

Questions and Answers (Springfield Conference)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the need for sound theology and effective practices in missions during his sermon at the Springfield Conference.

Duration: 51:21

Scripture: Genesis 1:1

Topics: "Question Answer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his experience of being challenged by an ex-Catholic priest to read the entire Bible and teach in a Bible institute. Through this process, he realizes that his understanding of God was different from what he had learned in seminary. This realization leads him to focus more on studying and teaching the Word of God rather than being busy with other activities. As a result, the speaker's ministry grows and expands to different countries, where he supports and helps indigenous missionaries. The sermon emphasizes the importance of theological understanding and the need to support and empower local missionaries.

Transcript

Well, um, asked how HeartCry ever got started and, um, when I graduated from seminary, I felt the Lord's leading to go to Peru and, um, after prayer and because of my circumstances and being single and things such as that, I, uh, Lord led me to go to Peru just through the, kind of the authority of a small local Baptist church. And, um, I went to Peru and, um, the first year I was with another brother from, uh, from the States by the name of Daniel Franz and we were to work with a, uh, an old missionary there by the name of Homer Crane for a year and kind of learn the ropes. And after just a few months, Homer, um, had to leave.

So the church that he had planted out in Bentania Alta in Lima, Peru, a very dangerous place at the time because of the terrorism and everything and the little, literally a civil war going on. Uh, we were left to, uh, continue planting that church and, um, we built a building out of, uh, Toyota crates, the crates that are used to ship the Toyota cars and, uh, tin roof and kind of started from there. And while we were doing that, we also started a group in, um, in Lima made primarily up of college students and the like, and it began to grow, uh, rather quickly.

It grew to about 80 in a year and things were going very, very well. And, uh, but some things after the first year began to trouble me. I had graduated from seminary.

I studied hard. I read my Greek New Testament, but, um, things just didn't seem right. And I was challenged by an ex-Catholic priest who had become a Baptist to, um, to read scripture.

He asked me to teach in a small Bible Institute that he had. And in the first semester, the students read the entire Bible and would come into class and just ask all the questions that they had through their readings. And it caused me to stop doing missionary work for about almost a year.

I mean, I still kept the churches preaching and doing things like that, but I gave myself to about eight hours a day of studying just from Genesis to Revelation because I had to answer all their questions. And after I got through the first five books of the law, I realized that this God was so different than the God that I had learned about even in seminary. I graduated from the seminary where they taught me basically all the theology that closed every church in Germany.

So, uh, the scriptures were fresh to me and, um, I began to see the Lord in a new light. And after about that year, I became rather confused because I thought I'm beginning to believe things that, uh, I was never taught in seminary. And so I thought since I had gone to a Baptist seminary, I literally thought, well, I'm no longer a Baptist because I don't believe anything that seminary taught me.

And when I came back to the States, someone handed me some books, Voices Abstract to Principles, Spurgeon, things like that. And I realized that I had not stopped being a Baptist. I had become one.

And the theology, the simply sitting down and studying and studying and studying caused me not to give as much time to the ministry. And I would work 18 hours a day. But the focus went from busy work to studying, to teaching, and the Lord prospered the work much more than when I was given to all the activity.

And as I began to work in Peru, I began to see something. Well, first of all, there are North American cross-cultural missionaries that are worth their weight in gold. And that's that's an enterprise the church has always practiced across cultural missions.

But I also began to see men who were Peruvian that were truly men of God, who God had used to start in one case about 75 churches, just one man. And I began to see their great need. Some of them lived in places where their children would be eaten up by pig lice.

They had nothing, had no books, had very little teaching. But God's hand was upon them. And so I began to think instead of just sending North American missionaries, that we would help support indigenous missionaries.

Now, you have to be very careful in this endeavor because the handing out of money on the mission field can ruin good men. And so and I was very discouraged by other missionaries of helping indigenous men. But I began to just study scripture and consider the things that scripture said.

And I discovered this, that the belief that supporting indigenous missionaries would somehow spoil them or ruin them. And then every time it had happened in the past, it had caused disaster. I realized it wasn't because mission organizations from outside of certain countries supported indigenous missionaries.

I realized that it was because when they did it, they broke about every principle in scripture. And I began to look at ways in which biblically we could help men of God in other countries. And I saw, first of all, that the men that must be supported must be men of God.

According to First Timothy, chapter three, verses one through seven, they must qualify as men of God, truly be pastors, that you must work through the local church. And so we began. I remember when we decided to support our first missionary.

When I when I went to Peru after my first year, my support was about one hundred and fifty dollars a month. And that was for ministry, food and everything. So I'm talking about someone who had a lot of money and said, well, we're going to support a bunch of missionaries.

And I remember first stepping out on faith to support one missionary at one hundred and fifty dollars a month. And I remember laying awake in bed thinking, what on earth have I done? How are we ever going to provide this much money to support this work? But prior to going to Peru and I was in seminary, even when I was in college, I was introduced to George Mueller, who is probably the most influential person in my life and read his autobiography several times. And I decided that when I went to the mission field, I wouldn't raise support.

And not only would I would not raise support, I wouldn't tell people the needs at all, not because I'm strong, but because I'm weak. I figured that I'm just not strong enough to to keep something going like that, raising support. I'm not a mover and shaker and all these different things.

So I decided if I was ever going to do anything in life, God was going to have to do it. And so we made that commitment and started supporting men. It began to grow and God began to bless.

And then after a few years, the work in Peru was, well, it went far beyond anything that I could have ever imagined. But I realized that I had come to a point where if I did nothing the rest of my life, I could kind of sit back on what God was already doing in Peru. And so I sought the Lord and gave myself to a time of prayer.

And I felt that the Lord wanted us to start the same thing in Romania. I didn't know anyone in Romania. So after I felt like that was laid on my heart, I told the Lord, Lord, let's meet again tomorrow on this issue and and talk about this all day.

And it seemed to be confirmed and confirmed. And so we began in Romania and it began to grow. And then from there, other countries in Europe and then Africa and Israel and Asia.

And now we work in about 15 different countries. Sometimes it goes up to 18 different countries, because in Asia, some of our men, because of persecution, they go across the border and preach. And then after a few months, sometimes have to run back across the border and we're no longer there for a while until things settle down.

And what we do is we support men and and and movements and we help them financially. Also, and most importantly, we help them theologically. I am I am not at all the wisest, the most mature or the most gifted theologian preacher you're ever going to meet.

But for some reason, God's allowed me to go into so many different countries. And because of that, I have an open door to take men who I know are far wiser and far more educated and spirit filled and everything

than me. And to get an open door for for training of men.

And so the greatest need on the mission field, the greatest need on the mission field is systematic theology and Christ centered expository preaching. You see, everyone talks about missions. Oh, we need to do missions.

We don't need to do any more missions than we're already doing. I mean, we're the most mission minded bunch of people on the face of the earth. The problem is most of what's called missions isn't biblical.

It's just absolute silliness. Missions has become theological. And that's wrong.

Missions also is now directed by the sociologist, the anthropologist and the cultural expert when missions must be directed by the theologian and the exegete. It must be based on scripture. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking.

I'll give you two examples. Years ago, a young man from seminary called me when I was in Peru and he said, Mr. Washer, I want to come down and work with you. I just want to give my life away in Peru.

And I said, tell me about your theology. He said, well, my theology is that's not really my strong point. I just want to give my life away.

And I said, well, tell me about your your studies and preparation for preaching. He said, well, you know, Mr. Washer, you know, I just want to come down there and give my life away. I said, young man, no one in Peru needs your life.

So don't come down here. They need someone who can open up their mouth and tell them about God. They need God.

Another example. I literally just can't understand the ideas that we have about missions. Sometimes I'll walk through an airport in a foreign country and I'll see 40 American teenagers or college students all with the same T-shirt on.

They're a Christian group going to save the world. You add it all up. They've spent about \$80,000 for their week and a half mission trip.

It's 40 of them. They've come down. They've preached the gospel.

That's not really the gospel at all. They've done puppet shows. They've run around.

They've acted silly in their silly clothes. And then they go back and tell everybody a thousand people got saved when, in fact, probably almost no one got saved because all those people who made decisions don't show up at church. The next Sunday.

And it's just an exercise in futility. Where that same amount of money could have put 25 Peruvian pastors on the field for an entire year who speak the language, preaching the gospel 24 hours a day. And so we do all kinds of missionary activity and most of it is quite useless.

Because it's not based on this one truth. Missions is not about sending missionaries. Missions is about sending the truth of God's gospel, of his word through men and women.

So if you've got a passion for missions, I don't care. I don't care. That means very little to me.

Because everybody's running around with a passion for missions. The question is, do you have you dedicated yourself to knowing God and knowing his word in such a way that when you go on the mission field, you can open up your mouth and instruct people in the things of God? If you're not a scribe, don't go to the mission field. I was talking to a dear brother who teaches theology and systematic, systematic theology and expository preaching in China.

And he said that the best that he could discern doing as much statistical work as possible, studying as many missions and missionary agencies and such that he estimated that four percent of all missionary money and missionary activity actually went to the proclamation of truth. It's all about evangelistic campaigns and how many people got baptized and doing all sorts of events. And most of it, when the smoke clears, means nothing on the mission field.

What do we need? We need we must plant biblical, sound, local churches. And we must endure with those churches until they are autonomous. They have a biblical eldership, a leadership, and they are able to propagate themselves and the truth that they believe.

It's hard work. And it's not done by doing silly little campaigns and sending a bunch of young people over to do nothing for a while and come back and tell all their stories. If you want to be involved in missions, then let me give you some advice.

Stop gathering together in a bunch of little groups and running around and doing your Jesus thing. Open up your Bible, get good books, study the scriptures, memorize chapters. Organize your thoughts into a systematic theology, know what you believe, be able to defend the truth, understand something of Christian history, become a teacher of God's word and then go to the mission field.

Until then, stay home, stay home. Because we don't need any more of the mess that's already out there. Now, that sounds so very hard, but I'm sorry, it's true.

I'm just saying what almost every other missionary on the face of the earth wants to say, but isn't quite dull enough in their brain or have hard enough a head to say. Any questions? Yes. Well, you know, all the stories you hear about China.

Oh, the question is exactly, you know, the work that we hear about, the marvelous work we hear about in China and 30 and 40 thousand people getting saved today and the great work and the power of the church and the supernatural nature of the work and things. Is it what's really going on? First of all, no one should deny that there has been a marvelous, sovereign work of the spirit of God in China. But much, many things have been exaggerated, been greatly exaggerated.

I mean, you would think from the stories that you hear that you go over into China and everywhere you go, you're going to meet Christians, and that's not true. Secondly, because of a great lack of teaching, the church is immature and very open to syncretism. It's very open to influences, cultic, half pagan, a mixture of Christianity and Chinese religion.

Now, the spirit of God has done a work, a great work. I don't want to take anything away from that, but the spirit of God also uses practical means. The greatest need in China is a very sound, straightforward, defined, systematic theology.

The training of pastors in hermeneutics and expository preaching, how to study scripture, the doctrines regarding what is a local church, how does it function, what is the leadership of a church, how does it

function. And so, again, if I could flood China with something, I would not flood China with a bunch of young guys with backpacks on doing extreme missions. I would flood China with godly pastors who've spent their life in the word of God, send them over there to teach pastors from the word of God and from pastoral experience based on the word of God.

So, the church in China will always be weak until it's built up with truth. There are some movements right now that are very encouraging, getting the scriptures out in China, but also the publishing of good books. A dear friend of mine, Roger Wheel from England, who has a little basic doctrine book that he's put together, that's been published now in Chinese and things like that.

So, that's the great necessity. Listen, when all these groups come back and they tell you, you know, 10,000 people got saved in Russia or a thousand people got saved in Puerto Rico and they're all excited. Listen, I've been there.

After the groups leave, you can't find any other converts. Missions is hard work. It's not done with a mission trip in a week and a half.

It's done by going to that country and giving your life. Do you know to plant? I would have to say after my own experience and talking also to strong, sound missionaries that have given their lives on the foreign field, you plant a biblical church in 10 years, that is a miraculous thing. It's hard work and it requires just great endurance in the Holy Spirit.

And so we just really have to be careful about the way we do missions. Another question. Yes.

OK, that's a very good question. The question is from a 10 year old theologian. How do we know that what we believe in is the right thing? Let me just put something before you.

Let's say that I was standing here with Vinnie Hinn. OK, and and and you asked me a question. For example, interpretation of Hebrew six tasted of the powers to come and things such as that.

And I gave you my interpretation and he gave you his saying that a certain unique individuals throughout history have tasted of the powers to come. They've tasted of what heaven is like. There are very few and he's one of them.

And I come with a little bit different interpretation on the passage. Now, if you ask me, well, Brother Paul, why do you believe that? I say, well, that's what the Bible says. But if you ask Vinnie Hinn why he believes that, what's he going to say? Well, that's what the Bible says.

So we're kind of at a stalemate, aren't we? Because everybody's saying that's what the Bible says. So where do we go from there? Well, now, part of this, you're just going to have to realize you yourself are going to have to study the scriptures. But I'm going to have to, first of all, appeal to certain things.

I'm going to have to lay out for you my hermeneutic. That is, how do I study the Bible? I'm going to have to appeal to context. The context of the historical context of the letter.

I'm going to have to appeal to grammar and try to show you the logic that the Holy Spirit who inspired this scripture, he inspired it. So he's not going to illuminate me to say something that contradicts the scriptures that he himself wrote. But then also something there's a I wrote a little thing years ago for the Peruvian brothers.

It's like 14 very simple principles of hermeneutics. And one of them is this. We always do our theology in the context of the church.

Now, what does that mean? It means this. If I go to a certain passage and I work very hard with the grammar and the context and I've come to my conclusion of what I think this text means. Now, what should I do? Well, I'm not an island.

I live in the context of a community of faith. So I go to my other brothers, sisters in Christ that are near me. And I share this with them.

I ask their opinion. I dialogue with men of my own time, of my own circle of churches, my own fellowship. And I ask them, what do you think about this? And we dialogue and we go back and forth.

So that's that's one way. That's what I would call the first circle. But then I have to be careful because I realize I'm within people of my own community, of faith, people like minded with myself.

And, well, there's a chance we could all be wrong. And so I want to step outside that and I want to see what other people, what other godly people who believe in the inspiration of Scripture, what they believe. But then I don't just want to stay with my own time because I realize that all of us can be a product of our own culture.

And so I'm going to go back and I'm also going to look at men that we know had a reputation of godliness. Churchmen that had a reputation of believing the Bible, of studying the Bible. I'm going to go back through history and I'm going to dialogue with them.

Now, if I find out that all of them are in agreement and they disagree with me, that kind of ought to put a red flag up because wisdom wasn't born with me and wisdom won't die with me. So those are some of the things that I'm going to do to assure myself that, yes, I think I'm understanding this text properly. OK, and that's where Benny Hinn is going to have a problem, because when he goes back and begins to dialogue with what we know in Christian history have been biblical movements and biblical men, he's going to be hard pressed to find anybody throughout the history of the church that believe that believes what he says.

So that's that's some of the very simplistic, but that's some of the ways in which I would address that. Yes, brother. Oh, I thought you wanted to come up mad.

So that would you like to add to my answer? This is a big question topic, love and confrontation. When you see a loved one, believer or nonbeliever going astray, either deliberate or blatantly or unknowingly, and you speak with them to them and love about it. Yet they continue when you when do you draw the line and continue to pray for them and love them, but stop confronting them with their sin and pray for God to do the work.

Remember, the relationship may suffer as a result of the confrontation. OK, now this question springs forth out of a context of the failure of most churches today. This is this is a thing that what we have here is this question demonstrates a believer on their own without a godly leadership in the church.

And what do I mean by that? If we go for a minute to Matthew chapter 18. We have the answer, but the answer only really can be carried out if you're in a biblical church. If your brother verse 15, if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private.

If he listens to you, you have won your brother. Very simple. Now, 16, but if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every fact may be confirmed.

And what is it saying? If this person who you believe is in sin, you go to them and they do not listen to you. They look at you and say, look, I don't agree with you about this. What does that mean? Does it mean they're in rebellion? Could be.

It could also mean you're wrong. So you're not bringing two or three witnesses with you in order to really corner this person. You're bringing two or three witnesses with you who are mature and godly and not partial to you to judge.

To judge between you, maybe they'll listen to the whole story and look at the person and say, you know, you really are in sin. What the dear sister here is saying about you is true and you need to repent, or they might listen to the whole situation, which I have done before and say, look, you're pressing a point of legalism. This has nothing to do with with sin.

This is has is a matter of opinion and you need to just let this go. So you bring two or three witnesses with you to judge, and I think it's very, very wise at this point that you don't bring two or three people who are novices in the faith or just recently converted. You don't bring people who are opinionated and unwise in the scripture.

I prefer to go to two men of God in the church, elders possibly. Now, in verse 17, if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. You see, this is the way God has set up in the church, church discipline.

In order to to work through this matter, it's a very loving thing that the Lord has given us. There are a lot of other passages in the Bible that deal with this. First Corinthians, chapter five, Galatians, chapter six.

And this is the way you deal with problems in the church. But usually problems in the church aren't dealt with at all. And so now here's something that's very, very important when it's on a kind of a let's say it's a parent child relationship with a child who's who's not a believer.

OK, this comes up quite a bit and the child is now older. The child has been raised in your home or the child has heard the gospel from you several times, knows where you stand and everything else. And the child goes off into another type of lifestyle.

Now, here's something I think that is very important, and this applies in a lot of different places. You've told this person the truth many times, so make sure that every time you see them, you don't tell them the truth. And what do I mean by that? They know what you believe.

They know where you stand every time they see you. They should not be censored by you. They should be loved by you.

They should be. They should know that you care for them, that you're reaching out for them, that you're going to serve them. They should know that every they shouldn't think that every time they come to you, they're going to hear a sermon.

You've told them the truth. They've rejected it. Now, love them, serve them, don't don't censor them, don't criticize their life all the time, because what's going to happen is this every time they're with their unbelieving friends, they're going to, even though it's false, they're going to feel like they're loved, they're

accepted and they're cared about.

Every time they come back to you, the godly, all they're going to see is a frown on their face and censor. You've told them the truth. You've done the right thing.

Now, love them. And there's a balance there, but you have to be very, very careful. Now, the other question insurance.

Does anyone really know 100 percent that they are saved or does God only know is the fact that I'm asking that question conclude that I myself am not and not saved. Well, here's the way that I see assurance and security. First of all, in in the 20th century and now the 21st, it seems to me that we've taken the doctrine of security, as it's called, and the doctrine of assurance.

And we've brought the two things together and we've lost both of them. First of all, I'll use the terminology used today, the security of the believer. I prefer that I prefer perseverance, the security of the believer.

And what is that saying? That once a person is truly saved, the God who saved them by his power and grace is the God who keeps them. So there is a sense and with a great sense of total sense in which the true believer is secure, has security. He is not going to fall away.

The God who saved him keeps him. So the security of the believer, as it said, is that the true believer is secure. But assurance deals with something else.

How do you know that you're a true believer? For example, I'm dealing with someone who's prayed a prayer and yet they've lived most of their life in sin and rebellion and they go, man, you know, I'm once you're saved, you're always saved. I go, well, yes, once a person has truly believed in Christ, the Christ who saves them keeps them. But how do you know you're a true believer? What is the evidence that you are a true believer now? Assurance is seen in many different things.

First of all, as I said last night, the moment a person is converted, the moment they believe in Christ and to eternal life in the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, they can be given great assurance and great joy. I think many of us experience that when we believed in Christ, some would say, you know, I felt like just all my sins were forgiven. I felt like just weight was taken off.

I felt had a new relationship with God. It just things changed. There was and you stood up possibly from where you were crying out to God and you were praising God.

I'm saved. I'm saved. I'm gloriously saved.

Well, that's wonderful. And that person right there has great assurance. But then also there's the idea of growing in our assurance in what way as we begin to live out this experience, this conversion, and we begin to see more and more over the years that he who began a good work in us is continuing it.

For example, we look at the book of First John and we see the tests that are there of true faith and we begin to see those forming in our life. Then we have greater and greater assurance that truly God has saved us. Now, can a believer, a true believer at times doubt their salvation? Yes.

Yes, things can happen, trials and certain things that can cause us that can shake us. But will God continue to work and begin to restore to us our assurance? Yes, he will. Now, are there times when a believer can fall into sin and as a result of falling into sin, they begin to doubt or it's almost as though God

and discipline takes away their assurance.

Or at least allows it to be shaken. Yes, that can happen. Someone is shaken, and that's why they're told to make their calling and election sure to examine themselves, test themselves to return.

Demonstrate that they truly are believers. I have, I would say it, I have great assurance in my heart of belonging to Christ, great and tremendous assurance, not because of just progress in sanctification. I can look back over 25 years and I can see great changes that the Lord has wrought in my life.

But but to be honest with you, the great assurance for me, the source of it is looking back through 25 years and seeing God, the reality of God's care in my life. The reality of I'll tell you, one of the greatest evidences of conversion that gives me great assurance is the Lord's discipline. He says in Ezekiel 36, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idolatry.

And what it means is he'll work through the life of the believer, constantly disciplining, teaching, changing, admonishing, correcting, rebuking. And I can just see that. Hopefully you can, too.

So, yes, a believer can have great and strong assurance. Yes. OK, the question is on chastening, especially with regard to Hebrews chapter 12, how that looks in a believer's life and some of the things that's even happened in my own life as an explanation of what it means to be under the Lord's discipline.

Before I say anything about it, let me just recommend how many of you have read Pilgrim's Progress? OK, read it again and those of you who haven't read it, read it and then read it again. Got it back there in the book thing. Why? It's just phenomenal.

It's phenomenal in that. Although it's not a systematic presentation of theology, you go through there and you see him dealing with assurance, you see him being attacked, you see him wavering, you see all the different things in the Christian life. It's just it's just phenomenal.

It's phenomenal and it'll be a great help to you now. Discipline, if you look in Hebrews 12. These believers have come under persecution, but in verse four, he says, you've not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood and you're striving against sin and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons.

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by him. For those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines. Now, look at this.

The Lord's discipline is always. It is always in the life of the believer, it is redemptive. It is not punitive or condemning, he's not out to get you for some sin that you committed is it is redemptive.

OK, let me just share with you, God, in a sense, you can put it this way. God will never come to you again. Now, again, this is just in a sense, God will never come to you again as a judge.

To condemn you. Or to demand some punitive sentence of you, when he disciplines you, he comes to you as a father. You are his son, you are his child.

And so one of the greatest manifestations of the love of God is his discipline in our lives. Now, and for you who are parents who really waver on this thing about disciplining your children because of your love for them, realize that you have a hypocritical, unbiblical love. Greatest manifestation of love, again, can be the discipline that you give your children, the consistent, enduring discipline.

Now, and then look at the extent of this discipline. He scourges every son whom he receives, scourging. OK, I'm not saying go home and tie your children up to some whipping post.

But I mean, what what's going on here is amazing. This discipline can hurt. I mean, really, really, really hurt.

OK, now, but let's look at something here that's very, very important. We usually equate discipline in the Christian life with some sin in the Christians life. Well, you've done something, you're being disciplined.

Well, that may be the case, but I want you to look at two ways in which discipline can occur. And this is very simplified. But when I was a young boy, my dad was a really good athlete and I wasn't.

Very weak legs. And so my dad wanted me to be a great athlete. So after we would feed the cattle, hay and everything, because we lived on a cattle ranch, we'd be about a mile away from the house.

It didn't matter if it's snowing, didn't matter. I had big boots on and then dad would have me strap on leg weights and I would run behind the truck almost all the way home. Now, had I done something wrong that day? No.

Was he mad at me? No. The fact is, I was weak and if I was ever going to get stronger, I was going to have to experience some greater resistance. I was going to have to pass through times of discipline.

And what you need to see is that discipline doesn't always come as the result of some sin in your life. Discipline is necessary in order to make you into the man or woman of God that God intends. Do you see that discipline can also be seen as as training, as training? And that is very, very important to understand.

It's not always as a result of some rebellion in your life. OK, that's been very, very helpful for me. But discipline also can be as a result of of something that that's gone unnoticed in our life.

That is, let me give you an example from from my own life. I was preaching in a conference with men that I greatly respect, greatly respect. And this happened just, I guess, a month and a half, two months ago.

I knew I was invited there because the other speaker fell out, couldn't do it. It was something that was quickly just put before me and I shouldn't have done it. I'm very tired, I'm wore out.

But I went ahead and did it. I got up, I started preaching. There was very little of God in everything I was doing.

I made a statement, a foolish statement about John Owen. I just said, you know, some of you guys reading 30,000 pages of John Owen need to be reading your Bible. Well, there's no contradiction between John Owen and the scriptures.

And the way I said it, it just wasn't appropriate. Well, later on that same evening, a guy got up and just basically rebuked me from the pulpit. Now, here's the point, a friend of mine got kind of angry because he said, look, he just rebuked you, he didn't come to you.

He were. But here's the thing, I knew what was going on. Regardless of what was done, I knew what was going on.

It was the Lord. I was embarrassed because these are men I greatly respect, but it was from the Lord. I'm not going to get angry.

You know, when when someone comes to you with a rebuke and the only thing you can say is, well, it may have been right, but you didn't say it right. You've got some serious problems. And it was like and it's where actually it embarrassed me.

And then later on, I got a letter that pointed out other things that I had said that really hurt me. The reason why it hurt me is some of them were true. But a month and a half ago is when I realized and then talking to the pastor here this this week, but about a month and a half ago is when I realized, hold it.

God has really used me in the last couple of years. I'm getting dangerously close to burning out. I'm redlining and through what that fellow said, he may be saving my life.

And then I came here and the pastor has been encouraging me, Paul, come on, you've got you've got to get back scripture, rest, settle down. Do you see what's going on? That this is the Lord, this is the Lord. So I was blindsided.

I was blind to the fact that I'm running on fumes. You see that and then God allowed that to happen, I could get mad all day. Why did he get up and pulpit from all those people and say that? And he's a very godly man, I just have to say, I think the Lord was in the whole thing.

Because it's saving my life and then I come here this week, it's the same thing, a very godly, wise and much older man than me. I'm just kidding, is sitting down and telling me many of the similar things that have been going through my heart and other people have been addressing. Now, that is a form of discipline.

Now, another form of discipline, I hurt right now, my lower back hurts and I've got such pain in my head right now. Literally, I just want to run out of this room screaming. Now, I have a bone problem, I have all these there.

I got more metal in me than a Tonka truck. All right. Why? I guess the charismatics would say I'm in sin.

I bless. I bless it. What has God saved me from? What has God saved me from? It's not necessarily Paul's this great sinner and God's doing something to get back at him.

It's simply this. God knows exactly what you and I need to be conformed to the image of his son. He knows exactly what we need.

All of these wins, all these problems, all these different things, all these difficult people he brings into our lives, everything he knows what we need to be conformed to the image of Christ. And that's a big part of discipline. Now, let's talk for a moment about sins that are very difficult to get victory over.

All of you know this. I mean, it happened in your own life. You know, the moment that I was saved, literally there were certain things in my life that were horrible things that I did as an unbeliever.

At the moment I got saved, they just stopped. I mean, bam, they were gone. But there were other things that did not go.

Now, why? I thought about that. Why? I mean, why just not? Why just not immediate sanctification? Well, let me just ask you a question. I don't know.

You're probably not as as immature as me. But let me just give you a story from my daily life. One morning I get up, man, I get four in the morning.

Me and Jonathan Edwards were there. We're studying, you know, I'm praying and just everything, you know. Then it's eight o'clock and I come down at the Bible.

I'm just helping my wife, man, with scripture. And I just look like a puritan. I'm doing everything right today.

Now, for the last 10 years, I haven't done any of this. But today, man, I've got it down. I have.

I'm just looking good. I go to work. I'm blessing everybody.

And I witness to the guy at lunch. And I mean, I go to bed at night and I'm thinking, why can't everybody get this right? I mean, what's wrong with everybody else? I mean, today was a good day. I get one good day under my belt.

And automatically, I'm almost thinking, man, I am really I'm doing it. God leaves in his own providence these things in our lives, doesn't deal with him immediately as he does some other things because he is creating in us a dependence, an ever growing, ever deepening dependence upon him and upon grace. It also helps us to understand the nature of salvation that are standing before God is not based on our performance, but his finished work in Christ.

Now, let's not take the hyper view on this and say, well, you know, it's just God's will that I'd be ungodly in these areas. No, that's not true either, because he promises a great promise. Charles Leiter pointed out to me years ago.

It's been very helpful where he says in Ezekiel, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. That means that even many of the sins that I still struggle with that have to be really. Areas in my life where I really have to be careful that God is going to eventually also work in those areas and bring about greater and greater victory.

I'll give you an example, one probably the greatest dragon that I deal with is is depression. It is a great dragon for me. There were times in my younger Christian life that it just incapacitated me.

And there are times in my Christian life up till today that I will still struggle. But as I look over the 25 years, I see I see great victories that the Lord has won in my life. Part of it can only be attributed to a supernatural working.

Other parts of it is attributed to practical means that the providence of God uses, like giving me a very wise wife. So you see, those are the ways that the discipline will work. How much do we finish? Oh, OK, I'm finished.

Oh, just really cool. What's the love of God? The love of God with the justice of God, because that's when you begin to realize the importance of the cross, the necessity of the cross. How can God save a people, a wicked people and still be just? How can he manifest that love and that that is done through the cross of Jesus Christ? The hardest thing you're ever going to have to do as a Christian is this, look into the mirror of God's word and see your failure and then believe that God loves you as much as he says he does.

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