

Practical Holiness

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing God's Word and having a knowledge of the holy in order to discern the will of God and achieve spiritual growth and transformation.

Duration: 1:06:19

Scripture: Isaiah 42:3, Matthew 6:33, Romans 1:28, Romans 12:1, Philippians 4:8

Topics: "Sanctification", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of retaining the knowledge of God and making dedicated efforts to know Him. He challenges the audience to examine their commitment to God and warns against engaging in activities that go against His teachings. The preacher highlights the consequences of not valuing the knowledge of God, which leads to a depraved mind and a life filled with wickedness and disobedience. He urges the audience to renew their minds and not conform to the patterns of the world, but instead be transformed by God's truth.

Transcript

I have more than enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened animals. I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to meet with me, who has asked this of you? This trampling of my courts.

Stop bringing meaningless offerings. Your incense is detestable to me. New moons, sabbaths, and convocations.

I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your new moon festivals and your appointed feast, my soul hates. They have become a burden to me.

I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you. Even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen.

Your hands are full of blood. Wash and make yourself clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight.

Stop doing wrong. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we come before you in the name of your Son.

Lord, help us to come as we should and not as we do so many times. Help us to understand that you are holy and that you are sovereign and that you have given your law and it is to be obeyed. Father, we

recognize that salvation is by grace, that our love has been sealed, your love for us, that you cannot love us less and you cannot love us more because your love is perfect, that our standing before you is in Christ Jesus and not by anything we do.

And yet, Father, you require us to be righteous and to make every effort to be holy and to learn to discern what is a pleasure to you and what is an abomination. And, Father, we are a people who have no discernment so that when we come before you, it is not an offering of praise as much as a trampling of your courts. Teach us as though you have to teach a child again how to be holy.

In Jesus' name, Amen. There is so much to be said and done among you. There is so much to be done.

I look around, I don't see students. I see, as I've said so often, sealed fountains and enclosed gardens, people who may be used of God to glorify God throughout the nations, possibilities, endless possibilities to reflect the glory of Almighty God. I see before us the greatest potential that any generation of Christians has ever known.

All the walls are down to preach the gospel to the entire known world. Endless possibilities to live and die for the glory of God. And yet the work is hindered.

The glory of God is tarnished. And it's because the people of God no longer know how to discern the things of God. I preached last night on the holiness of God.

And a dear little girl, she's a freshman, she looked like she ought to be in the 6th grade. She came to me and her heart was so broken. And she was crying and weeping.

And she said, I've been in church all my life and no one ever told me I was supposed to fear the Lord. And I said, young lady, but that's the very beginning of wisdom. We have not wisdom today.

And even among many teachers, there is human wisdom. And we do not know how to discern the will of the Lord. We must learn.

If you look at this passage in Isaiah, you find some incredible things. Now we're just going to use this to open up and then we're going to go to a lot of passages about discerning the holiness of God. But look at what can happen to the people of God.

Have you ever read through the Old Testament? I hope so. But have you ever read through the Old Testament and wondered how the people of God could walk into the temple of God, could offer sacrifices to God, could praise God, and then turn right around and find the biggest tree on the highest hill and worship every number of idols. And not be able to tell the difference.

And not be able to recognize the wrong. In a publicity of God's. Well, I want you to know that's the church in America today.

And because the greatest sin among the men of God today is the fear of man, which is a snare. And the fear of losing economic security and reputation in the denomination. You're not hearing the truth.

And you need to. Why? Because judgment has come upon the people of God. We mock Bill Clinton and we don't realize that our garments are far more stained than his.

Because to whom much is given, much is required. Has the grace of God touched his life to convert him? No. And it doesn't matter if the Southern Baptist leaders get mad because I said that.

He's lost. No, the grace of God has not touched him. But it has touched you.

You don't laugh at a man like that and you don't judge a man like that. You pray for a man like that and you weep for a man like that. The judgment of God has not come upon politicians in America.

It's coming upon the church. And if history repeats itself, and it seems to always repeat itself, because man never learns. This is what's going to happen in America.

Because of the sin of the church, God will allow the political reality in this country to turn against the church. And a secular, hating government will rise up and do everything it can to tear us apart. And God will allow it.

It will be of God. As a matter of fact, Bill Clinton is God's man in the White House. You need to know that.

Read the Old Testament. God gives a king as a blessing to a nation or as a curse. It's a judgment of God.

And a nation will rise up against the church and will persecute the church in America. Yes, the church in America will be persecuted if history repeats itself. Because we're wicked and we're full of idols.

And then when the church is purified by the persecution that God sends, then God will raise up another nation to come against the government that had no mercy on His people when Hitler was taking over Germany. The theologians, with the exception of a few like Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church, the theologians were debating on how long the drapery should be around the communion table. And as the church runs headlong into judgment today, the men of God, instead of repenting and crying out and studying God's Word with all their passion, are looking for little models on how to keep lost people in their congregations.

And it's wrong. Here we have in Isaiah a people that came to God on a daily basis. They did it.

On a daily basis they came. And God hated it. Every moment of it.

Why? Because they had lost the ability to discern the holy. Because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There is not much fear of God.

Especially there's not much fear of God among some of you. I've watched you mock the music. I've watched you laugh at the guitar player.

I've watched you talk among yourself when people were crying out about the holiness of God. You don't fear God. And we need to realize that that's the very beginning of wisdom.

Nations are established upon one principle. The fear of God. That He is God.

Schools are to be based upon only one principle. The fear of God. That it might walk in wisdom and teach wisdom.

And your life is to be based upon the fear of God. But you can't do that when your God looks more like Santa Claus than He does Jehovah. The fear of Almighty God is the beginning of wisdom.

And the knowledge of the holy. The knowledge of the holy. And I'm going to talk about that now in a practical way.

How do we stop being ignorant of the holy? Let's go to the book of Romans, chapter 12. Romans, chapter 12, verse 1. Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship. Therefore, an old man told me one time, every time you see therefore, you should ask what there is for and why it's there.

I want you to listen to something. What is Paul saying? Therefore. What does he mean? He means this.

He says, look back at the last 11 chapters that I've written to you and look at all the great things that God has done. And then, live your life based upon this mercy of God that has been granted to you. You see, knowledge of the holy begins with this.

A recognition of the first three chapters of the book of Romans. Yes, all revivals and reformations come out of the book of Romans because it's pure theology and it teaches us about a pristine God. A knowledge of the holy comes with realizing that for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And the only thing that man deserves is wrath. And then moving into chapters 4 and 5, the glory of God revealed in Christ. You have to have a knowledge not only of your sin, but you have to have a knowledge of God.

And what He's done for you in Christ. And the great work of salvation in chapter 6 and chapter 7. And the great work of the power of God in your life in chapter 8. And the great work of sovereignty of God in chapters 8, 9 and 11. When you study the whole counsel of God, not just little principles of the Christian life, but when you know God and His counsels, by that motivation, you are called upon to do what? To offer your life as a sacrifice to God.

To offer your bodies as a sacrifice to God. Why does He say bodies here? Because He's wanting us not to make this into some kind of just loose metaphor that requires nothing. He's not saying to you that He wants you to have an attitude of sacrifice.

I hear these preachers today who want to protect themselves. And when they talk about the rich young ruler, they say, well, you know now, don't take that too serious, congregation. Don't come under any condemnation.

Don't think now you have to give anything up. Of course, Jesus was just talking about an attitude. He would never ask you to give up everything.

Strange, He's asked me to do it three times. It's not an attitude here. He's literally saying, you give your life to God.

But we find we don't want to. Why? Not just because of some remnant of carnal nature living in us, but because of our lack of the knowledge of God. If you could only catch a glimpse, a heavenly glimpse of who God is.

If you could only see His wonder and His glory and His passion and His power and His love. If you could only just for one moment be taken to a place where you might get a clear vision of who He is, you'd throw yourself on God. You'd be willing to cut yourself up in a thousand pieces and throw them around the world.

But there is no vision of God and therefore the people perish. There is no law of God and therefore the people perish. Christianity is surviving today in America by being propped up, not by power.

It's because we don't know God. Now, for you ministerial students, I want to tell you something. It's very, very important.

If your Bible study is Bible study only because it's used to prepare sermons, then you'll become as useless as a lot of men have become in the kingdom of God. Most Bible study today is done only to prepare messages and therefore men do not know God. Bible study is to know God.

I don't particularly care how much time you spend on your message. What I care about is how much time you spend in God's Word. If you're going to be a preacher and you're going to fulfill a pulpit, then you get in that Bible hours and hours and hours a day.

You lock yourself away. You make rules that say, no one touches me until God's finished with me. Or what will happen? You'll become a lap boy for a bunch of carnal Christians in the church who don't want to do anything.

You'll run around and be serving them and doing all kinds of things they're supposed to do. You've got to be a man of the Word. You've got to live with God.

How many of you young ministerial students have gone out into a mountain for days without food and without friends and without carnal Christian music and sought God to His face? Thrown rocks into the heavens saying, God, come down. Saying, God, I will give you no rest until you show me your glory. How many of you are that bold? Or how many of you are going to grow up and play church all your life? Learn how to do the denominational thing.

Make no ways. Conform to everything. Because that's the way to get ahead.

Cooperation. Are you going to be a man of God? And in this wicked generation, there's got to be a knowledge of the holy. Some of you dress like lost people.

You watch things that only lost people should watch. You talk the way only lost people should talk. You worship like lost people.

Because no one's ever told you that there's such things as modesty and godliness. Like I said last night, 30 years ago, unbelievers had more Christian principles than Christians today. We have forgotten how to blush.

Some of you watched things last night you shouldn't have been watching. And we're going to talk about that in a moment. It's funny when I talk about the theology of the holiness of God, everyone gets so excited.

And when I talk about the practicality of it, everyone says I'm a legalist. But how do you find this knowledge? Look in verse 2. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. By the renewing of your mind.

The word means this. Do not be conformed to the image of this world. In Peru when we're building a church out in the high jungle, we use mud.

And we take a box about this big and we fill it full of loose sand so that the mud won't stick to it. And then we fill it full of mud and then we flip it over and a block comes out. And we can make every block just the same because we have the same mold.

The world has a mold. Satan has a mold. Religion has a mold to make you just like you ought to be.

But they're going to make you not like God wants you to be. And you're to break out of that mold. And there's only one way.

How? By renewing your mind. Be transformed. Be metamorphosized by the renewing of your mind in God's Word.

Many of us are awake about 16 hours a day. Some of us a lot less and some of us a lot more. And constantly, because we live in a wicked generation, our minds are being bombarded with garbage, with filth, with sewer from the world.

I have young men come to me all the time and say, I have so much trouble with my thought life. Well, of course you do. For 16 hours a day, you're swimming in a sewer.

And you spend no time in God's Word. The only way to have a renewed mind is for the power of the Word of God to fulfill and fill your mind. You need the Word.

You need the Word. You need to memorize the Word. You need to read the Word.

You need to study the Word. You need to meditate in the Word. The Word, the Word, the Word.

God said, put it on the doorpost of your home. When you sit down and when you rise up and when you walk through the streets, the Word of God. Throw away some of this carnal, stupid Christian music you're listening to.

A lot of those people don't even know anything about God. Start memorizing the Word of God. Most of you live your life based on flimsy little songs and not upon the Word of God.

You've got to get into the Word. You've got to love the Word. It's got to be a passion for you.

We honor the old prophets, don't we? We honor the Chosers and the Spurgeons. But we don't want to pay the price they paid. And they paid the price by being men who walked alone, who lived with God and loved His Word.

When I became a Christian and then felt the calling of God's ministry, an old preacher saved my life. He took me in his office and he looked at me and he said, boy, I said, yes, sir? Do you know how to be alone? I said, well, what do you mean? He said, well, you've said to me that God's called you to be His man. Is that true? Well, I feel I'm called.

No, that's not what I said. He said, you're either His man or you're not called. Now, do you know how to be alone? Well, what do you mean? Do you know how to separate yourself from the college group? When they go skiing, will you go out into the desert and pray? And while they're going to all their little tiny conferences to get psyched up and enthused for about a week and then allow the fire to burn off afterwards because it's not of God, will you pray for hours? When they're sleeping because they watched too much television or had too much fellowship, will you be burning the midnight oil reading theology? Do

you know how to go into a room and walk away from everybody and just be alone with God? That'll be the key to your ministry.

But beware, boy, because you'll be alone all your life. And a lot of times the only one standing with you will be God. We seek out so much Christian fellowship.

We need to seek out the fellowship of God. And we do that by knowing His Word. God has exalted His Word with His name.

You can't know God apart from His Word. God has revealed Himself. He has spoken through His Son.

And look at how His Son treated the Word. He honored it with His life. He fulfilled it.

And He told us to obey it. You can't know holiness unless you know God's Word. You just can't.

You just can't. And look what it says in Romans 12. Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Then you will be able to test and approve God's will. What His will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

So many people today are out struggling. Oh, what's the will of God for my life? What's the will of God for my life? You don't need to know the will of God for your life as much as you need to know the God of your life. It says here that we need to change our habits with regard to the will of God.

Many of us get in a situation and then spend all night crying out, God, what's your will? And He never talks to us. Why? Because He said that's not the way to do it. He said you live your life constantly renewing your mind with My Word and your life will become conformed to My image and conformed to My will and you will do My will as a natural spiritual, better, spiritual extension of the Word of God in you.

You've got to get filled up with the Word of God and you won't have so many decisions to make. Now, what is the will of God for your life? What is God's will? First of all, whether you eat or you drink, everything you do for the glory of God. That's the first thing to know in discerning the holy and discerning the will of God.

There's only one question you have to ask. Does it glorify God? Does this relationship I have glorify God? If it doesn't, it's wrong. Put an end to it.

Does my voice glorify God? My words, my tongue. Does this car I'm lusting over, when I should be giving half that money to missions, and this big house I don't need, does it glorify God? Is what I'm watching on television, does it glorify God? Can I bow down before it, lift my hands to heaven and glorify God for what I'm watching? Does my clothing glorify God? Do you want an answer to that? For some of you, no. Let me put it this way.

If your clothing is a frame for your body, it's detestable to God. And if your clothing is a frame for your face, it is to the glory of God. And some of you, both men and women, need to repent, because you're a stumbling block.

There are some people here wanting to walk with God. You need to change. Does it glorify God? Everything I do, it doesn't matter culture, it doesn't matter style.

Does it glorify God? That's the only thing you have to ask. Does your music glorify God? Do the books you read glorify God? That's the first thing you need to ask. That's the discerning of the holy.

You sit down and say, does this glorify God? If it doesn't, it's gone. It's gone. Second way to discern the holiness of God and to discern the will of God for your life.

Romans chapter 12, verse 2. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good, pleasing, and perfect will. God's will is always good.

What does that mean? It's easy. No. It's helpful.

No. God's will will always promote spiritual prosperity, spiritual health, spiritual growth. It will always do that.

You might be nailed to a stake and burning, but you'll be spiritual about it. God's will is always good. It is always pleasing.

You see, it's just like worship. One time in Peru, our worship leader came to us and he met with the elders and he said, I really feel like I've got a word from God. And when someone felt like they had a word from God in our church, they came to the elders and the elders would listen to it and the elders would pray about it.

And if they thought, yes, this is a word from God, then he would go up and he would speak. Now when I talk about word from God, I'm not talking about some mystical prophecy. I'm talking about something he found in Scripture.

And the music leader came to us and says, I really feel like God's laid something on my heart. And he shared it with the elders and we were in agreement with it. And so Sunday morning he gets up.

He stands behind the pulpit and he said, Lately I've been hearing from many of you that the worship hasn't really been touching your life and it hasn't been blessing you much and it hasn't been pleasing you much. He said, Well, I would just like to share something with you as your worship leader. I really don't care.

You can get away with a lot of things in Peru. You can't in America. He goes, I really don't care because this worship is not designed to please you or feed you or bless you or make you feel happy or get goose bumps or to make you wiggle a bit.

This music is to glorify God. And if you can find for me in Scripture where what we're doing does not glorify God, I will be happy to change. I put an end to that.

You see, we are so busy. We think that God was actually made for us to please us. I heard of a woman.

She said, Well, I'm going to get a divorce. We asked her why. She said, Well, God wouldn't want me to be unhappy, would He? And I'm unhappy now.

God is not that concerned with your happiness. He's concerned for your soul. There's a lot of difference between the two.

He's concerned for your soul, my friend. So the will of God always glorifies God and it is always good and it is always pleasing to God and it is always perfect. It's mature.

It's complete. There's a soundness to it. It's not partial.

It's not halfway. When you know something is God's will, it's just complete. It's right.

It measures in on all corners of God's Word. So many people make a list of something they're going to do. All the things about it.

And they think, Well, at least half of this I can see is God's will. I'll do it. No.

If it's God's will, all of it is God's will. And so, to know what God desires, you've got to ask yourself, Is it pleasing to Him? Is it good? Does it promote spiritual health and prosperity and soundness? Is it perfect? If it's not, I shouldn't be doing it. That's how you know about the holiness of God.

That's how you know. Now, another way. Let's go to Philippians 4. Philippians 4, verse 8. We're going to talk about your mind now.

Why do some of you have so much trouble with your thought life? Why? This is going to help you. But, I want to make a suggestion. You might want to leave now.

I'll tell you why. I say this almost every place that I preach. Because I know what I'm doing up here.

I'm saying some very extreme things, some very hard things, taking a lot of risk, and stand the possibility of getting myself in a great deal of trouble. Not before men, but before God. If I'm wrong, I'm in a lot of trouble.

And I tell people this everywhere I preach. If what I say today is a bad interpretation of the doctrine of Scripture, then what I say will bring judgment upon me on the day of judgment and it holds nothing on you. You're not bound to it and you can walk out of here laughing at a fanatic and no harm will come to you.

But, if what I say today has Biblical precedent, it can be found in Scripture and it is true to Biblical doctrine, then be very, very afraid. Because the words I preach are the very words of God and you will be bound by them on the day of judgment and you will be responsible for them, so it is better that you leave rather than hear them. You see, authority doesn't come from some special anointing, as your TV preachers tell you.

And it doesn't come from some special calling, as even some Baptists will tell you. Do you know where it comes from? When you correctly interpret God's Word and transfer it correctly to God's people, there and only in there is found authority. Now, about your mind.

What kind of decisions must you make today? Verse 8, Finally, brothers, whatever is true, what should you allow to enter into your mind, Christian? Only those things that are true. You're watching a television program and it is promoting sex outside of marriage or even laughing about it. You shut it off.

Or you're in sin and rebellion against God because you're laughing with people who are laughing at things for which Jesus Christ had to die. You've become a friend of the enemy and a traitor to God. And your sacrifice of praise in chapel the next time around will not be acceptable.

To a lot of churches in America, God is crying out what He said in Malachi. I wish someone would come and shut the doors of this church. I'm tired of your offerings.

Is it true? Does it conform to God's Word? If it doesn't conform to God's Word, it is not right and you should not be listening to it. Should you be listening to a false prophet? Should you be going to a conference put on by the Unification Church or the Mormon Church? No. Neither should you be listening to the false prophets of television and the media.

If it's not true, you have no business allowing it to go into your mind. Whatever is noble, nobility, whatever happened to nobility, whatever happened to men and women who are Christians acting noble, acting as people with honor, who have convictions and virtues and make stands on things? Whatever happened to courtesy and being polite and dignified and giving honor to those to whom honor is due? Whatever happened to being noble? Is what you're watching and what you're reading and what you're doing, is it something that on Judgment Day God would lift up in honor before the creation? If it's not, why are you letting it in your mind? Is it noble? If it's not noble, you should have no part with it. Whatever is right, not right in the eyes of the world and not right in the eyes of a carnal American church.

Do you know how you decide whether or not you should watch a film? Well, it doesn't have much cussing in it and it doesn't have much nudity in it. There's only one place and we can fast forward that and then you're going to come and worship God. Go play golf.

It'd be safer. You say, well, if God's so dangerous, why isn't He doing anything? Because He's not here like we say He is. If God was to manifest His presence in a real and true way, well, have you ever read the book of Acts and Ananias and Sapphira? We probably don't want the presence of God to be manifest in this place.

Whatever is right. What does right mean? Righteous. What does righteous mean? A pole.

A straight thing. God is righteous. Why is He righteous? Because God, in all His ways, in all His being, in all His works, He conforms to His holiness.

Here is God's holiness of standard. Here is His righteousness. He is always righteous because He always conforms to His holiness.

How are you and I to be right? By conforming to God's holiness. We are made right in Jesus Christ. You bet you we are.

Not of works lest any man should boast. But we are called upon to live a righteous life. The book of Hebrews says make every effort to be holy.

Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. Do you make any effort to be holy? Any separation? Any renewing of the mind in the Word of God? Do you? My goodness, I'm not here to preach to you. No, I'm here to see your life changed.

This is not some little task I'm carrying out here. There's life and death hanging in the balance. There's eternity written on your eyes.

Are you right? Are you living right? Are you bent, crooked? The word is perverted. Whatever is right, that should enter. Whatever is right, that should enter into your mind.

Not anything else. Whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure. What happened to purity? White dresses for women and white hats for men.

Our garments are so stained by the garbage we feed on, even as Christians. Purity. The ability to blush.

If you took a Peruvian Christian from the mountains or a Romanian Christian, Baptist, they're called repenters, and you brought them here and they watched your worship and the way some of you are dressed and act, they'd cover their eyes and start crying. I know. I live among the mountain people and I work with the repenters of Romania also.

One group, like you, came into one of their churches right before I arrived in Timișoara a few months ago. College group, singing group, started singing and doing all the stuff they do. The old women of the church covered their eyes, screamed out, the demons have come, the demons have come and ran out of the church.

Be very careful. What about modesty? What about it? Hiding and blushing. And I'm not just talking to women, guys.

I'm talking to you too. Purity. You say, well, it's not that bad.

Let me tell you something. What some of you wear to the beach, a place where you should not be going. If you were to have worn the same thing 30 years ago, even among pagan unbelievers, they would have taken you to a mental hospital or a prison.

Southern Baptists don't preach this way and they ought to start. And I'm talking to family because I am one. You want godliness? Listen, I've learned something.

To the degree that I separate myself from the things that God hates, God uses me. And I also know that to the degree that I've held on to things that God hates, He does not use me. I know both sides of that coin.

I'm not setting myself up as some spiritual giant here. I know what it's like to be used of God. And I know what it's like to be cut off.

I know what it's like to sin and to tarnish my father. I know what it's like to do wrong and be a mass of flesh before people, a showman and nothing more, only to hear the rebuke of God after it's all done. I zealously desire that you be holy.

Paul said that. I burn when I see that things aren't right in my own life and in yours. That's my job.

That's what God called me to do. Now it says here, whatever is lovely, beautiful. Let me share with you something.

When I was a brand new Christian, I went to Southern Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, called Christ Memorial. It was a rather large church. It had a choir of about 100 people.

And I walked in, and from the very first day of church, I noticed this woman. She was about 47, and she was right there in just the middle of the choir, and she was homely. She wasn't very pretty at all.

She had a rather large nose, long hair down to here, gray, kind of scraggly, and she sat there. But there was something, I couldn't stop looking at her. There just seemed to be something about her.

And I mean, this went on for weeks, and I started thinking, well, maybe I need to call a counselor or something. I mean, I can't take my eyes off this woman. And so there was a man who was discipling me, a

very godly man.

And I went to him one day, and I thought, I said, I've got something to share with you. And he said, well, okay, what is it? And I said, well, it's about a girl, a woman. And he said, well, you're a brand new Christian, so you're going to hold off on that.

But he said, there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing ungodly about that. And I said, no, you don't understand.

I said, she's real old, and she's not pretty at all, but I can't keep my... And you know what he did? He started laughing. I said, what are you laughing about? He said, no, stop. Let me just finish your sentence.

There's a lady who sits in the middle of the choir. She has long gray hair, and she's not all that pretty, but you can't stop looking at her because she seems to be the most beautiful thing you've ever seen. I said, yes.

And when you look at her, it's not a thing that's bad. It's a thing that's good. There's something wonderful about her.

I said, how did you know? He said, because everybody in the church says the same thing. I said, what is it? He said, it's the beauty of Jehovah. It's the beauty of the Lord.

A young lady ran out to me last night, and she just looked like a little mosquito. She was so tiny. But her face was glowing.

With what? The beauty of a contrite spirit and a broken heart and humility before God. And you young men, be careful. Don't seek out sensual things.

And you young women, slam the door on the face of any young man that doesn't know God. You probably won't listen to what I've said because most women don't. Most men don't either.

But you should. He's not a spiritual leader. He's a carnal little boy who knows nothing about God.

Get away from him as fast as you can. You want a man who loves God more than you, and you want a woman who'll rebuke you when you're not walking with God. Oh, and I just want to throw this in for some of you ministerial students who have girlfriends.

When you go out with them in a group, stop talking about theology. My wife met with some of the girls last night. Seems like all you guys know how to do is talk about theology.

Then go out on a date with yourselves. You need to know that because when you get married, you don't get married to discuss theology with your wife. Alright? Repentance.

That's what brought the world into the dark ages, and you should know it. And it's only when a man says, I will excel... A young man came to me last night and he said, you know, after your preaching, I feel like I should go to Peru and everything and just serve God and all this stuff. And then he said, you know, there's a possibility I might be able to go to Oxford and everything.

And I said, I hate you. I said, boy, don't you come to Peru. You come to Peru, I'll knock you out of there.

You get a chance to go to Oxford. You go there and you live in the library for ten years. And then you come out and maybe you'll be able to tell somebody about God.

You see, we've made a great divorce in Christianity today. The mind has no business. But you ought to read about Paul and Peter.

That's all they talked about. The Bible is theology. It is doctrine.

What do you think I've been doing here? Maybe I've been doing a mess, but I've been trying to do theology. You need to know. You need to excel.

You need to strive to be excellent. Excellent, excellent, excellent. Your music, excellent.

Your studies, excellent. Your appearance, excellent. Your manners, excellent.

Whatever is excellent, whatever is praiseworthy, would God hold it up on judgment day and honor what you allow to be pumped into your brain. Now, I want to go to a passage in Romans. And I want you to listen closer than you've ever listened before because I want to say something about you.

And then we're going to go to one more passage and we'll be finished. Romans 1, verse 28. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God... Have you dedicated yourself to knowing God? Or do you do those little daily devotions that last about ten minutes in those little books? Get real.

Are you trying to retain the knowledge of God? If you're not, this is a good description of you. Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind to do what not ought to be done. They became filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent ways of doing evil.

They disobey their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. You say, but Brother Paul, we're not all that.

I agree. You're not. But let's keep reading.

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death. Every one of you here know that those who do such things as these are under capital punishment by God. You know that.

The wages of sin is death and these sins bring death. You know that. So this is describing you.

Although you know that God's righteous decree God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death. They not only continue to do these very things. And you say, but we don't continue to do these things.

I agree. But here's the last part. They not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

And that does describe the church in America. I want you to know something. You probably have never in your life had any preacher preach against television.

Well, you're going to hear one now. Is television bad? No, it can be a great tool of God. I use computers all the time and someone told me the other day that it was of the Antichrist.

And I said, well, until he comes and grabs my computer, I'm going to use it. But let me share with you something. Would you commit adultery? Or fornication? Or homosexuality? Would you? Probably not.

But every time you turn on a television show and watch someone commit adultery and fornication, homosexuality, you do not continue to do these very things, but you approve of those who practice them. And God will not be with you. You want the power of God in your life? Then you separate yourself from things that God considers an abomination and you don't compromise.

You want the power of God in your ministry? Then you separate yourself from things that God hates. You do what the Puritans did. You go through Scripture and you find everything in life and you categorize it.

Is this of God? No, that it doesn't belong in my life. Is this bringing pleasure to God? Yes, that it belongs in my life. Don't conform to the Christianity of Sunday school literature.

Get in Scripture. Allow God to cut you like a knife. If what you're hearing preached is comfortable and what you're reading does not cut you, it probably doesn't have much of God's Word in it.

Now, I'm finishing these three days with regret. And I'll tell you why. Not because I haven't met some wonderful young people and some wonderful things that God is doing.

But I usually don't preach a revival unless I can preach about nine or ten days or something like that. Guys, let me just tell you something. If you're going into the ministry, forget about this revival stuff.

Going around churches and preaching revivals, it's useless. Let me tell you why. People want revivals on a weekend.

You can't have a revival in three days. You go back to the old men of God. They moved into town for six months and then they gave an invitation.

Do you know why I haven't given an invitation? Some of you say it's because I'm not evangelical. Well, let me ask you a question. Did you witness to the man who cleans these floors of this gym every night? I have.

It's not because I'm not evangelical or I don't want people to be saved. You know what the problem is? It's become almost like Catholic absolution or something. You come forward and you do your little prayer and you go back home and think it's okay.

And I've been telling you it's not. You better go home and you better get alone with God and you better hear His voice. And that's not easy.

You see, if you want a little instantaneous Christianity, well, that's fine. You can find it out there. But if you want to know God, it's not going to get fixed in a little invitation.

This is not confession. This is a rendering of the heart, a tearing away of dirty garments and a running to God. It's a great deal of difference.

I feel bad because I have beaten you with a large stick. You know what I would be doing now from now on for the next month? Teaching you how to dance with God. If you're willing to separate.

You see, separation is legalism only when it's separation from the world and not separation unto the joy of Almighty God. Read John Piper. He'll tell you something about the glory of God.

You see, you need to be taught about the grace of God now. You need to be taught about the wonder of God. You need to be taught about how wonderful and exciting and refreshing, how kind God is, how gracious.

But I don't have time to do that. But I am going to leave you with one passage. It has meant a great deal to me.

Let's turn to the Gospel of Matthew. And I hope that this will help those of you. Matthew 12.

Some of you here have heard hard preaching and it has no effect on your soul. As a matter of fact, it's hardened you. You ought to be very afraid because you might be going to hell.

Some of you have heard preaching and you've repented, but also you have enough knowledge of God that you know that He does not condemn you and that He is your Father and you're so excited about what God's doing in your life and there's joy. But there are some of you who've heard this preaching and I can't leave you like that because you're walking away thinking that God, that His love is not as big as you thought. Let me fill you in on something.

It's a lot bigger than what you could ever dream. But you see, there's two sides to this thing and you need to know both of them. But for those of you who are sitting there thinking, man, Paul Washer, he ought to write a hymn that goes something like this.

Oh my God, holy and firm, step on me and watch me squirm. I preached just a while back in a Presbyterian church and a prominent man in the congregation got all the other men together and he was so moved by my sermons, he asked all the men to take up an offering to send me back to Peru. But I want to leave you with a thing that has meant so much to me because honestly, the standard I preach causes me to repent.

Look at this passage. And this is for you. Those of you who are loved by God and have been broken by the hard things I've said and who may think, well, could God ever use me? This is your answer.

This is about the Messiah. Chapter 12, verse 20. A bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out till he leads justice to victory.

In his names the nations will put their hope. A bruised reed he will not break. You go to Israel and go down by the river and you know what you'll find? Reeds.

Not one or two or three or four or a hundred or a thousand or a million. You'll find six kazillions of reeds. There's reeds everywhere.

I mean, there's so many reeds. I mean, you could pluck up all the reeds and you'd still have trillions of reeds. And well, the children in Israel in Jesus' time and the prophet's time, they were rather poor and so they made their toys.

So when the children all wanted to play, they would go down to the river and they'd cut them off a reed about this long. And they would take the reed, a very fragile thing, and they'd take an object like a sharp rock or another stick or something, and they would begin to make holes in the reed. Why? They were going to make a beautiful instrument to play with, make themselves a flute, to play music, to have a good time with, to enjoy and to bless.

But there's a problem with making flutes out of cane with a dull rock. The reeds break. They break.

You take a reed and you want to make a beautiful instrument out of it, and you start working on it, and because of the weakness of the reed, it will break. So what do you do? I mean, there's thousands of reeds. You're not going to spend time fixing that reed back up so you can do something with it.

No! Toss it away. Get rid of it. Kick it out the door.

Throw it away. It's no good. Get you another reed.

God's not like that. God has called you. And He has called you to make you an instrument for His glory, for His beauty, and to be a means of blessing others.

And because of some old hard preacher that He brought here, you feel broken. You say, I've sinned. I'm broken.

How could God ever use me? Look at all these faults this man has pointed out this week. Well, God's probably just going to toss me. I mean, after all, He can find somebody better than me.

He's not going to stick around with me and fix me and start all over again. God's not going to waste His time while I'm on someone like me. It's done.

No, it's not. It's not done. Because He doesn't throw reeds away.

Bruised reeds He does break. You know what He's going to do with you? He who began a good work in you, He's going to perfect it. If you are broken in your heart and tears have rolled down your cheeks and shame has crept upon you in the presence of God, and you have cried out, Woe is me.

You can say that. But don't you ever say, Cut off, I am. Because you're not.

Because He won't allow you to be. He'll fix you. Because bruised reeds, He doesn't break.

Look what else it says here. And smoldering wicks, He will not snuff out. Do you know what you were made to be? A light to the nations.

That's you. That's you. You were made to be lights to the nations.

You, little girl, you're a light to the nations. You, man, you're a light to the nations. That's what He's made you for.

Oh, there's no glorious. There's no glory compared to the glory He's given you. You know, angels get mad at you.

They're envious of the things you've received from the Father. And you were created to be this wonderful light to the nations. Nations! And I say nations.

You want to know why? When I started out as a missionary, I was speaking in a church and they had this forum where they had microphones and things and everyone was asking me questions. I was going to Peru for the first time. And when everyone had finished, this little red-headed boy got up and he went to the microphone and he said, Mr. Paul, he says, I have a question for you.

I said, yes. He goes, what are you going to do when you win everybody in Peru to Christ? And you know what? Everyone in the church laughed except him and me. I said, well, I'm going somewhere else.

You see, I don't put limitations on God. I started out this Christianity wanting the entire world to come to know Christ. I've been 15 years into it and I still believe that God is going to use me so that the Gospel might be preached to the entire world before my generation is finished.

Now, not only me, but in my time, a young man traveled with me from the university. I took him to Romania because that's the way I disciple people. And he said, you know what's wrong with you? I said, what? He said, you're the most idealistic adult I've ever met.

You're like a child. Yes. I believe that about you too.

That God can use you to be a light to the nations. But you know what? You know what happens to a lamp that burns on oil that has a wick when the oil runs out? It stinks. I know that because I work in Peru and sometimes we use lamps like that.

Some of you older Christians in here can remember. You let a wick burn down and the oil runs out and that wick starts to burn. It stinks.

And if a woman came into a house and she found that there was no oil in the lamp, that it was empty and the wick began to burn and it was stinking and the stench was filling up the entire house, she'd grab the lamp, throw open the window and throw the lamp out the door. And because it was made of clay, it would break into a thousand pieces. No more lamp.

Get you another one. Well, a lot of you this week have said, I must stink before God. I'm to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be a light to the nations.

Because of my sin, I've grieved the Holy Spirit. And now the only thing burning is my flesh and I stink not only to God, but to my roommates and to my professors and to everyone around me. I'm a stumbling block.

I walk in the darkness. There is no light. There's only stench.

I'm sure now after this preacher's done that God's simply going to open up the window and throw me out. But a burning wick, He does not snuff out. You need to know that.

With repentance, with a true turning away from sin and a true trust in Jesus Christ, you can be filled once again with that spirit that burns so brightly and so clear. You can. I hate condemnation and I hate legalism

and I hate the ideas of right standing before God because of our works.

That's an abomination and it doesn't fit into my theology, even though some of you think it does. But I will tell you this, there is a communion with the Father that can be broken by sin. And it can be restored because of the grace of God and Jesus Christ our Lord.

And I want you to walk out of here a broken people, but not a condemned people. A repented people, but there is a repentance that leads unto death. Judas is a good illustration.

And there is a repentance that leads unto life. And Peter is a good illustration. Even when the prophets came and they preached things that I'd even be afraid to say in a church, they never finished their prophecies without giving hope.

And I'll never finish a sermon without doing the same. You're not cast away. You're not beyond grace.

You stand here today. I have considered this and I've told God this has been the greatest privilege and I don't know why. Maybe there's a... who knows, a Charles Spurgeon here or a Lottie Moon.

I have no idea. But something in my heart tells me this is the greatest privilege I've ever had in 15 years of preaching. God loves you so much and He's given you men and women who love Him.

He's given you the opportunity to be with Christians. Now, there are quite a few lost people here too. But He's given you the opportunity to be here.

You're not in some jungle somewhere with the rain coming down on your head all alone. You've got Christians all around you. Look at the opportunity that's before you.

I wish myself a curse if only you would stand before Christ on that day and hear, Well done, my good and faithful servant. I want so much for you. There is so much of God for you.

So much. And oh, you are His church. And oh, the love of God.

I know a man who went to a place and he doesn't know if it was a dream or he left his room. But he saw things that cannot be explained and are not lawful to speak about. But I suppose that if you could see those things, you would be driven to passionately chase after God with everything you ever hoped to be.

And you would die with your hands lifted in the air, reaching for the One who you've longed to see. Oh God, I come before You in the name of Your Son. And I lift up those before You who have hearts of stone.

I know that to so many here, I'm nothing more than a fool and something to laugh about. Fifteen years of that, Lord, you get used to it. And I know that there are some here who have hearts of stone, who've hated every word I've said.

I pray for them that they might experience the mercy of God. Then there are some here, Father, that are babes in Christ. And even though they're old in the faith, they've only heard milk all their life.

Father, I pray that they would find Your Word a source of life. And that they would sit under teaching that would feed them and make them strong. Because if they can't run with men, how can they run with horses? Father, there are those here who have a calling to preach.

Oh God, that their highest calling be the pursuit of God. I pray for the professors here. Oh God, it's so easy for me to come and then leave and not have to pastor the flock.

So I pray for these professors and administrators and the president. I pray that their goal for this school be the magnificent pursuit of God. The person of God.

And I pray, Lord, that when all other faculties and universities and seminaries are running around building their own little kingdom, and that when you look to and fro throughout the world looking for someone who might be looking back at you, that you would find this school not making a name for itself, but like a child searching the clouds for the face of the Father. And I pray this to the one who is able to do far above all I ask or think or imagine. And I rest in that.

In Jesus' holy name, Amen.

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