

The Cross-Centered Life, Part 2

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the gospel and the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and challenges listeners to focus on eternity and the language of eternity.

Duration: 58:15

Scripture: Genesis 6:5, 1 Samuel 6:6, Ezekiel 37:3, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:23

Topics: "Cross of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living for the glory of God in all aspects of life. They share their personal journey of walking with the Lord and express their regrets, not for their losses, but for not fully living for God's glory. The speaker highlights the need to study and understand why Jesus died and what it means for humanity. They reference the passage in Romans 3:23 that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, and also mention Genesis 6:5 to illustrate the continuous wickedness of man. The speaker's goal is to teach truth and trust that the Spirit of God will work in the hearts of the listeners, even if it takes years.

Transcript

Well, it's a tremendous privilege to be back here with you. And we are going to begin considering the cross life. Last night I attempted to warn you, to listen.

Not because of me, but because of the message. Because of who the message is about. It is about Jesus Christ.

His supremacy is absolute in the mind of God. God loves His Son more than anything, more than anyone. If there are millions of worlds inhabited by billions of people, the combined love that God would have for them would not outrank the love He has for His Son.

So whenever the Son is spoken of, God demands that we not be neglectful, but that we pay the greatest attention. There are so many things that I could do here, possibly if I had a different personality. There would be so many things I could do to entertain you, and to fire you up, and to do all sorts of things.

But you must learn the focus of eternity and the language of eternity. You see, heaven, well let me put it this way. One time I was trying to witness to a man, and he was negating many things and saying he was not really interested about a lot of things that we were talking about.

And then, I don't always do this, but I felt led to do it. I did it. I said, So then, sir, you are content to go to hell.

And he got very, very angry. And he said, How dare you tell me that I'm going to hell? And with a surprised look on my face, I said, Sir, I'm sorry I offended you. As a matter of fact, I'm rather shocked.

I thought you would be pleased. He said, Why would I be pleased about going to hell? Well, sir, after speaking with you, I at least realized you would not be pleased about going to heaven. And he said, Why not? I said, What do you believe heaven to be? A utopia built around men who are just as immoral in heaven as they now are on earth? And wouldn't a utopia like that quickly turn into a living hell? I said, Sir, heaven is all about God in the face of His Son, Jesus Christ.

It's all about worshiping Christ. It's all about speaking of Christ. Sir, it's all about doing the will of Christ.

Remember that prayer that's on a lot of plaques, even sold at truck stops? You know, the Lord's Prayer. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Sir, in heaven, God's will is completed every moment perfectly by hearts that are totally yielded to Him. Why on earth would you want to be there? Now, that's a good question for you.

Would you really want to be there? So many young people would gather if we would do so many other things. If we would teach, possibly, about other things. They would come.

They would be excited. They would bring their friends. But you see, you must learn to focus your eyes on eternity.

And eternity has all of its eye focused upon Christ. Now, we're to talk about the cross life. That always has something to do with dying to self and following Christ.

But before we can talk about the cross life, we need to talk about the cross. When it comes to the gospel presentation today, there is a great lack of knowledge. Much of what is called the gospel is not the gospel.

It's not. Now, me standing up here saying that might seem kind of arrogant to you. Who do you think you are saying that much of what is called the gospel in the West, in America, is not the gospel? Well, here's something I want to teach you.

It's a principle of hermeneutics. Now, hermeneutics is a big word that we use in order to make people think we're very intelligent. When actually what it is, it's the study of how to study the Bible.

Now, there are certain principles about how to study the Bible. You have to take context into consideration, the history of the book, the author, the purpose. But there's also a principle that goes something like this.

We always do our theology or we always study the Bible in the context of the church. Now, what does that mean? Well, it means if I open up my Bible and I interpret a passage a certain way. OK.

Now, how do I know I'm interpreting it correctly? Well, a helpful way to know whether or not you're interpreting the Scriptures correctly is you go back through church history and look at all the men and women that truly believed the Bible and were mightily used of God. And you ask yourself this question. Did

they interpret the passage the same way? Now, if all of them are in agreement with regard to what the passage means and they all disagree with you, that ought to be a red flag, shouldn't it? Well, that's what we have today.

That's what we have today. Much of what is taught and much of what is practiced, I can say that we can't find it in the Scriptures. But I can also go to church history and I can look through 2,000 years of church history and say, no one did it back then either.

We all hear about Charles Spurgeon. My two favorite preachers probably in the whole world are Charles Spurgeon and Martin Lloyd-Jones. But if you look at the gospel of Charles Spurgeon or Martin Lloyd-Jones, or the Reformers or the Puritans or the early Baptists, their gospel, their view of the cross, how they witnessed, the way they looked at the cross is different.

Now, that should be a red flag for us, shouldn't it? I mean, after all, now listen to me, young person. You can get a lot of things wrong and still go to heaven. I mean, most people who talk about eschatology or the last things or the second coming of Jesus Christ, probably most of them are wrong.

We can be wrong about a whole lot of things and yet still go to heaven, still be reconciled to God. But you can't get the gospel wrong. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

There is no other name and no other message by which we can be saved except the gospel. So you must get the gospel right. You're raised in a culture where the gospel can be reduced down to four spiritual laws or five things God wants you to know.

No, that's not the gospel. So we're going to look at the gospel. We're going to look at the cross and we're going to go to maybe one of the most extraordinary, if not the most extraordinary passage in the Bible with regard to this.

And that is Romans chapter three. And let's go there. Now, I want us to begin in verse twenty three.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now, this is one of the first verses that you memorized, probably in your Sunday school. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And it is a very important verse to memorize. But here's something that I want you to ask yourself. What does it mean? Now, I can tell you and I'm going to put me with you so you don't think that I'm talking down to you, even though I am.

I don't like being up here. I feel like I'm supposed to pronounce a blessing on you or something. You and I do not understand what that means.

For all have sinned. Now, yes, we can define it. You know, amartano, amartia, to miss the mark.

It's the Greek word. It means that you're shooting at the bullseye with your bow and arrow and you miss not only the bullseye, but the entire target. You fall short.

The arrow doesn't reach. God has revealed his character and his will to us. And we have deviated from both.

We have contradicted the law of God. We have opposed it. All these things.

These are all definitions that probably most of you have heard. But the meaning comes to this statement. All have sinned when we begin to study who God is.

So you can't understand what it means. All have sinned until you know whom we have sinned against. Let me use President Barack Obama as an example.

Now, there is a law and it is a good law. That you shouldn't say a lot of bad things about a president. Now, what I mean by that is this.

If you and I are out playing basketball or something. And you say to me. You foul me like that again, Brother Paul.

And I'm going to take your head off. Okay? Now, we laugh. That's just a statement.

We can joke about it. Or you say, I'm going to kill you on the next move. Okay? Now, because you said that, the police aren't going to show up.

Secret Service is not going to come running in and throw you on the ground and handcuff you. Because I'm me. Okay? You just said that about me.

And I'm just me. You make the same statement to President Obama. And the Secret Service is going to show up.

And they will throw you on the ground. And they will handcuff you. You don't make statements about him like that.

Why? Because of the office that he holds. Because of who he is. You just don't treat him the same way.

Now, the old Puritans used to say. I think it was Watson said it. He said, when you sin against God.

You are not sinning against some tiny mayor of an unknown village. You're not sinning against the governor of a small province. You are sinning against the creator and sustainer of the universe.

You are not sinning against a fallible man. Or someone who may, in your mind at least. You can think that it's right to sin against him.

Because he's done something wrong to you. You are sinning against a creator of infinite goodness and grace. That even gave you the strength that you turned against him.

You see, we're going to talk some about holiness later on. But this is what you need to understand. Holiness is not primarily about the sinlessness of God.

Holiness is primarily about the separation of God. He is not like us, just bigger. He's not like us at all.

He is in a completely different category. As R.C. Sproul, I've heard him say. What's closer to God? A seraphim in heaven? Or let's say, a worm crawling on the ground.

Which one's more like God? The answer is, neither. Neither. I can say, I can pick you out of the crowd.

And I can laugh at you. And I can boast and say, I'm closer to the sun than you are. But the statement is so nonsensical.

Why? I may be six feet higher than you right now. Maybe eight. But the sun is so far away.

It makes no sense to talk like that. What I want you to see is, God is so totally other. And so totally separate.

And so totally supreme. And good. And great.

And other. That to sin against Him is a crime of unspeakable, unspeakable vileness. That is why Adam and Eve could simply bite a fruit.

Now look what happened. They bit into a fruit. And the entire universe was brought under the judgment of God and thrown into chaos.

That's how bad sin is. And see, you and I don't understand that. We don't.

I like to use the illustration. I think they put it in the notes of your book. Imagine there's God standing there in the days of creation.

And He cries out to stars that could swallow up a thousand suns of ours. He commands those stars to put themselves in certain areas of space. And they all bow down and worship Him.

He tells planets to move in an order that He has designed. And they all follow their course in fear. He tells mountains to be lifted up.

He tells valleys to be cast down. He looks at the sea. And you know the power of the sea.

It's been demonstrated in recent years. Tsunamis. He looks at the brave sea and He commands the sea.

You will come to this place and you will not trespass. And the sea bows down and worships and cries out, Amen. And then God looks at you and says, come.

Come. And you say, no. That is why on the day of judgment.

You've got to understand this. I'm not trying to be mean or hurt you. But you've got to understand this.

This is why on the day of judgment. Saints and angels and all of creation will stand to their feet. And applaud God when He condemns you to hell.

Have you ever thought about that? They're all in agreement that you should be cast out. You see, we simply. Children, listen to me.

We simply do not have an idea of how horrid is sin. The sinfulness of sin. But the more we study the attributes of God.

The more we know who God is. The clearer this definition. What is sin? What is sin? Now, he says here for all have sinned.

It is a universal thing. You see, when my wife was yet converted. We were married and I did not know that she was not converted.

She was such a moral and godly in a sense person. She was very disciplined. She was willing to do anything in missions.

Go down dangerous rivers. Teach people the Bible. But one day she was sitting there in a tent meeting in the inner city of San Antonio.

And here's this woman who had even put her life in jeopardy for the cause of the gospel. And she told me that while I was preaching, she looked out the door of the tent. And there was a woman there.

A prostitute who was eaten up with AIDS. A woman that I had been witnessing to. Just eaten up with AIDS.

Couldn't have weighed more than 110 pounds. Just there. Her skin and everything.

There were sores. It was horrid. And she said for the first time in her life, she felt as though God had spoke to her.

And told her, the only difference between you and that prostitute are the clothes you have on. All your good works are like filthy rags. You see, so you can compare yourself, but it makes no sense.

Do you realize you cannot even set yourself above Hitler? Who's name has gone down as the most heinous, the most horrid human being possibly that has ever lived. And yet you cannot sit in judgment of him. As we're going to possibly learn later.

The only reason you don't make Hitler look like a choir boy is because the grace of God restrains you. Hitler is not the anomaly. He's what everyone would be if God in His grace did not restrain the wicked.

Do you see that? Do you see why I said you need to be careful to listen? Because you really don't hear this much, do you? In Christianity today. But we want to preach a Christianity that is yesterday, today, and forever. All have sins.

You know, I would give anything. Well, I suppose I would give most. To see the Spirit of God come through this building and crush you.

Disintegrate you. Break you into a million pieces. That He would weigh upon you this.

This is only something that the Spirit of God can do in the life of a man. And that's why if you're noticing that your heart's not really that broken over this. And your heart's not really trembling over this.

Then you should cry out and say, Oh God, help me in the dullness of my heart. Help me. Please help me.

I remember one time I was preaching and about three quarters of the way through the message. I don't really give altar calls or whatever. But three quarters of the way through my message.

I noticed a nine year old boy stood up. And he went right into the middle of the aisle. And he began to walk down the aisle like this.

Just terrified. And I kept preaching and I walked down the platform. And I met him part way.

I stopped preaching and I turned my mic away. I said, young man, how is it with you? What's wrong? Nine years old and he said, Could God have mercy on someone as filthy as me? I said, young man, what have you done? He said, I have disobeyed my mother. You laugh.

You laugh only because you're so far away from the Spirit of God. You see, the Spirit of God had impressed upon that boy's heart. That his disobedience to his mother was vile enough to cast him for an eternity into hell.

And he was saved that night. I was preaching one time in Tennessee. And they had trained all these counselors.

And I was terrified because counselors are very dangerous people. And as I was preaching, I noticed over to the left, people started weeping. And then people started weeping.

It came across and people just started weeping. And people just started coming. And as I guess they were taught to do, they just came forward and started.

Some of them almost hysterical by the time they got forward. And I noticed the lead counselor kept looking at me like, We need to counsel. And I looked at her and I said, And she just kept looking up like, You wretched man, you don't care about these people.

They're weeping and crying. This one girl's hysterical and you just keep going. We need to comfort them.

And I looked at her and I said, No. And then I realized she's going to bolt on me. So I went down there and stood beside her.

I said, Let's just wait for a moment. Finally, she looked at me and she was like, I'm going to go. I put my hand on her shoulder and I said, Sister, do not touch the Ark of God.

You see, God was wounding these people. God was showing them something of His glory. And in that light they were seeing their sin.

And it was making some of them almost hysterical. But you know what happened? After about 20 minutes, another change started to come. There was joy on faces.

Glowing forgiveness, freedom. The young college girl that was almost hysterical was now beside herself with joy. That's why, you see, there is no preacher that can make these kind of things happen.

Preachers can make a lot of things happen. And most of it is false. Every time I walk out here, it's as though the Lord were saying, Son of Man, can these bones live? And my answer is, You know, O Lord.

I do not say, Yes, they can, and presume upon Him. And I do not say, No, they can't, and doubt Him. I must say, Lord, blow on these.

Cause them to please see the greatness of this message. That's my prayer for you. Now, I'm going to teach you this week.

I'm not going to stand up here and do all sorts of things that might get you fired up. Why is that? Because you see, if the Spirit of God does not move this week, at least I will teach you truth. And maybe 15 years from now, the Spirit of God will take that truth and regenerate your heart.

So we need to study. What is it? Why is it Jesus died? What does it mean? It's going to take us a while, but we're going to go through it. Now, let's go back.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now, what is the just modern day way of looking at this passage? God has a wonderful plan for you. God has a glorious plan for you, but because of your sin, you've missed that glorious plan and God wants to save you and put you back on course to this glorious plan He has for you.

Well, to be honest with you, that can be found in the text to some degree. But it's not the emphasis of the text. The emphasis of the text is this.

Now, get ready, because this changes everything. You were made for God. And you were made for God's glory.

And you are going to be a miserable wretch apart from applying that truth to your life. This is not about you. It's about Him.

He made you for His pleasure. That's what you were made for. Now, you can do what secular man does.

I do not exist for anyone's pleasure. I am a being in my own right. I live my own way.

Go ahead. Go ahead. And you will be dislocated and broken and miserable and incomplete all the days of your life because you were not made for that.

I make long bows to shoot arrows out of. And when I have time, it's something that I love to do. And I can make a really good bow.

It could kill an elk. Strong bows. Excellent bows.

They can weather the storms. They can hunt with you for years. They won't wear out.

Strong, solid, good, accurate bows. But you cannot play music on them. They just don't work right.

In the same way, there's a lot of guitars up here. And even though I am a pretty good shot, I doubt that I could knock an arrow on one of these guitars and shoot you with it. Guitars are not made to shoot arrows.

And bows are not made for music. I can try to wrench them out of their created order and use them for a purpose for which they should not be used, but I'm just going to wear myself out. That's you.

You see, you weren't made for you. You weren't made to do your own thing. You weren't made for personal accolades.

You were made for Him. I heard something just recently, and to tell you the truth, the person who was telling it to me thought it was marvelous. It made me nauseous.

We were talking about music, and we were talking about young musicians, these powerful musicians that often come out of Asia, Japan, you know, six years old, and they're playing with the orchestra, all this sort of thing. And this person told me, they said, Now, Paul, what you have to understand, I'm going to tell you how they're able to accomplish this. It's a magnificent form of training.

And I said, OK, how do they accomplish this? He goes, Well, when the child is just old enough to put a violin in the child's hands, say three years old, and the child holds the violin, and the teacher and the parents and other people that are very important to that child, they will call them all in and have them stand around that child. Then they'll hand the child the violin, they'll hand the child a bow, and they'll encourage

the child to play anything. So the child takes the violin and smacks the string with the bow.

And all of the people that are the peers that are important to that child begin to applaud wildly. And just, oh, you're so wonderful! You're so great! And this person told me, what it does, Paul, is it enforces in this child that through this violin, they're going to be able to find for themselves glory and praise and encouragement and purpose and meaning. My goodness! That's horrid! And yet the Scriptures say whether you eat or drink or any other thing you do, do it all unto the glory of God.

As I told you last night, I've walked with the Lord for almost, I guess it's 28, 29 years or something. And I have regrets. I've lost a lot.

I have. And I have regrets. I don't regret my losses.

I regret what I have kept. I'm hoping that I will grow in Christ to greater maturity so that on the day of my death that I will die well. I'm praying, and if you'd like, you can pray with me.

I'm asking the Lord to let me live to at least 91. I'm a little bit angry at Methuselah because I think, you know, he got all those years to walk with God and I think if I had that many years, maybe I could learn something. Young person, your desire ought to be to live for His glory.

To live for His glory. It's the only thing that's going to give your life meaning. If you do not do that, you're always going to be not only dislocated, but let me use this word, you're just going to be ridiculous.

You're just going to be ridiculous. When men set themselves up as some sort of entity independent of God and relish and proclaim their own power, they're like a baboon finally dressed with lipstick. Honestly, it's just ridiculous.

But the person who lives for God's glory, and you see again, prepare yourself for heaven because that is the theme of heaven. All glory, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto You be the glory. This is how you find life, young people.

This is why when my children are asleep and the Lord wakes me in the night and I go in and I pray for them, I don't pray that they be big preachers or missionaries or businessmen or scholars. I just say, Lord, my petition to You is that You will take their hearts, that You will instill in them a love for Your Son, make them slaves to Your Son. They're captivated by the love of Your Son, whether they be janitors or doctors or construction workers or preachers.

Their heart will belong to You because I know that their lives will be just foolishness, that they will just be ridiculous apart from that. And so is your life. And not only ridiculous, but pitiful.

I like to say it this way. You know, there's some of you guys out there, you know, you're young and your bodies feel good and you're strong and you're nimble and you're quick. Do you not realize that one day someone is going to have to help you go to the bathroom? You will have no strength.

You'll be old and feeble. Take no joy in even music or songs or physical pleasure. That's coming quickly.

You young girls, so concerned your culture is with the way you look. You're in front of the mirror all the time. You want to be so beautiful and many of you, you are beautiful.

You're young. Let me just share with you something, young ladies. One day, each and every one of you is going to be frightfully ugly.

Did you know that? If you live long enough, every one of you, you're going to have hair growing out your ears. All sorts of things are going to happen to you. Young people, listen to me.

Isn't it amazing? Now, think about this. We are not a people who wear a lot of clothes in our culture. And one medical doctor I was talking with a couple of weeks ago, he said, you know, Paul, in a sense, clothing is a gift from God.

And I said, why? He said, I'm a medical doctor and I can tell you, there's only a small window of about ten years when the human body is actually beautiful. After that, it's like, please somebody put some clothes on that person. I mean, it's going to happen to you.

This is your future. Ugly is your future. And then after that, you die.

Have a nice day. But do you see that? I don't want that for you. I don't want you to grab ahold of something that's just not even going to last more than ten years.

Do you really? I saw a famous actress one time and even when she was like 65 years old and even then she was still somewhat physically attractive because she had had probably every kind of surgery you could possibly have. But when you looked in her face, you saw that she was losing the battle. And not only that, when you looked in her face, you saw that she knew she was losing the battle.

Today or yesterday you were born. Today you sit here as a teenager. Tomorrow you will be 50.

The next day you will be no more. You will either live for the glory of God or you will be a dislocated, miserable fool. One of the things that so disrupted my life was when I was 17.

A great fear, but a great respect for my father. And he was a very smart man, but he also had a hobby of, well, we had quarter horses and Charlotte cattle was a horse farm. And he and I were out, I was 17 years old, and we were out building a fence.

And we were talking about the upcoming basketball season and all kinds of stuff. And all of a sudden when I took a few steps back to go to the truck, I heard my father scream. And I turned around and I ran to him and I caught him and we fell to the ground and he was dead.

That threw my world for a loop. Why? Alright, my father was a big man, strong. I have not attained to his strength or athletic ability.

My father was a really good looking man, jet black hair and eyes as blue as the sea. I have definitely not attained to the way he looked. My father was a really good mathematician and he was even used on some certain things for the government, kind of secret.

I'm 2 plus 2. That's as far as I go. I'm not a great mathematician. And I would look at this and I'd go, everything I wanted to be is him, but he's gone.

Why does it even matter? I'm not going to be as good as him. And even he's dead now. Life is absurd.

It has no meaning. If I become strong, I will die. If I'm wealthy, I will die.

If I fall in love, she will die. It all just dies. There's no purpose.

There's no meaning. It's all just a mist, a fog. And do you know what? This horrid thing I've described, did you know it's actually God's gift to us? Do you remember when Adam fell? And he told Adam, from now on you will live by the sweat of your brow.

You will work in something of misery and futility. Do you remember when he looked at Eve and he said, you're going to have childbirth and it's going to really hurt. Although my wife still finds this hard to believe, that was a gift from God.

You say, well, Brother Paul, the Bible says it was judgment. Yes, it was judgment. But in that judgment, there was also mercy.

How is that? Every time, and this is how God reveals Himself to men, secular men. Every time a man goes out and he works and he works and he works and it all falls apart, it's all futility, it's all vain. Every time he gets what he wants, like a new car or a new boat or this or that, a promotion, and yet it doesn't satisfy him, that is God screaming out at him, you were made for me, you were made for me, turn back to me, turn back to me.

Every time a woman in childbirth screams with the greatest of pain, it is God screaming out at her, return to me, return to me, return to me. But like we asked last night, will you listen? Will you listen? Or will you be a fool on the way of destruction that will lose it all? It says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now, we have ten more minutes here, and I want to look at some passages that may help us understand this.

There are passages I always use, even in evangelism. Just go for a moment to Genesis 6, verse 5. Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man, that it was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Now, some will say this is antediluvian man.

You know, this was man before the flood. Every thought of his heart was wicked always. Here's the problem.

The flood didn't change anything. It washed most men off the face of the earth, but it didn't wash the men who remained upon it. Men are still this way.

I was teaching years ago at a university, and it caused quite a stir. Some people were very angry. Things went on, happened.

And this reporter came up to me, and he was beside himself. I think a good word would be livid. He was angry.

And he said, why do you keep talking about sin? I do not believe man is as wicked as you say he is. And I said, well, first of all, I'm talking about sin because I want you to love God. He said, how is this going to make me love God? I said, have you never read, She Loved Much Because She's Been Forgiven Much? I said, young man, you do not love much because you do not know how much you've been forgiven because no one ever told you how sinful you are.

But I said, regarding the fact that you claim that young man is not as sinful as I say. First of all, young man, remember the sermon. I did not interpret Genesis 6-5.

I read it to you. You're the one that interpreted it. But let's talk about that for a moment.

You do not think that every thought of a man's heart is wicked. Let's say that I could take every thought you've ever had, every one, from the time when you first remember thinking, even till right now, and your thoughts in this camp, and I could take them and transpose them upon a DVD. And I came to you and said, tonight I'm going to show your DVD to the whole auditorium.

You would beg me with tears. You would fight me to keep me from showing that DVD. Because you have thought things so vile, so wicked, that you cannot share them with your closest friend.

And if your closest friend even knew some of your thoughts, they would no longer be your friend. You would be so totally and utterly ashamed. Now, let's think about that for a moment.

You're ashamed about this, even before us? You don't want us to see it? Even though you know that we're just like you. We're just as bad as you are, and yet, you don't want us to see it. So now let me ask you a question.

What's going to happen in the judgment when this is exposed before a holy God? When this is shown before angels? When this is shown to the saints? Shame? Untold shame? You see, this is what God sees about you. This is what God sees. He sees what we do not see about you.

And that's why you must go to the cross. Now, look at Genesis 8, 21. The Lord smelled the soothing aroma, and the Lord said to Himself, I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth.

What you need to see here is that this is not some sort of socially imposed malady, sin. Here's what I want you to see. This is ingrained in you.

There is something that hopefully we're going to talk about before this week is over, and that is the relationship between nature and will. And if people would just understand this, it would clear up a lot of bad theology. You sin because you are a sinner.

You do corrupt things and think corrupt thoughts because you are corrupt. Men do evil because men are evil. You say, I don't like that.

Remember what Jesus said, if you being evil can give good gifts? That was His word. You see, one of the problems that we have that literally causes all our theology to disintegrate is we do not realize how evil men are. You know, and we're going to see this later on.

When I talk about hell, especially as a secular audience, and I talk about hell, they're appalled that I would say that God would throw someone in hell. Heaven has the opposite problem. For them, it's a moral problem when God doesn't throw men in hell.

They can't believe that God doesn't throw men in hell. They know all men should go to hell, and when God doesn't send a man to hell, they go to the throne asking for an explanation. And that's what Romans 3 is about, actually.

You see, everyone in creation is in agreement about us. It's just we're not in agreement about us. We need intervention or something.

Everyone agrees. This is who we are. Except us.

Now, it says from our youth, from our childhood, yeah, even from our birth, the wicked go astray even from the womb. Do you have to teach a child to lie? No. Do you have to teach a child to be self-centered and selfish? Absolutely not.

As a matter of fact, this whole idea of, you know, I hear these pop songs that say, you know, let the children lead the way and all this kind of stuff. That would be the most terrifying thing I could ever imagine. Have you ever seen children in the first years of grade school and how they will find weaknesses in a child or defects in a child and they will literally cannibalize that child? Merciless.

Merciless. You know exactly what I'm talking about. One law enforcement person or a person involved in law enforcement made this comment one time.

After all these years and the atrocities that I have seen among men and children and women, I would have to say this. Men are born evil. They are born evil.

And he said, I would submit to you this. You're holding an 18-month-old baby in your arms and that baby looks at the watch that's on your hand and wants it and so reaches for the watch and you grab the baby's arm and you say no. The baby begins to twist and reaches again for the watch.

You say no. The baby begins to cry and frail its arms. He says, I submit to you that at that moment, if that 18-month-old baby had the strength of an 18-year-old man, he would slaughter his parent, rip the watch off his arm, and walk over his dead body, leaving bloody footprints out the door without feeling an ounce of remorse.

Just look at your newspaper. You see, now let's get back to Hitler for a moment. The Holocaust, it's the greatest atrocity of our time.

Definitely one of the greatest of human history. But you think Hitler is an anomaly, a phenomenon, an unusual once in a world history event. Absolutely not.

I would submit to you that the only thing that keeps every human on this planet from being like Hitler or surpassing Hitler in evil is the common grace of God restraining men. Hitler was evil, but even in his evil, God still restrained his evil. Hitler was not as evil as he could have been.

You see, men... Well, let me give you an example. And please, just think, Pooh, think, okay? This is a good example. When I go to universities and things, I'll hear people always talking about, well, what about the good atheist? And before I answer that question, I always say, the good atheist.

You know, could you give me his name and number? Because I've been hearing about him all over the place, but I've never met him. The good atheist. What about the atheist who, you know, he will rake the leaves of his elderly neighbor.

He will go charge up her battery when it's cold. He's pretty much a nice guy. What is God going to do with him? Well, first of all, what you see there is superficial, and you're not seeing in his heart.

We've already determined what men think in their hearts. But when someone asks me that about the good atheist, I always say it in this way, and it's kind of blunt. Oh, for the good atheist, the deepest, darkest hole in hell is reserved.

And that's always a shock. What do you mean? And I say, how is it that he rakes his neighbor's yard instead of walking over and slaughtering his neighbor with an axe? Only one thing. The grace of the very God he denies.

And the greatest judgment is reserved for him because God has poured His common grace out on that atheist and restrained his evil, and any appearance of good he might have is the result of the very God he denies. Yes. Yes.

Yes. We have not yet seen what is man. But I can assure you, on the day of judgment, you will see what man is.

Because I believe that God will vindicate Himself, and I believe that on the day of judgment, He will pull back for the first time. There's never been a human on this planet that was fully given over to themselves. The evil of every human that's ever walked this earth has been restrained.

But on the day of judgment, God will pull back His restraining grace and you will see a monster that goes beyond the ability of Hollywood or your own mind to imagine. And you will realize that was you! That would be you, apart from the grace of God. Now, I want to say one more thing before we close this session.

This problem is so profound. It's so deep. It is so impossible for us to solve.

Not religion, not the praying of little sinners' prayers. The only thing that can solve this problem is the hand of Almighty God. And I want to sum up by saying two things.

Man has two great problems. You can reduce everything, everything, down to two great problems. You say, what are they? First of all, the condemnation of sin.

Because of sin, men stand condemned before a good and loving God. The second is the power of sin. Men are under sin's power and they have become a slave to it, a willing slave, not a victim.

Only God can solve this problem. And how does He solve it? He solves the problem of the condemnation of sin by Christ's atonement on the cross. Christ carried our sin.

He bore the wrath of God in our place. He died in our place that God might be just and the justifier of the wicked. The power of sin, though, even though Christ has died, even though atonement has been made for a multitude of men, a countless multitude of men, there's still a problem.

And it is the power of sin. And that problem is solved by the doctrine of regeneration. That God sends His Spirit to regenerate your heart, to make you a new creature.

And with that new heart, you have new affections. And when those new affections, when your eyes with those new affections fall upon Christ, you are drawn to Him because He is altogether lovely. And we're going to try to get through all this, this week, so that when you walk out of here on Friday, you're going to know something about the Gospel.

Let's pray. Father, I come before You, and I pray You have helped. You have.

And I pray You will continue to help. In Jesus' name.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24038.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paul-washer/the-cross-centered-life-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net