men and say, you're a Christian. Stop acting like a homosexual.

No. You're acting all the time. You're acting out what you are.

And salvation, again, is not simply a human decision. It is a supernatural work of God. And I know that I'm getting close to the edge here.

But I would dare say that the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit stands on par with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead in regards to a manifestation of power. And there is no doubt that it equals or supersedes the work of God in creating the entire universe. And I believe that is why John, the gospel of John, starts off with, in the beginning, because John's writing about a new creation.

And we have so taken that into this deity who can bring people out of Egypt, but he cannot bring them into their own land. He cannot bring them into greater graves. He can only save them.

But then he must stand there and wring his hands back and forth, saying, oh, if only my people would cooperate. It has nothing to do with this passage. His people are going to cooperate.

As a matter of fact, their cooperation is the sign that they are his people. You see, something you need to understand, the nation of Israel was, by and large, I hear people thinking everybody in the Old Testament that was in the nation of Israel was saved. It was a nation.

A nation. Yes, called out. Yes, God's not through with them.

All these different things. But you have to understand, we are a new thing here. There's no remnant in the church.

The church is the remnant. Every one of us is taught of God. Every one of us has been given the Spirit.

Every one of us knows that our sins have been forgiven, and our iniquities he'll remember no more. There is a real, tremendous work of God, and God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of pulpits that preach salvation as though there was no power whatsoever. And it is wrong.

And it is the reason why we come under such scoffing. Sometimes I just want to stand up. I want to go to NBC, CBS, ABC, and just say, listen, would you just sit down with me and a few small church pastors I know so we could explain to you what Christianity really is? Because everything you're putting on this television in your interviews has nothing to do with the Christianity we know.

And he says, now listen, he says, then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and ye shall be clean. Now, Baptists, be careful here. Our Baptist theology many times are speaking about this with the pastor.

We're reactionary. You can see that down through our history. We'll see someone run off over here with a false doctrine, and instead of holding our ground just in Scripture, we'll run the other way so that we're not identified with them.

Many times we're reacting against the Roman Church, if you can call it that. Catholicism. We have this idea of when he's going to sprinkle clean water on us, and we shall be clean, that he's just talking about justification.

He's just talking about our position, and he's not talking about our lifestyle because we're not saved by our works, and we go through all this thing because we do not want to be identified with people who talk about a work salvation. But my friend, when God cleans a person, He cleans a person. It is not only that I am justified before God because of the blood of Christ, but that same God who saved me and gave me a right relationship is also going to work to make me clean.

And he says, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. So I'm about being raised as a farm boy, and the one way you can tell about a farm boy, at least until he starts getting old enough to care about how he smells, is this. He's got dirt everywhere.

My mom used to say I could grow potatoes in those ears of yours. Every crease in your body has dirt because that's all you do. You're a dirt farmer.

And I remember coming in one time, about nine or ten years old, and my mother said, take a bath. I said, Mom, I'm not going to take a bath tonight. I don't think I need one.

And that was back in those days when it was legal to kill your children. But no one ever had to because the children knew that they would. And my mom just looked at me and she said, you will take a bath.

It was over. There was no argument. There was nothing.

And when I was 16 and could wrestle a greased hog better than anybody else in the county, you will take a bath. You took a bath. You just took a bath.

There wasn't any bickering, fighting, even any question of what was going to go on in that house. You'll take a bath. And yet here we have this deity.

I think one old prophet said one time, isn't it amazing? Jesus Christ is the only Lord in the universe that can't make anyone do anything. So guarded about this free will, silly notion that we have. Friend of mine was preaching.

I don't want to run any rabbits, but a friend of mine was preaching a while back and I just loved it. He's from Texas. Very straightforward.

He goes, I am so sick and tired of all you people talking about Jesus Christ and this door at your heart and the doorknobs on the inside of your heart. And you're the only one who would open the door. He said, let me tell you that Jesus owns the door.

If he wants to, he'll kick it down. And it's the same way with cleansing. It's the same way with cleaning.

Now, my mother would go in and she'd say, take a bath. You took a bath period. But sometimes you would take a bath where you just have enough water to smear the dirt around on your body.

But my mother would come in there and my mother could, she could haul hay better than any man. And this is no exaggeration that my mother's hands were so calloused that she would put a washcloth between her hand and your body just because when we were little babies, just because her hands were so rough. And if you went in there and you did dabbed a little bit of water on you and you just were just reeking still, the worst thing that could ever happen to you is my mother coming around that corner and looking into that bathtub.

Because my mother would grab a bar of soap. And when she got a hold of you and you came out of there, it looked like the Shekinah glory coming off of your skin. What skin you had left would shine like the noonday sun.

Because when my mother said, you will be clean, you will be clean. Well, I want to tell you something. God says, for my own sake, my own reputation, I am going to call forth the people from the dung heap and I am going to bring them to glory.

And all along the process, I am going to zealously and jealously guard after them. What would you think if I was the pastor of this church? What would I do if I was the pastor of this church and I came home from a meeting one night really late, about 1230 in the morning, and I come across some corner of the city here and I see under a streetlight your 14-year-old daughter out there with a bunch of young men. What am I going to do? Well, I'm going to stop my car and if I got a cell phone, I'm going to call you.

If I don't, I'm going straight to your house. And I'm not going to have a problem with your daughter. I'm going to have a problem with you, sir.

I'm going to step you outside and I'm going to say, you're a derelict father. And yet I want you to know preachers all over this nation are making God out to be a derelict father. He's got all these children that either he doesn't really care about or he's not going to get involved with or he's just not.

Well, he just can't violate their will. God can violate their will, but here's something else you need to understand. If they're a true child of God, he's changed their will.

And he's made it theirs. He's made it his. He's made it his.

Now, then I will sprinkle clean water on you and ye shall be clean. Now, I want to say one other thing. In the South, there is so much romanticism, emotionalism and everything else in the gospel that you can't even cut your way through.

And so many people have this idea, you know, I'm just an old chunk of coal, but I'm going to be a diamond someday. And they have this idea that they're saved. They're not changed.

They live their entire life in ungodliness. But boy, when they jump across Jordan, they're going to be perfected. That is not the New Testament teaching on sanctification.

The New Testament teaching on sanctification is that the moment he saves you, he is doing a work of sanctification. He is working that all the way through, and he is a tenacious God. Isn't it amazing that there are some, if we were to base our interpretation on most preaching today, we would have to say that there are some Christians that God is tenaciously involved in their lives so that if they do one tiny thing wrong, he comes down on them and captures them.

And yet there are other believers who can literally commit every immorality under the sun and God turns his head. My friend, that is not New Testament. But if you're a Christian, God will jealously and zealously guard over you.

Now, he says this, and I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. Now, this next part of this text applies in so many ways. It's so beautiful.

It's a warning, yet it's an encouragement. He says, you shall be clean from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. I have been a Christian for 23 years.

I have been preaching for 22 years. If I had to take a verse of scripture out of the Bible and say, this is a summary of Paul Washer's life, it would be this. For the last 23 years, God has been cleansing me from my filthiness and my idols.

And if I live another 23 years or another 46 years, if I live to be a hundred and can stand in a pulpit and give a testimony, the testimony will be this. God has been working all these years to cleanse me from my filthiness and my idols. You say, well, Brother Paul, yes, in justification, the moment I believed I was justified and I stood before him, not just forgiven, but clothed in the very righteousness of Christ.

But in sanctification, God has been just working and working and working to cleanse me from all my filthiness and all my idols. And throughout my days, that's what God will be doing. Is that a reality in your life? Is that a reality in your life? Can you honestly look at your life and say that it is marked by this, a labor-intensive, a work of God, that he has been working in circumstances, he has been working in trials, he's been working in blessings.

You can look back through your life and see that what God has been doing is sanctifying you, cleansing you from your filthiness and your idols. You can say, oh, but he's got so much farther to go. We all know that.

That's not the point. The point is, from where you started to where you are today, is there just a long, continuous view of God working in your life to cleanse you from your filthiness and your idols. Oh, my goodness, what a precious revelation that is.

If you can look back and say, I cannot escape this God. This God is constantly, I sometimes will hear people say, you know, it's unbelievable. You know, I know one believer, he can commit immorality and do all sorts of things.

It's not even a problem for him because I tell one white lie and it's like God destroys my entire world. I say, praise God, behold the salvation of God. For it is the mark of one being lost under condemnation and the other one being saved unto eternal life.

Let me give you a wonderful passage. Jacob I loved, Esau I hated. Now, hated there in Hebrew is very important.

You need to really understand the Hebrew to understand what it means, to understand the context, to understand what it means. It means hatred. And if it meant anything, I suppose they'd have translated something else.

It means hatred. In the same way that he loved Jacob and his love was manifested toward Jacob, his hatred was manifested toward Esau. That's all there is to it.

Now, but when you look at Esau, this is an amazing thing. Every promise that God ever gave anyone about that man, God fulfilled. Not only that, but Esau was in a sense tremendously blessed by God.

He was so wealthy that when Jacob came back over into the land, he needed nothing from him. God had given everything he promised Abraham. God had done it all.

God had done a tremendous work. The providence of God had fallen on favorable lines for Esau in a sense. So how is it that God demonstrated hatred towards Esau and love towards Jacob in this? Never once in Scripture, never once does God do a corrective work of discipline in Esau's life.

God cut the rope and let Esau go. God let Esau be Esau as long as he wanted to be. And then you look over at Jacob, and as my mom would say, he beat the living daylights out of that boy every day of his life.

And that is the difference between the love of God and the hatred of God. The greatest manifestation of the love of God for the believer other than the cross of Jesus Christ is continuous, enduring, never-give-up work of sanctification. And the greatest mark of the judgment of God upon a person or a nation is when he cuts the rope and lets him go.

And so I want you to just look. That is why I just can't understand people sometimes. You know, I preach on these things and they'll say, oh, you're stepping on my toes.

And I preach on the same thing and another brother goes, I'm so happy I can't even see straight. Because when you understand Scripture and you understand what God is doing and his goodness and the work of salvation, you glory in trials. You glory in difficulties.

You glory in discipline. I am 43 years old. When I was 31 years old, 32 years old, both my hips were replaced.

This has been operated on several times. My elbow is going to have to be replaced. My back is really in trouble.

I'm hurting right now. I've got this degenerative thing and it just it hurts. And if Benny Hinn were to walk in the door right now and tell me and for once spoke the truth that he really had a prophecy from God that God was going to heal me, I'm not so sure that I would want him to lay hands on me.

Because this thing has been used of God more than anything could have ever been used of God to cleanse me from at least some of this filthiness and some of these idols. Oh, what a perverted type of Christianity there is in America. To the wind with health and wealth.

I want godliness. I want to be like that old, old preacher who was B.B. Caldwell or one of those men just stood there right before he died and he just goes, I hate sin. I hate sin.

I want to grow in sanctification to the point I can say with that old man that I can say with God, I hate sin and I love righteousness. And I really love it, that I desire it, that I feed upon it, that is something I want to hold with everything else. And I mean that.

I mean, there comes a time when you just got to cut all the frivolous stuff out and say, this is what God saved me for. Saved me for this. No matter what it costs, He saved me for this.

And we'd be like Him. Set that as your goal. You say, well, brother Paul, how does health, wealth and all these, let me just share with you, clear it up for you really quick.

Here's how it all works. You just put it all in the context of God's great purpose for you, and that is conformity to the image of Christ. And if through health, God can conform you in a greater way to Christ and get greater glory for himself, he'll grant you health.

And if through grinding your body into powder, God can make you more like Christ and get more glory for himself, he'll do it. Same way with wealth, same way with anything. It is all in the context of this great purpose in the plan of God, and that is to make every one of his children like his son, who will not be ashamed to call them brothers.

So he says, I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. He says, from all your filthiness and from all your idols now, I will cleanse you. And here's the promise in this, especially for the young men here.

There are some sins that a moment you are converted, they're gone. I'll give you an example. I was a drinker.

I had the foulest mouth you've ever heard in your life. The moment I was saved, it was gone. It was gone.

But prior to being saved also, I was one of the most vicious liars you could have ever imagined. I could lie so well that if my friends would have me go lie for them, one of them said one time, he says, Paul, you know, you are frightening. He goes, I was sitting in that office.

You were lying. I knew you were lying and I was believing you. And when I was saved, that didn't leave.

Didn't. Oh, I couldn't get away with it anymore. But it didn't leave.

Not immediately. It was a thing that God, just like just like in the promised land, he took them out gradually. He takes some out immediately, some out gradually.

Now, what's the point? The point is this. There is a difference between being sinless. No one is sinless, but there are certain areas of our life where we walk in victory and other areas where we do not walk in victory.

And we call that besetting sin. Now, some believers, some believers, you've got a certain sin in your life, maybe that you just sit there and you've basically done like Pavlov's dog. You've just given up.

Well, this is just going to be something I'm going to have to deal with all my life. This is just one area that just doesn't seem like it's going to change. That is a lie straight out of the pit of hell.

Why? Look at this promise. He says, from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you? How should you be praying? You've got a sin in your life. You just can't seem to get victory over it.

Pray this promise. Lord, cleanse me from all my filthiness. Cleanse me from all my idols.

Do whatever it takes, but hold on, because that is a very dangerous prayer. The one prayer I never would have prayed if I knew what it would have cost to pray was this, Lord, make me like Jesus. But God withholds wisdom from young men so that they will pray that prayer, because if they knew what they were praying, they would not have the courage to ask for it.

I'll never forget when I was in Peru, and it was before my operation on my hips, and I'd come into the city of Lima. I was hurting so bad. My last trip up into the mountains, I literally grabbed to hold the horn on the mule and let him just drag me up the mountain.

And I was hurting so bad, and I got into this pity party, and I was laying on this couch there in the city of Lima, and I came out on this platform, this kind of the top of a house. You can walk on houses up there or down there, and I walked out, and I said, Oh God, why? Why am I hurting so bad? Why do you, you know, I need to go up in the mountains. I need to go down the rivers.

I need to do this. Why, why, why? And no, God did not speak to me, at least not in an audible voice, but I began to see all the times in college, all the times in seminary, it just started coming to mind when I was down on my knees with other friends or alone saying, Oh God, make me like Jesus. And it was basically, why am I doing this? Son, this is the very thing you asked me for.

Now, I can relent if you choose not this thing. I'll give you an open door. Just run through it, son.

Never touch you again. But if you'll submit to my hand, I'll do a work with you. Yes, when I found you, you were the worst.

I'll do a work with you for that very reason, to get glory for myself. Now, what do you choose? So many people want to escape trials, escape hardship, and what they are, is they are escaping conformity to Jesus Christ. There are two Russians that I heard speak, and they were talking about they had been in America for several months, and they were just, they explained how terrified they were in America, of living here in America, how dangerous it was for their Christianity.

And I spoke to one of them, I said, I just don't understand. You know, you, as young boys, witnessed the KGB coming into your church, knocking the door down, grabbing your pastor, and cutting his tongue out of his head. How can you tell me it's dangerous to live here? He said, there's no Jacuzzis in Russia.

There's no nice houses in Russia. There's no air conditioning in Russia. There aren't strip malls in Russia.

There's no, there's nothing to distract you. He goes, here is the danger. You talk to a missionary living in a tent on the Amazon River, and ask him if it's difficult to serve Jesus.

No, he'll tell you when he lands in Miami, is when the difficulty starts. That's when the clouds start filling into your mind. When you sit down beside that young man, who's not any smarter than you, but he's making \$250,000 a year, and he's got the respect of everyone on the plane, they think you're an absolute fool.

You sit down beside him and watch your vision get cloudy. Oh, my dear friends, the things that we maybe love about this country, God hates. Oh boy, you can't get a meal like this in Burma.

Oh, I tell you what, I've been overseas. I hear people say, America's like a place paved with gold compared to overseas. Well, it could be that very pavement of gold that's keeping us from being like Christ.

I think they asked J.I. Packer one time, they said, who's the greatest preacher alive? J.I. Packer said, you don't know him. His point was this, he's over in some squall somewhere overseas, preaching to three people, and more like Jesus Christ than we could ever imagine. So here's the thing, do you want to be cleansed from your filthiness and your idols? Then ask it of God.

But oh, don't think, my friend, he's going to send a video to your house on 10 steps on how to grow in sanctification. No, he's going to visit you, but it will be hard. It will be hard.

It will be hard. Is he really most precious to you? I now understand Abraham and Isaac and that sacrifice that was called to be given up on that mountain. If I lost my two boys that I love so much, if I lost them, would I be able to get down on my knees, raise my hands to heaven and worship God? Would I be able to acknowledge that it was his sovereignty that ordained the loss? And then kiss his hand.

Is God the most precious? And is his working in my life the most precious? Or are there idols? Or are there I? Let's go on. He says now, and this is a wonderful text, and I, verse 26, a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. Now, there are two things that I will probably spend the rest of my life preaching on.

People ask me about the book of Revelation. I know absolutely nothing about it. I'm about right at the same level with everybody who thinks they do know something about it.

If I could have a pulpit that would take in this entire nation, everyone were to listen to me. First of all, I would preach on the cross of Christ above all things, but it would be this. Not that we are saved from our sins because a Roman whip fell on the back of the Messiah, but we are saved from our sins because the Messiah bore sin, became a curse, and his own father crushed him under his wrath.

The real cross. And secondly, secondly, I would teach on this passage that regeneration is a supernatural work of God, whereby the very heart of a man is transformed. Now, I want us to look at a few things here.

He says a heart of stone and a heart of flesh. Usually, especially in the New Testament when we come to this idea of flesh, it is always in the negative, always in the negative. But here, don't take it so.

What is he speaking about? If I had a statue of stone here, of the mightiest man in this county, statue of stone, I could walk up to that statue of stone, I could prod it, I could kick it, I could pinch it, I could cut it, I could stab it, I could do any manner of things to that statue of stone, and how would it respond? Not at all. It's stone. It's inanimate.

It can not respond. It is not a living thing. It doesn't matter what I do, it will not respond to divine stimuli, any type of stimuli.

Now, imagine I had the biggest man on the face of the earth here, and I caught him under the tender part of his arm with two fingers like this, and I pinched with all my might. It doesn't matter how strong, how tough that man is, I'm going to get some response out of him. Why? He's flesh.

He's alive. And what is God saying? Your unregenerate, sinful man, the man who does not believe in Jesus, the average man in the pew on Sunday morning, does not know Christ. His heart is a heart of stone.

It can not respond to anything. And it's going to take a lot more than some soupy story about his grandmother in heaven wanting him to be there also. It's going to take something more than that to make that man a child of God.

It is going to take a supernatural work of God's Spirit. Whereby that heart of stone is taken out, and a heart of flesh, a heart that can respond to divine stimuli is put in its place. That, my friend, is what it means to become, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, a new creature.

That is why preaching is pitiful. That when you're standing there preaching, you have no armament. You have nothing in your pockets.

You have no tool, no device, no trick. You have nothing that can change a man's heart from stone to flesh except the promise of the Holy Spirit blessing biblical preaching. And that the power of God for salvation is revealed in the message.

Martin Lloyd-Jones one time, I don't have the, I remember reading the story, I can't remember it all, but he was on the platform and was to speak second with a man who had been converted, who was a mighty intellect. He'd been a mighty man in the academic world and everything else, and now he'd been converted, and he was going to speak, so he gets up and he speaks, and he says, We need to reach academics who are lost with other academics. We need to get the men in the university that are Christians, we need to get them together because they are the best men that God can use to reach other men like them.

And his whole sermon was based on that. When he finished Martin Lloyd-Jones, classical Martin Lloyd-Jones, he gets up and he goes, I appreciate everything the brother says, but he's wrong on every point. He said, Wesley could speak as eloquent and as well as any man.

He was high bred, went to the best university, and he preached to coal miners, street urchins, and God did a mighty work. Dwight L. Moody, that American, he doesn't even speak English well for an American. God brought him over here and used him to save aristocrats and people of brilliance.

God will not use the likely instrument. God will use the unlikely one to get glory for himself. See, if you're not pitiful, you can't preach.

That's all there is to it. Mighty men, mighty men, show me one, I've never found one. Bring them all together, bring my favorite preachers, the Spurgeons, bring them all together, Alexander McLaren, give me Whitfield.

Dust every one of them. There's a mighty God, but there are no mighty men. There's a great God, but there are no great men.

And I'll not have it any other way. I like it like that. Because there's hope for someone like me, if greatness is not required.

Oh, what a thing here. But now, I want us to look at something about the different varieties of preaching you will get today. There are some who believe, you would imagine that that curtain was closed and that Jesus Christ was standing behind it.

There are some who believe in their preaching, their theology, that all you have to do is pull back the curtain and show Jesus to the congregation, and when they see Jesus, well, they're going to love Him. That's the way some people preach. Just got to show the world Jesus, and the world will love Him.

There's a problem. That would work in a congregation, possibly, where everyone had eyes and could see. But if you pull back the curtain to show everyone what's standing behind it, and the entire congregation is blind, it's not going to do much good, is it? Now, there are some preachers who say, that's just the point.

It's not only revealing Jesus, but the Holy Spirit has to come and give sight to the blind. That's true, but that's not far enough. Because if God only gave us sight, we would hate what we see.

Because our hearts are deceitfully wicked. Our hearts hate holiness. Our hearts hate righteousness and true love and true beauty.

Our hearts hate everything that God is prior to being regenerated. And so if the only thing that happens is God giving sight to the blind, with that sight they'll curse Him all the more. The more they see of Him, the more they'll hate Him.

So it is not just that the curtain has to be pulled back and sight has to be given to the blind, but that heart has to be taken out and a new heart has to be put in its place. You see, one of the things, if you are going to study philosophy at all, one of the most important things, in my opinion, to study is the idea of ontology. The Greek word ontos, being.

The idea of being. And what I mean by that is this. And Jesus teaches this in Matthew chapter 7 better than all the philosophy books that exist in the world.

And it is this. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit. The character of the thing will determine its action, its response.

Men are born with an unholy, unrighteous heart. Therefore they are going to hate anything and anyone that is righteous and holy. And the only way a man is ever going to love God is if God comes and gives him a heart that is like God's.

Again, we throw ourselves back on this. The weakness of all this. Apart from the Spirit of God.

Apart from the Spirit of God. Now, one other thing about this passage that is so very, very important. Spurgeon, I read him one time, he had this illustration.

And maybe just because I was a farm boy, I actually thought of it before I read it. But if you just imagine for a moment, if you had a plate of the finest food from the finest restaurant in Atlanta, here. And you had the biggest bucket of slop you've ever seen in your life, filth, here.

And you had a pig in the very back of this church, and you let that pig go. I can tell you exactly where that pig is going to go. He's not going to go here to this fine, exquisite meal.

That pig is going to come here to this filth. He's going to stick his head in it. He's going to relish it.

He's going to devour it. He's going to love it. And no one can blame him.

Why? That's what pigs do. He's a pig. It's what he is.

He has no shame in that. Nothing. But if in one moment, I had the power to transform that pig into a man, what would happen? The first thing that would happen, he would throw his head out of that bucket.

Because the very thing he loved, he would now hate. Not only that, but there is a real sense in which a man cannot physically digest what a pig can eat. It would be an impossibility.

He would start vomiting up the very things that he was once gobbling down. And when he turned around, he would be ashamed. I just described your conversion.

I don't care what country club you belong to. I don't care about any of all that. What social standing you have.

I just described your conversion. If you have been converted, you have been converted that way. And if you say, well, I never.

You have never. I just described the conversion of a man, of a nine-year-old girl in Sunday school. If you're going to believe this depravity thing, you got to carry it on out.

And my friend, no one can do that but God. Can these bones live? Oh, young preacher, every time you get in the pulpit, it ought to be ringing in your ears. Son, can these bones live? And the prophetic answer, which says, not by my power, O Lord, thou knowest.

You know. What am I? So when he says, I will put my spirit within you. Cause you to walk in my statutes.

I will put my spirit within you. My goodness. The same Holy Spirit who hovered over creation.

I don't know, but I just hope God lets me see creation. You know, I don't know how he would do it. It wouldn't be any problem for him.

I know it's a past event, but I would sure love to see the glory of God manifested in that. That very first day. Isn't it amazing that this same spirit who hovered over creation, brought it into being, is the very same spirit that has been placed, that dwells within the believer.

And you're going to tell me there's not going to be a change. And more than that, because the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a greater act of God than creation itself. Are you going to tell me that the resurrection of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that that same spirit can come and dwell within a believer and he not be changed. I use an illustration and I use it all the time. If you hear me preach very much, you'll hear this illustration.

Just one day I was trying to think about how does this work? I want you to think for a moment that I'm, you know, I show up 20 minutes late to preach. The pastor's kind of mad. Everyone's kind of mad.

Like, well, you know, don't you count it a privilege to preach here? What's your problem? And I walk in, I've got my shoes and hair, everything just like I am now. And I say, now, hold on, pastor. Don't be angry with me.

You don't know the story. And he says, well, what's the story? And I said, well, I was out there on the highway and had a flat tire. And I was changing the tire and the lug nut came out of my hand.

It rolled out into the middle of the highway. And I wasn't thinking. I just ran out there to the middle of the highway.

And I got down, I picked up the lug nut. And when I stood up, there was a logging truck weighing about 30 tons going about 75 miles an hour. And it was like five feet in front of me.

And it ran me over. And that's why I'm late. He would sit there and go, you're a liar.

No, it happened. You're either, Paul, you're either a liar or you're out of your mind. What's wrong, pastor? He calls the deacons in.

I plead with all the deacons, the other elders. What's wrong? What do you mean you don't believe me? Why wouldn't you believe me? And you would constantly be saying this. It is impossible to have an encounter with a logging truck weighing 30 tons going 75 miles an hour and not be changed.

And why is it possible for most people to profess faith in Christ and not be changed? Has your God become smaller than some puny mechanism built to carry trees? And that's why I hate much of the preaching I hear. I hate it because it defiles, it lowers the glory and the power of God. Why should you walk with Christ? Why should you? To go to heaven? You know what that is? Humanism.

As one preacher said, you're no different than two men sitting at a cafe discussing how they're going to rob a bank and get something for free. You walk for Christ just because you're going to heaven? It's all about you. I tell people this.

People who don't have assurance, listen to me. This is what you need to do. You need to repent of your sins whether you go to hell or not, because He's worthy.

You need to believe in Him whether you go to hell or not, because He's worthy. And you need to follow Him all the days of your life whether you go to hell or not, because He's worthy. And people adopt an attitude like that, they get assurance pretty quick.

Why? Why? Why do we do all this? For His glory. For His glory. There's no other reason to stay in business, church.

You just become a little prostitute. There's no other reason to stay in business except for His glory. His glory.

Just for Him. He says, I'll put my spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes. That means make.

I'll make you do it. I will make you do it. I'll make you.

Now, how does He make you? Well, I do not like... Now, this might get me in trouble. I do not like the terminology so much, irresistible grace. Because it means that, it communicates this idea that I don't want to follow Jesus.

I don't want to worship Him. I don't want to believe in Him. But I am forced to do it.

What you're talking about there, folks, is regeneration. That's all. That God changes a man's heart and gives him a heart.

That if God gives you a heart that's a new creation, recreated in holiness and righteousness. If you have a heart created in holiness and righteousness, the moment you look on the Holy and Righteous One, you'll love Him. And He makes by transforming us.

You see, that's the difference between Christianity and religion. We have a trouble where I live with coyotes. Now we have big trouble with mountain lions.

Seem to be killing a lot of goat herds and things like that. But you take a coyote. You take a coyote.

You take a mountain lion. Capture it. Put it in a cage.

You've solved your problem. But you haven't solved his. He's still a coyote.

He's just a coyote in a cage. And you let him out of that cage. He's going to go back to doing the very same thing.

Why? Because that's what he is. Christianity is not a religion of, I know it's the right thing and I ought to do it. Right.

The most frightening thing for a pastor, in my opinion, is to go out on visitation and visit some wayward church member who hasn't been to church for a year. And that man receives the pastor in the house. And when the pastor says, you need to get back in the church, you need to get back fellowshiping with the saints.

When that man puts his head down and says, you're right pastor, I just need to do the right thing. It's almost like he's saying, I've got to take this horrible medicine I hate in order to be saved. It's like me going home next Friday, walking up the door and my wife comes to the door and I just grab her and give her a big hug and a big kiss.

And she says, well, what's all that about? I pull out the manual for Good Husband. I turn to page 35 and I say, what says right here? That's what I should be doing. She's going to feed me that book.

She doesn't want a man who kisses her because he wants to do the right thing. She wants to be kissed because he wants to kiss her. It's the same way.

I hear all these people. Yeah, I know I need to do this and I need to do that. And I said, well, just go home.

If that's all it is to you, it's self-serving to start off with. You don't love him. You don't care about him.

You're just doing the right thing so that you don't go to hell. You know, you can catch a field on fire and snakes will run out of it, but they're still snakes. What do you mean? One of the things that if I were to do a Ph.D. and I was going to do it a while back and I was standing in the middle of this big seminary and it's

like God looked at me and says, what are you doing here, son? Get out of here.

Go back and preach. But if I was going to do a Ph.D., it would probably be on the beauty of God because it is one of the areas that has just been totally ignored. Folks, this is not about what I'm doing.

Doing the right thing. This has nothing to do with doing the right thing. This has to do with being captivated by the most beautiful, the most glorious.

It's like my favorite artist is French Impressionist Monet and he painted the water lilies. That's like me finally getting to see the water lilies and all its magnificence and you walking up to me with a stick man and saying, look, leave me alone, boy. Look at my stick man.

I'm going to go cry. Leave me alone. One of the things that I love in studying the attributes of God is the doctrine of, maybe I made this up, but I call it the doctrine of condescension.

The doctrine of condescension. That it is an act of condescending grace and mercy for God to take His eyes off of Himself to look at any other thing because He is so glorious. And so beautiful.

I don't want my sons doing the right thing all the way to hell. I want them to be captivated by a vision, a heavenly vision. Christ.

Christ. And now I'm going to just stop here, but I want to say one thing. It's very important to parents.

You know, you have things like Harry Potter and those books and such. People always ask me about them and I don't agree with them at all, but I want to tell you something. They don't make me half as mad as our type of Christianity.

And I'll tell you why. You have these children, and this goes in with my sermon. It actually does.

You've got these children and they're looking at Harry Potter. The wonder, the marvel, the miraculous of all those books, as demonic as it is, there are those elements there. The marveling, the adventure, the miraculous, all these things in there that just mesmerize our children.

And what do we give them? Sunday morning church in a pew. Now, why wouldn't they be drawn to something like this? I want them to see life, life, not just a bunch of rule keeping people who hate what they do, but do it out of the name of self-preservation. We ought to be so full of joy.

We ought to be so different. We ought to be marvelous. We ought to do Edwards and others, other theologians.

I mean, big thunderstorm come up, lightning storm, dangerous. Dude's just wandering around in the middle of it, worshipping God. That is Christianity.

That. Came to give you life. Came to give you glory.

And all that is coming to give you me. What do you think we'll be doing in heaven? Think about that. You know, anything on this earth, no matter how glorious, how beautiful, is going to be boring after a while.

Well, let me submit to you something. The same thing goes for heaven. There's only so long you can swing on gates of pearl and it just gets boring.

Streets of gold. I mean, it's pavement. I mean, how is it that you say, well, time does it? Let's just forget about that for a moment.

That's too big of a thing to get into right now. Let's just think about this. What is it? Someone asked me one time, a student.

They said, when I get to heaven, will I know everything? I said, no, you'll know a lot, but you won't know everything. And they said, well, why won't I know everything? Because you'll still be a finite creature. Just like every angel, every cherubim, every seraphim, you will be a finite creature.

What will we be doing in heaven? Chasing down the glory of God. Because He is infinite. His beauty is infinite.

His excellency is infinite. All of that. And thus we'll be chasing down.

And every day, if you can say such a thing, we'll be new. It'll be like you walk into heaven. And the first revelation you have of God, if you were not supernaturally strengthened by the power of God, His beauty would drive you mad.

But you will be strengthened to behold a revelation that you never seen even possible. And you will be strengthened. You will fall down in such ecstasy and joy and worship that if you were not supernaturally strengthened, you'd explode.

And then you go to bed and you get up in the morning. And what do you see the next morning? A revelation that is so much greater than the revelation you had the day before that it seems as though you never knew Him. And you are going to fall down with such joy and ecstasy and worship that if you were not supernaturally strengthened much more than the day before, you would explode.

And you'll march through all the days of eternity, never coming to know the end of Him. Don't talk to me about these silly little I-ought-to-do things. I think that's why David was so pleasing to God.

He didn't get a whole lot of ought-to-do things right if you look at him carefully. I just... This is not Scripture. This is not coming down from the mount.

But I just imagine sometimes David walked in front of that tabernacle going, Okay, I go into that holy of holies, I'm dead. It's worth it. If I can just run past those priests, jump through that curtain, I'm dead in a second, but if in that one fraction of a second I see His glory, it's worth it.

And then Moses... I mean, young man, you are not going to have a bigger ministry than Moses, okay? I hate to deflate you, but probably not. Moses had this tremendous ministry. I have to be careful here because when we get over into the church at Corinth, Paul says that we do have a greater ministry, but just by way of illustration.

He's the greatest redemptive figure in the entire Old Testament, the type of the Messiah, everything else that is to come. And when he had accomplished his task, he was empty. He was empty.

And I can prove it. He said, Lord, show me your glory. This is not enough.

Ministry is not enough. It's not enough. It's not enough.

And if it is enough, you're just lost. It's not enough. And he was a Jew.

He knew what he was saying. He said, show me your glory. He knew he was going to die.

I've got to see you. I've got to see you because nothing else is enough. I say that this is not time for men with narrow spirits and tiny hearts.

If what you've got is enough, you've got a problem. I learned this from an old teacher one time about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And it's this.

You talk about fill me with the Holy Spirit and then fill me some more with the Holy Spirit. Well, how can he do that? Well, it's like blowing air into a balloon. You blow a little air into a balloon, that balloon expands only with the amount of air it has in it.

You blow more air into it, it expands and can hold more air. Just this continues. You need to be praying, God, enlarge my heart.

Enlarge that cavity that the Spirit fills. Enlarge me, Lord, that a greater filling and a greater filling and a greater filling of You. And if you're content, you need to especially pray that.

Lord, I am content. That does not mean, Lord, that I have all of You that can be had. It means that that little place in me is just tiny and narrow and drawn.

Bust my heart wide open and then fill every area of it. And then bust it open again and fill every area of it. And bust it open again until I'm consumed by the Old God.

God bless you.

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