

# The Reality of Regeneration

by Paul Washer

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*The reality of regeneration is the supernatural work of God that transforms us from the inside out, making us new creations in Christ.*

**Duration:** 50:46

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 36:22-32, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Spiritual Regeneration", "Heart Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Ezekiel 20:24 and explores the parallels between God's work of salvation and the transformation of a believer's life. He emphasizes the importance of separation from the world and asks the listeners to reflect on whether their lives reflect this separation. The preacher also highlights the goal of true Christianity, which is conformity to the image of Jesus Christ. He challenges the audience to examine their lives and see if they can point to the ways in which God has cleansed them from idols and filthiness. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the supernatural work of God in giving sight to the blind and the need for a heart transformation to truly embrace Jesus.

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## Transcript

It's a tremendous privilege for me to be here with you this morning and throughout this week. And I pray that the Lord's blessing will be upon us, that he'll help us, that he'll have mercy. Because one thing is for sure, we are always in need of mercy, always.

Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Ezekiel, chapter 36. Ezekiel, chapter 36, verse 22. Therefore say to the house of Israel, thus says the Lord God, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when I prove myself holy among you in their sight. For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. Let's pray. Father, I pray that you would help us for the glory of your own name, for the benefit of your people.

And Lord, for the salvation of men. In Jesus' name, Amen. We have here in the Old Testament one of the most beautiful illustrations of what we know, what we call regeneration, our being born again.

And it's so very important to speak on this topic because in America we have what I call and many others call born againism. Sixty-five, seventy percent of the people in America believe themselves to be born again and mainly their idea of being born again is influenced by an unbiblical mass evangelism. The idea that one time in their life they raised their hand or one time in their life they prayed a prayer and asked Jesus Christ to come into their heart and therefore consider themselves to be born again.

And yet they're not. They're not born again. Not born again at all.

And the evidence that points to the fact that they're not born again is simply their life and their heart. The reality of what they think, the reality of their attitude, the reality of what they do. I've twenty-two years preaching.

I don't know how many more years I'll have to preach, but I do know this, I don't have time, and neither do you, to play with words. I don't have time just to teach truth that you can say, Amen. My question for you this morning, my question, the word that just burns into my heart in the last two years of my life, a word that just keeps coming more and more at me in my own life, and every time I preach, reality is the word.

Where is the reality of Scripture in your life? What we teach on this morning, I don't care. I don't care at all whether or not you say yes or no, Amen or so be it. Because you can acknowledge all the truth of Scripture.

You can be orthodox. You can go down through all the great creeds of Christianity and say yes, yes, a thousand times yes. But if it's not a reality in your life, it does you no good.

The word is reality. I don't care what you profess, and neither does Jesus Christ. For many will come before Him on that day and say, Lord, Lord, and He'll say, Depart from me, I never knew you.

What comes out of your mouth is of no concern to God. The question is, we're going to look at what it means to be born again. And if it's not a reality in your life, it is because you are lost.

You are separated from God. You know not Christ. Christ knows not you.

And on the day you die, you will only see the face of God in judgment and wrath. It's just the reality of it. When you live in a country where even the most pagan believe to have some relationship with God, strong words must be spoken.

Strong words must be spoken. It's true. God did not send me here to patronize or to play.

If some of you walk out, and if some of you snicker, so be it. But know this, that this morning when you leave here, you'll have heard God's Word with a blade, not dulled, so as to make churches grow in all the wrong ways, but a blade to cut your heart as deep as it can be cut, that you might be saved. And this might be the last time you ever hear a message.

It says in verse 22, Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God. Oh, so rare today. So rare.

So rare to hear a word from God. Pray that God might give us one today. It says, Thus says the Lord God.

It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. I sometimes have preached in conferences and it just seems like almost the Lord has a sense of humor. Before I get up to preach, someone will sing a song that's just so unbiblical that it shakes me up so bad I don't even know how to find my text.

And one of the songs that have often been sung is this song that says, I just don't know what God saw in me that He would save me. I don't know the worth that He found in me that He would save me. And after I get up and I look and I say, look, folks, before I start my sermon, let me just answer the question of the person who sang.

He did not see any worth whatsoever in you so as to save you. He saved you for two primary reasons. First of all, He saved you for His own glory.

He saved you to demonstrate how great He is that a God like Him would take interest in a vile person like you and me. Secondly, He saved you because He is love. It is what He is.

He loves because He is love. He does not love because that love is drawn out of Him by some motivation springing forth from you. When God looks at a man apart from Christ, the only thing He could be motivated to do is judge him.

But God is moved in love to save for His own glory and to demonstrate His power. Now, why do I say that? I say that because you need to understand something. Salvation is not a mere human decision by which people decide to jump out of the line going to hell in order to jump into the line going to heaven.

Salvation is a supernatural work of God whereby the power of God is so manifested that it either parallels or exceeds the power of God manifested when He created the world. And when God truly saves a person, He does not just hand them a ticket to heaven. When He saves them, He transforms them that His power might be made known.

So why did God save you if He has saved you? He says for this reason. He says, it is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name. Now, let's just put an emphasis here on the idea with the word name and emphasis on reputation.

You know, someone says he has a good name or doesn't have a good name. What are they talking about? Reputation. For My reputation, I'm going to do this.

For My fame, for My glory, for My vindication, so that when God does a work of salvation, it is some way going to vindicate Him. It's going to bring Him fame. It's going to cause Him glory.

Now, let me ask you a question. You who profess faith in Jesus Christ, each one of you, does your life promote fame toward God? Do people glorify God because they see the power of God manifested in your life? Is it a reality? Do people look at you and go, my goodness, look at what God has done. We all acknowledge that when God saves a man, He changes a man.

But here's the question. Is that a reality in your life to such a degree that others can see it? Now, he goes on. He says, I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst.

Then what's going to happen? Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. Now, what does that mean? It means that when God saves an individual, His power, His attributes, the essence of who He is, is going to be so manifest that even the pagan, unbelieving world is going to note a difference. Now, they might not do it.

I've heard so many preachers say, you know, if the world could see Jesus in us, they'd all be converted. No, if the world could see Jesus in us, they'd crucify us. We'd have to sneak around from building to building just to worship the Lord.

They would hate us so much. But there is this reality that when God truly saves an individual, even the pagan, unbelieving world will take note. Now, they'll probably misinterpret what God has done, but they will take note.

And usually, they'll label it fanaticism. Now, let me ask you a question. When was the last time the unbelieving world labeled you personally, you as an individual, fanatic? Now, let me throw an even worse statement at you.

When was the last time the so-called Christian community in America labeled you fanatic? Because by and large, Christendom in America is churchianity, but it is not Christianity. And the great majority of professing believers are lost. And if you do not stand out among that mass of people in America that call themselves Christians, if you're not labeled unusual by them, you're probably just like them.

Would the unbelieving world see something? Do you know, I served for years in a Catholic country where everyone believed themselves to be reconciled with God simply because they had gone through infant baptism. Now, the evangelical community in America would scoff at that and they'd say, how could anybody believe something so preposterous? Physician, heal thyself, because the evangelical community in America does the very same thing, just with a different mode. In the Catholic community, you are a Christian.

You are reconciled with God because you have gone under. You've been sprinkled as an infant. You're in the church.

In American evangelicalism today, you are going to heaven because you repeated a superstitious prayer. You supposedly asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart. You raised your hand, but there is no difference whatsoever in your life.

And that's what we're looking at. Reality. What is the reality of God in your life? Now, let's go on.

He says several things in verse 24 on down that so parallel what happens when God saves a person. And we're going to ask ourselves with each one of these things, is this a reality, sir? Ma'am? Young person? Child? Is this a reality in your life? Now, I'm not talking about is this manifested perfectly, but is it manifested at all in your life? Verse 24, I will take you from the nation's separation. I will separate you.

I will take you out from the rest of the world and make you unique, different from them. I will separate you from the pagan, ungodly nations and their practices. Now, let me ask you a question.

Not as you look in the mirror, but if any observing, discerning eye were to look at you, would they notice any sense of separation between you and unbelieving America? I'm not talking about what you profess. I'm not talking about what you do on Sunday morning. I'm talking about your life.

Would they see? Would it be any evidence whatsoever that God Almighty had separated you from the unbelieving world? Or do you look like them? Talk like them? Do you have the same ambitions, the same desires? Do you laugh at the same jokes? Do you dress the same way? Do you just want to be like them? Can anyone see that God has done a work of separation in you? Can they see it anywhere? You say, well, in my heart of hearts. I don't care about your heart of hearts because the heart is deceitfully wicked. And Jesus made it quite clear that yes, indeed, my friend, you will know a book by its cover.

You shall know them by their fruit. You shall. None of this super spiritual stuff.

When someone looks at your life, will they see that God Almighty has done and continues to do a work of separation making you different from the unbelieving American world around you, even the unbelieving supposed Christian world around you? Because if you look like, talk like, act like, and enjoy the same things they enjoy, it is because God has not separated you because you are not His people. Because I will take you from the nations, but that's not all. Gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

Now, this is very, very important for the mindset of Christian who is so concerned about separation, but the only thing they think about is separation and not devotion. Separation is not an end in itself. It's a means to a greater end.

Separation from the world in order to be gathered unto God and the things of God. Now, not only would I ask you, can someone, a discerning eye, look at your life, not even talk to you, just look at your life and tell not only that God has separated you out and pulled you out and continues to pull you out further and further from an ungodly world, but can they also see that God continues to draw you nearer and nearer to Him and the things of God and the things of His kingdom? Can they see a growing desire in you, a growing longing in you for the things of God? There are some of you sitting here this morning and you know exactly who you are and the only reason you're here is because it is either the right thing to do or your parents make you come. And the moment you break the leash from your parents, you will be gone.

You know that. And I'm here to tell you this morning, God knows it. You're lost.

Is there a real work that God is separating you from the world that more and more you are hating the very things that God hates? But not only that, God is doing such a work with His Spirit that more and more you are loving the things that God loves, longing for them and clinging to them to a greater degree. Now, let's go on to verse 25. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean.

Wow! Now, I have a problem here. So many people, what they'll do is they'll go, yes, that's right. You know, that positional justification.

The moment we believe in Jesus, He forensically or legally declares us to be right. We can live like the devil, but before the Lord we're right. I'm sorry, the Old Testament doesn't do that and neither does the Old nor the New do that.

There is never a sense in the Old or New Testament of someone being declared right before God by faith and continuing on in an ungodly lifestyle. But the idea is this. We are justified, declared right before God

only by faith.

Only by faith. And we are legally declared to be right before God by faith because of the work of Jesus Christ. But the same Bible always follows with this.

If you have been justified, God is doing a work of sanctification also. He is cleansing you. He is changing you, transforming you.

And it's very, very important here to make a distinction between character and ministry, or character and activity. There are many people in the ministry doing supposedly great things who are very, very, very ungodly and probably unregenerate and lost. So it's not just is God using you.

The question is, is God changing you? Is He changing your character? Is over the years, can you look back since the moment that you made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, can you look and see God continually working in your life to transform you and to make you clean? Can you? Now, I want us to look at something that's very important in this text. He says, I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I've heard many, many people, many scholars, many old, old preachers that say things like, if I could summarize everything that my walk in Christ means, it would be in this statement or that statement.

Well, I'm not that old of a preacher, but I can tell you this, if I could summarize my Christian life in one statement out of Scripture, it would be this. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Not that God has done that work and finished it in me, but as I look back over walking with the Lord more than 20 years, if there's one thing that I can point out about God's work in my life is He continues and continues and continues.

It has been a history of Him rubbing me clean and smashing idols. And there is still much cleansing to go. And there are still many idols to smash.

But if I look back on my life, I would say God has done one thing. It is a process of Him cleansing me from all my filthiness and smashing all the idols in my life at any and every cost. Is that a reality in your life? God's cleansing and God's discipline.

Is that a reality in your life? Because if it's not, you're an illegitimate child according to Hebrews 12. You know, there's a passage in Scripture that says, Jacob I loved and Esau I hated. That word hated there, what it means in Hebrew and in Greek is hated if it meant something else.

I guess they translated something else. It really does mean hated. And the question is how did he hate him? Because if you look at Esau's life, every promise God made towards him he kept.

And more abundant than even the declarations of his father. And when Jacob came back across to meet with his brother, his brother was so wealthy and prospered he needed nothing from Jacob's hand. So how is it that God hated Esau and loved Jacob? If you look at Esau's life, you see that Esau could just be Esau.

And Esau could do anything Esau wanted to do. And Esau was never corrected, never disciplined, never chastised, never punished. Esau could just be Esau and have a good time about it.

And God beat up Jacob almost every day of his life. God let Esau be Esau. God refused to let Jacob be Jacob.

And the distinguishing mark between the two men is the loving discipline of God cleansing and changing one and in the other we see no transformation whatsoever. As a matter of fact, except for a few spiritual, a bit of spiritual dullness there at the beginning, Esau looks a lot more moral than Jacob. I mean, after all, Jacob was the deceiver, the heel grabber.

But what do we see? A man coming back into the land after years and years of being disciplined, chastised, cared for by God. It wasn't Esau limping. It was Jacob.

And God had done it to him. I look back for some of you young men. I look back on my life.

And in my younger years, everything was physical. It was so important. Weight lifting and sports and everything.

God destroyed every bit of that in my life. And although I'll never get on Trinity Broadcasting preaching this message, God has broken my body into bits. I have a genetic bone problem.

I have both my hips replaced. All my wrist is filled with metal. They're looking at doing my elbow.

My bones are eating one another. And you know what? It's not Satan. It's God.

And what is God doing? Cleansing me from all my idols and my filthiness. Because in this true Christianity, ministry and everything else is of quite little importance. But the great goal is conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.

And everything in your life, including your marriage and your children, everything has one great purpose to conform you to the image of Christ. Now let me ask you a question. Can you point? Can others look at your life? If we could put a history of your life on a video and show it here, would people be able to see how God has miraculously worked in your life cleansing you from filthiness and idols? Guarding you, cutting you off, shutting you in, doing everything necessary in order to transform your life and make you into the image of Jesus Christ.

Because that's the reality. Let me say something here. It's the reality, not in the super spiritual or the super called.

It is the reality in every true believer. And why do I have to say that? Because in the American church, we have three groups now. We have the spiritual Christian, the continuously carnal Christian, and the lost man.

The Bible knows no such three groups. The Bible only knows two groups. And those groups are the spiritual Christian and the carnal lost man.

Can a Christian sin? Christians most certainly do sin. Can a Christian fall into carnality? Yes. Can a Christian live there in a continuous state as a lifestyle? Absolutely not.

Absolutely not. Now, before I go on, I just want to make an emphasis here of something that is so very, very important. In verse 23, I want to go back for a second.

He says, I will vindicate the holiness of My name. Now, how will He do that? Look in verse 24. Now, I'm going to read giving special emphasis to personal pronoun, I. For I will take you from the nations and I will gather you from all the lands and I will bring you into your own land.

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh and I will put My Spirit within you and I will cause you to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Now, do you see what He means by vindicating? God's saying, this is My work and therefore, My reputation stands and falls with it. I will start a work in you. I will finish that work because My name is at stake.

Have you never read? He who began a good work in you will finish it. Remember when Israel in all their rebellion and God tested Moses and basically said, Moses, get out of the way, I'm going to kill him. Moses said, no.

By God's grace, he interceded. He said, no. Why? Your enemies, the Egyptians, will say that although you were strong enough to save them from Egypt, you were not strong enough to bring them into their own land.

And I want to tell you something. Most pulpits in America are guilty of blaspheming God in this regard. They teach a gospel in which it demonstrates God is strong enough maybe to pull them out of hell, but He is not strong enough to transform their lives.

And I want you to know the same God who can save, who can resurrect His own son from the grave is strong enough to transform your life. And Ephesians backs me up on that one. He is.

His reputation rides upon it. But because of the way the gospel is preached in America, we see just the opposite. We see Christianity being a laughing stock because most of those who are called Christians even by their pastors are not Christians.

And therefore, when someone says, I'm a Christian, no one says, behold the power of God, nor vindicates His holy name. And that's because we desire to build big churches more than we desire to glorify God. And most men are building their churches on the bones of unconverted church members.

Now, he goes on and he says... Let me just say something here in verse 25. The sovereignty and power of God. So many people, whenever they hear the word providence or sovereignty, they're always thinking about election and about salvation, justification, things like that.

Elected before the foundation of the world and all that's true. But I'm afraid we're really robbing ourselves of the word sovereignty in a terrible way. We only apply it nowadays to that one work.

When the idea of His sovereignty is seen throughout every aspect of our salvation from the beginning to the end. Everything in our life. Me missing my plane yesterday is under the sovereignty of God.

And therefore, I expect wonderful things to come from this. But let's just look for a minute. He goes, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean.

I don't know if he said it that way, but I think that's the truth. I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I was raised on a farm.

And anybody here raised on a farm? Nobody. Oh my goodness. Well, I'll have to explain more because it's hard for you types of people to understand these things.

I was raised on a farm and you can always tell a farm boy, at least until he's like 17 or whatever and he realizes that baths can be important. But farm boys, the one thing you'll notice about them is every crevice of their body has enough dirt to raise potatoes. Under the neck, right here, the wrist, back of the leg, everywhere because that's all you're doing.

You're out there in the dirt all day long. As a little boy, I just loved being outside. I still do.

And I would come in after being outside all day filthy dirty and my mom would say, take a bath. And one day I come in and she said, Paul, go take a bath. And I was probably 8 or 9 or something and starting to feel my oats.

And I said, Mom, I don't think I'll take a bath tonight. Things were different back when I was a boy. My mom just looked at me and she said, you will take a bath.

And that's all you had to hear. That's it. Because the next thing, you were going to glory.

You took a bath. Parents never had to beat or yell because they could kill you. And you knew it.

She said, you will take a bath. Now, as a young boy, I could actually jump into a shower and not get wet. I was so skinny and maybe so quick, I could just, because I would come out of there and if I had a towel and I started drying off, the towel would be black by the end of my drying off.

And my mom sometimes would say, get in the bathtub. When my mom said, get in the bathtub, you knew your party was over. My mom, we lived on a charlay cattle and quarter horse ranch and my mom could outwork most hands, most workers.

And my mom's hands were so rough, they hurt. They would hurt you. And when my mom would start scrubbing you with those hands of hers, you would come out of there with Shekinah glory breaking forth from your body.

Now, what's the point of this story? The point of it, she said, you will be clean. Period. This deity that most people have up there sitting on his paper mache throne with a little tin crown on his head just full of remorse and wringing his hands thinking, oh, I've got this people and I so wish they would just do at least something that I want them to do.

I don't know what God that is, but it's no God at all. He says, I'll cleanse you and you will be clean. It's a certainty.

These are certainties. These are realities in the life of every believer. Now, these realities might take a different shape, form or fashion.

They might take different degrees. But the fact of the matter is in every true believer, these will be realities. And if they're not realities in your life, you're not a believer.

Now, and he says, moreover, I'll give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Now, what does this mean? Flesh usually in the Bible refers to something, you know, not very good, but here it does refer to something good. And if I were to give you, let's say that I had a man here and, you know, six foot six, three hundred and eighty pounds of just pure muscle and we make a statue out of him, statue of stone, an inanimate thing, and I walk up and I pinch him in the soft part of the back of his arm with all my might.

What's going to happen to that statue? Absolutely nothing. I can poke it, prod it, cut it, pinch it, burn it. It's not going to move.

Why? It's inanimate. It is not alive. It is not a living thing.

It cannot respond to stimuli. But that man, no matter how big and strong he is, if I go up under the tender part of his arm with two fingers and I clamp down like that and twist with all my might, I don't care how big, how strong he is, he's going to respond. He's going to respond to stimuli.

Why? He is living, breathing flesh. He is an animate object. He can respond to stimuli.

That's the difference between a lost person and a saved person. A lost person who is unregenerate cannot respond to divine stimuli, does not respond to divine stimuli. That is why some of you here today, I am painting a perfect picture of the lostness of your life and you cannot even hear it.

You can't even respond to it. You don't even care, even though you know it's true. You just sit there.

Why? Your heart is dead. And if that scares you, fall on your face and cry out to God and ask Him to give you a living heart. And that is why when you preach on sin in the church, or God begins to work, maybe the Holy Spirit begins to do a really unusual work in the church, begins dealing with people's hearts, dealing with their sin, isn't it always amazing that it's the most pious, the most devoted Christians in the church that come forward weeping and those that are most carnal, most disinterested in the things of God sit back there cold as a stone as though nothing happened, because one of them can respond to divine stimuli and the other cannot.

One hears Christ and the other one does not at all. Does your heart respond to divine stimuli? Is there a real sense of God leading you? A real sense of Him prompting you? Is there reality in your life, a Christianity that can be experienced? You know, we are so afraid, many times we are so afraid that we lose our heritage. Now, what do I mean by that? For example, Jehovah's Witnesses knock on the door at my house and they go, we're Jehovah's Witnesses.

And I go, well, come on in. So am I. And they come in. After talking to them about five minutes, I go, you're not Jehovah's Witnesses.

You're deceivers and liars. That's not what Jehovah said. That's not a proper description of Jehovah's Son.

Someone says I'm charismatic. I go, well, so am I. Praise the Lord. Because people out there having all kinds of false experiences, unbiblical experiences, we crawl over in a corner and don't even believe experience exists.

My dear friend, if you've not experienced God, nor His presence, nor His leading, you don't know Him. If God is just an abstract principle or even a truth to which you submit your will, be afraid. This is a living God.

The Spirit of God. Is it a reality? Do you respond to divine stimuli? Do you? And especially with regard to the convicting, rebuking, correcting work of the Holy Spirit. Now, we'll go on.

He says in verse 27, I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. Other translations, I will make you walk in My statutes. And then He goes on, and you will be careful to observe

My ordinances.

Now, is this what some people would call irresistible? Is God forcing people to do things? No, I don't agree with the terminology irresistible grace. I don't like that. I think what Calvin was talking about and what the Bible is talking about is simply regeneration.

He gives you a new heart. How does He make you? He makes you willing. How does He make you willing? He changes your heart.

That's exactly what He's talking about. Let me just share with you the way it really is. You are born with... This is a word no one likes.

If I say sinful, they go, okay. If I say disobedient, they say, fine. But when I use the word evil, they get mad.

If I look at someone and say, you're a sinner, they go, yeah. If I look at someone and go, you're evil. But look what Jesus said.

In even a simple teaching, He goes, if you being evil can do this. You see, we are born with an evil, God-hating heart. Someone said to me one time, that's not true.

I've worshipped God ever since I was little. I've always loved God. And I said, no.

You're like so many people in churches all around America. You love a God that you made up with your own mind. And if I were to sit down with you right now and go through the God of the Bible, you would react this way.

You would either say, that's not my God or I could never love a God like that. The real God of the Bible you hate. And that's why many preachers don't preach Him today.

Now, why is it that prior to being regenerated or born again, you cannot do God's will? Because at a university, they'll always say to me, well, if I can't do God's will, then it's not my fault. If I have no ability to follow God, come to God, carry out His will, then how can God judge me? Well, you remember Joseph? You remember his brothers? They could not speak a kind word to him. They could not.

Now, they had mouths. They had tongues. They knew how to speak.

But it says they could not speak a kind word to him. Why? Because they hated him. Have you ever heard someone say, I can't forgive that person? Well, they can.

They've got a mouth. They've got a tongue. They could.

But they say, I can't because of what they've done to me and the hatred I have. Ah! So this inability, your inability to come to God or respond to Him is moral. You cannot come to God because you hate Him.

You cannot do His will because you hate His will. And you hate His will because His will is holy and just and your deeds are evil. You love evil, therefore, you hate God.

You cannot come to Him. You cannot be interested. You cannot love Him.

And so what must God do? For a man to be saved, God must literally take out their heart of stone that hates Him, that's dead to Him, and replace it with a heart of flesh. And when that new heart comes, then

the willingness to follow comes. You see, I'll always, when I'm teaching about preaching the Gospel, I'll say, okay, now you tell me, when I'm teaching young preachers, I'll say, tell me where to stop on this.

I'm going to give you some illustrations. Okay, okay. Now, we have this congregation of lost people and what we need to do is present to them Jesus.

And they'll go, yes. And I go, so we could say, you know, the word revelation, it means to reveal is to run the curtain. So let's say that Jesus is behind this curtain and in order for these lost people to get saved, the only thing we need to do is pull the curtain, open it up, and let them see Jesus.

Some will say, well, yes. That's a good illustration. I say, well, but there's a problem.

What if everybody sitting out there in the audience is blind? They'll go, well, I never thought about that. So we could pull this curtain all day, open up the door and everything else. But if they're all blind, they can't see Him.

So what has to happen? Some student will stand up. Well, the supernatural work of God, they must have sight. And I go, yes, that's very, very good.

So I have to pull the curtain, reveal Jesus. Some supernatural work that's beyond the preacher has to happen in which they're given sight. And I say, is that it? And they go, that's it.

But what if their hearts are evil? What are they going to do when they see this Jesus in a way they've never seen Him before? If their hearts are evil, they're going to hate Him like they've never hated Him before. For example, Romans 7 tells us that the more an unconverted man has the law pressed upon him, the more wicked he becomes because he hates it so much. The more he kicks against it.

So if we give them a clearer vision of Jesus, give them sight to see, with that wicked heart, they're just going to hate Him more, aren't they? Well, yeah. Well, then what has to happen? Pull the curtain. Reveal Jesus.

Sight for the blind. And then radical heart surgery in which that heart that hates God is removed and replaced supernaturally with a heart like God's, made in the image of God's. And therefore, with a like heart, they will love the same God.

That's why salvation is so far beyond the hands of preachers and parents. It's the supernatural work of God. And we have a big problem where I live with coyotes.

Of course, if you like to hunt varmints, it's not so much of a problem. We have a problem with coyotes. We have a big problem now, supposedly, with even mountain lions.

And, you know, you take a coyote. You can keep him from... You know, a bunch of them will get together and attack a calf and take it down. But you can stop them from doing that.

You just put them in a cage. It's still a coyote. You know, you can jump into a religious cage.

You're still a lost man. Red flags start going up for me whenever I'm going door-to-door visiting or something and someone looks at me, comes out, receives me very well, invites me into their house and everything, and I start talking to them about God. And they say, you know, preacher, you're right.

That's the right thing. I need to get back and start doing the right thing. I automatically am thinking, this person is as lost as they can be.

Because their whole idea of a relationship with God is, well, even though I don't want to do it, I need to do it because it's the right thing. My friend, when you're supernaturally converted, you want to do it. That's why, have you ever heard? We hear a lot today.

I really make people mad with this statement, but it's true. Discipleship, you know, is so important. And I say, well, why is it so important? Well, because we have just as many people walking out the back door of our churches, entering into the front door of our church.

They're not staying because they're not discipled. I said, that's not true. They're not staying because they're unconverted.

I know people all over the world, some of the most remote jungles that exist, they've never been discipled, and they've never even really had fellowship with hardly any other believers. They cannot, even at the risk of death, stop speaking of Jesus Christ. Why? They've been converted.

The problem is not discipleship, my friend. The problem is, we're ecclesiastically declaring people to be in the kingdom when they're not. Are these things that I spoke about this morning a reality in your life? If they're not, be afraid.

If you are afraid, seek the Lord in this day that you might be saved. Come for counseling. Only thing we can do in counseling is refine and speak with more clarity what's been spoken this morning, but we cannot seek the Lord for you.

Seek the Lord until the Lord saves you and the reality of that arrives. Let's pray. Father, I thank You for this opportunity and I pray, Lord, that You will use Your Word to do a good thing.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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