

The Problem of a Good God

by Paul Washer

The problem of a good God is that if he is morally excellent, righteous, and holy, then what does he do with sinners, and the answer is that he restrains their evil and offers redemption through his grace.

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Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:15, Romans 1:1, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 4:22-24, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 1:24-25

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of serving God wholeheartedly and not holding back in one's commitment. He urges young people to dedicate themselves to God and to preach the gospel to the nations. The preacher also highlights the temporary nature of worldly beauty and strength, urging listeners to break away from the world and give themselves to Christ. The sermon touches on the concept of sin and the need for redemption through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the importance of living a biblically grounded life.

Transcript

Well, it is a great privilege for me to be here with you this evening. As the brother was saying, there's no such thing as a great man of God. There never has been, never will be.

There's only been weak, tiny, pathetic men of a great and merciful God. And we are always in need of his grace. As a matter of fact, it could very well be true that the greatest thing that could happen here tonight is for the Lord and whatever grace he gives me to pull back completely from me and allow me to stand here completely alone, without power, without wisdom, so that you could see who I really am.

I sometimes marvel, as our brother said, John Calvin said, that the heart of a man is an idol factory of how quick we are to think such great things about men. But hopefully, as we grow older, we begin to see that although we should be sincere men, we ought to seek to walk with the highest integrity, that we are nothing apart from the grace of God, that we always stand in need of grace every moment. As we grow older, young people, you need to understand you don't become stronger.

You come to recognize in greater measure your weakness so that after many years of walking with Christ, the first thing you do when you open your eyes in the morning is cry out for grace. You're terrified to leave the bed, to move a quarter of an inch to the left or the right without first petitioning grace, because you know that apart from him, you will fall. The greatest calamities, the greatest moral failure apart from him.

I understand that many of you are probably Christian, some of you believe that you are and maybe are not. Some of you know that you're not. But let me just address for a moment the Christian, then I'm going to go on to another subject.

A few things that I want to say to you. I hope that in your life. You learn to pray.

At least one hour a day. At the bare minimum. Leonard Ravenhill, who I had the privilege to sit under at times, used to say, if you don't pray three hours a day, you're not worth a dime to the kingdom of heaven.

Well, he was known for his superlative, but. Above all things, if you want to be anything in the kingdom of heaven, you must, first of all, be a man or woman of prayer, if you are not. Then you will not amount to much.

Those of you who are young men that are very excited about theology, I applaud that about expository preaching and about returning to the reformers and the Puritans and all of this, I think that's amazing. And I marvel and I thank God for that. But I want you to know you can have the knowledge of the Puritans without the fire and you're nothing but a dead stone.

You'll be nothing more than a 25 year old with a blog who doesn't know even what he's talking about. Those young men and young women who want to be in the ministry. Pray.

That which can be accomplished without prayer is not worth accomplishing. Some of you young men need to stop running around in bachelor packs. Talking about theology at Starbucks until 12 at night, you need to get alone with God.

Till he meets with you. Do you belong to him and his seal is upon you? To know him, to walk with him, that his presence be more real to you than the presence of a congregation that's looking at you. To know him in prayer.

Another thing we saw an amazing clip on holiness, as a matter of fact, God used the teaching of R.C. Sproul when I was much, much younger, I heard his CD series on the holiness of God. It was the first time in my life that a sermon actually had me laying on the floor. But again, young people, let me share with something with you, there's something of a kind of a nebulous theology of glory that I see among the.

The young reformers today. And it's this. You'll talk about holiness all day long, you'll raise your hands, you'll read the right books.

You'll follow John Piper and everything else, turn right around. And watch and practice sensuality, immorality and all kinds of things. Let me tell you this, holiness and all your glorying in Christ Jesus means absolutely nothing unless it's going to manifest itself in every activity of your life.

And know this. There are do's and don'ts in the Christian life, and it's not legalism, they're called commandments. I am so tired of hearing your generation, anytime someone puts a principle of righteousness on you, even if they quote a command without interpreting it, you stick your nose in the air and say that's legalism.

Remember this. Jesus said, depart from me. You who practice lawlessness, those of you who claim to be my disciple, but you lived as though I never gave you a law to obey.

Holiness will work itself out, as I was sharing in the cafeteria, Christianity is not primarily a ethical religion. It is not primarily a morality. If you were Muslim, you would be primarily geared toward the principles, the rules, the laws and the rituals of the Muslim faith.

If you were even Buddhist. You would not be if you were truly following Buddha, you would not be a follower of Buddha because Buddha was basically an atheist and didn't claim to be God. You would be following his teachings, not his person.

But see, Christianity is all about following a person. A person, Jesus Christ, and you can't truly follow him without your life truly being impacted. And the way it's going to be impacted is a manifestation of love toward him.

And toward your brothers and sisters in Christ. I'll hear young men talk about the holiness of God and their love for God. And then freely go in and watch a movie where the Lord's name is used in vain countless times, and they'll say, well, you know, that doesn't cause me to stumble.

No, it may not cause you to stumble, but if you love him as much as you say you do, it'll drive a stake through your heart. You won't be able to stomach it. American Christianity is by and large.

What's known as American Christianity is by and large carnal. Me centered. Materialistic.

Sensual, very sensual. And soft. Christ.

One English preacher that I admire recently, I heard him say when he looked at all the young men and women who are all excited about theology, and yet it really hasn't changed their life or made them any different than their culture, he said, behold, the young Calvinists, behold, the young reformers. They're no different than the world. Oh, I want you to have a passion for Christ.

But I want you to realize that passion works itself out by meditating upon his law, meditating upon his word, seeking to follow it. Ask yourself, if I am a slave, Lord, what do you command of me? How shall I live? How shall I talk? What should be my relationships? How shall I dress? What should I look at? What should I listen to? Lord, command and I will obey. That's not legalism.

That's following the will of your master. Just on that right there, some of you would do well to just spend the rest of the night repenting. Real Christianity.

Now, one other thing I want to say before I get to the sermon. Is I am primarily a. Missions is my life. I've even got the name right here.

This is what I this is. Listen to me. In all your learning, understand this.

You learn not for your own benefit. But for the glory of God and the benefit of others. I walk through countries where billions of people have never heard a proper gospel.

I want you young people to think. About this. If the world needs Christ, this is not about you, as our brother so eloquently pointed out, this is not about you getting your best life now.

This is about the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is about lives transformed, resurrected by the power of Christ. This is about seeing entire people groups that have been enslaved to Satan for countless generations being set free to live.

I'm forty nine. Robert Murray McShane said one time, God gave me a message on a horse and I've killed the horse. Well, God gave me a message and a horse, and at least I've crippled him thus far.

But I'll tell you this, I wouldn't trade one ounce. Of death that's worked in my body because of working too hard. I have never regretted one sacrifice made in his name, but I have regretted countless times that I've held back out of self-preservation, self-love, whatever you want to call it.

I wish that God would truly teach the gospel to some of you young men, and that you would be men and stop being boys. And that he would fill you with the Holy Spirit, he'd pour out his spirit upon you and make you evangelists and preachers. No strategies, no systems, no faddish new ways of doing ministry, no, just a Bible and intercessory prayer.

And the boldness and clarity and love to preach the gospel as it ought to be preached. This is what the world needs. You're living in the greatest time of the history of the world.

The end of all the ages has come to you. Don't just sit there. The Messiah has come.

He's accomplished the redemption of his people. He's seated at the right hand of the majesty upon high. He calls you to go forth and preach the gospel to the nation, something to live for, something to die for.

It's wonderful to have your youth, to have your strength. To be able to go out there and do it all over again. But.

Break away from this world. Your beauty, your strength, all of it, it'll rot soon, break away from this world, give yourself to Christ. Well, every time I get a chance to preach.

The first thing I'm going to preach. Is the gospel. Now, I don't know how long this is going to take us, we may have to do this in two parts because I'm just going to stop every once in a while.

While our brother was preaching, some things came to mind that I feel I need to deal with. This is going to be something like Christianity 101. We may run a lot of different places, but well, let's begin.

Go to Romans 3. We'll just take this line by line. In Romans 3, 23, it says, for all have sinned. Now, many people will point to this.

And again, this is for the Christian, the mature Christian, for the young Christian. And if you're here and you really don't know what Christianity is about, hopefully this will help you. But we start off here, it says, for all have sinned.

Now, many preachers will tell you therein is the problem. That's really not the problem. You say, what do you mean, sin's not the problem? Well, it's not the ultimate problem.

It's not the greatest problem. This is what you need to understand. If all we had in the scriptures was all have sinned.

And we knew nothing else, this would not be a problem. It becomes a problem to the degree that we understand who God is. That's when it becomes a problem.

So ultimately, man's problem is not so much sin as it is God. Do you see that? Because if God was like us. Then our sin would not be a problem, at least not in this category.

A few years ago, I was teaching in Europe and I was at this university and I knew that it was it was like roast Puritan night at the university. So I knew that they had stacked the cards against me and everyone was coming out to see the flaming social dinosaur Puritan person. And so.

I thought, Lord, what do I do? I mean, I put forth any form of morality, they'll reject it. I put forth your law, they won't understand it. And I just praying and praying.

And finally, it was my time to go up there and I still didn't know. And when I got up there, though, it seemed that the Lord impressed something upon my heart. And so I stood there for that auditorium and I said this.

I am a Christian and I want to set before you tonight. The foundations of Christianity, what it is truly all about, and I'm going to begin with the most terrifying news in all of the scriptures. The most frightening, terrifying, set you aghast, just tear you into pieces, terrifying news of the Bible.

And I could just see them all getting set to think that I was going to give some ancient ethic that they had already thrown away and then just laugh. But I said, are you ready? And some of them said, yeah, we're ready. What is it? I said, OK.

Here's the here's what I have to tell you. God. God is is good.

And everyone was just like. I said, didn't you hear me, what I said? God is good. And finally, some student goes, and why is that a problem? Said, because you're not.

And what is a good God supposed to do with you if he really is good? What does he do with you? And therein lies the problem. We can look at it in a in a in a putting man in the focus and saying the problem is man is a sinner, but I want to put God in the focus as a problem is God is good. Maybe you've never heard this before, but one of the most terrifying things you could possibly imagine is that God is love.

Because in light of our sin. We have to ask ourselves a question, well, if he is good, if he is morally excellent, if he is righteous, if there is no spot or blemish in him, if he always does what is right, conformed to who he is, always acting appropriately according to his holiness, then what does he do with you? Now, of course, the audience was like, well, look, we we aren't that bad. And therein lies the task of Christianity.

You see, we live in a world that does that no longer confronts any of the issues of what it means to be human. Rather than deal with these these problems in our humanity, we simply were like the man who digs a hole in the sand and buries his head to protect himself from the charging rhino. No.

We just say they don't exist. But but they do exist. And here's the problem that exists, men really are evil.

You see, that is something that even Christians have a hard time swallowing. But the moment you begin to understand what evil is, you begin to understand everything about the economy of God, everything about the way he works with mankind. You see, what is your focus point? What is your standard for judging whether or not you're evil? Hitler, Mussolini, Popock, I mean, who do you use? The scriptures.

Put before us the proper standard, and that is God, so many people will speak a lot today about, well, God's law is the standard and and yes. But but not taking God's law and separating it from his nature, we must be conformed to God's law in the sense that God's law is a manifestation or revelation of his nature. Sin is any departure from God's nature.

It's any departure from holiness, it's any departure from love. For example, when I'm speaking to a group of young people like that university in Europe, see, their whole thing was they think that our Christian idea of sin is anything that's fun. You see, and so we're against sex outside of marriage because we're against fun.

We're against this because we're against anything that is fun, but that's not true. We're against these things because we're against anything that is not love. Let me give an example, some of the students, a group of young men came in to kind of disrupt that meeting and they were sitting there laughing at everything I said about sin and everything.

Kind of mocking, oh, we're not that bad, and this is, you know, carrying this too far and everything. And I pointed to them and I said, let me ask you a question. How many girls have you hunted down? In bars and discos and taverns just to use them for your fun.

Tell me how that's loving. Well, they consented. Tell me how it's loving to their father, who, if their father found out, it would break his heart.

And just keep tracing it back, see, when we come to the world, we just don't need to come to the world with these are the rules. Because rules mean nothing unless they're attached to a God who is excellent, who is morally excellent, who is loving. That sin is a violation of his excellence.

It's a violation of his love. It's a violation of his goodness. In that light, man has no excuse but to admit he's bad.

I don't love like that. I'm not good like that. But you see that as a people, we are, prior to regeneration, we are loveless.

We are full of self. And that self turns us into beasts that will kill and maim and destroy and crawl over the top of every body we have mutilated to get what we want. And if you think that I'm only referring to corrupt corporate giants or people who lead countries into war, realize this.

The only thing that limits your evil is you haven't been given the position to allow you the freedom to carry it out. Or by God's grace, he has restrained you. Let's just look at Hitler for a moment.

You treat Hitler as some anomaly. Some some monster birthed out of hell, some deviation from normal humanity. Well, you ought to study history.

There's a lot of Hitler's. In the macrocosm, in the larger picture of the world, there's a lot of Hitler's and in the microcosm. There's a lot of Hitler's.

A lot of them. But see, what you've got to understand is this question. Why was Hitler as bad as he was? Why wasn't Hitler worse than he was? Why aren't you like Hitler? You're not as bad.

You started off on a better footing. Well, you know, that doesn't agree with scripture. We were all born radically depraved.

I would submit to you this, that every person on this ever been born on this planet would make Hitler look like a choir boy if it was not for the restraining grace of God. God restrains humanity and its evil in order to be able to work in this world and bring redemption. If he were to cut loose every human being on this planet and let them be what they would be apart from his grace, this would be a horror movie.

Beyond anything that's ever been imagined in the mind of the most dark human being on the planet. And that's what is so disgusting about our race. Someone asked me one time, they said, what about an atheist? What about the good atheist? Is God going to send the good atheist to hell? And the first thing I always ask when someone tells me that, I said, you know, could you give me this guy's phone number? Because I've been hearing about him everywhere and I can't seem to get a name.

And you know what? The good atheist, this will show you. Wait. What happens to the atheist who mows his neighbor's yard, starts up the elderly woman's car in the dead of winter in Minnesota with jumper cables and does all these wonderful things? I submit to you that the judgment upon that man will be greater.

Will be greater. You say, why? Because the only reason he is able to do whatever good thing he does is by the grace of the very God he is denying. And then taking credit for the grace that has been given to him.

And then there's another thing that you need to understand. Of course, being human, we would be anthropocentric, we would be centered on us, wouldn't we? We would only be thinking about us. We would think about good deeds only as it related to other people.

If you go up to someone in the street and you said, if you died right now, where would you go? They'd say, well, I'd go to heaven. Why? I'm a good husband. But see, your wife's not died.

Your wife, although she may tend to think so. As is quite common among the feminine gender, but. You see.

Here's the problem, your your your wife doesn't give you breath. Your wife doesn't send rain and sun. Your wife did not create you, she does not sustain you, and she did not send her only begotten son to die for you.

You see, you can't leave God out of the equation, you can't. So a morality apart from God, not only is morality impossible apart from God. Because we can't determine what that morality is.

But if you had a morality that you all accepted and you all agreed upon and were happy with it, but you left God out of the picture. You still have problems with the universe, the judge of all the earth. The one who made you.

Now, I want us to look at some things that are very, very important, it says in verse twenty three, for all who sinned. Now, you all probably know that this. Comes from a Greek word, Amartano, means to miss the mark or to fall short.

It's like you take an archer and he shoots at a bullseye and there's the bullseye and every arrow just seems to be flying off the mark and none of them land. What does it mean to sin? It means to deviate from God's standard, from his righteousness. From who he is, from his nature, that's what it means to sin.

It is lack of conformity to the law of God. Now, herein lies another problem. Even to say law of God.

Is not that big a deal unless you know who God is, if God is like a benign but foolhardy grandfather, then to deviate from his law is not that big a deal. If God is Santa Claus, it's not that big a deal. So people cannot understand how terribly sinful sin actually is unless they understand who God is.

You see, Israel, as our brother taught us in Psalms 50, Israel was able to do all kinds of wicked things. Why? Because they thought God was just like that. But you see, when you begin to see who God is, then you not only begin to see your sin, but you begin to see how vile your sin truly is.

If you were breaking the law of a despot, if you were breaking the law of some God that was some sort of ethical monster, I don't guess that would be too bad, even though he would get you in trouble. The fact of the matter is, though, all creation stands to its feet and judges you because you are breaking the law of an infinitely good God. I don't know how many of you have seen Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, but it's a fascinating thing to see.

It's just so without life, it's just they're a park bench and everything's gray and there's no leaves on the trees and everything is just. Dead, it seems. Do you realize that one of the greatest philosophical, theological, moral problems in the universe is not why do bad things happen to good people, but why does anything good happen at all? This is a fallen world.

Do you understand that the mass of humanity is in constant rebellion against God? There should not be leaves on trees. Skies should not be clear. There should be no rain, no marriages, no birthday parties.

Nothing. And the fact that there is demonstrates in a phenomenal way the grace of God. And that's why our sin is so heinous, because he is so good.

And so kind. So merciful. Now, like I said, we're going to go to a lot of things here, but let's look in Romans for a moment.

Romans chapter one. I want you to see something. Because this is a very important question, because we have a lot of people even in in California, the United States, Canada, third world countries, and the whole thing is, well, you know, hold on now.

God can't be judging all these people because they just don't know who he is. They just don't know. Well, does that line up with scripture? Does that line up with scripture, look what it says, let's start in in verse 19.

Of chapter one, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. Now, I have to make a choice. It's a choice I have to make every day and every time I read a verse.

Will I look at what's possibly an opinion of humanity? Well, I look at what's politically correct, what I look at, even something that seems sort of obvious in my own eyes, and will I believe that contrary to scripture or will I lash myself down to scripture and take it as the infallible word of God? Because if I do that, I realize something very important. Not only do all men know there is a God, because that really doesn't accomplish anything. This text is not saying that all men have some kind of a concept out there about God.

It's not what it's not what it's saying, because saying that you could be talking about a tree frog, God of the Amazon rainforest. Or a God of ancient Egypt, it's not what it's saying, this is what it's saying, all men. Know enough about the one true God to hate him.

To repel him. All men know enough about the laws of the one true God that he has written on their hearts to kick against those laws. That's what it's saying.

All men really are guilty. When I go up to a person. My job is not to do a clever apologetic, it's not to out argue them, it is to proclaim to them the truth.

Someone tells me you're wasting your time with me. I'm an atheist, I go. No, sir, you're not.

What do you mean, I'm not? I mean, you're not. You're not an atheist. You know.

You know. That there is a God and he is true. And your problem is not intellectual, your problem is moral.

It is not that you and your great intellect have not been able to find him, it's that you and your great sin, you have done everything to hide from him and everything to cover your ears and your eyes and suppress every ounce of truth that's ever come down from heaven, sir, that's your problem. Because look what it says in verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. All the truth that men get, they hold it down, they hold it down, they hold it down, I don't want to hear it, I don't want to hear it.

I was speaking with a dear man from Spain, from Valladolid several years ago, and his favorite philosopher was Unamuno, who wrote the book *La Vida es un Sueño*. It's a life is a dream. He's one of the, I guess, probably primary philosophers of Spain.

And in this book, to sum it up very simplistically, he says basically this. The greatest, most virtuous thing you can do is be a seeker of the truth. And the most arrogant, stupid thing you could ever say is that you found it.

Now, my dear friend, I just described our major universities, our educational system. I was to speak at Garcilaso, Universidad de Garcilaso in Lima, Peru. Faculty was there and I walked out.

I tested this theorem, tested this and I said, soy un buscador de la verdad, I am a seeker of the truth. And I mean, the students are like applauding me. And I said, la encuentre en la persona de Jesucristo, and I found the truth in the person of Jesus Christ.

And they booed me. You see, it's very convenient to be a seeker of the truth as long as you don't find it, because as long as you don't find it, you can keep talking about the truth, but you never have to submit your life to it. And that's the real issue.

I mean, think of the absurdity of this, even if a man was agnostic. Agnostic. Or claim to be agnostic, you know, ah, meaning it's a negative, and gnosis, knowledge, no knowledge.

That's what agnostic means. It's amazing that they never use the Latin. They always use the Greek to define themselves, agnostic.

They don't use the Latin. The Latin is *ignoramus*. But it's amazing that I look at someone and I go, all right, but you do entertain the idea that God exists.

Yes, you're not doing anything about it. By definition, if God, if there's just an inkling out there that he does exist, he is just, he will judge you. It looks to me like you throw away every other aspiration in your life just to find out what was true.

No. No. See, it absolutely makes no sense.

So I don't go to the atheist and deal with him on his terms, I say, sir, I'm sorry. I believe the scriptures and the scriptures declare that you are not what you say you are. And that the problem is not intellectual, the problem is moral.

That's the same thing with with with evolution or whatever we want to deal with. I mean, why is this doctrine of evolution so so great, so important, fought over so fiercely because it is the chief means of suppressing the truth about God? See, up until Darwin, it's like, OK, there is a God. He is just we have to deal with him, what must we do? But with evolution, no.

We can conveniently explain our existence without a moral God. And we can do the most ludicrous things, anything it takes. Though the theory cannot be proven, though it has been defeated countless times, we'll hold on to it.

Why? Because we would rather believe alive and submit to a good God. And why on earth would you not want to submit to a good God? Because we're evil. I'll give you another thing that applies to the Christian life, and I know I'm rambling, but I'm older than you, I can do that.

But I'll give you another problem, and it applies to the so-called atheists and to some who call themselves Christians. I'll start talking about the law of God, maybe Psalms 119 preaching on it or or something. And I mean, I have seen people who worship.

You know, to wonderful songs and everything go, don't be putting law on us. Don't be. That's legalism.

We're not under the law. Here's a good question to ask them. Just which law is it that you hate so much? Here's the Bible, Christian.

This law that you're about ready to rip my head off because you won't be in bondage to it. Could you please show me which one it is? Because I would like to see that horrible thing. You'll sit there and go.

That law, that's legalism, that's this, that's that, I go, why do you hate God's law so much when it's a manifestation of his righteousness? Do you ever think about that? Scary, isn't it? Like these young men who came in and they started railing during the during this talk I was doing at the university. About, you know, laws and this and one to put this oppressive God upon us, so I just called them out, I said, OK, let me just throw a few of these laws at you. I'd like to know which one that you that's so terrible.

Let's see. Let's let's see. Honor your father and mother.

What's wrong with that? Don't steal another man's wife. Why are you so against that? Don't lie, murder. And then I looked at him, I said, you hate God's law because it's good.

And you're evil. And that's why you hate it. That's why people have a problem with Christianity, there's two primary reasons why people have a problem with Christianity.

One, it is exclusive. If I were to simply change the definite article V to the indefinite article A or A, I'd be on the Oprah Winfrey show tomorrow. All I have to say is that Jesus is a savior.

That's all I have to say. Remove the V and say Jesus is a savior. They'll even probably let him be on the top of the pantheon.

They'll let him be the best savior as long as we continue saying he is a savior. But it is when we say he is the savior to the exclusion of all other saviors that are not saviors at all. That's when they kill you.

Never forget, early Christians were actually killed in Rome as atheists. Because they denied all the gods of Rome. But another reason why Christianity and this young Christian, this may get you.

One of the reasons why. A lot of people really hate Christianity is because Christianity goes, you can't do that. It does.

Nope, that's wrong. If you've got a Christianity where nothing's wrong, you don't have biblical Christianity. We are justified.

It is a thing of grace, it is all of grace, it's grace upon grace. Everything the brother said here about C.J. Mahaney's book about holiness, absolutely true, I agree with it 100 percent, absolutely wonderful. But let me tell you something.

Relationship will lead to a changed life and that changed life will be more conformed to the law of God than it will be conformed to your wicked, dark culture. Let me throw something else in, I'm running rabbits, so my preaching professor isn't here, so he won't flunk me, so I'll just keep going. Young person.

Now, I'm not against swimming, OK, I just want to use this as an illustration. Because it's true, I want you to think about something. How sure are you about your standard, because if your standard is your culture, you're in trouble and I'll show you why.

What Christians wear to the beach today, now, again, I'm not against going to the beach and I'm not, you know, so that's not the issue. I just want you to hear me out. What Christians wear to the beach today, many Christians 60 years ago, if a person went out in public that way.

The authorities would have been called, secular, unbelieving authorities would have been called and the person would either have been arrested, fined or taken in for counseling. Now, that's true, that's a fact, OK, that's just a fact, whether you like it or not, it's a fact. All right now.

Isn't it amazing? That what Christians can do today, brag about and get mad if someone stops them, what Christians can do today, only 60 years ago in our culture was considered by unbelievers. To be either criminal or insane, do you really want to use your culture as a standard? We have to use the word of God as a standard. Legalism is deadly.

It's very convenient, but it's deadly. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, if we just had a rule book that said how long the dresses need to be and everything else, it would sure simplify things. But we don't have that, what we have is the rule of love, the rule of decency, the rule of servant, the rule of honoring Christ.

You see, and that's what makes it tough, you're going to have to make that call, but make sure your mind is renewed in the word of God and you're being more influenced by God's holy word than you are, your ungodly culture. Now, where were we? My wife says this is my problem, I always want to preach a thousand sermons at one time, so we'll just go on and pick it up, you know, we'll go on till one or two in the morning and pick it up tomorrow morning. OK, now he says.

For all have sinned, I love what the Puritans used to say, I think this was Thomas Watson. Something like this. You have not sinned against some little mayor of an insignificant village somewhere.

You have sinned against the Lord of glory. You see, his person is, like I said, what determines how bad sin is. Let me give you an example.

If. If Shannon and I are kidding around and he steals my hamburger or something and I say, you do that again, I'm going to kill you. OK, now it's not very appropriate, but if I did that, he would laugh and I would laugh and there'd be no problem.

But if President Barack Obama walked in to Burger King and walked by and took one of my French fries and I said, you do that again, I'm going to kill you, I'm going to jail. And rightfully so, he's the president of the United States. You say, well, I don't like him.

Listen to me. What whatever your political views are, if he's the president of the United States, you respect him. You give honor to whom honors do.

But if I do say that. I'm going to go to jail. Why, because of his position, because of who he is, do you see that he is the president of the United States? This is not, you know, my friend Shannon or my friend Bob, this is Barack Obama, the president of the United States.

You don't do that because of who he is. And I believe that's a right law. It's a necessary law to sustain our country, to stay in our government.

You must respect certain institutions, offices. Well, now, my dear friend, let's talk about the universe. And let's talk about God's position.

I mean, so many people blaspheme today just by the way they pronounce the name Jesus. I don't mean that there's a certain way of pronouncing it, I'm just saying the flippant. Things, as our brother so eloquently again pointed out, written on either T-shirts or said in the media or just the way people talk.

This is the son of God. You don't talk about him that way. You see that, so when you sin, you've sinned against God, I like to illustrate it this way, imagine you're on the day of creation.

God is standing there and he speaks to two stars that could literally swallow up our sun. And he commands them to set themselves in a certain place and they all bow down and worship him. He looks at planets and he commands them to put themselves in certain rings of orbits.

And they all cry out, amen. Amen. He tells mountains to be lifted up, valleys to be cast down, and they all obey him.

He looks at the brave sea and tells the sea itself, you will come to this line, you will not trespass it, you will come no further. And the sea bows down and worships. And then he looks at you and says, come and you go, no.

So on the day of creation. And we can personify these things, they will all be gathered in the courtroom, as our brother said. And they will applaud your condemnation.

Can you imagine? Even though we do not see ourselves as vile. To be held so vile. By creation.

That they would applaud your judgment. That the earth has been rid of you. You say, I'm not that bad.

Whose standard are we talking about? All have sinned and they fall short of the glory of God. Now, I know that and there is some grounds for doing this, that people will say today, you know, this means that God had a wonderful plan for your life and that it went all wrong because of sin and and there's some truth in that. But it's not the main idea being carried on here.

This is not so much about man. I like to look at it more through the eyes of the Westminster. Why did God make you, I tell the children in our church? He made me for his glory to glorify him.

To enjoy him forever. That's the issue you were made for a specific purpose. And if you want to know the great bomb of Gilead or the thing that can correct and heal your life more than anything else is this.

You were made for him. If your heart beats, it is to beat for him. Every breath from the throne is to be returned to him in praise or the proclamation of his greatness.

You were given ears to hear his word. You were given eyes to read. Do you realize you were given marriage for the primary purpose to understand his relationship with his people? This is a theocentric, Christocentric universe.

It is not a you centric universe. Or a me centered universe, and one of the great problems with men and women and relationships and everything is this disobedience to this. You were made for his glory.

You were not made to have your needs met. You were made for him. For him.

And when you align your life with that, things start falling into place. It's what Jesus said, that the one who seeks to gain his life will lose it. And the one who loses his life for the sake of Christ.

Poverty. That most Christians experience. Because they're trying to collect whatever they think they need for themselves.

Instead of pouring out their life in service to God and in service to others. You were made for him. For him, look at Romans.

Look at verse one of chapter one, someone brought this up in our earlier conversation in the cafeteria, says Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle set apart for the gospel. This is Paul, the apostle. This is you.

We just have to change the name and the specific ministry. But it's you. If your name, let's say your name is Harold.

Harold. If you're a Christian, you're a bondservant of Christ. Called as a what? What have you been called to do? Oh, it wasn't your choice.

You were called to do something. Do you know what it is and are you doing it? And set apart, you were set apart for what purpose? The gospel describes everyone's life. And the joy that is gained.

Don't. Young person, listen to me. Your beauty and your strength and everything is going to fade, it's going to rot.

It doesn't matter. And all the stupid trinkets that are dangled in front of your face to grab your attention so that you will not look at the thing you ought to be looking at. To seek after other lovers other than Christ is

to destitute your life.

It is to make yourself barren and dead and vile. Little people with tight little spirits and narrow hearts. But to turn toward Christ, to give yourself to him, to allow him to decide changes everything.

There are some things you will never hear an old man say. You'll never hear an old man say, I wish I hadn't spent so much time with my wife and children and I had spent more time at the business. You'll never hear an old man say that.

Never. You'll never hear a preacher say on his deathbed, I regret that I prayed too much. You'll never hear a Christian on his deathbed say, I regret that I gave too much to Christ.

But their heart will rip in two that they did not give it all. But in giving it all, don't think that we're talking about some type of Catholic martyrdom where you get some joy out of being destitute. No, it is giving all away.

It is surrendering to Christ so that you might know joy. Remember, the one who seeks to keep his life will lose it. But the one who gives his life away for the sake of Christ will find life.

Will find life. Give your life to Christ. Serve Christ.

Don't waste your life. Serve him. But not with just.

Going to a conference. Serve him by preparing your heart so that you can walk biblically, so that you can talk biblically, so that you open your mouth and share the gospel with people and be a true gospel, become a people founded in the word that you might know how you should live. That famous question of Francis Schaeffer, how then shall we live? How shall we live? Since we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

All. But the problem lies in this, we sinned against an infinitely good God. And we turned away from the purposes of an infinitely loving and wise God, and so our lives become dislocated.

Warped without purpose. Please don't be that way. Please.

I beg you as though as though Christ were begging you through me. Knowing the fear of the Lord. I plead with you, I seek to convince you.

What a sad life my life would be right now. If I didn't have nearly 30 years behind me. For Christ.

I'm not getting any younger, not going to get stronger. Definitely not going to get prettier. I mean, it's it's just a downhill battle from here all the way.

OK. Even if I had all the money in the world, it could not buy me what is important to so many people. I have.

For the last several years. Since I was 21, pathetically served. An absolutely marvelous master.

Who has met all my needs according to his riches and glory, whose kindness goes beyond any description. Whose wisdom is infallible. You know this.

You know what I'm telling you is true. So serve him. Young men, make a commitment, serve him.

Cry out, God. Use me, kill me, whatever needs to be done, just don't let me get out of this life with one ounce of life held back. To serve him.

And you will find joy now. We were supposed to do this entire chapter. We didn't get very far.

That's why I got a C in preaching in seminary. Oh, well, living proof that God still speaks through rocks and donkeys, then, isn't it? Young people, you're very, very precious. If you've watched YouTube, you probably thought I'd never say anything like that to you.

I had one dear girl walk up to me a while back and she was just like. She wanted to say something, but she just didn't know how to say it. And finally, she just blurted out with all her courage and she said.

You're just not as mean as I thought you were. Precious, precious. You have been bought by the blood of Christ.

Christ. If you are truly a believer, you are no longer a wretched sinner. You are not a vile corpse, you have been made alive.

I'll have Christians come up to me and they'll say, well, you know, Brother Paul, I'm just a wretched old sinner with a God hating heart. And they go on and on. And when they get finished, I go, well, let me ask you a question.

Just what did God do to your heart when he regenerated it? You are precious, you know, believer, you know what the most difficult task you're ever going to have. Really, the most difficult task you're ever going to have as a believer. Is to believe that God loves you as much as he says he does.

You're going to have to fight. To climb that mountain. But he does, he really does, and you're free to serve him.

So do it. Do it.

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