

The Gospel: The Cross of Christ

by Paul Washer

The Christian life is being mesmerized by what God has done for us in the person of Jesus Christ, and our motivation should be to live for his glory and pleasure.

Duration: 1:30:52

Scripture: Isaiah 40:12-13, Matthew 6:33, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 3:23, Romans 3:25, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "The Cross", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of coming to Christ for salvation. He highlights that outside of Christ, there is no hope, but in Him, there is everything. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus not only lived a perfect life and died a perfect death, but He also rose again from the dead and ascended into glory. The sermon also discusses the question of how a person can go to heaven, with the answer being found in the person of Jesus Christ. The preacher encourages the audience to focus on the cross of Christ, as understanding and appreciating what God has done for us in Jesus should be our magnificent obsession. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the need to grow in the knowledge of who God is and to let His truth control every aspect of our lives. The preacher also mentions that the goal is not to bring revival, but to seek and comprehend the truth. The sermon references Psalms 24 and Romans 3:23-25.

Transcript

Young faces, and I would like to be able to just spend hours with you. Just talk about the things of God, things that can be gleaned from the scriptures, things that can help you to walk with him. But tonight, as these meetings are about the cross of Christ, I'm going to preach a message that I preach everywhere I go about the cross of Jesus Christ.

And you get that aspect of your theology right and everything else falls into place. That the Christian life is being literally mesmerized by what God has done for us in the person of Jesus Christ. It should become our magnificent obsession to track down and trace out what God has done for us.

Because when that occurs, there's very little need for coercion, manipulation or seemingly pull yourself up by your bootstraps to be motivated to serve God and to love others. All our energy, all our prompting, all our strength should come out of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Let's open up our Bibles to the Book of Romans, chapter three, verse twenty three, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed

publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith.

This was to demonstrate his righteousness because in the forbearance of God, he passed over the sins previously committed for the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness at the present time so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting it is excluded by what kind of law of works? No, but by law of faith. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, come before you in the name of your son. And what a dear and precious and powerful name that is. Father, I'm overwhelmed at your kindness and your goodness and your mercy and your grace.

You are so good. And the cross of Christ, so powerful that even a man like myself, prone with so many weaknesses, can know that he stands in full view of you, that you see every part, every fiber of my being and yet still have confidence to stand before you because of the power, the preciousness, the worth of the blood of Jesus Christ. Our confidence is Christ.

Relegate everything else, Lord, to useless refuse. Our confidence is in Christ and Christ alone. We ask you tonight, Lord, to help us to understand.

She would illuminate our hearts and our minds to understand this text, to speak it forth, to hear it. To be transformed by its truth, Lord, we acknowledge that. That apart from the working of the Holy Spirit, men cannot be converted.

Nor can men grow. Or even stay where there are in the things of God. We have constant need of him.

And pray, Father, that you would see to it and see fit. To empower us and strengthen us and teach us by the Holy Spirit. In Jesus name and for his sake, amen.

For all have sinned. You don't understand what that means, because if you did and you were outside of Christ at this very moment, you would fall on your face and tremble. You would have no strength left in you if you knew what it meant to sin against God.

At the same time, the Christian does not understand fully what this passage is saying for all have sinned, because if we did, our joy would be so unspeakable. We would have to be chained to our pews to control us that we have been forgiven of such vile crimes against God. For all have sinned.

Why does that not bother us? Well, first of all, we don't know who God is. We live in a culture that has dressed down deity. We live in a culture that sees God as this sort of benevolent, benign, somewhat lacking in intelligence.

A creator who will accept absolutely everyone on the face of the earth, that man is his most chosen and most precious possession and that he would do everything, even slack his own justice and lower the bar of his own rule in order to receive man to himself. Have this idea of God that knows nothing of justice and nothing of holiness. We do not see God as he is, and therefore we do not understand sin as it truly is.

All have sinned. Adam and Eve transgressed one time against the person of God, and it threw an entire universe into destruction. From what we know, and we know very little about the origin of the devil and those angels that supposedly were with him in whatever rebellion there was, we know that only one crime is committed and they are cast out of the presence of God and offered not one single shred of hope when the glorious angels fell and God judged them with perfect justice.

There was no need for him to give an explanation. Everyone in heaven nodded their head. The judge of all has done right.

When Adam and Eve transgressed against one commandment of God and cast an entire race into condemnation, God did not have to call heaven to order and explain what he did. Absolutely, everyone nodded their head and said, the judge of all the earth has done right. You see, as the Puritans used to say, when you sin against God, you are not sinning against some small mayor of some unknown village.

Some small and petite leader in power of some unknown province, you have sinned against the God of glory. Sin is the greatest of all things in its evil. Sin is not neutral.

Sin is not simply a mistake. Every sin is seeking to bust through into the courts of God to knock him from his throne and slaughter him. Sin can be seen how vile it is.

Maybe in this, that in the day of creation, God speaks to planets and he says, you put yourself in this orbit and you stay there until I give you another word. And every planet bowed down and said, amen. He spoke to stars that could swallow up our sun and he told them to put themselves in different places in space.

And they all bowed and said, amen. He told mountains to be lifted up. He told valleys to be cast down.

They all obeyed him. He looked at the mighty sea and said, you will come to this place and come no further. And they all bowed in worship.

And he looks at you and says, come. And you go, no, we don't understand what sin is. We don't understand who God is.

And this is a great problem. For all have sinned, broken the laws of God from preacher to prostitute, to popes and princes, every son and daughter of Adam has violated God's law. And you have to understand something prior to coming to Christ.

It's not that you were a pretty good fellow. It's just that you sin sometimes or even that you sinned much. But that every breath, every beat of your heart was accomplished in rebellion against God, even the greatest deeds that you might have done towards men was still rebellion against God.

Someone asked me one time, they said, well, how how is that? Well, let me just give you an illustration. Let's say you have a man who just despises you, who hates you. He lives on the other side of this city or across the continent.

You understand that he's dying. You sell your home, everything you have to buy a certain medicine that will save his life. You walk across the country on your knees, on broken shards of glass, and you present to him this medicine and it saves his life.

Have you done a good thing? No. You have sinned. Because the man who does such a thing and yet does not do it primarily and principally for the glory of God has done nothing.

I travel around in the universities, they'll say, well, what about the good atheist? What about him? What are we going to do with the good atheist? I said, well, first of all, could you tell me his name? Because I hear about this guy everywhere, but no one's he never comes so that I can talk to him and no one seems to have his phone number. And they say, well, no, the atheist who does good. But what you have to understand is men define good by what they do to other men.

When sin is defined basically by your relationship before God. So even if you help a person, but you deny the creator, you are still in rebellion for everything that is done that is not done for the glory of God is sin. Everything that is done that is not done by faith in pleasing God is sin.

Everything that is done in service not to God is sin. We're very humanistic. We think, well, if he does fine things for elderly people, he must be a good man.

That's not the question. What is his relationship to his creator? Therein lie the question. And the Bible says that men are radically depraved.

It does not mean that all men are as wicked as they potentially could be. But what it means is that all men that sin depravity permeates their entire being and whatever they do prior to coming to Christ, they do not do it out of love for God. Men do not love God as they should, and they do not glorify God as they should.

They sin. Now, think about this for a moment. First of all, and I know I'm just staying on this too long, I need to move on to the next verse, but it's so tempting.

First of all, what you need to understand is there are no atheists. I never get into debate with an atheist because they don't exist. The Bible does not acknowledge atheism at all.

So if I'm talking to a man who's an atheist and he says, I'm an atheist, I look at him and I say, no, you're not. He says, yes, I am. I say, no, you're not.

How dare you say I'm not an atheist? Well, sir, it's a question of authority. So what do you mean? Well, I have to choose between two authorities here. Your authority are the authority of Scripture.

Under your authority, you're claiming to be an atheist, but the Scripture claims there is no atheist. Sir, you are not an atheist. Not only do you know there is a God, sir, the Bible says you know enough about the true God to hate him.

Sir, you know enough about the true God to repress and restrain every bit of truth that's ever slipped under your door about him. You see, men know who God is. And they know something about the real God.

They know enough to run from him. And why would men run from God? You could say it this way. I mean, a man on a life support system doing everything in his power to yank the plug out of the wall.

It doesn't make much sense. Why do men run from God? Jesus told us clearly. He said you will not come because your deeds are evil.

You will not come to the light. What you need to understand about man is he's not a sinner simply because he sins. He sins because by nature he is a sinner.

It's something. Well, let's talk about ontology for a moment. The doctrine of being the idea of being in the very core of your being prior to coming to know Christ, you are fallen.

The Bible says that men are born hating God. Now, people say, no, I've loved God all my life. No, you didn't.

Again, let's go back to the question of authority. You haven't loved God all your life. If you have, the Bible's wrong.

What you loved was a God you made in your own image. What you loved was a God that you heard about in cliches, but you didn't love the God of the Bible because the Bible says that all men prior to the work of the Holy Spirit, they're at war against God. And why are men at war against God? Because God is good.

That's why. Because God is loving. You say, now, hold it, Brother Paul, if you would have said men are at war against God because he's holy and just now, men are at war against God because he is holy and just, but also because he's good, you see, men are not.

And that's our greatest problem in society today. We have been taught all our life that men are basically good. The Bible says men are basically bad.

Bad men don't like good men. Don't you see that? Society everywhere. Bad men don't like good men.

I went to a very, very rough high school that was not known for scholarship. And I was voted most likely to take a life my senior year. But I went to a school that was very, very bad, where literally if you did your homework and answer the questions, you were probably going to get beat up after school because bad students don't like good students and bad men don't like good men.

And that's why men hate God, because he's good and men are not all have sinned. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now, what does it mean to fall short of the glory of God today? It's very popular to say God has a wonderful plan for your life and you have fallen short of it.

That to say that that man, you know, has fallen short of the glory of God means that God had this great and marvelous purpose for men and men have simply fallen short of it. But you have to interpret the Bible in its context. I think it would be more appropriate in light of Romans one to interpret this passage that men have fallen short of the glory of God another way.

It says in Romans one, although they knew God, they did not honor him as God to fall short of the glory of God may include that God has had a wonderful plan for man and he fell short of it. But the principle and controlling idea is this. You were made for the glory, the good pleasure of God.

You were made for him. Now, here's something that we hate. And it's this.

Number one, God has a claim on men. He does. They are his.

He made them. And by virtue of being creator, he also claims to be their possessor, their owner. And their absolute Lord, men were made for God.

Now, it is to our advantage that the God who made us happens to be a good God. But at the same time, we were made for this good God. And the Bible says that even though we were made for this good God, we have lived for self.

Now, I don't have to fillet this much. Men are full of self. You are full of self.

Self is what we think about more than anything else. And of course, you do know that the thing you think about most is your God, self-preservation, felt needs. We're all about self.

We are consumed by self and anytime anyone, especially on a college campus, begins to talk about the sovereignty and the rule of God. No. How dare anyone say they're going to rule over me or that I ought to do what some external person tells me I ought to do.

I'll do what I want. I'll live my own way. You see now, here's a good question for Christians.

Why is it that Christians in America are the wealthiest and most protected Christians in the history of the church? And yet you go into all these so-called Christian bookstores and 75 percent of the books are written about how empty we are, how our lives are so empty and so full of problems and our felt needs are not being met and so on and so forth. Why is it that the wealthiest, most protected Christians on the face of the earth are so empty? For the very reason that Jesus Christ was never empty. He said, I have food to eat that, you know, not of my food is to do the will of the one who sent me.

You see. When our eyes are set upon ourselves and our own plans and our own glory and our own wants and even our own needs, we dry up, we become empty and hollow people. But when our eyes are set upon God and his purpose for us, we are full, even if we're hanging, crucified upside down, dying as a martyr.

We are full, even if it seems like the very fabric of our existence is being torn away from us. We are full because we have set our eye upon him and his purpose for us. That, my friend, is the basis for the Christian life.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. It may be said the Westminster says that sin is basically defined as lack of conformity to the law of God. Toward his law, your relationship to his law, if I were to give a somewhat of a Westminster type definition to what it means to fall short of the glory of God.

To sin is lack of conformity to the law, to fall short of his glory is an offense against his person. What is so terrible about this God? What has he done? How evil can he be that men want to run from him so much? Is it that he is evil and men are good or that he is good and men are evil? We were made for him. That's why holiness doesn't just have to do with rule keeping, dotting every I and crossing every T. Holiness basically means to be cut, to be separate, to be separate from the world in order to be separated unto God, to live for him, for his pleasure, his communion, his fellowship.

Eternal life is knowing God. That's why I say most people want to go to heaven, but most of them don't want God to be there when they get there because they want a safe haven from hell. But they're not necessarily at all concerned about fellowship with the person of God.

So the Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And then it says being justified as a gift, the word justified, people say I've heard preachers say justified means just as if I'd never sinned. Well, no, that's not what it means.

Rhymes, but that's not what it means. Some people think justified means the moment I believed in Jesus, I was made righteous. No, that's not what it means either, because if the moment you believed in Jesus, you were made righteous.

You'd never sin again. Justified is a legal or forensic declaration. What it means is the moment a man trust with saving faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, God declares that man to be legally right with him.

God declares that man to be righteous before him. So here we have all these men that have sinned against God, broken his law, lived outside of conformity to the law of God. We have all these men who have spurned his glory, spurned his fellowship, run from him.

But even the most vile of those men, if they come to him in repentance, trusting in what Christ has done for them on that tree, God the Father will declare them from the throne to be legally right with him. Now, that's rather amazing, but it's more problematic than it is amazing. And we'll see that in a moment.

He says we are justified. And then he says this being justified as a gift by his grace. Now, this almost seems redundant, doesn't it? It's almost as if Paul is saying justified as a gift, as a gift, as a gift, as a gift, as a gift.

Well, first of all, this word here, it says justified as a gift. It's the same word that's used, you know, when it says this of the Messiah of Christ, they hated him without a cause. What that statement means is Jesus Christ never sinned against anyone.

He never gave anyone a sound reason to hate him. And if someone hated him, they had no cause whatsoever to do so. That's the same thing this word is saying.

He declared men right, even though men did not give him a cause to do so. As a matter of fact, men gave him just the opposite, not a reason to justify, but a reason to condemn. I used to think, well, I don't want to seem trite or anything, but there have been times when I've thought God must surely have a sense of humor.

Because a lot of times I don't know why, but it was always a different lady, so it wasn't the same person following me around. But I would get up, you know, prepared to preach. And right before I would preach in a typical church, you know, pastors say, now we're going to have a very special special from sister so and so.

And get up and sing a song that would be, God, I don't know what worth you found in me. I don't know what value you saw in me. Lord, what did you see in me? So to save me and claim me as your own.

And I'd be like a schoolboy in the back of the church with his hand raised. Oh, pick me, I'll tell you. And I would have to get up and in the loveliest way I could possibly do go, let me answer that question for you, for all of you.

You were all vile, depraved, wicked, God hating creatures. And God saw not one reason in you to save you. God saved you because God is love and because God chose to get glory for himself out of saving you.

It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my glory. God saves men not because of them. He saves them in spite of them.

As a matter of fact, Paul used this very truth to humble the church in Corinth, who were seemingly running around thinking God saved me because I'm the cream of the crop. And he basically said, no, if God saved you, it's because you were the scum in the bottom of the bucket. I always tell people the only thing I ever qualified for was grace.

Grace. God chose to save the vilest among men to demonstrate his power and to confound men who think themselves good. So he says justified, yes, declared right before God, yes, as a gift by his grace.

Now, let's just do a study for a moment, a comparative religion class. Let's compare a few things. Let's say that you're a reporter and there is an Orthodox Jew standing here.

There's a Muslim standing here and a real Christian standing here. I have to say real Christian because everybody in America thinks they're Christian, a real one. So the reporter comes up to the Orthodox Jew and says, sir, if you died right now, where would you go? An Orthodox Jew says, well, I'd go to paradise.

Why? Well, I love the law of God. I study the law of God. I meditate upon the law of God.

I am obedient to the law of God. OK. Makes sense.

Comes to the Muslim, sir, if you died right now, where would you go? So I'd go to heaven. Why? Well, I love the Koran and I obey the Koran and I am a righteous man and I've made the pilgrimages and I've given alms to the poor and I've done this and that. I am a righteous man.

The reporter goes, OK, makes sense to me. Comes to the Christian, sir, if you died right now, where would you go? To heaven. To paradise.

Well, why? In sin did my mother conceive me and in sin was I brought forth. I have broken every law that God has ever given. I deserve the very depths of right there.

The reporter stops and says, sir, now you're confusing me. The other two guys, I understand. I asked them, where are they going? They say they're going to heaven and they're right with God.

And I asked them why, because there are righteous men in themselves. They have virtue. They have merit.

So they're going to heaven. Sir, I come to you and you declare with a smile on your face that you're going to heaven. And yet.

You claim to have no virtue, personal virtue or personal merit before God, how are you going to heaven? And the Christian says, I am going to heaven based upon the virtue and the merit of another. Jesus Christ, my Lord. Nothing in my hands I bring.

Now, I need to step back for a moment. A true Christian will hear that all of grace and say, oh, how I want to be holy and how I want to keep his law. A religious carnal Southern Baptist church member.

We'll hear that and go, that's a good deal. Let's just keep living in sin so grace may abound. You see, true grace, which is what we have here going to heaven based upon the virtue and the merit of another true grace will always lead true Christians to desire greater godliness.

And true grace will always cause lost churchmen to think themselves able to take advantage of it. And to live in sin. But he says we are justified and it is a gift.

And then he says through redemption, there's some gospel songs that really bother me, especially they scream out terms sometimes thoughtlessly. There are some words that after you pronounce them, you should maybe be quiet for a few moments. If you understand those words correctly, maybe there'll be a bit of trembling in your lip.

This is one of those words through the redemption, it is the price paid to free a slave or captive. And that would be a great thing to pay any amount of money for a slave or a captive who's made himself a slave willingly has made himself a captive willingly. And he's done so in disobedience against his master for so.

So for his master to come and to pay a price for him is quite an amazing thing. But it is a more amazing thing when that master happens to be God and he does it with the blood of his own son. That we were not redeemed by coffers of gold and silver and splendid thing or food of angels or any other thing.

We were redeemed by the blood of God's own son. And that should be a controlling truth in our lives. I always say that men should live between two days, the day that Christ hung before men and the day when men, all men will stand before the Christ and bow.

The controlling motivation of your life ought to be he shed his own blood for my soul. I am not my own. I was bought with a price.

I belong to him. And you see, when the when the death of Christ is understood rightly in ethics, it has a way of transforming your life. Why? Why should you be faithful to your wife? Because Christ died for you.

Why should you live in service to your brothers and sisters in Christ? Christ died for you. Why should you separate yourself from the things of this world and avoid sin at all costs, even if it means amputation? If you're right, I offend thee, pluck it out. If the right hand offend thee, cut it off.

Why? Why all these things? There is one controlling factor. Christ shed his blood for me. Is there a need for another type of motivation in the Christian life? No, not if you understand the cross correctly.

He goes on and he says this, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. I'll just say simply this time, a young man came up to me after I was preaching on. Maybe it was Ephesians one where it's just in Christ, in Christ, in him, in him, in Christ.

He came up and he says, you're right, Brother Paul, Jesus is all we need. And I said, young man, Jesus is all we have. There's a difference in those two statements.

He's not only all we need, he's all we have outside of Christ. You have nothing to do with God and God has nothing to do with you. Except judgment, he's all we have.

Can you just for a moment think one of the most pitiful things about preaching is trying to preach this text. It's just useless before you start. You failed.

Can you just consider for a moment the preciousness of what's being communicated here? How precious and and unique and exquisite is the price paid for you and how it should control your life and how there is no life at all outside of Christ Jesus. There is not there is this is not about being religious. This is not about adopting some moral creed.

This is about recognizing who God is and what he has done in his only son and that becoming a controlling factor. Young men fall in love or whatever they call that thing they do when their hearts begin to spin and pound and they walk into walls and all sort of foolish things. I know I've done it.

Still do it a bit. Love controls them, they say. They can't stop thinking about her.

They tell me. It's just everywhere they see her face. If they cannot have her, they will die.

I just described the Christians relationship with God. You see. Why getting off here? I'm running a rabbit.

That's OK. I'm a pretty good shot. You ever preachers, they will always tell you what to do.

Very rarely will they tell you how to do it. You notice that I had a preacher one time. He preached the whole hour on you need to walk in the spirit.

I was in total agreement. I was a young Christian. I didn't mean to make him mad.

It just seems I have that gift. But I walked up to him and I said, sir, I agree. Your message was great.

I just have a question. You said we should walk in the spirit. I just don't know how to do that.

Could you please tell me what it means to walk in the spirit? He got so mad. He never explained to me what it meant. He just kind of went off.

So I figure he didn't really understand what it meant. Preachers are always saying you need to love God. And they tell me you need to love God.

And I kind of go, duh. Yeah, right. I do.

And I feel bad about the fact that I don't. Thank you for mentioning it. Now I feel worse.

We all need to love God. But how do you do that? I mean, how do you say, OK, I'm going to love God more. So I pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

How do you do that? Well, I'm going to tell you so that you don't have to worry about this question anymore. Here's how you come to love God more. I love my wife now more after 14 years than I did when I first married her.

I really do. Why now she's not perfect, although she tries to make me think she is, she is not. Even though I see more flaws after 14 years than I saw when I first saw her.

I see more virtue and I see more things about her that are so pleasing that endear me to her. How do you love God more? There's only one way. Come to know him.

The more you understand who he is and what he has done in Christ Jesus, the more love will be drawn out of your well. And that's the only way it can happen. Oh, you can go to some meetings, a choir, the fire or something and get all psyched up about loving God.

It'll last about a week. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about growing in the knowledge of who God is.

He is so splendid, so beautiful, so fantastic, so beyond anything we can describe. But the more you track down who he is and the more you track down what he's done for you in Christ, the more all these other things, these stupid little trinkets that mesmerize you and cause you to look in wrong directions. All those things will begin to disappear as you see the glories of God.

And that's how you come to love God more. It begins, really, it really does begin with truth. Comprehending that truth with the mind and it becoming a controlling factor in every part of who you are.

So when I go to a place, I don't seek to bring revival. I mean, it's not like I carry the thing around in my pocket. Sometimes revival does break out and that's a wonderful thing.

But if I can leave you with truth, it can permeate and work in you until the love of God is perfected in you. Now, let's go on. Whom God displayed publicly is the propitiation.

Martin Lloyd Jones referred to this as the Acropolis of the Christian faith. And so did Charles Spurgeon, for that matter. And so does just about everyone else who understands the Bible.

I just read to you probably the most important line in the entire Bible. There may be no greater word in the entire Bible, apart from the names of God, than propitiation. This word is absolutely essential.

Remember a few years ago, I had the terrifying reality. I got off the plane, was going to preach in a conference in Detroit. And the preacher before me was preaching.

And I walked in. I said, by the way, sir, I said, I know I'm preaching next. Who's preaching before me? And they said, oh, it's Vernon Higham, the guy who preached the funeral for Martin Lloyd Jones.

And I was just terrified, I mean, to be in the presence of such a man and to have to preach. And I preached on propitiation. I'll never forget that old man.

He was in his 80s. Oh, what a preacher. He walked up to me like this in tears, just running down his cheeks.

And he had his Bible open and he pointed and he goes, we got the word back in the book. And I said, what? We got the word back in the book. They put it back in the book.

And he was talking about a new translation of the Bible that was used in England for so long. They had taken out propitiation. The translators finally put it back.

He said, it's the center of the gospel. You can't understand anything apart from this word. He's right.

Propitiation. What is it? Well, let's first of all, talk about a problem. It's the greatest problem in the Bible.

There's no greater problem in the Bible than this. It's the divine dilemma. It is the thing that cannot be solved.

But what is impossible with men is possible with God. The reason if you want to know why the Bible was written, if you want to know everything that's ever you needed to know about the Bible, you're about to learn it. Why was there a sacrificial system? Why did God do everything he's ever done? It's found in an obscure text in Proverbs.

Well, it's all throughout Scripture. But Proverbs set something up for us that's very, very good. And I want you to go just for a moment to Proverbs 17.

And I'm going to show you the greatest problem in the Bible and why everything that's been done has been done. Proverbs 17, verse 15, he who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord. So I don't understand.

OK, let's put this thing together. He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.

What does that mean? That if there's this wicked man, he comes before a judge or before a council or before even just common people. And that judge looks down at that wicked man and declares him to be

right. Then God considers that to be an abomination and an abomination is the worst thing there is in the Bible.

We can't even go on to describe what it means. So anyone who justifies a wicked man is an abomination to God. Have you seen the problem yet for the last half hour? What have I been talking about? God justified the wicked.

It says that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God being justified. The Bible says in one hand that it is an absolute abomination before God to justify the wicked. But in Romans three, it says God justified the wicked.

And that's the greatest problem in the Bible. If God is just, he cannot forgive you. If God is just, he cannot forgive you.

And that's what people don't understand. Why? We live in a culture that knows nothing about justice. I mean, a guy goes into McDonald's, kills 40 people with a machine gun.

He gets off a hook because when he was a little boy, his dad didn't buy him a Happy Meal. We know nothing about justice. Nothing.

And the greatest question in the Bible is this. If God is just, how can he forgive wicked people without becoming unjust? An example, say that you go home tonight and your family didn't come and you make it home. You're happy to see your family.

You walk in, you find your entire family slaughtered on the floor. And the murderer is standing there over the last member of your family, strangling the life out of their body. Drops him on the floor, looks at you and laughs and bolts out the door.

You bolt out the door after him, you grab him and throw him to the ground. You take him to the police and the police take him to the judge. And the judge looks down at a man who just murdered your entire family, cold blood and caught red handed.

And the judge looks down at him and says, I'm a very loving judge. I'm a very loving judge. Go free.

What are you going to do? You're going to cry out. You're going to say, I demand justice. You're going to write the newspapers.

You're going to write the congressman. You're going to go on television and you are going to say that there is a judge on the bench that is more vile and more wicked than the criminals that he sets free, because judges are supposed to do justice. Yet that's the very thing that most people believe about God.

God, just forgive you. You have broken every law God ever made. You have done nothing all your life prior to coming to Christ except rebel against him.

You have ignored him. You have not been thankful to him. You have lived in ingratitude to him.

The greatest of all scoundrel. And so you stand before God and he's supposed to just go, I forgive you. If he does that, he's no longer holy, he's no longer just.

So the greatest question in all the Bible is how can God be just and forgive wicked men and declare them right when they are not right? That is the gospel. What's the answer? Propitiation. A sacrifice.

That satisfies justice and appeases the wrath, the anger of God against wickedness and allows a holy and just God to forgive wicked men and yet remain holy and just. Now, let me say something for a moment about God. If I hear one more evangelist, I'm going to scream if I hear one more evangelist get up on a pulpit and say, now, most of you believe that God is an angry God.

But I'm here to tell you tonight that God is not an angry God. Well, I'm here to tell you tonight, God most certainly is an angry God. The Bible says, as a matter of fact, that God is angry absolutely every day.

That's what the Bible says. Now, it's not politically correct, but it's true. And I'm going to explain to you why that is good.

Why is it good that God is angry every day? Well, but first, I want to move into another area. You hear much about the love of God. When was the last time you heard a sermon on the hatred of God? On God's hatred, you say, oh, yes, brother Paul, God hates sin.

Could you? Well, he does, but could you show me the verses that talk about that? Because that's not really the gist or the direction of his hatred. You've heard the statement, God loves the sinner and hates the sin, right? It's a really beautiful statement. Problem is, it's wrong.

It's not in the Bible. As a matter of fact, Psalms five says just the opposite. It says you hate all those who do wrong.

It doesn't say you hate the wrong they do. It says God's anger and holy hatred is directed towards all those who do wrong. So now what have I put before you? A God who's angry and he hates.

And you're saying, how can that be good? Oh, it's it's essential. It's one of the most blessed truths that exists, that God is angry and he hates. Why? Well, let me ask you a question.

What if I said. Do you like African-Americans, do you love African-Americans? And you said, well, yeah. And I said, well, what do you think about slavery? I'm pretty neutral on that.

Does anybody see a problem there? If I say, do you love Jewish people? Yeah, I love Jewish people. How do you feel about the Holocaust? Well, it's not that big a deal. I'm just pretty neutral, you know, I don't want to take sides.

We think about babies. I love babies. We think about abortion.

Well, you know. Their body, their choice. You see, here's the problem.

If you love African-Americans. You must hate slavery. If you love Jews, you must hate the Holocaust.

If you love babies, you must hate abortion. If you love, you must hate. People always tell me God is love.

Therefore, he doesn't hate. I say, no, God hates because he's love. If God truly loves all that is pure, all that is beautiful and all that is good with a zeal that we can't even measure.

If he loves with a strength that no man can map out, then equally he hates. All that is contrary to what is good, all that is evil, all that kills, all that destroys, all that rips at the fabric of everything that is good. So

there is a real sense in which God is love.

And because he is love, he is angry. Can you read a story in the newspaper about a little child molested by someone? And not be angry. Do you think that actually a holy and righteous and just and loving God can look down on this world and see the abuses and the crimes and everything and not be angry? He's not that stupid grandfather.

He is righteous and he loves with a love you cannot describe, and he hates with a hatred you cannot describe. He does. That's why the Bible talks about it so much, as the word wrath in Hebrew, it's talking about the nostrils, the flaring of the nostrils.

When an animal becomes extremely angry, how do you know? Get out of the yard. The bull's mad. How do you know he doesn't speak English? I know because his nostrils are flaring.

That's the wrath of God. And one day the wrath of God will be poured out on this world so that the greatest men, the captains and the mighty ones of great armies will cry out for rocks to fall upon them, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Brother Paul, are you saying that to scare us? I'm saying it because it's true, whether it scares you or not.

It's going to happen. But now let's get back to something before God can forgive the wicked and declare them righteous. Justice must be satisfied.

Now, I don't want you to think there was kind of a misstatement in the movie Chronicles of Narnia where Aslan is talking to King Peter and says, basically, you know, there's a principle, there's a wisdom, there's a law that even I must submit to. That's not what we're talking about. When we say that God must satisfy justice in order to declare the wicked righteous, he must first satisfy justice.

We're not saying that there's this law of justice over God and God must obey it and do the right thing. That's not what we mean when we say that justice must be satisfied before God can declare the wicked to be righteous. We're talking about God's own justice, the justice within God.

Have you ever heard someone say, I've heard preachers say this a lot. God could have been just with you, but instead of being just, he was loving. You realize what they're saying? God's love is unjust.

That's exactly what they're saying. They're saying there's an inconsistency in God, but there's not. God satisfied his own justice and appeased his own wrath.

And made it possible for him to be both just and forgiving and loving towards men who had been wicked. And how did he do that? Through a propitiation, a sacrifice. That is of value enough, infinite value to satisfy his justice for all the crimes you committed against it.

And that is in his son, Jesus Christ. Now, what do we know about the sacrifice? First of all, it had to be a man, didn't it? It was Adam who fell. It's men who have sinned, men that must die.

The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away your sin or cleanse your conscience or make you right with God. The one who dies must be a man, a real man, not a demigod, not something in between God and man, but a real man must die. But that real man must also be God.

Why? Well, here are just a few of the reasons. Number one, Jonah said it very clearly. Salvation is of the Lord.

You see. The abominable doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and they say that Jesus was a creature, a created being that God sent to Earth. Do you know what that means? If that's true and it's not, it means that salvation is not of the Lord.

Salvation is of a creature. The one who died on that cross was a creature. The one you worship and adore as Savior is a creature.

God says he will share his glory with no one. And God says he gives the title of Savior to no one. The one who died on that tree was not just real man, but he was also very God.

God, in all the fullness of deity dwelled in him, God became a man. Now, when God became a man, we have what we call the kinesis, the emptying. When it says that he did not account equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself, it does not mean that when the Son of God came out of heaven and became a man, he became something less than God.

It means he became something God had never been. He became something more than God. He united with his Godhead.

Humanity, the one who walked on this earth was God. The one who walked on this earth was man. Men have sinned, men must die.

He went to that cross as a man. The Savior alone, who is he? God is his name. Jehovah, Yahweh is the only one who saves.

Salvation is of the Lord. The one who went to that tree was God. Another thing that you need to think about is this.

Who else but God could withstand the wrath of God? Who else but God could taste the wrath of God and rise again? The seas dry up before his wrath, the mountains melt before his anger. And yet the one who was to die on that tree was to die under the wrath of Almighty God. Another thing that's good to think about, a life was required, a life had to be given.

Now, let me ask you a question. Who has life in themselves? Can you give your life even if it were pure? Could you give your life for another? Well, first of all, what you need to understand, it's not your life. You don't have life inherent in you.

Your life is borrowed life. It comes from God. To give away your life for another is like me borrowing the pastor's car and giving it to you.

But Jesus said, I have authority to lay down my life and to take it back up again. Jesus said over and over he had life within himself. It was his life and he could lay it down.

Another reason we can't do this exhaustively, but one of the most precious things a student one time wanted to shoot me down. And he stood up and he said, well, I got a question for you. He said, how can one man dying on a tree for a few short hours pay for a multitude of men and save them from an eternity of suffering in hell? It's just not right.

How can one man do that? I said, oh, young man, that one man. Could suffer for a few short hours on that tree and save a multitude of men from an eternity in hell because that one man on that tree was worth more than all of them put together. He was God, when theologians talk about the perfect sacrifice of

Christ, they're not just speaking about the fact that he was absolutely and perfectly holy, but they're speaking about the worth of his sacrifice.

It was of infinite value. Infinite value. So the one who was on that cross, who spilled his blood, was man, a son of Adam, the one who was on that tree was God in the flesh.

Paying a price for the very ones he had judged. Now, I want to talk about the cross for a moment and I want you to hear me. Several years ago, when when Mel Gibson came out with the movie The Passion and I was having pastors write me from all over the place, you know, angry about the movie.

And what do you think about the movie and everything else? And I never saw the movie. Don't intend to ever see it. But I wrote them back and I said, I don't have as much trouble with Mel Gibson and his movie as I do with you and your preaching.

Because the problem in this country is not Mel Gibson. It's conservative evangelical preaching. I heard a man after that movie came out, he came on one of the top preachers in America and he said, I'm going to just sit down and explain to everyone the meaning of the cross.

And he took an hour and sat down and spoke about the cross. And he missed it entirely. He literally missed it entirely.

And most people miss entirely what's really going on in the cross. Let me give you an example. I was preaching in Europe several years ago and I was in a Germanic type of seminary thing and it was real cold.

And I've got through preaching and and I went in the library looking for a book and everything was in German. And I finally found something I could read. I pulled it off the shelf.

It was the cross of Christ. That was the title, not John Stott's book, but another book just entitled The Cross of Christ. And so I began to look through it and I found the key, you know, what the man was trying to say.

And this is what he said. God, the father, looked down from heaven and saw the suffering of his son, suffering that was inflicted upon him by the hands of the Romans and the Jews. And he counted that as payment for our sin.

That's heresy. I don't know if you recognize the problem, but that's heresy, my dear friend, if you are a Christian here tonight, you are not a Christian. You are not a Christian because when Jesus Christ was on that cross, the Romans and Jews beat him up.

If you are a Christian, your sins are paid for because when he was on that tree, he bore the sins of his people and God, his own father, crushed him under the full force of his wrath. All the wrath that should have been poured out on you, God crushed his only begotten son in your place. Now, Jesus is on the cross and he cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I've heard so many preachers say God looked at the suffering of his son and his son was so dear to him that he just had to turn away because he couldn't bear to look.

That again is heresy. That's not what Jesus says when Jesus is on the cross. He doesn't say, oh, Father, I know I'm so dear to you that you can't bear to look upon what they're doing to me.

But he cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The word can also mean abandoned me. And why did he why did God, the father, when Jesus Christ was on the cross, he turned away from him. Why? What are all those little tracks of yours say? Man is holy, man is sinful and God is holy.

And there is a big gap in between them. Man can't come to God, God can't come to man, God cannot look at sin. What you need to understand when Jesus Christ was on that tree, he became sin.

He became the scapegoat. He became the one lifted up in the wilderness, the serpent. He hung there on the tree, the vile thing.

Have you never read? Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them. Cursed. Cursed is what it says.

It means everyone who's ever sinned against God is under a curse before they come to Christ. What does it mean to be under a curse? It means this, this is a definition from Paul Washer after studying the term over and over. A curse is a vile thing.

It's just it goes beyond language. But let me put it this way. A man who dies in his sin and rebellion against God and without Christ, the last thing, sir, that you will hear.

When you take your first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God and worshipping God because he's rid the earth of you. That's what it means to be under a curse that men are so vile. Sometimes I'm a university context and I talk about hell or eternal punishment.

And somebody will say, I'm just appalled that you would even believe that. And I say, well, I can understand that. But let me give you heaven's perspective.

When God judges men, no explanation is required. He's just men are wicked and they ought to be condemned. It is only when God saves men that a vindication or explanation is required.

You see, the problem is we don't know how evil men are. How evil we are prior to coming to Christ. Do you think that that Hitler is some kind of enigma? Do you think that Hitler is an anomaly? Just this rare thing that happened.

Have you ever asked yourself why Hitler was as bad as he was? Have you ever asked yourself why he wasn't worse? I mean, after all, I loved his mom. Have you ever wondered why you aren't as bad as Hitler? There's only one reason. Do you know that Hitler was not as evil as he could have been? Do you realize that even Hitler was restrained by God from giving vent to the full force of his evil? Do you realize that? And do you realize that if God, with his common grace, did not hold back your wickedness, you would make Hitler look like a choir boy? You see, that's the thing I think that's going to happen in judgment.

You see, every man, even the atheist who will go out and rake someone's yard or charge someone's battery in the middle of the winter, even he does that by the common grace of God that restrains his evil and keeps him from being an axe murderer. And on Judgment Day, do you know what's going to happen? For the first time, there's going to be an unveiling. You say, yes, an unveiling of Christ on Judgment Day.

No, for the first time, there's going to be an unveiling of man. And he's going to stand before God without a stitch or ounce of grace restraining his evil. And for the first time, we are going to see the evil in the heart

of every man that will make them look like a monster.

Because that's exactly what they are. I'm not as evil as you think. The only reason that you can even come close to saying that it's because God's grace restrains you.

If he were to pull back and that's what it says about a society, he gives them over finally. When he gives a society over, you have emperors. You know, I hear people today and they go, oh, you know, this world just can't get any worse.

I said, yeah, it can. Let me just fill you in. I remember when President Bill Clinton, you know, all the things that were going on.

And notice my language, I am not going to make a joke of him because of the office he held and I am to honor him. But in all the things that he did, people were saying, boy, I mean, everything's just institutions have gone to seed. Everything's bad.

And my mom one day was going, oh, I just can't get any worse. These leaders are so horrible. I said, mom, let's go back about 2000 years to Rome.

Try this on. Tens of thousands of people in an auditorium, young men and women tied up at the stake without any clothes on. And the emperor of all that is the known world dresses himself up in a leopard skin and puts claws between his fingers and goes out and eats the flesh off of them while all of Rome tears.

That's what happens when God turns over a people and a nation. And even that was restrained. You have no idea.

All religions killed so many people. You ever read about Stalin? Was it 20 million of his own people? Try North Korea, atheism has killed more people. And by the way, let me just say this.

The Church of Jesus Christ has never been a part of any of that. All those people who died, they died in the name of an apostate religion. There was nothing to do with Christianity, so don't blame that on the Bride of Christ because it wasn't the Bride of Christ.

Well, anyways, let's go back to this. Christ hung on that tree. He became the curse.

Galatians chapter three, verse 13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. And how did he do it? By becoming a curse in our place. Behold, the love of God.

And so he hangs there, the curse and the father can't even look at him now. Imagine this for a moment. There has been nothing throughout eternity except perfect communion and union between the father and the son.

God did not create this world out of need. He created this world out of superabundance and to show his glory. He does not need men.

He was never lonely. If you ever tell your children that, you blaspheme God. Always in perfect unity, the father with the son, but on the cross of Calvary, it is split and the fellowship is broken.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? In Psalms 22, he's quoting Psalms 22. And in that passage, we get a revelation of the cross. He says, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And

then he gives an argument.

He said all throughout the history of the covenant people of Israel, there's never been a time when a righteous man has cried out to you and you've turned away. But I cry out to you day and night and you do not answer why. And then the Messiah answers his own question because you are the holy one of Israel.

And I am a worm because on that tree, the most precious son of God. Became sin and the father turned away from him, but not only turned away from him, there's much more. Go into the garden and you hear Christ praying three times.

Let this cup pass for me. Let this cup pass for me. And I hear preachers saying, oh, he did not want to go to the Roman cross, the whip and all of that.

That is trash. Do you honestly think that the Messiah of God is trembling about a whip that he's afraid of a crown of thorns? Don't you realize that for the last 2000 years, Christians have been crucified, beat up, burned at the stake and they have gone to the cross worshipping God and singing with joy? Are you going to tell me that the followers of Jesus Christ have more courage than their captain? Do you honestly think when Christ is in the garden, he's afraid of a Roman whip or even nails that you've missed it? What was in the cup? I remember one time teaching at a very classical reformed school, classical Christian education. And I was with a bunch of kindergartners and I said, what was in the cup? And a little girl raised her hand.

I said, yes. And she stood outside of her desk and she said, sir, the wrath of God was in the cup. That is what set Christ to tremble, that he would be forsaken of his father and that all the holy hatred of God.

That should fall on wickedness and fall on wicked men would fall upon God's only begotten son. You see, that's the cross. That is the cross.

It pleased the Lord. It pleased Yahweh. According to Isaiah 53 10, it pleased Yahweh to crush him.

It doesn't mean he got joy out of it. It means the purposes of God were uniquely and completely fulfilled by him crushing his only begotten son. Someone had to die under the wrath of a holy and just God.

In love, God became a man through his son and went to a tree and suffered under the wrath that men ought to know throughout all of eternity and after eternity, after eternity still never pay. You see, you hear that story of Abraham, don't you? Abraham takes his son up to the mount. And then the old man trembling puts his hand possibly on the brow of his son and draws back that knife.

And as his will is totally given over to the will of God, his hand is stayed. And you say, oh, what a beautiful ending to that story. Whoever told you that was the end? That wasn't the end.

That was the intermission, because thousands of years later, God laid his hand on the brow of his only begotten son and threw the knife down into his chest and slaughtered him. Someone had to die under the wrath of God to satisfy justice and appease wrath once and for all. You see, this is why you become a missionary.

This is why you're faithful. This is why you pray. This is why you're no longer your own.

This is why you flee immorality, young people. It's not because you want to do the right thing. It's because of him.

It's because of what he has done. I remember at the University of Texas, you know, being kind of a guy about campus and such and one day being converted. And a few days later out on the student center, they're handing out tracks.

And my friends thought I joined a cult or something. So they all grabbed me and took me away. And they said, what are you doing? I mean, people think you're absolutely out of your mind.

And I said, but I'm a Christian now. And they said, well, we're all Christians. I mean, we're all coming, but we're Christians.

And I go, he shed his blood for me. What am I supposed to do? Am I just supposed to remain the same now? He shed his blood for me. This is not some little accessory you tie onto your life like these stinking yuppie churches that are being formed.

There are no churches at all. The preaching goes like this. You've got a great life.

Oh, you've got a great education and a great job. And oh, you have a beautiful wife and you have beautiful children. You've got everything going for you, but you just lack one little thing.

You need Jesus to make your life perfect and complete. That is blasphemy. What needs to be preached is everything you have is rot if you don't have Christ.

Christ is not some little accessory you put on at the end of your clothing. He's not a buckle on a shoe or a belt to go around your waist. He's not a rose to go in your hat.

He is life to you or he is nothing to you. There is no middle ground. He's everything.

He's not an accessory on your already perfect life, your youth, your beauty, everything, your wealth, your power, your intelligence. It will all go into demise. It will disappear.

It will turn to rot and rust. Maggots will feed upon it. The only thing that matters is Christ and Christ alone.

Christ and the controlling thing is he died for me. Not only did he die for you. He rose for you.

Up from the grave, he arose with a mighty triumph for his foes. Romans four, verse twenty five says he was raised because of our justification. And I believe what Paul is teaching there is this.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is God's public declaration. That he had accepted his son's sacrifice to justify his people, he was raised because by his death, he justified us. He made it possible for a holy and righteous God to forgive wicked men and still be holy and righteous.

Christ arose. He arose from the dead. It is God's vindication.

I want you to now go back with me to Romans three, and I know I've preached a long time and you're probably also worried that I'm tired. Don't worry, I'm not tired. Romans three, verse twenty five, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith.

Now, why? I want you to look at this. This was to demonstrate his righteousness because in the forbearance of God, he passed over sins previously committed. What am I saying? Well, we teach that Christ died to justify men.

Is that not true? That's true. But there's another way of saying it. Christ died to justify God.

But we're using the word justify in a different mean, with a different meaning. We're saying to vindicate God. Christ died to vindicate God, to prove God right.

Now, why was it necessary to prove God right? I'll tell you why. Now, let me do a little bit of something of drama for you. Imagine, imagine just for a moment.

Satan sins is cast out of of glory, judged and all those who followed him. Perfect justice, no questions. He broke the law of God, is judged.

No reason to give a reply, no reason to answer any questions. Everyone understood it, nodded their head and said, Amen. Adam sins.

And we have the Protoevangelicum in Genesis 3:15, the first gospel. Hold it. Adam should die.

What do you mean a promise? Can you imagine the devil's called the accuser, not just because he accuses the saints, because he accuses God. Can you imagine God? What happened here? Your justice, I broke your law. Perfect justice, Adam.

Was his promise a Messiah, a savior? He should die. Abraham, your friend. Well, aren't you, you know, bad company, corrupts good morals, a friend of God.

This man was a liar. He put his wife in jeopardy. And Israel, your people, idolaters.

And David, a man after your own heart. Oh, right. He's an adulterer and a murderer.

I remind you, where is the God of justice? Two thousand years ago, God answered. And the devil railing, how can you promise something such the likes of Adam? How can you call Abraham your friend? How can you call forth a people such as this? And how can you call David a man after your own heart and your son? God looks at him and says, because my Christ has died for them all. God has proven once and for all he is just.

And he will not go around justice. Now, what does that mean? Well, for the Christian, it means praise the Lord. Worship God.

Justice has been satisfied. The wrath of God appeased, saved, saved, gloriously saved for the sinner. What does it mean? Let me tell you this, sir.

If you're outside of Christ, let me just say this. Do you want to know how much God hates sin? Two thousand years ago, when his own son bore sin, God crushed him. What do you think he'll do to you? You stand with no hope.

Throw yourself down now and come to Christ. Because outside of him, there is nothing, but in him there is everything, because not only did he come, not only did he live a perfect life, not only did he die a perfect death, he rose again from the dead. And not only did he rise again from the dead, he ascended up in to glory.

Look for a moment and we're going to end here, I promise you. Look for a moment at Psalms 24, verses one through six is basically asking the question that is asked by so many today. How can a man go to

heaven? Who can ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? And the answer is given in four.

He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and is not sworn deceitfully. Anyone qualify? Absolutely not. This is Job's dilemma.

This is Job's problem. Oh, that there was a man, a mediator, an umpire, someone who could stand in between us both, a ladder that reached to the top and a ladder that reached to the bottom. Someone who was God and could lay his hand on God, someone who was man and could lay his hand on me.

Christ ascends. The man never forget Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, but never forget Jesus Christ is man. The man.

There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. A mediator in our humanity, a mediator that can stand before God because he is God, but he can stand for us because he really is a man. And for the first time in all of history, a man called out to the gates of glory.

And in Psalm 7, he cries out, lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, old ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. And then there's an answer back from inside of heaven. Who is this king of glory? Who dares lay their hand on the latch of these doors? No one has ever cried out or commanded these doors.

Who do you think you are? Who is this king of glory? And then the Lord answers back, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, old ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. For the first time in all of time.

Those gates swung open and there entered the man, Christ Jesus, and he ever lives to make intercession for his people. He walks up to the throne of God and sits down at the right hand of God with the glory he had with the Father before the foundation of the world. But not only that, oh, don't think for a moment, don't think for a moment that it's the same glory that he had.

It is an even greater glory. And all the old men used to talk about this because he has the glory. But not just as the son of God, but as man, the mediator, flesh glorified in the person of Jesus Christ.

He is there for us. An amazing thing. The son of David reigns.

God becomes a man and vanquishes his foes and ours and ascends back up with triumph, overcoming everything. It's almost as if the father looked over at his son and said, son. It is finished.

Father, it is finished indeed. Now, this same Jesus whom you crucified, God has made him both Lord and Christ, and this same Jesus will come in the same way he left. But he will not come as a slave or a servant.

He will come as a king. He will come as a savior to his people and a terror to his enemies. He will come as one who will reign absolutely.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to in Greek as the despot. You know what a despot is? We call men despot, absolute rulers. In the New Testament, that very word is used about Christ.

He's coming back as master and absolute ruler. And every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord. Some will bow out of love and through grace, and others will bow because their kneecaps will be broken by the one who wields a rod of iron and rules the nations.

You say, well, he has no right. Tell him that on that day. You will not do so.

You will melt before him like a wax figurine before a blast furnace. For he reigns. The one thing that C.S. did get right, he's not a tame lion and he's not a cross in your pocket.

He's God in the flesh, the Christ of God. And God, God himself warns the nations, warns the greatest among the nations, the kings. He looks at them and he says, kiss the sun now.

Hear ye him now, because the time is coming when there'll be no more hearing, because there'll be no more speaking, there will only be judgment. What must you do to be saved? Repent. You say, what does it mean to repent? Acknowledge your sin before God and hate it.

Let me give you just an illustration of repentance rather than a theological explanation. Maybe you came here tonight and you came here for all the wrong reasons or whatever, and you just not you just had to come doing your duty. Mind's been wandering.

You've heard all of this. You could care less or maybe it's made you angry. You can't even see straight.

The only thing you can think about is getting through these doors. I've got news for you, you cannot be saved. At least not at this moment, because there is no repentance in your heart.

But if you came here tonight for all the wrong reasons, but while the preaching was going on, all of a sudden you begin to see God as God and you begin to see yourself and your sin as you truly are. And you begin to understand the justice of God and the terror of being before a holy and righteous and loving God. And you begin to see your sin is black and you begin to hate it and you begin desire to be saved from it.

I've got good news for you. You can be saved. You lack one thing.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Throw yourself upon him. Trust in him alone.

Everything, everything is nothing. Do you know to repent, to turn away not only from evil that you've done, but to turn away from all hopes you ever had in good works? To say, I no longer trust in church, I no longer trust in a religious right, I no longer trust in some religious duty, works I've done, anything. All of it is useless.

It is dung. It is refuse. I no longer trust in it.

My hope is fixed on Christ and Christ alone. Only he can save. So know this one missionary very well, always gives this illustration, says I have burned up with fevers in the jungles of the Amazon and I have almost frozen to death in the mountains of the Andes.

And I have been chased through jungles by terrorists who wanted to kill me. And I've had a gun to my head five times. And I have been in danger of thieves and robbers and every sort of disease, all for the cause of Christ.

And if I died right now, I would go to heaven. And there's only one reason. Two thousand years ago, the son of God died for my soul.

My only hope, my only confidence is not what I have done for him, but what he has done for me. If someone were to walk up to a true believer and say, my, you're a mighty fine form of a man, you're such a good man, I'm sure you're going to heaven. That believer would become so nauseous as the vomit.

And the believer would scream out and say, no, no, you've judged it all wrong, my only hope is Christ, my only hope. Let's pray. Father, I come before you and ask you, Lord, to to help, to help your people, to help those who may not be your people.

To show mercy, Lord. Do a work of grace in the heart of men. In Jesus name, amen.

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