

The Cross of Christ (Providence Chapel in Denton, Tx)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon on 2 Corinthians 5:21 emphasizes the significance of Christ's sinlessness and the curse that fell upon Him to save us from God's wrath.

Duration: 1:14:25

Scripture: Numbers 6:23, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Cross of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of waking up in a state of confusion and realizing the need for Christ in their life. They emphasize the concept of amazing grace and how it can save even the most wretched individuals. The speaker also highlights the contrasting nature of God, who can show both mercy and judgment. They describe a powerful analogy of a dam breaking and the impending destruction it brings, likening it to the consequences of sin. The sermon concludes with a reminder that despite human love being limited, Christ will never forsake those who are in need of His saving grace.

Transcript

For more media content from Grace Community Church in San Antonio, Texas, go to gccsatx.com. Let's open up our Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Let's pray.

Father, I come before You in the name of Your Son. Lord, I would have no strength to do so if it were not for Your Son, for His virtue and merit, for His blood on Calvary, for His resurrection from the dead, for the fact that He lives forever to make intercession. Father, I pray that tonight You would work in my heart through the preaching of the Gospel, that You would work in the heart of the hearers through the preaching of the Gospel.

Father, we confess that we are weak, that we are susceptible to so much sin. That though we praise You for the great work You have done in our lives, we recognize that even today, if it were not for grace, we would be undone. But with You, great grace is found.

And therefore, Father, we are happy in the Lord. Father, make us always mindful that we might be tethered to You clinging to You, hoping in You and Your goodness, looking unto Christ. Father, help us this night that we might look unto Christ from a higher vantage point, that we may see more of Christ and love Him more and be to Him better servants.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Tonight I'm going to be speaking about the cross of Jesus Christ. I'm going to address some issues that I commonly address, but I'm also going to go in some different directions to try to go into a little bit more of an understanding of what it means for Christ to have died for us.

Recently, I have been reading something from the French Reformed pastor, Adolphe Monod. And he preached 19 sermons from his deathbed. The last few sermons, he was not even able to turn to look at his congregation that was gathered around him.

He had to preach and just look straight up at the ceiling as he was lying on his back. He made a statement that I will never forget. Oh the burden, or oh the cross of preaching the cross.

Oh the cross of preaching the cross. Now the sad thing about that statement today is that few evangelicals would even understand it. What do you mean? What could be burdensome about preaching the cross? To ask that question betrays a superficiality.

The cross, there is nothing higher than the cross. There is nothing wider than the cross. There is nothing deeper than the cross.

You will never fully grasp the glories of God in the person of Jesus Christ and in the cross work that he has accomplished on our behalf. Never. You may revel a great deal about the second coming and talk.

A great deal of nonsense about what you've learned. I can assure you this, that on the day of the second coming you will understand absolutely everything about the second coming. But you will spend an eternity of eternities in glory and you will still not comprehend the cross.

And that's why it's a burden. A preacher who is going to preach the cross whether it's to 50 people or 5,000 knows this, that he is going to leave that pulpit of failure. That he's not going to do justice to anything.

To anything. So, oh the cross of preaching the cross. Now I want to go into some things that are often spoken.

Well, they are frequently spoken but very rarely are they understood. In verse 21, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf. Now, God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.

Now, what do you think about when you think about the sinlessness of Jesus Christ? The impeccable nature. The fact that He always walked in absolute righteousness. Do you marvel at that? But what do you think it means? Do you think it means He always obeyed the law of God? That He always obeyed the Ten Commandments? Yes, it does mean that.

But if that's where you stop, you don't fully understand the magnitude of this miracle. Now listen to me. There has never been one moment in your life, never, that you have loved the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Never have you done that one time. You have never loved God as He ought to be loved. Never.

Not one moment. Not in your most pious moment as a Christian. You have never loved God as He deserves to be God.

It would be blasphemous for you to say that you have loved God as He deserves to be loved. Now I want you to think about this. There was never one moment in the life of Christ that He did not love the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength.

There was never one moment when He did not love God as God deserves. Can you imagine that? We're not just talking about Ten Commandments here. We're talking about something so much more profound.

Now think about this. There has never been one moment in your life that you have glorified God in eating and drinking and in every task. You have never glorified God as He ought to be glorified.

Never. Even if you were to give your body to be burned, even if you were to be martyred after being tortured for a thousand years, you could still not say that even one moment in your life you lived fully and completely for the glory of God. And yet there was never one moment, one thought, one word, one act in the life of Jesus Christ that was not completely, totally and perfectly for the glory of God.

Does that add any meaning to the fact that He did not sin? I want you to think about that. That's absolutely astounding. I used to think, well, He knew no sin.

He never sinned. I used to marvel at that, but one day I was sitting there in my study and I was thinking, thinking, thinking, there has to be more here. And all of a sudden, there was more.

It's one of the most magnificent things you could possibly ever think about. That He lived every moment as a man. As a man.

He lived every moment perfectly for the glory of God and loving God as God deserved. Do you know anyone bold enough, ignorant enough, to raise his face to God and say, I have loved you as you deserve? It would be tantamount to blasphemy. But Christ, always.

Now, it said, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin. What does that mean? So you can say that, but what does it mean? And be very careful here, young men. Be very, very careful.

The statement that fools rush in where angels fear to tread is very appropriate for this text. What does it mean? You don't want to go too far and say blasphemous and dirty things about Christ. But you want to make sure you go far enough to understand what it meant that He was made sin.

What does it mean? You see, preaching the Gospel isn't just telling someone about four spiritual laws or five things God wants them to know. It is explaining the Gospel. Now, what does it mean that Christ was made sin on our behalf? Now, the answer is found in this text, I believe.

And most theologians would agree. The answer is found in the very text. Let's read on.

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. You know about the doctrine of justification, don't you? That a man is justified by faith. Now, what does that mean? Does that mean that the moment a man believes in God, he becomes a perfectly righteous being? Is that what that means? No, not at all.

If that were the case, he'd never sin again. Does it mean that your nature, your entire personality becomes so transformed that you never sin again and you become totally and completely righteous? No, that's not what it means. What does it mean? It means the moment that you place faith in God, you are legally or forensically declared to be right with Him.

At that moment, He legally declares you right with Him. And, and here's the important word, He treats you as right with Him. You stand before Him having been legally declared right with God.

And He will treat you from then on as being right with God. Do you understand? It is a legal thing that He does. Is everyone following me? Now, what does it mean that Christ was made sin? Does it mean that on that cross His nature became deformed, polluted, degenerated into corruption? Is that what it meant? No.

He was always the spotless Lamb. Always. So this is where you need to be careful and not say terrible things against Christ.

It's not that He became this horrid, sinful, deformed, depraved creature on that tree. That is not what occurred. But what occurred is this.

The sins of His people were imputed to Him. As His righteousness has been imputed to you, and you are therefore treated as righteous before the throne of God, all the sins of God's people were imputed to Him, were put on Him. And then, and this is the important word, He was treated before the throne of God as the sinner should be treated.

Now, does that terrify you? It would if you knew how sinners should be treated before the throne of God. It would absolutely terrify you. John Gill in early Baptists used to say that He stood in our law place.

He took all our sin and all our guilt upon Himself and God looked down at His only begotten Son in whom He was always well pleased and there at that moment treated Him as the one guilty. Treated Him as the one deserving punishment, deserving abandonment. Now, I want us to go on.

I'm going to be reading from a lot of notes because I'm going to be quoting a lot of Scripture. First of all, something you've probably all heard me preach before. He became a curse.

Having carried our sin and being treated by God in the way that God ought to treat you, He became a curse. Now, what does it mean to be a curse? Well, it's very, very hard to say because the Bible doesn't give us direct statements with regard to what it might mean to be a curse. But there's a summary statement I always make to kind of help people understand the terror of the idea.

And it's this. The man who is a sinner under the curse of God and why is he under the curse of God? Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them. He is under the curse of God because he has violated the law of God.

And he has done it every moment of his life. He is under the curse. What does it mean? Something like this.

That that man is so vile, so wretched, so depraved and loathsome not only before a holy God, but any and every holy creature in heaven. He is so vile that the last thing he will hear when he takes his first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because God has rid the earth of him. So if you want to know what you are apart from Jesus Christ, if you've so emboldened your heart and set your

face like flint against God and you want to stand like that and be judged by Him, know that that is your destination.

That is what is coming upon you. I want you to understand something. It will be not parents gathered around you mourning or trying to defend you from God.

It will not even be creation. You will look to your left and all of creation will stand back from you like they stood back from Achan. You will look to your right and your family will say, we know you're not.

You will look to angels. They'll turn their face away. And when you take your first step into hell, you'll hear all the world rejoicing.

That is what you are. Whether you want to acknowledge it or not, apart from Jesus Christ, that is what a man is. Why do I have to say it that way? Because if you don't understand how ugly man is, and if you don't understand how horrifying is the judgment he deserves, you will never understand what Jesus Christ suffered on that tree.

That's why it must be done. You think I do all this for you? Compared to Him, I care not for you. I want you to see your violence.

So that I'll repent. Right, preacher? Whether you repent or not, I care not. I want you to see your vileness so that you will see how wonderful He is.

I want to magnify Him. I want to magnify Him. Now, what does it mean to come under a curse? What does it mean? Well, here's something I did.

I decided to take several days off and go through the Bible and look up curse and blessing and take everything that's ever written as a curse and see how it would be applied to that tree. And take everything that's ever said to be a blessing to the people of God and convolute it, turn it around, and throw it back upon the head of Christ. Because here's what I want you to see.

If you ever say, I'm blessed, I want it ringing in your ears right after that statement because He was cursed. The only reason you can be blessed is because He was cursed. I want you to rejoice in the blessing.

But I always want you to hear following that it came out of a curse that fell upon Him. Let's just for a moment, I'm going to give you for a moment the Beatitudes turned inside out to give you an idea of what it meant for Christ to be on that tree. You know the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And on and on. Well, according to the Beatitudes, the blessed are granted the kingdom of heaven.

The cursed are refused entrance. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Slam door. The cursed are recipients of the blessed are recipients of divine comfort and the cursed are objects of divine wrath.

The blessed are satisfied in the cursed are miserable and wretched. The blessed receive mercy. The cursed are condemned without pity.

The blessed shall see God. The cursed are cut off from his presence. The blessed are sons and daughters of God.

The cursed are disowned in disgrace. Now listen to me here. Let me share with you what you should know.

Let me share with you what you should experience. Let me share with you what will happen to you if you continue rejecting Christ. You will be refused entrance into heaven.

You will be eternally an object of divine wrath. You will be eternally miserable and wretched. You will be eternally condemned without pity.

You will be cut off from the presence of God and you will be disowned in disgrace. But you can be saved. Why can you be saved? How can you be saved? Because Christ was refused entrance.

Because Christ became an object of divine wrath. Because Christ became miserable and wretched. Because Christ was condemned without pity.

Because Christ was cut off from the presence of his only father. And because Christ was disowned in disgrace. In the book of the law, Israel was divided into two camps.

One camp was set upon Mount Gerizim. And the other camp was set upon Mount Ebal. Those on Mount Gerizim were to pronounce all the blessings that would come upon the covenant keeper.

The man who obeyed Yahweh. Who obeyed his God. And on Mount Ebal, they cried forth all the curses that would come down upon the head of the covenant breaker.

That's you. And that's me. Now, I've taken all these curses and applied them to the cross.

Looking at the cross, when it says that he became a curse on our behalf, what does it mean? Well, taking all these curses from the law, this is what it means. Just listen carefully. When Jesus looked up into heaven and cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The father turned his face away and said, The Lord, your God, damns you.

The Lord sends upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly. The Lord smites you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart and you will grope at noon as a blind man gropes in darkness with none to save you. The Lord delights over you to make you perish and destroy you and you will be torn from the land.

Curse shall you be in the city and curse shall you be in the field. Curse shall you be when you come in and curse shall you be when you go out. The heavens which is over your head shall be bronze and the earth which is under you, iron.

You shall be a horror. You shall be a proverb and a taunt among all people. Let all these curses come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed because you would not obey the Lord, your God, by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

I want you to think about that. Listen to me. A Jehovah Witness comes to you just by their own name they are preposterous.

Jehovah has only ever had one witness. It's His Son. Jehovah has only ever had one servant.

One true servant. There's only ever been one true Israel. It is His Son.

You think of Him as a servant of man. That's only secondary. Please understand that.

He was first of all the servant of Yahweh. He came down and out of love for a bride and a desire to glorify God He put Himself against the threshold of the door and allowed not only His ear to be pierced to be made a servant but His hands and His feet. He was a servant of Yahweh.

He is the only covenant keeper that ever walked on this planet. The only one that God could ever look down at and say this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. There has never been another.

And yet on the cross the Father turned away from Him and said this, let these curses come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed. Now listen. He looks down and says because you would not obey the Lord your God and keep His commandments.

And it goes on. He was cursed as a man who makes an idol and sets it up in secret. He was cursed as one who dishonors his father or mother who moves his neighbor's boundary mark or misleads a blind person on the road.

He was cursed as one who distorts the justice, do an alien, orphan and widow. He was cursed as one who is guilty of every manner of immorality and perversion, who wounds his neighbor in secret or accepts a bribe to strike down the innocent. He was cursed as one who does not confirm the words of the law by doing them.

Imagine a man responsible for tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of deaths in Nazi Germany who then becomes a Christian. Christ was cursed as He ought to be cursed. To save him.

It says in the book of Proverbs, it says this, like a sparrow in its flitting and a swallow in its flying, so a curse without cause does not alight. A curse that has no cause. It will flitter around like a bird because a curse cannot land on a righteous man.

It cannot land on the branch. For Christ was the branch and the curse landed upon Him because He bore your sin. He bore your guilt.

Listen to what David says. How blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and whose spirit there is no deceit.

It is a wonderful thing, isn't it, to have your transgressions forgiven? It's a wonderful thing to have your sins covered. To not have your own iniquity imputed to you. Yet on the cross, the sin was imputed to Christ.

He was exposed before God and the host of heaven. He was placarded before men and made a spectacle to angels and devils alike. The transgressions he bore were not forgiven him and the sins he carried were not covered.

If a man is counted blessed because iniquity is not imputed to him, then Christ was cursed beyond measure because the iniquity of us all fell upon him. I want you to listen to something. The renewal of the covenant in Moab.

It speaks about the covenant breaker, but it doesn't talk about a group of covenant breakers. For some reason, in an unusual way, it just speaks about it as one man singled out as a covenant breaker. And it talks about the curses and the punishment that would fall upon him.

Now listen to this. The anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against that man. And every curse which is written in this book will rest on him.

And the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven. Then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in the book of this law. The Messiah was a Jew.

He was of Israel. He was of all the nation of Israel the only covenant keeper. Yet he was singled out for adversity because he bore the curses, all the curses of this book and was crushed by his father.

Just think for a moment. I want us to turn just for a moment to the book of Numbers 6. Aaron's benediction. Verse 23 of chapter 6 of Numbers.

Speak to Aaron and his son saying, Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them, The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. This is the type of thing I pray over my children. But when Christ was on that tray, this is what He heard.

The Lord curse you and give you over to destruction. The Lord take the light of His presence from you and condemn you. The Lord turn His face from you and fill you with misery.

You love this blessing from Aaron. You buy paintings. It has it written there.

You put it on the wall. You pray over your children with such a blessing. But look at this.

The Lord bless you because the Lord cursed Him. The Lord keeps you because the Lord let Him go. The Lord made His face shine upon you because the Lord took His presence away from Him.

The Lord is gracious to you because He was just to the one who bore your sin and crushed Him. The Lord lifts up His countenance on you. The Lord took His countenance away from Him.

You see, every good and perfect gift that you have is a result of a deadly, horrid cross that killed Him. Every last bit of it. I remember one time my religious upbringing.

I saw a great deal of hypocrisy. And I pointed it all out. The problem is I didn't see my own.

And I remember when a young man first came to witness to me. And immediately I fell back on Christians are hypocrites. I know part of my family, they're Baptists and they're hypocrites.

And I know the other part of my family and they're Catholics and they're hypocrites. And they're this group and they're hypocrites. And that young man, although he didn't know much of the Bible, he stopped me cold dead when he said, I'm not talking about your relatives.

I'm talking about the Son of God who never did you wrong, who never failed in one thing, who gives you breath even now while you curse Him. He gives you breath. He rains down upon the good and the evil.

Everything that is pleasant in your life comes from Him. What are you going to do with Him? What are you going to do with Him? I am not religious. And I wouldn't even call myself much of a nitpicker when it comes to rules.

But there's one thing I can't escape that must control my life. I'm blessed because He was cursed. That makes me a slave to Him.

That binds me forever to Him. I don't care for morality for morality's sake. To the wind with ethics, it doesn't bother me.

Everything I must be, I must be for only one reason. Because of Him and what He did on that tree. That's why when Paul said he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus, it meant more than chains.

He was a prisoner of love. I have seen the love of God manifested in the cross of Christ take the most vile, angry, God-hating human beings on the face of the earth and cause their heart to melt like wax. Know this.

You may look around you and find plenty of excuses to set your face bold against the Gospel. But you have no reason to set your face bold against Christ. Against Christ.

Now, I want to go on. I want to talk for a moment about the suffering of the wrath of God. It's something that's very elementary, but it's very, very important.

I remember several years ago when people were talking so much about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ because of the movie *The Passion*. And people would write me all the time and ask me, what do you think about Mel Gibson's film? Pastors would write me. What do you think about Hollywood doing this in Mel Gibson's film? And I answered every one of them with this.

Mel Gibson's rendition of *The Passion* doesn't bother me near as much as your preaching. Mel Gibson's film will not do as much damage to anybody as most evangelical preaching is doing today. So that's what I think about Mel Gibson's film.

I've never seen it. I have no bones against it, but I have heard much preaching and have many bones against all of it. I heard a man after that.

I was out working on the farm. I had my truck radio on and a man said, there's much talk about *The Passion*, so I figured I would take this next hour in my national radio program and share with you the true meaning of the cross. And man, I put my tools up and sat in the truck even though it was about 98 degrees outside.

I said, yes! Someone's going to explain it. He spent an hour talking about the dimensions of Roman crosses, the size of nails, how a man is whipped, the way they weave a crown. He talked about spears going through the heart and water coming forth.

He spoke about it all and he never once, never once, never once even got close to what the cross was about. How many people have I asked him what was in the cup that he did not want to drink? And how many answers have I received? Mostly, it was the Roman cross, the Roman whip. Even one person said, well, of course, he was afraid of what Satan would do to him when he was tied down on that beam.

I'll never forget one time I was in a very, very Reformed classical school and I was going to teach. I told the headmaster I was going to teach on propitiation. And she said, well, that's fine.

And I said, well, how old are the children? Well, they'll be there from kindergarten or first grade all the way to twelfth grade. I said, well, that makes my task a little more difficult. She said, don't worry, they'll understand you.

And I asked. I cried out to the student body. I said, tell me what was in the cup.

And I'll never forget a little girl. She couldn't have been more than eight years old. She raised her hand.

And I said, yes. And she stood up and she said, Sir, the wrath of Almighty God is in the cup. Do you honestly think that Jesus looked forward in the power of who He was and cringed at the thought of a cat of nine tails coming across His back? Do you think He cried out in a garden to the point so emotionally disturbed that blood is coming through His skin because He was going to be nailed to a tree? Now, let's just think about that for a moment.

Just for a moment. Do you know that after the death of Christ, there were countless thousands of Christians crucified? Not only were they crucified, many of them were crucified upside down. Not only upside down, but covered in bray.

Covered in tar. Crude form of kerosene and set on fire alive to provide light for the city of Rome. Do you know the testimony of over 2,000 years of countless millions, some estimate over 50 million believers that have been slaughtered? And do you know the testimony that many of them went to the cross to be crucified upside down, to be set on fire alive, and they went to the cross singing hymns and worshipping Christ with great joy that they would have a privilege of dying for Him.

So are you going to tell me that the followers of Christ could demonstrate such courage but the captain of their salvation is cowering in a garden and afraid to go to the very tree they long to embrace? Do you think that was the wrath of Almighty God? The wrath of God. Now I want you to think about this for a moment. In Psalm 75, verse 8, this is what it says, For a cup is in the hand of the Lord and wine foams.

It is well mixed, and He pours out this, Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. Those of us who were converted later in life know what dregs are, don't we? To drink up a bottle of wine, even the finest wine. Spend all the money you have.

Buy whatever wine you can find that's the best. When you drink it down to the bottom, there will be dregs. There will be residue left.

It says, I will make the nations drink my wrath until there's not one drop left. In Jeremiah 25, it says, For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, says to me, Take this cup of the wine of wrath from my hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it, they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them. Divine hand sweeping down and grabbing you by the back of your head.

By the back of your neck. And bringing a chalice of fury beyond description. And forcing you to set your mouth upon it and drink down every drop.

You say, my God's not like that. That's because you don't have a God or the Bible. He has a rod of iron with which He rules over the nations.

Some men will bow before Him by grace and others because their kneecaps have been broken. They will bow. And, what is amazing, what you should know, no one will be your lawyer on that day.

No one will cry out anything about human rights. There will be no defender. They will all applaud.

They will all applaud. I want you to imagine for just a moment a dam that is 10,000 miles wide and 10,000 miles high and filled to the brim with water. Holding back a massive body of destruction.

And an eighth of a mile from the bottom of the dam is a village. Us, in this room tonight. And all of a sudden, with an explosive sound that we cannot even bear, the wall is torn in two.

It is taken away. And all that massive destruction is coming toward our village. It doesn't matter how fleet a foot, you will not outrun it.

It does not matter how strong and how great your endurance in swimming, you will not last. And right before it comes to the very entrance of the village, right before even a singular drop wets your sandals, the ground opens up and swallows the whole thing down. That's what Christ did.

He opened Himself up and swallowed down. The old guys would say He extinguished, He exhausted the wrath of God on behalf of His people. Imagine two great millstones.

One 10,000 pounds and another set on top of it 10,000 pounds. Two stones. They're both spinning in opposite directions in order to grind anything that is put between them.

And you take a kernel of wheat and you put it between the two. The pressure immediately takes hold and explodes the outer hull. By the time it makes itself around, it's ground to nothing.

That's what Christ did for you. That's what Christ did for you. One of my favorite writers, I am not a very well-read man, but the little reading that I have done, one of my favorite writers is John Flavel.

It's some of the most beautiful things. I admire any man who can speak great things and beautiful things about Christ. He writes a thing about a dialogue occurring between the Father and the Son prior to His incarnation, maybe even prior to the foundation of the earth.

It's a dialogue and I want to read it to you. I call it the Father's Bargain. Flavel says, Here you may suppose the Father to say, now listen to this, when driving His bargain with Christ for you.

That right there is enough to sit for days. The Father driving His bargain with Christ for you. And the Father speaks, My son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls.

Now miserable is used in a wrong way or it's used in a different way than it used to be used. We think, you know, how are you feeling this morning? I'm miserable. The idea of misery and pity is that you're utterly pathetic.

Everything of you cries out have pity even if it won't come out of your mouth. What's amazing to me is the very God who is just and will destroy the wicked yet has pity on the wicked. He sees them as pitiful, pathetic creatures.

That's one of the reasons men do not come to God. They do not want the title of pitiful. They do not want the title of pathetic.

I have seen, living on a farm, great snow come and all the cattle go into the shelter and the heat of their body and the manure and everything else, it will melt in the barn. And you'll be two and three feet deep in there of manure and slime all heated up. And the little calves running in there for shelter and when they do, knocked to the ground and then stomped into the manure.

And to find one, just his nose or head sticking out and climbing in there amidst all of that. Why? Because you're just a little farm boy and you have pity on this pathetic manure covered thing that is going to die and it won't come out in the newspaper. And you pull and you tug and you fight to release him.

He's pathetic. And then he can't stand because he's been there for two days, he's dehydrated. To take him into the house, your own house, and clean him off.

Feed him. That's the idea. A dying baby, kicking on the side of the road.

Covered in blood. Thrown in the ditch. That's you.

Cover yourself with fine clothing. Put on your lipstick. You're nothing more than a baboon painting his face.

That's you. And all Levites and everyone else will just pass by you. But here comes the Christ.

Here comes the Christ. You know, sooner or later in your rebellion, everyone will give up on you. They will.

Even parents. Everyone. Human love only has so long a cord and then it breaks.

Don't come to me with something about a mother's love. Even that can be snapped in two. But when all have forsaken you, here comes one walking who has carved your name in the palms of his hands.

And he'll go down in the slime, in the manure, your own defecation. And he will pull you out. That's amazing.

He said, my son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves. Look at that. Utterly undone themselves.

You're undone. Every fabric, fiber, every molecule, every atom is out of place. It's wrong.

You're wrong. Everywhere you turn, you're wrong. He says, they've utterly undone themselves and they now lie open to my justice.

Sometimes I'll speak at universities and I know what they've planned for me. Here comes a fire and brimstone preacher. Let's get him on film so we can put him on some show and mock him.

So I'll always walk out there and I'll go, you have a problem. And they're expecting me to begin with some Puritan ethic, some morality. I'm going to force upon them from ancient times.

Here stands a social dinosaur ready to tell us something from the past. And I go, this is your problem. There is a God and He's good.

And I can just hear them. Why is that a problem? Because you're evil. So what's a good and loving God to do with someone like you who knows nothing about goodness and nothing about love? Self-centered? Propped yourself up in the foundation of your own ego? What's He to do with someone like you? The better He is, the worse is your condition.

Justice must be satisfied. He says, justice demands satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. Think about this.

I don't know why I'm preaching this way. I suppose all of you, most of you, believe yourself to be believers, but there's somebody. It's not true.

Eternal ruin. Ruin for a while I can bear with. A ruin of 10,000 years is bearable.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. But eternal ruin, where destiny is no longer linear. Do you realize that? There is a sense in which history is linear.

It's not circular. It's not a circle. It is linear.

But there will come a time when your destiny will double itself back on itself and never have an end. Eternal ruin. So I beg you, as God would beg you through me, do not do this.

Don't go this way today. If you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. Today is the day of salvation.

Will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. What shall be done for these souls? And thus Christ returns. Oh, my father.

Such is my love to and pity for them. If I ever I hear this so often, I don't want anybody's pity. You will.

But wisdom speaks to you in Proverbs and she tells you how she has stood in the streets and she has called your name so many times for you to accept her reproof so she could pour out her spirit upon you and you would not. Therefore, when calamity comes and you cry for pity, she will laugh at your destruction. Oh, my father.

Such is my love to and pity for them. You know, it's just amazing to me. And this is so important in marriage.

This is amazing. If I hear tell, I know there's a rumor out there. I've never seen this done, but I hear tell there are people who will spend \$40,000 per car.

I mean, that's a house. But I don't think there's anybody who buys a car for \$40,000 in order to fix it up. You don't do that.

You buy a car for \$40,000, something's wrong with it, you're immediately back to the dealer going, hey, what's the deal? I spent \$40,000 on this thing. Christ spent His love to buy a bride that was ugly and that He would have to spend countless hours fixing up. Now that's love.

That's love. I mean, you're there and you're in your wallow. You're in your slime.

You're in your blood. You're in your afterbirth. You're there.

You're filth. He buys you out of the ditch. He buys you on the auction block of prostitution, covered in the filth of men with His own blood, with the intention of cleaning you up.

That's utterly amazing. A lot of you were raised in religious families and all sorts, not me. I remember one night coming back from a drunk, don't even know how I got home, and this is one of the things that led to my conversion.

Man, I could party, fight, and everything with the best of them. You want to know what the world is like? I've been there, done that, got the t-shirt, and you don't want to know. And I remember making my way

back to an apartment.

I don't even remember how. I just remember waking up at 5 in the morning, a little bit of light cracking through. I'm going, where's my shirt? And getting up off the linoleum floor halfway and going, why, I'm all wet.

Why am I all wet? God, I'm sticky. Going to the bathroom, turning on a light. Someone had told me about Christ a couple weeks before.

And turned on the light, and there I am, covered in my own vomit. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound. It saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. She loves much because she's been forgiven much.

He spilled His blood. He had pity. He had pity.

Oh, Father, my love to and pity for them is so great, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their guarantee. Take the most wicked, vile, irresponsible man that you know who cares nothing about anybody but himself, who would just as soon destroy, kill, maim anything, and then stand up and tell someone when he's knocking at the door, tell the owner of the mansion, let him come in. I will be responsible for him.

I will be responsible for them as their guarantee. Now look at this. This is so important.

Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee. You see, here's the thing. Sometimes you make a pledge of love and then it gets so difficult.

You go, hold on. Let me out. I didn't know what I was getting into.

No, no, no, no. I didn't mean to pay this much. No, no, no.

I'm sorry. I'm going back. If you had told me what it was going to be like and what they owed, well, I wouldn't have done it.

So I'm leaving. That's not what he said. He said, father, bring in all their bills, everything they owe thee.

I want to see it. When he went to that cross, he knew exactly. What he was going to suffer now, that is love that my friend is love.

He says, and listen to this. Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee. Lord, bring them all in.

Now, this is the most beautiful part. Listen, that there may be no after reckonings with them. Once I pay this, there is nothing left for them to pay.

Ever. I'm paying for past, present, future. Everything.

There's no after reckoning. No one. The law, the devil, no one comes to them and speaks with him after this.

Justice is paid at my hand. Thou shalt require it and will rather choose to suffer the wrath that is due them than they should suffer it upon me, my father, upon me be all their debts. Now, listen to this.

The father responds. But my son, if thou undertake for them, you take their place. Thou must reckon to pay the last might.

Expect no abatements. He says, if you're going to stand in their place, then you're going to pay down to the very last penny. Expect no ease of my hand because you are my son.

Being on the Amazon River, if you're on the Amazon without a covering on your boat, and I usually didn't have a covering on my boat, it's dangerous. A big squall blows in. A great storm starts rising and it can drown your boat, drown an 18 foot boat in a matter of a few minutes.

And so you see it coming down the river. You can just see the rain. And you're praying for an abatement.

You're praying that somehow it will decrease, that it will die, that it will diminish. And he says to his son, son, if you're going to take their place, then expect no abatement. No diminishing.

I will take out of you every last penny they owe. And then listen. Expect no abatements.

Son, if I spare them, I will not spare you. Son responds, content, Father. I'm content.

Do you know the only thing that can make someone content in the face of such a price? Love for the one for whom he's going to pay it. It's like Jacob with Rachel. Serve me seven more years.

I'm content. I'll do it. I'll do it.

Only love can do that. Only love can do that. Content, Father, let it be so.

Charge it all upon me. Now, this is where I see the mighty Christ. Listen to Him.

Content, Father, let it be so. Charge it all upon me. I am able to discharge it.

No one can say that. Do you realize that? I hear these songs and they're going, you know, God looked all over Heaven to find someone willing to die. God looked for a perfect man and couldn't find one.

You could crucify under the wrath of God but He had 100 million perfect men and they could not discharge our guilt. Only the Son of God could discharge our guilt. No one else.

No one else. I am able to discharge it. And though it prove a kind of undoing to me, what an understatement.

But love always makes understatements when it talks about the sacrifice that must be made. Go to the missionary who's lost everything on the foreign field, but don't mention to him that he made a sacrifice. You will make him nauseous to the point of vomiting.

He will scream, I sacrificed nothing for Him. For Him. All for Him.

Though it kind of prove an undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty my treasures, yet I am content to undertake. I want to close up with something. Many, many years ago, God tested a man by the name of Abraham.

But know this, in all our dealings with the Old Testament, know this, and I know there are scholars who would disagree with me and call me, well, romantic or from a wrong age. But the Old Testament is not about ethical teaching. It's about the person of Jesus Christ.

The whole thing. Every jot and tittle of it points to Him. And so when I tell you about this Abraham who is told by God to take his son to the mountain, Mount Moriah, his son Isaac, know that it is pointing to Christ more than it is pointing to the faith of a man.

And I want you to listen to what God says to Abraham. Now listen to the language. It's very important.

Take now your son, your only son, whom you love. You think God is trying to tell us something. But this is not just about Isaac.

This is not just about Abraham. Listen to the way He speaks. Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I tell you.

Can you imagine the sadness in that man's heart? He marches himself and his son to the mountain. We see in the Scriptures, and I think the rabbis would see it so, in the Scriptures, it doesn't mention at all any contradiction or opposition by Isaac. Why? Pointing to Christ.

Nothing is mentioned in the fight. The boy surrenders to the will of his father. And so the father's will finally bends into the will of God.

He takes probably a flint knife, maybe even the same knife he used in the circumcision of his son, his only son, the son whom he loved, and he laid his hand on his brow and he brought the knife down to his breast to kill him. And his hand was stained. And God spoke and said, Abraham, Abraham, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him for now I know that you fear God since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.

And then Abraham looked and there was a ram in the thicket caught by its horns. And the boy was released and the ram was slaughtered. And those of us watching the stage breathe a sigh of relief as the curtains are drawn to a close and we say what a wonderful ending for the story.

It wasn't the ending. It was the intermission. Generations and generations and generations pass and the curtains are opened up again.

And there on the stage is the Son of God placarded on a cross. And the Father lays His hand upon the brow of His Son, His only Son, the Son whom He loves, and takes the knife from the hand of Abraham and brings it down upon the chest of His only Son and slaughters Him. There was no ram in the thicket caught by its horns.

There was no deliverer for the deliverer. As the old poem says, offer up the sacrifice. Creation sends forth the call.

Offer up the sacrifice. One life to pay for them all. Offer up the sacrifice.

The innocent one must be slain. Offer up the sacrifice and bring man back to God again. You know, when Abraham was there on the mountain, this is what he said.

The Scripture says, He then named that place Jehovah-Jireh where the Lord will provide. Thus it is a faithful saying that remains until this day in the mount of the Lord it will be provided. For us, the true believer, Calvary is the mountain where the Lord provides.

The most angry I guess I become is with this. When I hear preachers talk about homes and cars and Mercedes Benzes and all sorts of material prosperity because Jehovah-Jireh the Lord will provide, with those words they condemn themselves demonstrating that they care more for things than the Lamb of God who was provided on the mountain. And one of the reasons why people follow these false prophets, and so many of them are in your state, the reason why people follow them is because they want exactly what those false prophets want.

They don't want God. They want their best life now. But for those of us who are Christian, this is what we say using the words of God to Abraham.

Abraham, Abraham, I now know. But we say this, God, my God, I now know that You love me since You have not withheld Your Son, Your only Son, whom You love from me. To be controlled, to be controlled, not by a religion, not by a morality, not by an ethic, and not by a way of life, but to be controlled by an act of love is an amazing thing.

Don't talk to me about duty. To be controlled by love and to have your gauge being that, it's a marvelous thing. It's a marvelous thing.

I think instead of asking do you believe, do you walk the straight line? Because there are many who say they believe and they don't. And there are many who walk in a wonderfully straight and religious line and they're marching themselves straight into hell. My question for you would be this, do you esteem the person of Jesus Christ? Do you esteem the person of Jesus Christ In His presence, does everything else fade into nothing? Do you esteem Him? I hope you say, like the man who said, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief, I hope you will say with me, I esteem Him, help me esteem Him more.

Help my lack of esteeming Him. When your eyes are set on Christ, that's all you need. That's all you need.

My prayer for you is the prayer I have for me, the prayer I have for my own children, that your hearts will be devoted to a singular person. That's it. That's it.

Brother Paul, what's your definition of Christianity? A heart devoted to a singular person. I catch all kinds of flack because I'm hanging out with rappers in Chicago and everything else you can imagine. Brother Paul, why do you go up there with all those guys? I'll tell you why.

They esteem Jesus Christ with a singular devotion to those guys. I don't care if the hair is blue. I don't care about anything.

They esteem Jesus Christ. I want to be where life is. Where life is.

Where life is. Where there are people, because of love for Jesus Christ, are making incredible sacrifices and they count them as no sacrifice at all. Where they are doing to the best of their limited knowledge whatever they can to please Christ.

Put me there. I'll teach them. Put me there.

You see, it's Him. I want you to have Him. I know that this group will disappoint you.

I know your parents will disappoint you. I know your children will disappoint you. I know I will disappoint you.

I know preachers will disappoint you. I know everything about everything will disappoint you and give you cause from turning away from the faith. But He will never disappoint you.

The one who calls upon the name of the Lord and trusts in Him will not be disappointed. There's not been one time in almost 30 years that Jesus Christ has disappointed me. Never.

So if you're going to throw some argument about somebody let you down and therefore you don't follow Jesus, it's just not going to wash. This is just between you and Jesus. You can sit there and go, Christians are weird and I don't like them.

Yeah, I agree. A lot of them are like children of the corn. They're kind of strange.

And some of them in a right way and some of them, no, they're just strange. But that's not what I'm talking about. Jesus never does that.

Jesus is always absolutely wonderful in every shape, form, and fashion. Every shape, form, and fashion. Oh, please come to Him.

Please know Him. Please seek Him. Please claw your way.

Jump over anything. Kick it out from among you. Do whatever you have to do, but come to Jesus Christ.

Come to Jesus Christ. And don't delay. Today is the day of salvation.

Today. Let's pray. Father, I come before You, Lord, and I pray that You, dear God, would work in our hearts those who do not know You, that they would know You, that today would be their day of salvation.

Brokenness. Joy. Lord, for those who do know You, I pray, dear God, that today would be a day that would move them one step closer to a right passion, to a higher esteem.

Father, when I think about my devotion to Your Son, I am greatly ashamed. Oh, God, help us. And we will be helped.

We call upon You to do what we know You will, and that is to keep Your promises, Lord, that You who began a good work in us would finish it. To the day we stand before You without spot or wrinkle, glorifying the Lamb. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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