

(True Disciple Conference) Regeneration - Ezekiel 36

by Paul Washer

God's holiness is about His separateness and uniqueness, and He saves men for His own glory, not because of their worthiness.

Duration: 1:35:47

Scripture: Genesis 3:14

Topics: "Regeneration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of getting lost in the dark while trying to reach a village. They encounter a young boy with a burro who leads them to safety. The speaker then reflects on the importance of growth in the Christian faith, emphasizing that it is absurd to think there is life without growth. They highlight how believers are called out of the world and begin to hate worldly things while marveling in the things of Christ. The speaker also emphasizes the unity of believers and the need for preachers to recognize and support the growth of their congregations.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 36. While you're turning there, let me just say a few things. Maybe it's a bit out of sort, but we were singing about holiness, the holiness of God.

What is the thing that pops into your mind when you think that God is holy? For most people, the idea is that God is sinless or morally pure. When someone says that, then I ask them the question, well, what does it mean for God to be righteous? And they say, well, right, sinless, morally pure. Then I ask them, then, what's the difference between holiness and righteousness? Many people have a wrong concept of what it means to say that God is holy.

The holiness of God speaks primarily not about his moral excellence or his purity. The holiness of God speaks primarily about his separateness, his uniqueness. Let me just explain this for a moment.

The word holy in the Hebrew means to cut and to separate. It's though when a woman lays out a plate or a cutting table full of vegetables, has several carrots and she begins to chop on carrots. And as she a pile of pieces begin to mount up, she takes the knife that she's cutting and she separates them off.

She continues to cut. She separates them off. It's the idea of being cut off to be separate, to be unique as opposed to being common and profane.

When the Bible says that God is holy, it is saying there is no one like God. God is not like us, just bigger and better. God is not like us at all.

Let me give you an example. If what would be closer to being like God? A flaming archangel standing in the presence of God or an amoeba floating around in the sewer. Which one's more like God? The theological answer would be neither.

I'm higher than you. Does that mean I'm closer to the sun? The sun is so distant. It is so far away that if I were to climb Everest, I would have no gain.

I would be no closer to the sun that shines in our sky or the stars that surround our night. When you think of God as holy, you've got to understand that what it means He is unique. There is no one like God and no one to whom God can be compared.

And that is why the prophet tells us there's no one holy like the Lord. It's like when Moses speaks to God and God speaks with Moses and Moses says to Him, Who are You? You tell me to go to Egypt, but I must tell Your people who it is that's sending me. And He says, I am who I am.

There is a real sense in which if someone possibly, if there were such a thing, if someone came from another planet like Mars and landed here in Kansas and came up to me and said, Who are You? I could say, well, I am like Him. And I am like Him. And I am like Her.

I would have six billion examples of what I'm like. But when Moses asked God, Who are You? He says, I am who I am. There's no one outside of Himself to whom He can point to give an illustration of what or who He is.

That is until 2,000 years ago when someone asked God, Who are You? And He pointed down to a carpenter from Nazareth and said, I am like Him. So when we say God is holy, you need to understand, I do not believe holiness is an attribute like other attributes. First of all, I believe that God is holy in His omniscience.

There's no one omniscient like the Lord. God is holy in His righteousness. There is no one righteous like the Lord.

God is holy in His moral excellence. God is holy in His love. God is holy in absolutely everything He is because in absolutely everything He is, there is no one holy like the Lord.

There's no one like Him. Now someone always asks, well, then why is holiness so associated with moral purity in the Bible? Well, if you wanted to show God's uniqueness to a fallen creation, that uniqueness most stands out in the fact that unlike fallen creation, God is morally excellent and pure. And in His holiness, He cannot look upon sin.

But never forget that the primary meaning behind holy is that there's no one like Him. Now, this adds to not only our theological box where we keep all our information, but this leads also to praxis and doxology. For you to be holy doesn't just mean you keep all the rules, even though there are rules in the Christian life.

To be holy doesn't mean that you just dot all the i's and cross all the t's. To be holy means that you're separated from this world, but that in itself is not the end. That is only the means to a greater end, separated from this world in order to be separated unto God.

So the man that is holy is the man who recognizes above other men the uniqueness of this God, the worth of this God, and separates himself unto it. And many times, the men most holy among us will be like bulls in a china shop. They won't be pretty.

They won't dot all the i's or cross all the t's. But they have a heart that wants only Him. You see? He's holy.

He is holy. Now, let's go to our passage. Ezekiel 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. Verse 23. And 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. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers. So you will be My people and I will be your God.

We have such an unbalanced understanding of Christianity and the ways of God here in America today. If you were to go, if they had bookstores 200 years ago, Christian bookstores, you would have gone into those bookstores and you would have discovered that almost all those books were either written on the attributes of God or they were written on what is the true biblical Gospel or they would have been written on how do you discern biblical conversion or they would have been written on the process of sanctification in the believer's life. You walk into a Christian bookstore today and you'd be hard pressed to find one book given to those topics.

And then you look at the Gospel of Jesus Christ and what have we done with it? We've reduced it down to four spiritual laws, five things God wants you to know, and then what we do is we give somebody a five minute presentation of the Gospel. We pronounce them born again because they've made some human decision and then we go on to deeper things. Deeper things.

There is nothing deeper than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Absolutely nothing. Let me just prove the point.

Much speculation today on the book of Revelation, the second coming, and all sorts of things like that. The day Jesus Christ comes back, you're going to understand the book of Revelation. The day Jesus Christ comes back, your eschatology is going to be absolutely perfect.

But though you spend an eternity of eternities in Heaven, you are still not going to comprehend the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This message, above all messages, we've reduced to a few things that someone, if they nod their head to those things we mention, in the end we say they've heard the Gospel and if they make a decision in favor of that, we pronounce them born again. And then we take them on to deeper things and we wonder why we have to chase them around.

We wonder why they won't grow. We wonder why. And we invest money after money after money in discipleship programs and discipleship programs.

And in reality, what we're doing is we're trying to train a bunch of goats so that they'll act like sheep. My dear friend, I have done personal discipleship. I believe in discipleship.

But I want you to understand something. Most personal discipleship is done today because the people are not born again. And even among people who are born again, most of them are being disciplined because the pulpit is so weak.

You get a man standing at a pulpit preaching for an hour each time, twice a week. You get a man in that pulpit preaching that way and that will be enough truth to carry them for a month. The pulpit is nothing anymore.

So we raise up boys to disciple other boys. Now, I want us to go to understand something. Today in America, the battle is not over the second coming of Jesus Christ.

The battle is not over the length of the cloth on the communion table. The battle is over what is the Gospel and how do men get saved. There are no bridges to build between the two camps.

There are no truces to be sought after. We are dealing with the Gospel and whether someone preaches it correctly or not. And if they do not, they do not.

We have so covered. We have come to believe that the fellowship of men is more important than the glory of God. Preachers that will stand up in their churches and go on and on because the great majority of their membership is carnal.

And so they'll seek with every power in their Bible to please the carnal majority so that they won't lose them while that one remnant that truly belongs to Christ, they let them languish and starve. It's like if my wife was at Walmart at 11 at night and two men were raping her in the parking lot and you walked by, but because you did not want to cause a stir or hurt anybody's feelings, you let them. Trouse my wife.

I'd find you and beat you to the end of your life. And for the sake of trying to keep a bunch of carnal, wicked people who don't love Jesus, we let the sheep of God starve to death. Those who truly belong to Him.

And we have got to get back to two specific things. One of them is what is the Gospel, which I'm not going to deal with today. Probably tomorrow.

But we need to get back to what is salvation. Salvation. Because of the little tracks that have been developed by men who do not know theology, because of the evangelists who hardly study their Bibles, because of church growth movements that are based upon Wall Street marketing schemes, we have forgot to realize that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is more than just a few things God wants you to know.

And we have forgotten that men are not converted by being convinced, manipulated, or brought in gradually to our community of faith. Men are converted by a supernatural work of God that demonstrates more of the power of God than the very creation of the universe. And that's what we're going to look at Ezekiel for.

Let's go to Ezekiel 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, I am about to act, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. When we begin studying the Gospel, there's a very important question that no one seems to realize that needs to be answered.

Why would God save man? What would motivate God to save man? And you say, well, Brother Paul, it's quite simple. God's love. No, you've just dug the hole deeper now.

What would motivate a holy, righteous God to love men? That is a very important question. Let me put it to you in human terms. Do you have fond affection and endearing desire towards Hitler? Do you? You say, well, absolutely not.

And what would you think about a person? Sometimes we see them on television who stand up and say, I think Hitler was the greatest man who ever lived. I honor Hitler. I follow Hitler.

What do you say about a person like that? You say, well, that person is just as evil as the person toward whom he is manifesting his affection. You say, good men do not manifest affection or kindness or love towards evil men. Well, then how less a holy and righteous God.

You have to ask yourself, why does God save men? And if you say love, then you have to ask yourself, why would a holy, righteous, good God love evil, depraved, wicked men? There is one answer that we don't have time to touch on today and that is because God is love. There is another answer that comes in as a mystery, even a tauntology in the Old Testament when God tells Israel, I have loved you because I have loved you. Letting us know that all love that God would have towards men is not motivated by man, but it comes forth from God on His own.

It is a sovereign decision of God to love. I think sometimes, I don't like to say this in sounding trite, but I sometimes think God has somewhat of a sense of humor, at least towards me. Because for a while there, every time I would get up and preach, it seemed like some lady who wanted to do a special in whatever church I was in would sing a song that was basically, Oh God, what did you see in me that you would save me? And I'd be back in the back of the church like a little school boy with his hand raised.

Oh, pick me, I'll tell you. What did God see in you, madam? He saw absolutely nothing in you. Or these songs that, you know, I'm glad God never gave up on me.

He never gave up on you because He never put any confidence or hope in you in the first place. Why does God save men? He tells us right here, I save you for my own glory. If God was not utmost concerned about making a name for Himself and demonstrating His greatness in the universe, every man since Adam would be in hell and have no hope of salvation.

If God had to look at men to find a reason to save them, there would be none. You see, here's one of the greatest problems in preaching today. People do not believe they're evil apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

And they don't believe it because preachers aren't telling them and they're not telling them either because preachers don't believe it or they're too cowardly. It will cost them their life. My dear friend, I don't know if you've read the fine print in this book, but it's supposed to cost you your life.

He says, why did I save you? He said, I'm about to act for my holy name. Here we see this great contradiction between God and man. When you look at Israel, the people He's going to save, all they've done is profaned Him among the nations.

So there's no good thing in them. But He says, I will act to demonstrate who I am. To show forth My glory.

Now, He goes on. 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.

Now, I want you to look at something here that's very, very important. This is teaching us this. When God truly does a work of redemption, even the unbelieving nations, even though they may hate it, may misunderstand it, and may fight against it, when God does a true work of redemption among a person or a people, everyone will know that something has happened.

Everyone will know. It's not that if everyone sees us acting like Jesus, they're going to come to Jesus. No, if everyone sees us acting like Jesus, they'll crucify us.

It's not that if God does a great work, all the nations are going to come to Him and love Him. No! They will maybe kick against Him and hate Him even more, but they will know He is the Lord God. That He is the One.

Now, I want us to look at this for a moment. I want us to think about this. Most, the great majority, of all our conversions today, never end up growing in sanctification.

Now, that is not a lie. Even Billy Graham said, if 5% of all the people in my campaigns were even saved, I'd be happy. The problem is, why isn't he telling that to the people he's preaching to? All these evangelists, whether they're Baptists or whatever kind of evangelists, they go and they preach.

And 100 people get saved in a small town. The only problem is none of them come to church on Sunday. But the evangelist goes right down to the next church and says 100 people got saved last week.

Is it not true that the name of God is blasphemed among the unbelieving world because of our converts? It is true. Everybody's been converted. Everybody's saved.

Nobody's changed. Why? Because of us. The problem in this country is not Hillary Clinton.

It's not the Democratic Party. It's not the Republican Party. It's the evangelical conservative preachers that are the problem in this country.

It's the leaders in Christianity that are the problem in this country. And we've got to understand this. Things of history do not ride upon the governments of puny men.

They ride upon the preaching of the Gospel. Anybody, like I said so many times, we're like the ugly girl at the county dance who stands there at the wall. Anybody looks at us, any politician mentions God, we run to them and dance.

Anyone who walks an aisle, we declare them born again. Do we really have such a puny view of the Gospel? Are we really so ignorant? Or are we so cowardly that we call ourselves reformed, but if I walked into your church, I wouldn't notice any difference between your church and one that supposedly preaches the Gospel. It's not good enough to be reformed in a closet.

Do you preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How much does your preaching cost you? It should cost you dearly. I know one brother that's headed to Africa one time. He heard me preaching.

And he said, brother, if this is true, it will cost me my life. I'll get killed in my church. I said, then die in your church.

What about my family? What about your God? What about your God? You see, when people truly get converted, if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Hear these silly apologists running around. I heard one of them a while back saying this.

We've got to do something. All our children, when they go off to college, are denying the faith. We've got to bring our Christian youth back.

If they're denying the faith, they're not Christian youth. Oh, we've got to do something. Seventy-five percent of the young people in our churches today do not believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important.

It's because they're not regenerated. They're lost. They're going to hell.

They prayed a prayer with you and that is it. And since you understand so little about the workings of God, you think it is good. You cry out peace, peace, when there is no peace.

These are the things we have to deal with. When a man is converted, don't you understand? As I said last night, creation of the world, ex nihilo, out of nothing. Wonderful demonstration of the power of God.

But it is a greater demonstration when God takes a corrupt mass of humanity and changes it. You see, salvation is more than a human decision because the human decision, if it is a true decision of repentance and faith, it is based upon a supernatural work of God. Now what happens when a man gets saved? Well, for one thing, look at this in verse 23.

It declares the Lord God, when I prove myself holy among you in their sight. When a man truly gets saved, it vindicates God. When a person is truly a convert, when they're truly saved, their life vindicates God.

People can look at that life and they might not understand it and they may fight against it, but they know something has happened. God has done something. As I said last night, people will walk down an aisle and say, I just got saved.

Or they'll talk to a counselor who's been given a little pamphlet of how to walk them through a few little spiritual laws. And after five minutes, that counselor declares them saved, gives them to the preacher, and the preacher stands there and says to everybody, Billy Bob got saved tonight. And everybody's rejoicing.

What are you doing? You're not allowed to do that! Who gave you such popish authority to look at a man, not even talk to him, and declare him born again? Or to talk to him five minutes and declare him born again? Who do you think you are? The correct thing to do is say this man has made a profession of faith and we rejoice in that. But because we love him and we care for the honor of God, we will be meeting with

him, counseling with him, talking with him until we are assured and he is assured with a biblical assurance that not only he knows God, but God knows him. And a profession of faith, my dear friend, according to the Baptist faith and according to Scripture, is not when someone walks down an aisle.

A profession of faith is when they make that profession in the baptismal waters. That is their great declaration, that I unite myself with Christ and His body. So what's going to happen when someone really gets saved? God's going to be vindicated.

People are going to look at our converts and say, man, what happened to this guy? It's unexplainable. Like the old Russian proverb. The communists used to say this about the believers that were converted in Russia.

When someone contacts the disease called Jesus for this one, there is no cure. You can kill him, you can stomp him, you can freeze him, you can do whatever you want, but there is no cure. So what will happen when someone gets saved? Verse 24.

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the lands. Separation. Separation.

I, look what he says, will take you from the nations. Now, before we get into that, maybe I need to address the personal pronoun here. Today in America, it seems like as one old woman said, isn't it amazing, Jesus is the only Lord who can't make anybody do anything He wants.

Here we have something that's quite amazing, quite different, from this impotent God of evangelical pulpits today. Well, God wants to do so much in your life that He just can't. God wants you to go to Heaven, but He can't make you.

One man stood up right in the middle of a congregation after that was said, and he goes, well, if He can't make me go to Heaven, He can't make me go to Hell. But look at this. Look what God says He's going to do.

Look what He said. Verse 24. In the work of salvation, I will take you from the nations.

I will gather you from all the lands. I will bring you into your own land. 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. I will give you a new heart. I will put a new spirit within you.

I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh. I will 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.

This is a work of God, don't you see? Salvation is all about the demonstration of God's glory. It is not primarily about man. Even though man is the magnificent beneficiary, he's the one who receives, the great recipient of grace.

And creation is all for the better because God does everything for His own glory. But make no mistake, salvation is to demonstrate the name of God. And why? He says, he who begin a good work will perfect it.

And why is that? Because his reputation is riding upon the work. It's all of Him. And He's demonstrating how great He is.

That is why He will not fail. That is why if He truly justifies a person, He will sanctify the person. Do you realize that many, many today, maybe even some of you, have bought into the idea that God can justify, but God can't sanctify unless we cooperate? You say, well, what are you going to say, brother Paul? God makes them get sanctified? No, what I'm telling you is you don't understand regeneration.

The only way God can justify is by faith. The only way a man can have faith is if God has regenerated him. If God has regenerated him, if He's made him a new creature who wants to follow God, who wants to grow in sanctification.

Now, he goes on, he says, I will take you from the nations, a work of separation. Isn't it amazing? For years as a young Christian, before I began to understand the Scriptures, I would just be enthralled. And I would ask pastors and they would say, yes, it's a great mystery.

I would look at the church and wonder why. Some drunken, bum, criminal would come off the street, walk into the church. No one had invited him.

He gets saved. He comes to church. You can offend him.

No one wants to be with him. He smells bad. People in the church don't even like him.

And you can't make him leave. He just wants to serve Christ. He loves everybody.

But then you have all these other people in the church and there's absolutely no work. And you wonder, what did he do that they didn't do? But it's not what did he do that they didn't do. It's what did God do to him that he didn't do to them.

You see, why is it that some people in the church are concerned for holiness and other people could care less? Why is it that some of the students in your student groups are so concerned about holiness and others could care less? Why is it that some can live in rampant sin and not have a second thought or a word from God about discipline while others fear God? Because one group got saved and the other didn't. Your problem is you think just because they went through that little evangelical hoop jump of yours that they're all saved. They're not.

The evidence of conversion is the continuing work of God. He says, I will separate them. God will begin to work in the life of every believer.

Yes, He will work at different speeds. He will work at different degrees. He will work in different ways.

Yes, some grow faster than others. Some it seems to be two steps forward, two steps forward, four steps forward, two steps back, nine steps forward and they just seem to grow. Others it seems to be three steps forward, two steps back, four steps forward, one step back and they struggle and struggle and struggle, but they grow.

It is absolutely absurd to think there is life without growth. They grow. God begins to call them out of the world.

They begin to see things they've never seen before. They begin to hate the world more and more and more. And they begin to marvel in the things of Christ more and more and more.

As preachers of the Gospel, why can't we see this? It is true. It is true. And it will always happen, not sometimes.

It isn't just that some people get lucky or some people are more moral or some people get saved farther ahead in life. No, it's a work of God. If any man be in Christ, He's a new creature.

Not if some men. If any man be in Christ, if any man, He will separate them. He will separate them.

Let me ask you a question. Is the work, God's work of separation a reality in your life? Because you can be as Reformed as the most Reformed guy in the world. But let me ask you a question.

It's not enough to say, yes, I agree with that theological truth. The question is this, is it a reality in your life? The things that God hates, are you growing in your hatred towards those things? The things that God loves, are you growing in your love towards those things? And it's a special reminder for those of us who have been in the ministry for 20 some years because we almost stall and think we're in no need of growth. He separates us.

But realize this, He doesn't just separate us from the world. There are a lot of people who have separated themselves from the world and separated themselves even from evil and yet they will split hell wide open because separation is not in itself separating from the world, but separating from the world in order to separate unto God. Is a growing passion for God a reality in your life? A growing, deepening passion.

Now, I'm not saying that we don't struggle. We all struggle. I'm not saying that our hearts do not grow dull.

They all grow dull. But over the years, is there a growing, deepening passion for Him? Then He says this, He says, 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.

You see, there's something of a Hebrew parallelism going on here. It's very important you understand this. When the Jews want to emphasize something or explain it, they will repeat themselves.

They will repeat themselves in a somewhat different fashion. The second phrase will be somewhat different than the first and it clarifies the first phrase and defines it more clearly. I will sprinkle clean water on you does not just mean I will justify you positionally before Me.

I will justify you positionally before Me and then it's up to you whether you want to live like a demon or live like a saint. That's not what He's saying. What does He mean that He will sprinkle clean water on them? It does base itself upon justification, but it goes further.

You will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. If someone were to ask me, Brother Paul, would you please surmise your Christian walk over the last 25 years? It would be this verse.

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Not that all my filthiness and all my idols are gone in the reality of my everyday life. Not that I've made greater success or progress than other men, but there is such a reality of God doing a work to cleanse my filthiness and to destroy the idols in my life.

Over the years, one of the most precious things to me, most precious, has been God's discipline. Is God's disciplining hand a reality in your life? Does He discipline you to cleanse you? When you were a brand-new Christian and filled with the zeal of God, so filled with the zeal of God that if someone turned on

the television set and it was kind of an off-colored or gray thing on the program there, you wouldn't dare look at it. But now after 25 years, you can sit down and enjoy the program right after a prayer meeting.

Or does God come upon you and discipline you? Does He guard you zealously? Does He let you know, you are mine? Discipline takes many forms. It can be the convicting work of the Holy Spirit when you step out of line. It can be the admonition, the rebuke of a brother or sister in Christ.

It can be God in His providence working through circumstances in your life to do things. It can be Him using all manner of things from all the devils in hell to the things that we most do not desire on this earth. I'm preaching next week at my home church and been thinking about what to preach on.

I'm going to preach on Genesis 3 and take it from a little bit different angle. That yes, there are judgments there against Adam and Eve and the world. Judgments, great ones against the devil himself.

But it is one of the greatest passages, I'm convinced, of mercy. Of mercy. Man looked at the devil instead of looking at God.

And so God says, I'll destroy this devil before you. I'll have him eating dust before you. And you'll never look at him again.

Man heard the voice of his wife more than he heard the voice of God. He even says, I'll put something between you two. All of creation can be a thing that will mesmerize us and carry us off from the eternal.

So God says, I'll make thorns grow. God says, I will do everything to hem you in so that you'll look at the only bright spot in reality. And that is Genesis 3.15. And my son, my son, every time, don't you see, that a woman cries out in pain in childbirth, it is God screaming to us in mercy.

Look to my son. Every time an unbelieving man works and works and finds no satisfaction, it's the mercy of God screaming out, You are fallen! You are fallen! And every time a Christian with a dull heart gets carried away by the things of the world and it turns into vomit and rot in his stomach, God is screaming out in love, You are fallen! But you have been redeemed and you belong to me and no, I will not share you with another. Does He zealously watch over you? This absolute blasphemous, ludicrous, idiotic idea that a Christian can be a Christian and live in a continuous state of carnality is absolutely pathetic.

Sir, if you had a child and for 15 years you applied no correction, no discipline and let that child run wild, the Scriptures testify against you, you do not love your child. Yet, for most preachers, that's exactly what they accuse God of. He's got all these children out there and He lets them run wild all the days of their life with no discipline, with no discipline, with no care, with no correction.

What a name we give to this God. Some people say when you talk like this, you're talking legalism and works. Do you not understand even the rudiment factors of the Gospel? You see, one of the greatest problems with that gang out there that say grace is all about God saves you, you believe in Him, you pray that little prayer, you live like the devil your entire life, but you're saved because salvation of grace is of grace.

That is not what Scripture teaches. Scripture teaches that salvation is totally and completely a work of grace so that if you repent and believe, you do so by the power of God. But the same God who justifies you, regenerates you, and regenerating you, He makes you a new creature who doesn't want to do these evil things anymore.

That's where they miss it. I go to a man, let's say he's not been in church for five or six years. I arrive in a town where I've taken up residence to be the new preacher.

They say, well, he hasn't been in church in five or six years. He's over there in some trailer, and I go visit him. He sees me coming.

He's very polite, very humble man. He opens the door. Come on in, preacher.

Serves me tea. Sits down with me. I start talking to him about righteousness, and he says, you're right, preacher.

I need to just get back in church. You're right, preacher. I just need to do the right thing.

I just need to buckle up and do the right thing, preacher. You're right. I need to stop going to those taverns.

I need to stop chasing women. I just need to get back in church and get back in the Bible. And you're right, preacher.

You know what I'm looking at? I'm looking at a lost man is what I'm looking at. You know why? Because this is what he's telling me. You're right, preacher.

I need to stop doing all the evil things I love and start doing all the righteous things I hate in order to be saved. That is not Christianity. Christianity is becoming a new creature.

That's where they miss it. The lost doctrine of the age is the doctrine of regeneration. He says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean.

Isn't that amazing? I was a farm boy in Illinois. Farm boys, you can always tell them. I don't know about Kansas, but Illinois, because everywhere there's a crease in their body, they've got dirt.

I'd be out playing. I'd have dirt right here in the crease of my neck, right here in my elbows, back of my knees, my ears, everything dirt. And I would come in and my mother would say, boy, take a shower.

Or back then, take a bath. And I remember one day about nine years old when I was pretty much feeling like a man. I'd already killed a squirrel with my 20-gauge shotgun.

I was moving up in the world. She said, boy, get in there and take a bath. I said, no.

My mom looked at me and I knew what the opening of the doors of hell looked like when she looked at me. She said, take a bath. I said, yes, mom.

Isn't that amazing? My mom has more sovereign power than your God. She said, take a bath. I went in there.

And you know how it is, moms. I dripped a little bit of water on me and then took a white towel and tried to rub it all off. What happened? My mom walked in there.

My mom could haul hay and work cattle better than any man. Her hands were like the worst sandpaper you've ever felt in your life. My mom grabbed ahold of me.

She scrubbed me so hard that when I came out of there, the Shekinah glory of God was coming forth from my body. She said, you will take a bath. You are my child.

You will take a bath. But then, you know, of course, Freud had to enter into the picture and Rogers and Skinner. Psychology.

Politically correct God. Man at the center of all things. Humanist manifesto.

All sorts of things. So now we've got a God who really wants you to take a bath. He really does.

But if you don't want to, He just can't make you. Isn't it amazing? He commands us to do things to our children that He Himself cannot do. What a God.

He says, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. My dear friend, we have such... We are so earthly minded. Your best life now.

A friend of mine just did a book cover for me and they put it out on the thing. It's got a picture of me standing just like Joel Osteen. I didn't know they did this.

I don't know where they got the picture, but they got it. And it's got Your Worst Life Now. Paul Washer shares with you all about your lack of human potential and your total depravity.

And underneath it says New York's Worst Seller List. New York Times Worst Seller List. Your best life now.

I will not lose sleep tonight worried about your best life now. I will not pray tonight for tomorrow worried about their best life now or whether they have self-esteem or their checkbook is balanced or they've got 40 days or 90 days or 100 days of purpose in their life. I will lose sleep because one day every one of you will stand before God naked and be judged and some of you will be cast into hell.

Preachers, you're not professionals. You're not businessmen. You're not little boys running around serving the community.

You're prophets or you're nothing. To bring a word from God. These are people dying.

The wrath of God lays waste to your community even as we speak how many people will be swept away even today by the wrath of God through death in hell. And you're worried about whether or not someone feels good about themselves? God basically takes a man and if that man belongs to Him He will break that man into an absolute million pieces if necessary to get him ready for eternity. There's a little song that I sing to all my children when they won't go to sleep.

It's an old Keith Green song. Oh my Lord I am weak and I'm trembling for the Lord I am always remembering for what a strong shepherd looking at my child holds you in his arms he will break you and make you his own. If you belong to him he will shatter you in a million pieces and reconstruct you.

He will not share you with the world. He will not allow you to get any fun out of the vanity fair. And listen to me preachers.

Just listen to me for a second. Something that you need to know. People always tell you you need to take a break.

You need to take a break. Well sometimes you need to take a break but you don't need to take a break from Jesus. Oh you know you're working hard in the ministry you just need to get away for a while.

Yes you may need to get away for a while sit on a lake for a few days or something but not to get away from Jesus. It's like the evangelist the guy was telling me shows up and the pastors and everything of this large church they meet him at the church and I have nothing wrong with golf I've never played it but the evangelists like to golf and so they all went out to golf. The meetings were going to begin in two days and they went out to golf.

The evangelist was a man who really loved the Lord and while they're golfing he starts talking about Jesus. And the preacher said look we don't want any shop talk out here today. We came out here to get away.

When you have to rest from the Word of God and prayer then you know nothing about the Word of God and prayer. Where are you going to be filled? Is hunting going to fill you? Is golf going to fill you? Is some hobby in a workshop going to fill you? Even though all those things can be good in their proper categories but is that going to fill you? As a matter of fact all those hobbies are vanity and absurd unless they're done unto the glory of God. An eternal perspective.

Oh, you're so heavenly minded you're no earthly good. That is the biggest lie that ever cracked out of hell. Because it's been the most heavenly minded men on the face of this earth who did the most.

To begin with the captain of our salvation Jesus Christ who was always beholding the Father. Who was always in communion with Him. Always thinking heavenly thoughts.

I think of Frank Lombok in the Philippines. Taught everyone in the Philippines to read just so they could read the Bible. His greatest goal in life if you look at his diary you'll probably not be able to find it but if you can find one if you look at his diary this is his one goal.

He had one goal. He wanted to spend one waking day without one interrupted thought about Jesus. That was the goal of his life.

And he taught all the Philippines to read. God does not care about anything but getting you ready for heaven. Everything in your life has been orchestrated for one purpose to conform you to the image of Jesus Christ.

People think, I can't even hardly read a lot of Christian books on marriage. Why? Well, marriage is all about a little bit of heaven on earth. No, it's not.

Even though marriage can be a glorious thing. Do you know what marriage is about? Conforming you to the image of Christ. And God does not search around to find you a mate that's compatible.

Did you know that? More than likely He's going to search around to find you a mate that's totally incompatible with you. Why? He's going to give you a mate that's strong in all the areas where they must be strong that you not be tempted beyond what you can bear. But He's also going to give you a mate who fails in some of the areas where you most do not want them to fail so that you become like Jesus.

And what does that mean? So that you learn to love someone unconditionally who doesn't meet the conditions. It's not about big ministries. There are some men here and I can call them by name who have

big ministries and they are going to die and go to hell.

It is not about health. Praise God it's not about health or I'd be in hell right now. But the thing about it is when He comes in discipline, it'll be like on that day of judgment.

When you truly belong to Him, He never comes to discipline you punitively as a judge. He always disciplines you as a loving Father. And on that day when you stand before Him, it will be both a brother and a father you see.

Moreover, I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. This is what happens when every person on the face of the earth gets saved.

Do you understand that? Every individual who has ever been saved, this is what has happened to them. A heart of stone is an absolutely, completely inanimate object. There's no life in a stone.

That is why we've got all kinds of stones from Mars and yet we still say there's no life on Mars. If there was a little bit of life in those rocks, we could say there's life on Mars. But all we've got is rocks, stones.

Not a little bit of heart, rocks. Not a little bit of life, stones. The heart of a man is the heart of a stone.

Can a stone respond to stimuli? No. Kick it, prick it, pot it, punch it, do whatever you want, the stone just sits there. It cannot respond to stimuli.

It is a stone. Stone in the Greek means stone. If it meant something else, they would translate it something else.

It means the same in Hebrew, stone. And for some of you in Ephesians 2, dead means dead. It doesn't mean partially dead or mostly dead.

But dead, dead. Now here's the great problem, isn't it? If you take Scripture seriously. See, here's the only thing.

You don't have to read Jonathan Edwards. You don't have to wrangle about election. You don't even have to mention the C word.

You don't have to do any of that. The only thing you have to do is one thing. Is man dead? That's the only question you ever have to answer.

Because if he is, then everything has to change. If he's dead, not mostly dead, but completely dead, then something has to move on man. Something outside of him.

Not to lift him up where he belongs so that he can finally make a decision because then you're applying still residue of morality in life. No, he's dead. So if he's going to be saved, something's got to happen.

Let me give you... Here's a dead man. And I see him there and being the compassionate soul that I am, I come to him and I say, Sir, get up. There's a hospital right over this way.

If you just get up and we'll go over here. They'll put those things on you. They'll pop you with electricity.

You'll come back to life. Sir, come with me. What? You want to be dead for the rest of your life? Come with me.

There's a problem. He's dead. If he could get up and go to the hospital, he wouldn't be dead.

Here's another one. Lazarus, come forth. Now, here's Curtis Knapp and me standing in front of Lazarus' tomb.

Goober and Gaylord goes to Bethany. And we're sitting there and it's like, Lazarus, come forth. There's a problem.

There's a real big problem. But the same problem occurs when you remove Curtis and I from the picture and you put Jesus in the picture. The same problem's there.

Lazarus, come forth. You say, well, what's the problem, Brother Paul? Jesus commanded. I won't let you get away with that.

Jesus commanded a dead man. For someone to respond to a command they have to hear, to hear they have to be alive. So before Jesus can give the command, Jesus has to give life so that Lazarus can obey the command.

Now, I want you to look at the way preaching is seen in degrees today. Preachers, most of them will tell you basically that it's something like this. Let's pretend there's a big curtain here and there's Jesus standing in the back.

And preachers will say, if we could just reveal Jesus to the world, the world would see Him and be saved. No, the world got their chance to do that. And they crucified Him.

You say, no, Brother Paul, if we just pull back the curtain and let people see Jesus, they'll be saved. There's only one problem when your audience is blind. You can pull back the curtain all day long, but if your audience is blind, they're not going to see anything.

And then some preachers will say, you're right, Brother Paul, we have to preach Jesus and make Him known, but the Holy Spirit has to give sight to the blind. And when He gives sight to the blind, they will see Jesus and they'll come to Him. No.

If you give sight to them, they will see the holiness and the righteousness and the sovereignty of Jesus. And with that wicked heart of theirs, they will hate Him more than they've ever hated Him. Jesus is righteous.

They're not. There is nothing in Jesus that pleases them. Their heart is radically depraved.

They love evil and they will not come to Him. As a matter of fact, they'll run from Him. That's the entire argument of Romans 6, 7, and 8. You press the righteous law of God upon an unconverted man and the only thing he's going to do is fight against it with more strength.

What do you have to do? You have to preach Jesus. The Holy Spirit has to give sight. The Holy Spirit has to change that wicked, radically depraved, God-hating heart into a new heart recreated in the image of God in true righteousness and true holiness.

And when that man rises there from the dead like the bones in Ezekiel, he rises from the dead and with that new heart opens his eyes and sees the beauty of Jesus Christ. He's irresistibly drawn to Him. Why? Because he has a heart, a new one, created in the image of God.

And when it sees the perfect image of God, it wants that more than anything in life. That is why. We are not boys.

We are not eloquent speakers. We are not movers and shakers. And we are not cultural strategists.

We must be prophets. Every time a man stands up before men, he is asked a question by God, can these bones live? And the man responds, God, You know. And then the man by faith calls upon the wind to come and blow upon these bones and make them live.

He's a helpless man. And he's the most powerful man in the world when he preaches. He's helpless because if God does not move, that preacher will be like a lamb led to the slaughter and a sheep before his shears and nothing will happen.

But if God moves, there will be more power manifested in the conversion of one soul than the whirling of planets. Salvation is a supernatural work of God. I will take out your dead, stony heart and I will replace it with a heart of flesh.

Now, for hyper... I don't know what to call it. Hyper something. There are guys who will define a word and then trace that word all the way.

Hyper literalists maybe. They'll define a certain word and then trace it through the entire Bible and think it ought to mean the same in every passage that it's found. That's not true.

I think Schofield did this with this passage thinking that, well, heart of flesh is wicked. That's not what he's saying. He is putting two things in opposition.

A heart of stone that cannot respond to divine stimuli. I pinch a statue made out of stone, it's not going to kick me back or bite me. But a man of flesh, no matter how big he is, I grab ahold of him under that tender part of his arm and twist with all my might, he's going to respond.

And that's what it's saying. I will give them a heart. That is why I do not like terminology like irresistible grace.

Unless you're going to spend a lot of time explaining exactly what you mean. Because it gives people ideas that simply God pulls men to Him even though they don't want to come. Irresistible grace is regeneration.

God regenerates that heart and makes it like His. Gives that man a new nature. And with that new nature, he looks upon a God that for the first time in his life is irresistibly beautiful to him.

Now, he says, I will put my Spirit within you. I read a lot of books on this from a lot of great men. And they said a lot of great things.

But in all the great things they said, I don't think any of us on this side of eternity can comprehend exactly the privilege and the power of such a thing. That the Spirit of the living God that hovered above the waters, that created the universe, would dwell in the heart. Now just look at this for a minute.

What kind of God do we have? He literally says I'm going to do a supernatural recreating work in your heart. And when He says heart, He's not talking about your blood pumping muscle. He's talking about the very essence of your being, your character, your nature.

I am going to totally change your nature. Not only that, I am going to empower that new nature with the Holy Spirit. And yet we say that a Christian can live in a continuous state of carnality like a devil.

You say, well, if He makes the choice. But that's what you've got to see. He's a new creature.

He makes new choices. As Spurgeon's illustration of the pig. I can't find a better illustration.

Do you have the finest plate of food here that you can find in Kansas? And you have a bucket of slop and you let loose a pig in the back of the auditorium. Where is he going to go? Straight to the bucket of slop. Why? He's a pig.

That's what pigs do. They like slop. They eat it.

He's going to stick his head in there. He's going to gobble it down. He's going to wiggle his little tail.

He's not going to have any shame about him at all. Reckless abandon. Golfing it down.

But if you had the power in one millisecond to transform that pig while he's golfing this down, to transform him into a man, he would throw his head out of that bucket. The very things that he was golfing down and delighting in, he literally, because the nature of a man cannot swallow what the nature of a pig can swallow. It would literally, whether he wanted it to or not, would come out of his body.

He would literally despise what he delighted in. He would throw up and not be able to keep down that which he was eating. And when he turned around, he would be utterly and totally ashamed.

I just described your conversion. You say, well, I don't like that. Then you're probably not converted.

Because the humble hear it and rejoice and are glad. That's your conversion. And yes, you see, the devil is a murderer.

But he's a murderer through lies. He's a murderer from the beginning. Look how he murdered Adam and Eve through a lie.

Through a lie. The devil can still deceive a believer. A believer can fall into temptation.

And what does he do? That believer is tempted to go back to that bucket. That man is tempted to go back to that bucket. Now the whole time, he's going back to that bucket.

Something's screaming at him that the bucket's no good. Even the smell of it stinks to him. But he keeps going.

He can be headstrong. And he sticks his head in that bucket. He takes one bite.

He is nauseous. He throws it up. And he repents and goes right back to where he was.

Because he's no longer a pig. See, it's not about... Here's something. We need to have literally an entire year where the only thing that can be taught from the pulpit is ontology.

The doctrine of being. Because here's your major problem. You think that somehow the will can act independently of nature.

That's one of your greatest problems. Will is a slave to the nature. That's why a bad tree cannot produce good fruit.

You see, men do according to their nature. When you change a man's nature, he becomes a new creature. Now, this is a sermon from Romans 6, but we've got all the time in the world here, so let me just go through this really quick.

A man is unconverted. I want to show you how this works. A man is unconverted.

He's leaving for the office. He's got briefcase, papers. It's pouring down rain outside.

His wife got up late, didn't make him any breakfast. He's going out the door unconverted, grabs the door handle, and his wife coming out with curlers in her hair and fuzzy slippers on and the whole nine yards, says, Honey, can you take out the trash? And he turns around and goes, I am sick and tired. Every time.

Can't you see it's raining outside? I'm late for work. I've got stuff to do. You get up late.

Tell me to take out the trash right when I've got to get to work. I'm sick and tired. You take out the stinking trash.

He runs out the door totally and completely justified. Gets in his car. Justified.

Goes to work. Justified. Sits at work all day.

Justified. A couple weeks go by. He's converted.

Genuinely converted. Converted. Now, he's a new creature.

He's got a lot of growing to do. He doesn't have to struggle to become something he's not. He's a new creature.

He has to start just being what he is. But again, that's a whole other sermon. It's weeks later.

He's a Christian now. He's got his briefcase under his arm. Papers.

Pouring down rain. Wife still looks like Godzilla with slippers on. He's late for work.

He's making it to the door. And she goes, Honey, could you take out the trash? And he goes, I am sick. Why are you always doing it? I can't believe it.

I'm late. I've got to go to work. He does it.

And you say, well, isn't that directly contrary to everything you're saying? No. Because the moment he does it, it's like his heart was invaded with a nausea. Just like that man going back to that bucket.

He's nauseous. But he grits his teeth. He's not justified.

He's nauseous. He knows he did wrong. He can't stand it.

But he walks out that door. He gets in that car. He's nauseous.

He knows he did wrong. He was wrong. He may make it to the office.

He's probably going to call on the cell phone if he has one. He may make it to the office. He may have to totally, completely turn around the car.

Why? He's a new creature. He is, yes, still housed in a body of flesh, but he has a new nature. He is a new creature.

And that new creature cannot swallow that stuff anymore. He's new. And then the process of sanctification is kicking in, where he starts growing in to who he really is in reality.

You see, Christianity is not you trying to be something you're not. It's you being what you are. A new creature in Christ Jesus, recreated in true righteousness and true holiness.

Yes, still struggling behind the enemy lines in a fallen world. Yes, you still have a body of flesh, hard to define, but the reality is there. There's a part of us that's not unregenerate, but we have a new nature.

We are new creatures. And we can't live in sin anymore, the same way a man can't eat pig slop. Now, let's go on.

He says, I put My Spirit within you and cause you. Now, cause you. Some translations, make you.

That's because that's what the word means. I will make you do this. Now, how does he do that? Well, first of all, you have to understand this.

Not in some tyrannical sovereignty, like a Caesar, forcing you against your will. We've already dealt with this. He will make you because He's changed you.

But listen to me. Listen to me very carefully. Even though He's changed you, in your struggle in sanctification to grow in grace, there are times you will buck your neck.

There are times you will not understand. And there are times when God can directly intervene and make you. And if you don't think He can, you've bought into a bill of goods that have nothing to do with Scripture.

He does everything He wants. He can't violate My will. He can do anything He wants.

Your only thing to rely on is that although He can do anything He wants, He's good. Like C.S. Lewis, one of the few things he got right, he's not safe, but he is good. He can make you.

He can break you. He can roll you up in a ball, old man, and throw you into a foreign land. He can do anything He wants.

But if you are His child, He never does it as a judge. He does it as a father. I make my little boys do things they don't want to do.

But in the wisdom of a father, I know they must. I'll put my boys up on... I do this to all of them, all my children. When I feel like they're old enough, just starting to stand, they can understand commands, walking, talking a little bit, I put them up on the kitchen counter.

And I stand about this far away from them, I say, jump. They don't want to. I pull them and I say, jump.

Make them jump. I stand back a little farther. Jump.

Stand back a little farther. Jump. I make them jump.

Am I trying to teach them to be John Wayne-ish or extreme sports guys? No. Am I trying to teach them to be brave? No. What am I teaching them? To trust the Word of their father.

That's the only thing I'm teaching them. They have a good father. If father says, jump, even though I am afraid, I will jump.

Because my father keeps His Word and He knows what He's doing. He will make you. Don't you want Him to? Is your sovereignty so special to you? To hell with my sovereignty.

I don't want sovereignty. I don't know about this God you know, the one I have walked with. He takes prisoners.

But He takes them in love. When Paul called himself a prisoner or a slave of Jesus Christ or a slave of God, do you think he was just speaking about these puny Roman chains? He was talking about being imprisoned in the sovereignty of God. He was a spectacle.

He was no longer His own. He belonged to God. If God wants to do anything He wants to do, He can do it.

But the one thing He wants to do is the one thing He will do, and it's good, and that is conform you to the image of His Son. He says, I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers.

So you will be My people and I will be your God. Look at that. He doesn't say, Oh, I want to be somebody's God and if I could just get everybody to cooperate, what a wonderful time we'd have.

He says, No, I am going to do a work on this fallen earth and I'm going to do it for My glory and I'm going to give the whole thing to My Son. This is what I'm going to do. I am going to call out a people.

I will make them My people and I will be their God. That's what He's doing. That's what He's doing.

He's not throwing some hopeless net across the universe hoping it will land on someone's head. Now, do I have a little bit more time? Is that okay? Okay, well, you better pray that I listen to Him. All right, I want you to go to Jeremiah.

We're going to close this up. I want you to see something. Jeremiah 31, 32.

Well, 31, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant, and that's the key, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. Now, here's what you need to understand.

When Israel was delivered out of Egypt, I want you to understand something. Do you honestly think all those people were regenerated believers? He brought out a physical nation. Most of them, as you can trace it, all throughout their pilgrimage, I mean, they were carrying idols with them when they left Egypt.

They rebelled all the time. And what did He give them? He gave them tablets of stone. He cries out in the law and said, oh, that this people would have a heart that they would follow Me.

He is sending us forth to a greater time when the Messiah would come. And through His work on the tree and the giving of the Spirit, that they would have a heart. But we look at this.

He brings out a people and they are rebellious. And He gives them an external law and they fight against it and they break it and they commit idolatry and they're disciplined and there's no life and His name is shamed among the nations because of them. And then most preachers, because they don't understand the wonder of the New Testament and of the salvation we have in Christ, they go, well, see? I mean, my church is no different than Israel.

I mean, Israel was full of a bunch of idolaters. They never understood. They were carnal.

They were wicked. They did all this stuff. So why, brother Paul, are you preaching something? I mean, look at Israel.

The problem is you're not Israel. He says, behold, the days are coming when I am going to do something so much greater. What is He going to do? Look what He says.

Verse 33, this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days declares the Lord. I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it. I will be their God and they shall be My people.

What is He doing? He's promising a day when His people, He would gather forth a people and every one of them would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Every one of them would have the law of God written on their heart. Now when we look back at the nation of Israel, what do we see? We see a physical nation called out.

Most of them were idolaters, but in that physical nation of Israel, there was a remnant, wasn't there? A remnant of people who... How did these people catch the clue? Were they just smarter than everybody? No. In that remnant of the nation of Israel, there was a people regenerated by the Spirit of God. David, Abraham, on and on.

Simeon and Anna. All throughout the history, we see this godly remnant. So we take that and say, oh, the church is supposed to be the same way.

By and large, everybody in the church ought to be carnal, wicked, and idolaters, but there ought to be a remnant in the church of people who really follow Him. No, that's the whole point of the New Covenant. He says, but I am going to bring about a work that is so great, it will make your ears tingle.

He says, this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. I will put My law within them, and on their hearts I will write it, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Now listen to me.

I hear these preachers, and they stand up and they say this. And they're prophetic. I appreciate their desire for godliness and holiness and to preach all these things, but they are in danger and they are wrong.

They'll stand up and say, well, first of all, you'll have kind of the church growth group that really don't care about holiness, and this is what they'll say. Well, you know, there's just as much immorality in the church

as out of the church, just as much divorce in the church as out of the church, just as much pornography in the church as out of the church, so on and so forth. Well, it's grace.

Then you have the guys who recognize that is wrong, and they'll say, using language of the Old Testament, they'll look at God's people and say, the church of Jesus Christ acts like a prostitute, is acting like a whore. She's out there whoring herself with other gods and other loves, and she needs to repent. Both of them are wrong.

Both of them are wrong. They don't understand the nature of the church. And the nature of the church is this.

When someone says there's just as much idolatry and greed and divorce and hatred and racism and pornography and all these other things in the church as out of the church, they are lying. The church of Jesus Christ in America is absolutely beautiful. She sins, but she's broken, and she's following her Master, and she cares about Him, and she offers up true worship, and if that is not true, every covenant promise in the Old Testament is failed.

The problem is these people don't understand what the church is. They're thinking that everybody living in that brick building is part of the church. The Southern Baptists and all the other Baptists don't have a lot of churches in America.

They have a lot of really nice brick buildings with finely manicured lawns. But they're not churches. The church, according to Scripture and according to real Baptist theology, is always totally and completely a regenerate group.

There's not as much of all this horrendous stuff in the churches outside of the church. The problem is you don't know what the church is. You think everyone who's passed through those evangelical hoops and prayed that prayer is in the church.

You think everyone that's a member of the church is in the church. We're going through the same thing that Hal Harris, George Whitefield, and Daniel Rowlands went through. Everyone believed they were Christians because they'd been baptized as infants because they were part of the state church, because they had done some little thing.

And being born again was reduced down to nothing but some creed. The Baptists have done the same thing in America. We have taken the glorious Gospel and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

We've reduced it down. If you pray this prayer, you're saved. So the great majority of the people who call themselves Christian and part of the church are lost and the nations look at us and they laugh.

Now that's the truth. But the church, and I warn these prophets that are always saying bad things about the church, listen, buddy, if you called my wife a whore, I'll try to be Christian. I'll try to kill you quickly.

You're not going to call the bride of Jesus Christ a whore, but also point to all these carnal, wicked people and say they're a part of His bride. Both are in danger of the judgment of God. Should we love people? Well, let's define that term.

I love them so much that I'm not going to do what Jesus told me to do? I love them so much I'm not going to say the things Jesus told me to say? Now that's making a contradiction and also an accusation against

Christ. Either He is not all wise and He told me to do stuff that is wrong, or He is immoral. We're not doing anybody a benefit by creating a six flags over Jesus in a church, filling it full of entertainment and programs so that it will keep attracting people who have no spiritual life whatsoever.

But He says this is what's going to happen. He says, They will not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know Me. From the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.

Look what it says. You know, in Israel, there were all these people who had just absolute, abject ignorance of God. And every once in a while, you'd have a godly priest or a godly scribe or a godly man or a godly leader.

But everyone was oblivious to the knowledge of God, doing horrendous things. But He says, I'm going to create a people and they will not teach again each man his neighbor, and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they will all know Me. From the least of them to the greatest of them.

That when God regenerates a heart, He writes His law. This is not poetry, folks. This is reality.

This is what He says He's going to do. I'm going to write My law on their heart and they're going to know Me. So that when even a brand new believer hears some heretical preacher, he can't really argue against him.

He doesn't really know what's right, but he knows what that guy is saying is wrong and he runs from him. Don't you see how supernatural salvation is? And we must look for this in the life of our own life and the life of others. Now, I'm going to end.

I want to go really quickly to verse 32 and I want to point out something. 32. Verse 38.

Chapter 32, verse 38. They shall be My people and I will be their God and I will give them one heart. Now, I want you to think about this.

Many times, folks, now listen to this. This will help you. Many times we take spiritual realities as though they were conditional promises.

And that's wrong. This is a new covenant promise and this is what He says, I will give them one heart. Now, what does this mean? Do you know they have all these Jesus parades at times all over different places and everybody from all the denominations come together and sing Kumbaya and all these other things and they say we are one? And then everyone, it seems like the evangelical leaders on television and everything, yes, it's so horrible, the body of Christ is not one, the body of Christ is so divided.

That is wrong! If what they're saying is right, then the new covenant promise failed and Jesus prayed a prayer that His Father did not answer. He prayed that they would be one. They are one! What do I mean by that? First of all, you've got to recognize that the great majority of people call themselves Christian or not Christian.

Second of all, you've got to realize this, that there are converted people not just among us, but around all over the world. And yes, we may not agree on absolutely everything, but is it not true, especially some of you have been across on mission fields or you've traveled a lot, I can literally... Now see if you identify with this. There have been so many times I have sat down on a plane with some person from some other

denomination, sat down on a plane and began to talk to them.

And within about two or three minutes, we're sharing our testimonies, we're loving one another. This guy is like my brother, like I've known him all my life. I'd die for him! That quick! And yet I've sat down beside some big Southern Baptist preachers and had nothing in common with them.

Because if you start talking about church growth, they get all excited. If you go to Colossians and start talking about the glory of God in the face of Christ, they're looking over your shoulder for someone more important to talk to. I want to tell you, we are one! These promises are true! The Gospel is powerful! And I'm sick and tired of people who don't read their Bibles, not realizing these things.

God has done a work and He's done it through His Son and it is not failing. It has not failed. We are one and every promise He ever gave is amen in Him.

I'll give you an example. One time during the war in Peru at the Sendero Luminoso, it was horrible. And there was this one church up in a place called Tambulic in Departamento Amazonas.

And it was right in a red zone. The Communists controlled everything. Christians were dying.

And they made a call. They asked me and another brother, Paco Lauz, if we would come up. We promised them we would.

But then we were warned, if you go up there, you're going to die. It's too dangerous. I'm sitting on the side of the road.

They're on the coast. And I told Paco, Paco, I don't know what to do. I'm going to get married in two months.

I really don't want to die right now. But what are we going to do? Because if we don't go, those believers are going to just be tore apart. And so I said, Paco, I don't know what else to do except I'm going to pull out a coin and I'm going to flip it three times in the air.

If it lands on heads all three times, I'm casting a lot. We're going. So I flipped it up in the air.

Boy, I sound spiritual, don't I? Flipped it up in the air three times. It landed on heads three times. I said, we're going.

We jumped in the back of a grain truck. They covered us up with a tarp. And we rode 24 hours underneath that black tarp under the Amazon sun.

At about midnight of the next day, we reached a place called Cerradero. It was pitch dark, midnight. We jumped out of the truck and kind of run just a little bit into the jungle behind this old building.

And we slept there at night. And then we took off during the day to make it up this mountain. Now, proving can make it up that mountain in about four hours.

Me, it takes about 14. And so we're making it up there. We got caught in the dark.

Dark, very, very dangerous. There are thieves. There are the terrorists.

Everything. And we're lost. And so we're sitting there and we're praying.

And all of a sudden we hear a little bell. We hear this little boy talking. He was with a burro.

And he was coming back from a field. And he was talking to his little burro. And we decided, well, let's follow him.

So we got up to him. He was very afraid. And we told him, look, we're not thieves or anything.

We're not terrorists. We followed him to his village. We stood on the edge of the village and we thought, okay, if the terrorists own this village and we walk in, we're dead.

But we can't stay out here either. And so I kind of scrunched down with my hat and my poncho and Paco's about this tall. He didn't have to scrunch down.

And we walked in and Paco said to a man we saw standing there in the dark, kind of a little bit drunk, the guy, and said, Are hermanos por aquí? Are there brothers here? And the guy said out a few cuss words and pointed over to an old house made out of adobe cut into the side of a kind of a cliff. La vieja. The old woman.

And so we knock on door. An old Nazarene woman. And I knock on the door.

No one answers. Knock on the door. Finally, latch begins to move.

Opens the door. A little Indian woman about this tall with a lantern going like that. Scared to death, wondering if it's the terrorists, what's going to happen.

And I said, Soy pastor evangélico. Necesito ayuda. I'm an evangelical pastor.

I need help. She grabs me. Pulls me in.

Takes me down this little cut in the dirt steps. Puts me down in the hay with Paco. She tells this little boy, Vete ahora.

Llámalos hermanos. Go right now. Call the other brothers.

Pretty soon they start arriving. One with a chicken. One with an egg.

One with some yuca. If they were all caught in that house, they'd be dead. We are one.

When they're really converted, we are one. Do you see what we've done? Because of our lack of knowledge, God is not glorified in this wondrous, powerful, infallible thing He's doing. Because we're so busy reading cultural statistics and trying to be church growth experts, instead of reading our Bibles, we are one.

He says, I'll give them one heart and one way. And look what it says, that they may fear Me always for their own good and for the good of their children after them. That does not mean My children are saved, but I'll tell you what it means about My children.

It means this, My children have the privilege of being raised in a home that honors Jesus Christ. And goodness falls down on their heads because of their father's relationship with God. Now, we're going to finish here, and this is the most beautiful passage, one of them in the world, and I'm going to show you how we distort it.

Now just read the first part with me. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good. Stop! Now that's what we as Baptists say all the time.

Security of the believer. God's made an everlasting covenant with us. He'll not turn away from us to do us good.

We can go live like the devil right now. No problem whatsoever. It's all a grace.

Security of the believer. Once saved, always saved. Whoopee! That's the problem with us.

We always read just part and not all. This is one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good.

And to those with whom He makes an everlasting covenant, He says this, I will put the fear of Me in their hearts, regeneration, so that they will not turn away from Me. So you see, it is the eternal security of the believer. But it is not this damnable doctrine that we have today of you're saved because you prayed a prayer, now live like the devil.

Because the evidence that God has truly made an everlasting covenant with you is that He's also put His fear in your heart so that you will not turn away from Him. I had a boy in Romania like about a year ago. He came to me and he said, I've spoken to every preacher in the country about, I don't know if I'm saved.

I don't know if I'm lost. I'm so confused. And you could just see the boy just living in just terror.

And so I took him through the whole book of 1 John. That's what it's there for. Took him through the book of 1 John.

And afterwards he said, Pastor, I know what it says. I said, Son, you need to seek God. He said, I know I need to seek.

Could you just talk to me for a while? I said, okay. I tried something Luther did one time. I said, Son, do you know any good discotheques? Because they're still in style in Europe.

Do you know any good discotheques? He said, what do you mean by good? I mean wicked discotheques. He goes, yeah, I do. A lot of girls.

A lot of drinking. Immorality. Prostitution.

Wild dancing. Yes, Brother Paul, I know. Go there.

What? Go there. Why? Go there and sin with all your might. Jump in the middle of them.

Have the best time you've ever had in your life. Go sin as you have never sinned before. Brother Paul, why are you telling me this? Go.

I don't want to talk to you anymore. Just go to that discotheque and sin with all your might. But I can't go.

Why can't you go? Well, I fear the Lord. And I said, I'll make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good and I will put the fear of me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from me. And the boy just broke down crying.

Oh, I'm saved. I could never. And just like lights start coming on everywhere.

You see, this stuff. Listen to me. You don't understand.

It was the night of the Lord's Supper. And Jesus had all those Jews sitting around Him. And He said, this is the cup, the new covenant.

I could just see them. All of them, their mouths just dropped open. And one of them probably said to the other, did I just hear what I think I heard? Do you mean the thing that our people, that was prophesied by Jeremiah hundreds of years ago, is on the verge of happening at this very moment? The work of a Messiah? The creation of a new people? Something so extraordinary that we'd have to be told it a million times to even begin to believe it? It's about to happen.

I'm so sick and tired of all these people and they're saying, oh, I just wish I lived back in the Old Testament where God really did something. The end of the ages has come to us. The fullness of God in Christ has come to us.

But we must avail ourselves of these things. Turn away from all this putrid vanity. Seek Him.

Seek Him. Until He lets Himself be found by you. Let's pray.

Father, You know, oh Lord, You know, the greatest comfort in my life I've drawn from that prayer. You know. Amen.

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