

# True Gospel - Pt4 - Repent and Believe

by Paul Washer

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*The true gospel involves transformation, not just salvation, and requires ongoing repentance and faith.*

**Duration:** 1:19:46

**Scripture:** Isaiah 66:2, Mark 1:14

**Topics:** "True Repentance", "Faith Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need to stop wavering between two positions and make a clear choice between the love of the world and the desire for Christ. He criticizes the practice of relying on religious formulas and repeating prayers as a means of salvation, stating that true repentance and faith are necessary. The preacher highlights the power of God in the salvation process and urges listeners to have a deep understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. He shares a story of a missionary who gave up worldly success to preach the Gospel, emphasizing the willingness to lose everything for the sake of Christ.

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## Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to Mark chapter 1. Mark chapter 1 verse 14. Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I pray that you would send revival. Lord, I am not a revivalist or anything of the sort.

And so Lord, my heart cries out to you, not as one who desires to bring revival, but as one who desires to be revived. Oh, dear Lord, Lord, just so helpless. I stand before you and your people stand before you so helpless.

We not dare, Lord, do anything that would produce a fleshly enthusiasm that will dwindle away in a few days. I have no desire, Lord, to present a great circus before people so that their flesh might be attracted. Lord, we desire that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on your people.

And Lord, that we know that there is not one thing that we can do to make that happen. Lord, we know that we have no handle on you, but we do trust that you are good and mighty. And Lord, out of a heart that wants to see you vindicated among the people.

Out of a heart that desires to taste, even in a greater way, and see that the Lord is good. Out of a heart, Lord, that desires to see your people walking in the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit. I would ask you, Lord, that you would come.

Oh, dear God, that you would come and shake this place. Dear God, I'm afraid to open my eyes. I'm afraid to open my mouth and say anything to your people.

Oh, dear God, that you would break hearts. That it would be you, Lord, that I could hide in the basement. And that you would do a work.

Oh, dear God, do a work in these days. That no man would dare claim as his own. That Lord, if anyone reached out and touched the work, you would strike him dead.

That you would do a work, Lord, that all would stand in awe of the power of God and flesh would be debased. That pastors and preachers as myself, Lord, would hide in the back of the church and be converted as children. Make no great boasts of any great thing.

To fall before your presence trembling, Lord. Oh, God, that even now you'd sit me down and that a youngster would stand up and say a few words and the power of God would fall on this place. So that everyone would see that it is God and not man.

Oh, dear God, that's the cry of my heart. And I know, Lord, that if your son asks for fish, you'll not give him a serpent. If he asks for bread, you won't give him a stone.

Greater and greater measures, Lord, of the Holy Spirit. Greater and greater measures of the Holy Spirit, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

There is so much to be done that the work is too great for words. There is so much to be done in your heart that the work is too great for words. What did you come out to see tonight? The work that has to be done in your heart is too great for words.

If you truly want to be changed, then cry out to God. Oh, that God would show you your helplessness. That he would show me my helplessness.

Oh, that he would show us our need. Oh, that we would see his face. Oh, that we would see his glory.

And oh, that he himself would fill us. That he himself would move. That he himself would do a work in your life that would be undeniable.

That would be undeniable. Here in our passage, we find something that is quite a rebuke against modern day evangelism. As a matter of fact, if modern day evangelists were to write this text, they have no place with this text.

They have no way to preach this text. Because instead of saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel. They would urge you on to do this.

The time is at hand. The kingdom is at hand. Now, pray this little prayer and ask Jesus to come into your heart.

That's what they would tell you. They'll substitute their words for his. And in that, the power of the gospel is lost.

And many times we can say that we are our own worst enemies. Throughout all of education, we are understanding what we call a reductionism. The dumbing down of America.

That we cannot teach certain things because not all can grasp certain things. We've got to find ways to make education entertaining. We've got to find ways to bring it down to the masses.

So we are told. But we have done the same thing in the church of Jesus Christ. No one today apparently can understand repentance.

No one today can understand truly what is faith. And so we have to develop little ecclesiastical and religious formulas to replace the word of God. And because of that, the power of God is no longer seen in our so-called conversions.

I want you to know tonight. That no one on the face of the earth has ever been saved by repeating a little prayer. Now you say, well, Brother Paul, I asked Jesus to save me.

Well, that's a wonderful thing. I'm glad you did. It says to call on the name of the Lord.

But what you need to understand, if you were saved, and there is a great possibility you were not. If you were saved, it was by a work of God creating in you a repentant broken heart. And a faith that caused you to throw yourself upon His work of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

And if you did repent then, you continue repenting now. And if you did believe then, you continue believing now. And you will continue unto the end.

Jesus comes and He presents the gospel before men. And then He makes a demand of them. He gives a command to them.

He commands all men to repent. He commands all men to believe. You say, well, Brother Paul, according to all your other teaching, that's quite impossible.

Men are spiritually dead and cannot repent and cannot believe. That is true. But neither could Lazarus obey the command and rise up and walk.

Except that the Lord gave him the power to obey it. One of the things that most breaks my heart and that we're going to touch on tonight is that we have literally taken the supernatural from salvation. And yet salvation is only a supernatural work of God.

We have taken the very power of God that takes out a heart of stone and puts in a heart of flesh that will respond to Him. We have taken the power of God greater than the power manifested in creation itself. We have taken that power that is required for the salvation of a soul and we have reduced it down to four tiny little spiritual laws and in the end get someone to nod their head to a prayer.

And by doing so, our evangelism condemns more men to hell than any brothel in the United States. Countless and countless individuals in Bible-believing churches, countless and countless individuals in Christian high schools and grade schools and Christian colleges that if they died, they would die in their sin and they would go straight to hell because the supernatural has been taken out of gospel preaching.

And so we need to look tonight again at what it means to be saved.

Again, how is one saved? What does God do? What are men commanded to do? Now, there's something very important in this text and I want to get right into the text and then go to other places. Time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. With the coming of Christ, with the coming of Messiah, with the coming of the gospel came a call to do whatever you do, do it quickly.

There is no time to waste. There is no greater thing coming. There is nothing else to be expected.

The Christ has come. The work of salvation has been done. The greatest work God has ever done on the planet and will ever do on the planet.

He has done in His Son, Jesus Christ. It is fulfilled. The time is now.

So act now and do not delay. One of the greatest compliments I can give a man is this. He lived until he died.

Most aren't that way. Even those of you who are in college, you are waiting, aren't you? Till some certain day comes and you will start living. So many people are waiting for something to happen.

Even genuine born again Christians are waiting for a certain time to come in which they will advance in one day and then pick up the plow and do their ministry and other such things. The time is now. The great work of God has been done.

Today is the day of salvation. One day you are on campus and you think, One day I am going to be spiritual. One day I am going to be mature.

One day I am going to take these claims seriously. That one day may never come. It may never come.

And if that is your attitude, it probably will never come. Whatever you are going to do, do it now. Stop limping between two positions.

If this world you so love and drink down like water is what you want, then take it and run. But if Christ is your desire, then the time is now. Stop fooling around.

Stop delaying. Stop presuming upon the grace of God. And whatever you do, do it now.

So the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. What should be done? What is required when the gospel is preached? After presenting what God has done for us in Christ, what should be done? We are to command men not to repeat a little prayer after me. We are to command men to repent and believe the gospel.

As I shared the other night, I heard of a seminary that actually in evangelism was teaching its young ministers of the gospel to do this. Whenever you ask someone the exploratory question, would you want to go to heaven, you should also begin to nod your head like this so that they'll begin nodding their head and it'll be easier for them to accept Christ. Or you get this thing, you witness to someone and you say, would you like to receive Jesus? Well, yes, I would.

Well, then call on the name of the Lord. Well, I don't know how. Well, then repeat this prayer after me.

Well, I kind of feel uncomfortable doing that. Well, just pray to yourself in quiet. Okay.

Well, but I tell you what, I'll pray the prayer for you. And if you agree with what I'm praying, squeeze my hand. Look what we have done.

And it's done every day among every kind of Baptist you can count. It's done every day by foolish little men who should spend more time studying their Bible and less time preaching. And it's being taught to you.

And some of you have done the same thing and you know it because I've done the same thing. Until I began to study God's word, until I began to study church history, until I began to study the founding fathers. But more important than them, Jesus Christ himself and the apostles and the prophets.

What have we done because of what we've done because of this little systematized way of getting your ticket to heaven? We have entire campuses full of lost kids who act just like lost kids, but they're saved. No, they're not. And no, you're not.

If you live in the world and love the world and the only thing your Christianity is is something you do on Sunday morning with your eyes propped open with toothpicks because you've been partying all night Saturday. And you're not a carnal Christian. Oh, you're carnal, but you're not a Christian.

What is required when the gospel is preached? First of all, what is the gospel? We had to nail that down Sunday night. It is not that God has. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

And that's it. It's not that just that you're separated from God because of your sin and Jesus died and somehow through that death. Well, you can come back.

No, the gospel is this, my friend. God became a man to redeem a sinful humanity, to call forth a people from a depraved lot. And in becoming a man, he lived a perfect life.

And then according to the foreordained plan of the father, he went to the cross. On that cross, he bore your sin. And as bearing your sin, the father in heaven crushed his only begotten son under the weight of all the wrath that should have fallen on you.

Someone had to die, separated from God, forsaken of God and crushed under the wrath of God. That's what the son did. And that cup he drank, it wasn't a wooden cross and it wasn't some little spiky nails.

That cup he drank was the wrath, the furious, holy hatred of a just God that was directed towards you. And when he was on that cross, he drank that down. And when he cried out, it is finished, he turned that cup over and not one drop came out.

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ is, my goodness, the most offensive thing on the face of the earth to an arrogant humanity. And all these preachers doing their best to clean it up so as to not make it offensive.

To make it acceptable to seekers, blasphemers and traitors they are. Preach a gospel, then preach a gospel, a good news mighty to save. Blood flowing from a tree, the wrath of God flowing from heaven and a resurrection.

My dear friend, one thing we have forgotten is that men are not simply saved by the death of Christ because a dead Savior is no Savior at all. Men are saved by a resurrection. They are saved by a vindication.

When Christ died on that cross, He vindicated the Father proving once and for all He is just and holy. And the Father vindicated His Son by raising Him from the dead. And now He is seated at the right hand of the Father and He reigns.

He will not someday reign. He is reigning now. There is a King now.

Now there is a King. I am so tired of people waiting and waiting and waiting for a day when He will come back and reign. He reigns.

He reigns in glory and power and majesty. And the room where He sits angels fear to enter. But then again, because of our lack of theology, we foolishly run in where angels fear to tread.

Never forget, as I have always said, this God of ours is as terrible as He is wonderful. He is as majestic and mighty as He is compassionate. He is not a lopsided God.

He is not a politically correct God. He is a God who will take the most vile and filthy sinner and touch them and make them clean. But He is also a God who will take the arrogant and the religious and dash their souls into an eternal hell.

Practicers and players of religion and mouthers and confessors of Christ that do not do the will of the Father will find their home in the deepest part of hell. The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent.

What is repentance? Days and days of lectures could not tell you all that is in this Word. But it is an important Word and you are called to do it. And if you have not done it and do not continue doing it, it is the evidence you have never known the Lord.

I was preaching at a very large youth conference, about 5,000 young people, several months ago. And it was the most frightening thing I have ever seen in my life. The preacher that preceded me got up and proceeded for the next hour to make fun of sin, to tell jokes, to cackle and do absolutely everything that a man of God should never do in a pulpit.

And then he gave the invitation and 3,000 kids came forward, popping their gum and giggling and poking at one another. And they went back into the counseling rooms and people were declaring it to be one of the greatest moves of God they had ever seen. It was just a bunch of kids doing what they have been trained to do ever since they were in Sunday school.

No tears, no repentance, no broken hearts, no weeping over sin, no self-hatred, no realization of offenses against God, given nothing. A move of God? I think not. Because when God moves, and particularly when God moves to save, there is repentance.

Now, what is repentance? The word means to change. Let me ask you a question. Have you changed? And here is something very astounding about this word that we are going to talk about quite a bit this evening, is that it is a present tense imperative, repent, and so is believe, a present tense imperative.

Do you know what Jesus is actually saying here? The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Now spend the rest of your life repenting and believing. Do you know that most people, and many of you, you treat salvation as though it were a flu shot? I did that.

If we were to go around today and visit homes of all kinds of fine Baptists and Methodists and other evangelicals, we would find that they had done, did that. Preacher, don't worry about me. I did that.

What did you do? Well, I did that. I repented and I believed. My friend, if you repented and believed only in past tense, you are lost and going to hell.

There is an initial work of repentance and an initial work of faith that continues on for the rest of your life, and that repentance grows deeper every day, and that faith grows stronger. He said repent. Now what did he mean? He meant change.

Change from what? From a life without God. Do you realize that most people, even most professors and confessors of Christ, are practical atheists, which is the worst kind of atheist. They are practical atheists.

They would never stand up in a congregation and say, I am an atheist and I deny the existence of God, but their life, their life is a manifestation that they really do not believe that there is a God before whom they stand and to whom they are accountable. Do you call yourself a Christian and yet God is nowhere to be found in your life? You live in absolute independence in your own mind from God. God is not in your morning.

He is not in your afternoon. He is not in your evening. God is not in your thoughts.

He is not in your heart. God is not before your eyes. He is not making decisions for you.

He is not directing you, leading you, guiding you. He is not convicting you, disciplining you. No, you run like a wild dog cut off from a leash with no one to reel you in.

My dear friend, that is evidence that you have never been born again. You have never been born again. He said repent.

We do know ever since Adam, our father, what was his great goal? That Adam of ours. Well, it was to be God. It was to be independent of God.

How many people today treat salvation and Christianity like some accessory that they wear with the rest of their clothes only to be put on on Sunday morning or during some religious activity? That is not Christianity and that is not repentance and that is not faith. Not at all. Not at all.

You see, we are an independent lot. We walk in our independent arrogance, in our arrogant independence. Is his word a lamp unto your feet? Does it direct you daily? Is the Spirit leading you? Because that is one of the evidences of the sons of God is that the Spirit leads them.

Have you repented from independence? And are you clinging unto God? It means to change your mind and your attitude towards sin. To change your mind and your attitude toward God. Have you done that? The sin that you once loved, do you now hate or do you still love sin and practice it whenever you can sneak out from the view of another? Has your mind changed with regard to sin? Do you love all the stuff the unbelievers love? Do you? And do you practice it in the name of Christian freedom? And if anyone ever comes up to you and tries to correct you, do you call them a legalist? Of course you do.

That is your greatest defense, isn't it? Have you repented? And are you repenting? But to me, the greatest definition of repentance in the entire Bible is found in Isaiah. And I want us to go there for just a moment. Isaiah 66, verse 2. For my hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being, declares the

Lord.

The Lord needs nothing from man. God needs nothing. Let me give you a quote from Tozer.

It won't be quite direct, but it's from Tozer. He said, If every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth were to go blind, it would not diminish the glory of the moon, the stars, and the sun. And if every man on the face of the earth denied God and was an atheist, it would not diminish his glory one bit.

He needs nothing from men. Nothing! Nothing! But he has granted unto men salvation. And he says, look here, he says, For my hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being, declares the Lord.

But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at my word. Repentance is a giving up and a falling upon God and God's mercy as your only hope and staying there, and staying there. Like a man who's walking on the edge of a cliff, snow and wind and rain and sleet, and he's on a ledge of no more than six to three inches, and he's barely holding on with all his might and he's trembling with fear.

And then when he reaches his hand one step further, he finds a hole, a larger hole. It's a cave. And he leaps inside that cave.

A team of wild horses could not drag him out of that cave. Repentance is when a man has a confrontation, an encounter with God. And I want to tell you something.

There's no such thing as a godless salvation. These little salvation packets and such things that they give you at all your conferences, where they can get you a ticket without you ever having to talk to the Savior. I want you to know that in every work of salvation, God is present and God is manifested.

And no one has to tell you you're saved, because that's God's job. But what happens, what brings repentance is when your eyes are open to who God really is. And then your eyes are open to what you really are.

And then your eyes are open to the judgment that awaits you. And with terrifying fear you grasp a hold until you find that the ground underneath you is breaking away. And the roots to which you're clinging are too weak to hold you.

And you're about to fall. And you throw yourself upon the mercy of God. And you throw yourself upon Christ.

And you throw yourself upon what He has done for you. And if anyone told you to break off once more in independence, you would die first. Because you fear to come off that one foundation that is the only foundation that does not quiver and does not shake.

Remember, my dear friend, once again the Lord will shake both the heavens and the earth. And the only foundation upon which you may be sure is Jesus Christ. It is collapsing.

I can remember one time in Peru, I was... The Sendero Luminoso, the Shining Path, was considered one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations that's ever existed. They put out a threat upon my life. They said, we're going to kill him.

And I can remember one night hearing a noise downstairs in the church and going down and seeing two men through the glass trying to make their way through the door. I can remember being absolutely paralyzed with fear. Paralyzed, immobile, I could not move.

In a sense, that's repentance. When you give up all hope in self, having seen the holiness of God, having seen your wretched vileness, your depravity, your iniquity, your filth, knowing that the foundation has been cut out from under you, you throw yourself upon Christ, you cling to Him, and you do not move. You are immobile.

You will not move a foot to the left or the right, knowing that you could perish. That it is only Christ, only Christ, only Christ that saves you. And you cling to Him.

The old preachers used to talk about a repentance from good works. Something's not mentioned much anymore. What does it mean? If man has one banner that he constantly lifts up in the face of true religion, it is his own self-worth and the worth of his deeds.

But when God is truly revealed to a man, as I have been taught by a dear friend, those deeds will melt away like little tiny figurines of clay before a blast furnace. It is to repent of all the hoping you have ever done in yourself. Repent of trusting in any value, merit, or worth you might have thought of about yourself.

It is throwing yourself upon Christ and Christ alone. Christ is everything. Absolutely everything.

And your heart is in such a way that you are contrite before God and that you tremble at His Word. It amazes me as I stand in pulpit after pulpit throughout this nation and I preach and I know that I am telling people things that they know that demonstrate that they are directly contradicting God's Word. And yet they do not tremble.

They do not tremble. They sit there with faces like stone. They sit there as though they were blind.

They sit there as though they were deaf or even worse. They sit there with a smirk of arrogance on their face. Even before the Word of God, their pride and their self-righteousness and everything else treats the Word of God with disdain.

It is one of the greatest passages of the Bible to me, Isaiah 66 verse 2, because it demonstrates something that is a reality in my life. And if you are a true believer, it is a reality in yours. If He had said that He esteems the one who is perfect in all His ways, where would I go? His eyes would never be upon me.

But what does it say? He doesn't say that. He says He esteems the one with a broken and contrite spirit and trembles at His Word. Does that describe your life? When you had your so-called conversion experience, was there a reality of the holiness of God? Was there a reality of your sin? Was there a reality of judgment? Did you tremble with a contrite heart before His Word? Or did you just do some little oral agreement with God? Because some silly little preacher led you into it.

What happened that day? What happened that moment? Was it God? Was it God? You say, I don't know if it was God or not. If it was God, you would know it. And then we get back to the idea of this continuous work of repentance.

It is not that, oh, twenty years ago one time God showed me my sin and I repented and I trembled at His Word. But since then my heart is closed and I no longer tremble at His Word and I'm no longer contrite.

No, I live in sin with a boldness in my face that is frightening.

I can do all sorts of things on the campus. I can go to all sorts of parties, do all sorts of things. And I can be in church on Sunday as happy as a lark.

What does that describe? Your lostness. Because this initial brokenness of spirit, this initial contrite heart, this initial trembling at God's Word continues on in your life and it does not grow lighter, it grows deeper. When I'm teaching on the Christian life, many times I'll use this illustration.

When I was a new Christian and a new preacher, I was so much holier than I am now. I was just so on fire for the Lord, so holy. Because what had happened? I'll tell you what had happened.

I had a revelation, as anyone would when they're saved. A revelation of the holiness of God through the preaching of His Word. A revelation of my sin.

A revelation of Christ and His atonement. And so my heart was broken and yet I was filled with joy because Christ had died for my sins and now I'm saved. But when I began to preach and I began to walk, I thought, well, right am I before the Lord.

One of His chosen. Oh yes, I witness and I preach and I do all these things. And people laugh at me and scorn and mock.

But then what happens? As life goes on and you continue walking with the Lord, one day you see a greater revelation of God's holiness than you had previously seen. Which led to a greater revelation of your own sin than you had previously seen. Which leads to a deeper repentance than you ever thought possible.

And the Christian life is a continuation of that on into glory. Greater and greater revelations of the glory and power and holiness of God. Greater and greater revelations of our sin.

And greater and greater and greater works of repentance in our heart. Until the end when you're ninety years old and you're a thousand times more sanctified than when you began. And yet you count yourself a thousand times more like dung in as much excrement.

You say, but that would lead to depression. That would lead to so many terrible things. Not at all.

Because with the greater revelation of God's holiness comes a greater revelation of our sin. And the greater revelation of our sin comes to a deeper work of repentance. And in that deeper work of repentance comes a greater revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

And we're lifted up with joy unspeakable. Not because of our ability to obey, but His ability to save. A young man wrote me a while back and he said, I'm so holy.

I'm so unholy. And I'm so ignorant to preach. I'm so miserable.

And I wrote him back. I have the gift of encouragement. I wrote him back and I said, young man, you are much more unholy and much more ignorant than you now realize.

And I said, young man, I know your life. I've seen you. I admire your walk with God.

There are things that you have gained in the little time that you have walked with Him that I have yet to accomplish. And I admire that work. But I will say this.

Although you may be holier than I, I am happier than you. Because your joy is coming out of your ability to do the right things before Him. And my joy comes from the fact that I am gloriously saved by a mighty Redeemer who not only saves me, but keeps me by His power.

You see, and this is what we need to see. The Christian life is almost a stepping down in death. Each new revelation of the holiness of God brings a greater realization of what we are and a greater work of repentance.

But oh, He never leaves us discouraged, does He? He never leaves us downtrodden. Even when the prophets came to Israel with some horrendous, horrible message of wrath that was spoken in such a way it would be offensive and even frightening to share in mixed company some of the things those prophets said. And yet, no matter how hard the rebuke, they never left the people of God without hope.

Turn to Him and you'll be saved. Turn to Him and you'll be saved. He is a glorious Redeemer.

So you see, my dear friend, salvation, the repentance in salvation, it's not just an initial work that stops there. You were saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved. It is a continuous work of God unto glory with continuous revelations of its truthfulness.

Now, what do I mean by that? If God begins a work in someone, a genuine, true work, He will carry it out until it is finished. As I taught last night, He'll not lose anyone in the middle of the sea. He didn't tell the disciples, let's get in the boat and drown halfway through.

He said, let's get in the boat and go to the other side. I had a young man come up to me last night. And I would die before I would let it be known who it was.

But he came to me with such a deep, abiding hatred for his sin, a worry over the condition of his heart, a desire to be holy, trembling and asking, is it well with me, this struggle and fight I have against sin, this breaking of my heart, could it be an indication that I do not know Him? And in some cases it could, but not in this case. I said, young man, listen to me. The fact that you're broken over your sin, the fact that you're wanting to be holy, the fact that you're desiring righteousness, the fact that you're seeking to be free and more free and more pleasing and more pleasing, with this broken and contrite spirit of yours, with this trembling at the word of God, this is not evidence of lostness, it's evidence of salvation.

But for all the bold-faced ones that left as though their hearts were hard as stones and went out and committed sin even after hearing the preaching of the gospel, yes, my dear friend, that is evidence of something, evidence of a lost state, of a lost soul. Those of you who call yourself by the name Christian, let me ask you a question, Christian. When was the last time you found yourself alone, weeping over your sin, weeping over your lack of devotion, weeping over your lovelessness, weeping over the hardness of your heart, weeping over participating in works of darkness, weeping over being drawn in by other students into things that were ungodly? When was the last time you did that? Because if it hasn't been in a long time, there's only two possibilities.

One, you've reached sanctification and have no more need of confession, or your heart is as cold as a stone. You see, this work of repentance that begins in God's work of salvation will continue on until you are taken into glory. You are taken into glory.

If you have truly repented, you have a different relationship with sin. Am I describing you? Am I describing you? Or am I speaking about things that are completely and totally foreign to you and to your brand of Christianity that comes so easy through those little tracks? I said repent. Repent.

Now, what could bring about such a work of repentance in the heart of men? Only a magnificent vision of God. A magnificent vision of who God is. Let me read a passage to you.

Just listen. Hear now and I will speak. I will ask you and you will instruct me.

I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you. Therefore, I retract and repent in the dust and ashes. Those were Job's words.

I have heard you by the ear. So many people today sit in churches. They've heard the old, old story.

They've heard the songs. They've heard what is to come. They've heard what they were to do.

But they only heard. They only heard. But their eyes have never seen.

Now I'm going to share something with you. Especially for those of you who are Baptist. I'm a Baptist.

So I can tell you these things. Baptists basically in many ways form their theology by reacting to false doctrine. And they become just as false.

What do I mean? We are so afraid of experience in Christianity. Because we see so many abuses of people who have so-called experienced God, had an encounter with God. We are so afraid of experience.

We are so afraid of feeling. We are so afraid of someone even saying, Yes! God has come! God has touched me! I know it! I see it! I feel it! We are terrified of that. And why? Not because the Bible speaks against it.

John said, What our eyes have seen, what our hands have handled. The thing that cracks me up is, It is so pitiful. When the power of God is no longer moving among the people, they do such pitiful things.

Well, I know He's here. Why do you know He's here? Well, where two or three are gathered, He promised to be here. That's it? That's it.

My friend, that promise holds true. But that's not what Jesus gave us that promise for. Oh, we've never felt His presence.

We've never seen the working of His presence. We've never felt His presence in the innermost room and chamber of our hearts. But oh, we know He's here.

Did you pray that prayer? Yeah, I did. Well, then you're saved. Well, I'm not really sure.

Hey, don't call God a liar. He said if you prayed it, you'd be saved. Isn't that the way we do evangelism? Yes, my dear friend.

That's the way evangelism is done. And it damns more people to hell than all the taverns in the world. A young boy came up to Mordecai Ham one time.

Mordecai Ham looked at him and said, Boy, what's wrong with you? He said, I need to get saved. Mordecai looked at him and said, Well, then just go home and get saved. And turned around and walked away.

You would have thought that kind of harsh. That kind of bothers me a bit. But he's being much more biblical than 99.99% of the preachers preaching today.

See, the boy was coming for someone to save him. Mordecai directed him to the only one who could save him. God.

I was preaching a while back. This was years ago in Tennessee and I was preaching. And God began a revival.

This is not a revival. But God did begin a revival in the hearts of men. And I noticed one night.

It was about Wednesday night. That people started weeping on one side of the room. And it just started kind of going on.

People started weeping. And they started coming forward. And the church had it all set out that they had all the counselors on the front bench there.

And they were supposed to... I was to nod at this lady who was head of all the counselors. And they were to come forward. And all these people around the altar and they're weeping.

I'll never forget one precious little girl is just convulsing over here. Crying out to the Lord. And that lady just kept looking at me.

When are we supposed to go? And I said. I went like that. No.

And then I knew she's going to bolt on me. So I went down there and I stood beside her. And she keeps looking at me like.

We need to comfort these people. We need to help these people. I said.

Sister, no. And she took a step out. I put my hand on her shoulder.

I said. Sister, don't touch the ark of God. And she backed up.

And we waited. About ten minutes passed. And weeping started to turn into cries of hallelujah.

And joy. You're going to go heal people that God himself is wounding? Because of course we all understand now that men are much more loving than God. That is the great argument whenever someone decides that church discipline needs to be practiced, isn't it? We can't do what God said because we're more loving than He is.

It's the same way with repentance. Leave them alone to God. Leave them alone.

Let God deal with them. It's why I always tell people. I will help you in the way of salvation, but I will not tell you you are saved.

That is the work of God. I will not take you through a formula so that I can go down the road like most Southern Baptist evangelists and tell the next church that a hundred people got saved. When the fact is true, probably none of them did.

Because none of them come to church on Sunday. And those that do, do not live godly lives on Monday. You see, salvation is a supernatural work of God.

Has this happened in your life? Have you repented? Do you continue to repent? Is your heart a heart of stone that does not flinch at the conviction of God's Spirit? Or is your heart a heart of flesh that responds to divine stimuli? I don't care if you're a bull in a china shop. I don't care if sometimes you run off like your head has been cut off. I don't care if you get yourself in all sorts of trouble.

My question is, is God dealing with you? Does he go before you and after you? Does he hold you in, bind you in? Does he restrict you at times when you want to run into sin? Does he convince you of your sin? Does he work repentance in your life? Is there a genuine work of repentance that began the day of your salvation and continues unto now? Because if there's not, you know not the Lord. Now, he said in Mark 1, verse 15, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe.

Believe. I worked for years and years in a country in South America where the general populace believed they were saved because simply they had been baptized. That's it.

How many times did I hear, I've been baptized. Everything's fine. You look at that.

You find Baptists and others who may be here. You look at that and you say, that's preposterous. How could someone be so deceived? Physician, heal thyself.

I'm fine. I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart. I already prayed that prayer.

I already did that. Oh, you did. Well, if it was genuine, you will continue doing it up until this time.

Look what we've done. Do you understand what we have done? Do you understand what kind of generation we live in? Do you understand the preaching that is going on? Do you understand the falsehood of the whole thing? The salvation is a supernatural work of God and God will do a work. And when he does a work, he will do it with repentance.

And he will bring about faith and it will hold true until the very end. Because he who begins a good work finishes it. Do you see that? And I know what they tell you.

I know what even your parents tell you and what they think. Oh, they've gone off to college and of course they've got to sow those wild oats and all that thing. But eventually they'll rededicate their life.

Do you know what happens in Southern Baptist life and in other Baptist life? Let me tell you. Isn't it amazing that most people in Baptist churches get saved in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School? That's when they get saved. Then when they're a little bit older, 14, 15, they begin to rebel.

Well, Johnny's saved, he's just carnal. And then they begin to rebel against parents, rebel against God, don't go to church, don't do anything. Go to college, even Christian colleges.

Drink and fornicate and all sorts of things that go on and you know I'm telling you the truth. And then, maybe when they're 30-something, they rededicate their life. They stop doing a few different things and

they rededicate their life.

How is it that that's not found in Scripture, but it seems to be the way God works in America? And unique only to America. They didn't rededicate their life, there's no such thing as rededicating your life. If there was a genuine work in that 30-something period, it was called salvation.

And if it really did happen, it will bring about more than church attendance. It will bring about godliness and it will bring about a passion for Christ and a desire and love for God's people. You see, as I said yesterday and I repeat again, why would most of you even want to go to heaven? Because heaven is about beholding the face of Christ.

You don't want that. And you say, yes I do. Okay, how much do you seek His face? It's about being separated from the disease of this world and separated unto God and godly pleasures.

You wouldn't want to go there. What makes you think you would? There's no high fashion there. There's no arrogance there.

There's no rebellion there. There's no you being your own person there. There's the glories and pleasures of God there.

Why would you want to go? If you don't want those things here, what makes you think you want them? Here's one thing that we have to be very, very careful. Even I need to be careful the way I preach these things. In this wise.

You see, I can take you through the book of 1 John and I can show you all the tests that John lays out so that you can determine whether or not you're a Christian. But I want you to know something. You can still do a little bit of obedience and a little bit of devotion and a little bit of loving the word and everything else.

But it really comes down to this. Do you have any sort of a passion for Jesus Christ? Do you? Do you have any passion for Christ in your heart? Any real passion? Any real desire to see his face? Do you have any desire to be embraced by the Father? Do you? That is a thing that happens in the life of a regenerated child of God. It's a passion for God.

And sometimes I think of my little boy and I have known so many little scribes that take joy in being scribes and in wrangling with words and demonstrating their knowledge and preaching in so many places because they happen to be smarter than everyone else. And I say, oh God, save my little boy and save him from such things. I would rather him to be a wild man.

A wild man. A bull in a china shop. But with a passion.

A mighty, ocean wave, tidal, current passion for God. Because in that he would be pleasing to his Father. Did I describe you? Or what is your passion? What is your passion? I'll tell you.

What do you think about? That's your passion? And it's your idol? Unless it's God? What do you talk about? That's your passion. That's your passion. Now answer the question in your own mind.

Is Christ your passion? Is he the midst of your conversation? Do you meet with friends to talk about him? Even some of you who are Bible majors. Let me ask you this question. Has your search for the truth become pharisaical in that the more truth you know, the more you can climb above your brethren in faith and demonstrate your superiority? Or is your seeking for truth, the seeking for a person, Jesus Christ, to

lay down your life before him and behold the mystery of his being? The mystery of his person.

Repent and believe. Now we look at this faith thing. So many people put too much.

They have a wrong definition of faith to begin with. And then they put too much faith in their faith. Never forget, my friend.

We are not saved by the strength of our faith. We are saved by the strength of the Savior. Now I want us to look for a moment at faith.

Let's go to the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 1. Theology determines a great deal of how you live. I studied basically and was trained in neo-orthodoxy in seminary. Kantian ideas of faith.

Faith is a leap out into the darkness. My friend, that's not faith. I'm sorry.

It's not faith at all. Faith is not a leap out in the darkness. Please do not tell anybody that.

Well, you just got to believe. Well, they can't believe if they don't have anything to believe. What is faith? That's one of the first things that we have to establish.

What is faith? Is it a leap into a dark? No. Fools leap into dark. Lost people leap into the darkness.

Faith is a leap into the light. Not a leap into darkness. This is where you're going to see that salvation is truly a work of God.

Verse 1, chapter 11. Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. Now, let me give you just an illustration.

I believe that my mother is Peter Pan. Is that faith? Look at, let's look. I have the assurance that the hope I have that my mother is truly Peter Pan.

I have assurance that that hope is true. Is that faith? Or if I have the conviction, I've never seen my mother fly. I've never seen green leotards hanging up in the bathroom.

I've never seen a funny little hat. And although we do have very large mosquitoes, I have never seen Tinkerbell. So is that faith? Well, according to the definition of most Christians, I just gave you faith.

No, I gave you lunacy. Here's the question. There are two great sins that I see associated with the doctrine of faith.

One of them is unbelief. But the other is presumption, which is practiced quite frequently on Christian television. To believe something.

Unbelief is when you do not believe what God told you. Presumption is when you believe something he did not tell you. What is faith? Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

How can we have assurance of something we hope for? Only if God has manifested it to us that it is true. And how can we have a conviction that things exist that we've never even seen? Because God tells us it's true. Now, I want you to know that you can set a person down and you can have him read John 3.16 a million times.

But unless God does a supernatural speaking to him. Unless a voice within a voice speaks to him. Unless the Holy Spirit himself opens up his heart and mind and tells him these things are true.

He will not believe it. One of the things that scares me about apologetics. Now, apologetics are good.

The defense of the faith. But one thing that scares me about apologetics is that the existence of God rests on some men's ability to argue. I've got a watertight argument here for the existence of God.

Well, you're a man and I hope God's existence doesn't depend on your argument. My friend, let me tell you something. I have worked in some of the deepest, darkest jungles in South America.

And one of the greatest illustrations I can pull for this is from the Aguaduna tribe. The Aguadunas couldn't even find Jerusalem on a map. They don't even know what a donkey looks like.

They don't have a description of the temple. And they most certainly can't give you 10 reasons why they believe Jesus Christ is resurrected from the dead. They can't.

But they would die before they would deny that truth. Now think about this for a moment. Think.

How is this? There's some of you that I just described with that also. You couldn't give 10 historical reasons for the resurrection. And you might be better off that you can't.

So why do you believe? Think about it. Was it just a leap in the dark? Do you believe because you think it's a good thing to believe? Why do you believe? Because the Bible says it's so? Well, why do you believe the Bible says it's so? Why do you believe the Bible? I'll tell you why. The Reformers, especially John Calvin, nailed this one right on the head.

Do you know why you believe in the resurrection? Do you know why you believe that death on that tree saves you? Do you know why you believe that the Bible is the Word of God? Because the Holy Spirit told you. Because God told you. And here we go again.

It is a supernatural work of God. And the only way you can believe is if God speaks to you. The only way you can have assurance for what you hope for is if God told you it's true.

The only way you can have convictions that something exists that you have never even seen is because God told you it's true. Did God tell you? Has God dealt with you? Not men, not mother, not father, not preacher. Has God dealt with you? Harvard professor said one time, he said, I can argue with an argument.

I can't argue with a changed life. I can argue with an argument, but I can't argue with conviction. Faith is not a leap in the dark.

Faith is believing what God has revealed to you. And if you are saved, when you came under the preaching of the gospel, even though everybody in the room heard that, God spoke to you. And the Spirit bore witness that those things you were hearing, and you now believe them and cannot deny them because they are more real to you than the hand in front of your face.

Why? Because thus saith the Lord, He spoke to you. Or is your salvation based on the fact that someone took you through that track and you got all the way to the end without getting mad? And you did pray that prayer. Or did God do a supernatural work in your life? Now another thing about faith that you need to

understand that's quite important, is faith is a throwing yourself upon God.

It is a mistrust in every other thing, and an exclusive trust in what God has done for you. I've been hearing too much from Christians, this thing about God and country, that makes me want to puke. I'm a patriot.

I love my country. I don't like that. God does not belong in a conjunctive relationship with anyone or anything.

Don't say God and country. Don't say God and king. It is God.

If you want to put God in a conjunctive relationship, then say Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But other than that, you're limited. No one and nothing is on the limit with God.

It's the same way with your faith. It's not Christ and something. It is Christ and Christ alone.

I knew a missionary who used to say these words. Whenever he would witness, he would say this. He would look at people and he would say, after presenting to them the gospel, when he tried to describe faith to them, he would say this, For Christ's name, I have lost many things.

For Christ's name, I have suffered terrible injustices and insults. For Christ's name, I have burned up in the jungle with a fever. And for Christ's name, I have almost frozen to death in the mountains.

For Christ's name, I have been threatened with guns and fists and every sort of thing. For Christ's name, I have been impoverished and gone hungry. And if I died right now, I would go to heaven not for any of those reasons.

And then he would say this. I would go to heaven because 2,000 years ago, the Son of God shed His own blood for my soul. And nothing in my hands I bring simply to the cross of Christ, I claim.

An old deacon in our church who I love, even as a little boy, unregenerated, I recognized that he was a special man. Godly man. He told one time of having always been known as a good man.

And then he came under the preaching of the gospel. He heard it, even though he'd heard a thousand messages with the ears. One day, God opened up his heart.

And it disturbed him so that after the church, he didn't eat. He went up into the hayloft of his old barn and he stood there and he said he hung his feet as far as he could off the edge of that hayloft without falling off. And he looked down and he kept saying, Oh, Lord, what does it mean to believe? I've always believed you existed.

What does it mean to believe in you? And then he said, Paul, like a light turned on in my head. And he said, These words came out of my mouth. Father, I am going to trust only in what you have done for me in your son, Jesus Christ.

And if that work is not strong enough to save me, then I am going to hell because I refuse to believe in any other thing. That is faith. Only the Christian, only the Christian can make a claim to heaven without being arrogant.

You talk to a Muslim and you ask them, Are you going to paradise? They say, Yes. Why? Well, I keep the Koran. I've made the pilgrimages.

I give alms to my people. I'm a righteous man. You talk to an Orthodox Jew.

Are you going to heaven? Yes, I am. Why? I love the law of God. I walk in the paths of righteousness.

I am waiting for the Messiah. I am a righteous man. You talk to a Christian, a true Christian.

Sir, are you going to heaven? Yes, I am. Why? In sin my mother conceived me. And in sin I have lived.

I have broken every law that God has ever made. And I am deserving only of the deepest, darkest spot. And then the one giving the question says, Sir, I'm confused.

All these other fine men made a bold argument for their case of why they would go to heaven. And here you're telling me, after making a claim to heaven with joy on your face, that you're the vilest of all men and that you deserve the very judgment of God. How is it that you're going to heaven? I go there, Sir, by the merit and virtue of another, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who lived a perfect life and died a perfect death and rose again from the dead.

And only through Him am I saved. You say, well, that will lead to license. Such grace will lead to disobedience.

Such grace will lead to a superficial and flippant Christianity. No, such grace will chain you. As I said last night, the Apostle Paul called himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ, slave of God.

And I think he meant that literally because he was in chains. But I think there was a deeper meaning to it. That cross, that heavenly vision, it captured him.

And it captured him for good. Such love as this. What else can I do? Francis Schaeffer said, how then shall we live? How then shall we live? The Bible tells us, with a contrite and broken spirit, trembling at God's word, working out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Deeper, greater visions of God's glory. Greater visions of our need. Greater visions of the grace of God.

And joy unspeakable. Joy unspeakable. Eating at the Master's table.

Being called a child of God. As David brought that old cripple in to his table to eat. Jesus Christ has brought these spiritual cripples to his table to eat and called them brothers.

And his Father calls them sons. How then shall we live? Fear of hell is a true motivation. It is.

It is used throughout Scripture. I always find these men who argue with me, they say, don't believe in hell because a loving Jesus would never send anyone to hell. Do you know we would have almost no doctrine of hell whatsoever if it weren't for the loving Jesus? You search through the Old Testament.

You search through the Apostles, the New Testament. Oh, hell is there. But it's not very well known.

It's Jesus who gives us our doctrine of hell. It is Jesus who is the hellfire and damnation preacher. It is He.

You do a quick study with the topical Bible and find out where all the verses on hell come from. They come out of the mouth of our loving Savior. Is hell that bad? Is hell bad enough for a Savior to die? But hell is not the supreme motivation for godly living.

The mystery of godliness, the truth that leads to true godliness and holiness is the fact that God became a man in the name of love and walked on this earth and carried your sin and suffered His own judgment against you. He suffered in your place and rose again from the dead a friend of sinners. And if you have seen that heavenly vision, it makes you a prisoner.

Morality in itself brings no glory to God. Do you realize that? Being a good kid brings no glory to God in itself. Oh, he's a good kid.

You don't want them to look at you and say, oh, he's a good kid. You want them to look at you and say, that kid has a good God. That kid has a mighty God.

I knew that kid before. I've seen him now. This God that has intervened in his life is a mighty God and powerful to save.

Would they say that about you? And are you a prisoner? Are you a prisoner? I remember a missionary who tells a story quite often about how he was in the university studying to be something great in the eyes of men. And the Gospel got a hold of him. And he dropped down from one of the big men on campus to a fool standing on the campus mall preaching the Gospel and handing out tracts.

And his friends, discovering that he was doing these things, thought that he was beside himself and going to lose everything he had gained. They pulled this man aside, this young boy, and they said, what are you doing? You're going to lose everything you've gained. People are beginning to laugh at you and mock you.

You see what they do to you when you hand the tracts out. They laugh, and the girls wrap them up and throw them back at you. Why are you doing these things? And the young man's response was, what else can I do? What else can I do? He died for me.

What else can I do? Show me another way. Show me a door. I don't know where to go.

All I can see is when I go forward, the love of Christ is there. When I look up, the love of Christ is there. When I look down, it's there.

It's to my sides. What else should I do? The heavenly vision, the dark night of Him hanging on that tree for me, for me, yes, it was for me. What else will I do? Have you not seen that thing? Dark, so dark, that it would terrify you.

A silence that would burst your eardrums. A body hanging. Displeasure of the Father poured forth.

Agony of a son who had dwelt in the bosom of his father, being ripped from that bosom and made to be sin. He who knew no sin. Have you not seen that vision? If it hasn't imprisoned you, you haven't seen it.

And if you haven't seen it, you will die in your sins and you will go to hell. Where are you tonight? Adam, where are you? Adam. Silly preachers say that because God asked that question, it means God doesn't know everything.

Can you imagine? God knew exactly where Adam was. God asked the question because Adam didn't know where Adam was. Adam, where are you? I hope I've destroyed your religion.

I hope I've destroyed your Southern Baptist I'm okay, you're okay. And your other Baptists and the rest of you the same way. I hope I've destroyed your method to get to heaven.

And I hope that you throw yourself upon Christ. And for those of you who have thrown yourself upon Christ, I hope you've seen tonight that all those who come to Him, He will in no wise cast out. Oh, God.

Oh, God. Would You make a name for Yourself? Father, glorify Your name. Oh, Lord, I know the answer You told to my elder brother.

I have glorified it and will glorify it again. Oh, dear God, get glory for Yourself out of these people. Get glory for Yourself out of this mumbling.

Get great glory for Yourself, Lord. Rend the heavens and come down and get glory for Yourself, Lord. Not unto us, not unto us, but unto You be the glory, O Lord.

Oh, dear God. Desire makes my lips want to keep speaking, Lord, but faith tells me to stop.

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