

What Is Your Ambition in Life?

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having an ambition to please God in all aspects of life, and the consequences of not pleasing God, highlighting the hope of the believer in Christ.

Duration: 56:11

Scripture: John 3:16, Romans 8:16, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Salvation Message", "Personal Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the weight and responsibility of preaching the word of God. He acknowledges that for some, preaching is a talent show, but for others, it is a heavy burden. The preacher highlights the importance of recognizing the eternal consequences of our actions and the need for salvation. He shares his personal testimony of transformation and emphasizes the necessity of repentance and belief in Jesus Christ for salvation. The sermon concludes with an invitation for further discussion and understanding of the things of God.

Transcript

I've heard this song many times. How can you sing that song? Look at it. Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea.

If it weren't for Christ, you'd have no plea at all. You'd have no word at all. There'd be no good word spoken for you.

The only one that would stand there would be the accuser. And the charge would be guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty. And you would have no defense whatsoever.

You'd have no defense. But look what this says. Before the throne of God, not before the throne of an inferior prince or some little mayor of a small town.

Before the very throne of Almighty God who rules the universe, I have a strong and perfect plea. And who is that? A great high priest. But not a great high priest like a cold administrator or a CEO.

No, I'd have a great high priest whose name is love, who suffered everything I have suffered, who has walked my way except without sin. Someone who understands everything that's ever happened to me, everything that's ever been wrong with me. And yet he stands there.

Why? Because the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 that love endures. When there's absolutely no reason to hope in me, when there's absolutely no reason to believe me, when I've failed so many times I can't even begin to count, it says love remains. When every other characteristic and virtue walks out the door, love stands there and that's who he is.

A great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. There are people on this earth who wouldn't have one good word to speak about me. But here the very Son of God, thrice holy, holy, holy, holy, he stands and pleads for me.

There's a real sense in which, for example, sometimes when I'm praying and I ask God to save a man, I can't say, Oh God, look at that man and save him for his own merit and worth because he has none. When I prayed for you, I can't stand up before the throne of God and say, Oh God, save these people because they're so deserving because there's not one who's deserving. And I can't even say, Oh God, do it for me because who am I? But I can say, Oh God, look to your right hand and look in the face of the one who never did anything but give you pleasure and do it for him.

Do it for him. And he says, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me, my name is graven on his hands. My name is written on his heart, carved into his hands.

Not with a scalpel that causes little pain. Scalpels are sharp because the sharper the knife, the less the pain. But carved into his hands with nails.

My name is written there. My name. It's not just that he has the name of the people of God there.

It's not just the name of a multitude elect there. It is the name of each one of us is there. That is what is so wonderful.

You know, so many of you like myself, you would have to say that there are many circles I don't run in. And there are many circles I can't run in. I simply cannot run in those circles.

It's impossible. I'm shut out. I'm not smart enough.

I'm not rich enough. I'm just not good enough. I'll never be written on their banisters.

My picture will never be hung from their walls. There are so many places where I cannot go in. But here I stand.

In the person of Christ before the very throne of God. And my name is not simply written in a book of life. It is carved into the hands of the one whose name is life.

There is a tremendous difference. You see, you don't have a principal vouching for you. You don't have a certain amount of brownie points before the throne of God that will enable you to just about get in.

But you have the perfect life of the risen Son of God standing there on your behalf. If God be for us, who can be against us? It always makes me so angry sometimes when I hear the way that verse is preached. We say, the devil is coming against us.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Or people are against us. Or circumstances are against us. Or health problems are against us.

And if God be for us, who be against us? Well, that applies there. But that's just the very beginning. That's the foothills of the Himalayas of the meaning of that text.

My dear friend, if Christ be for us, then we can stand fully accepted before the throne of God. Fully accepted. And then look what it says.

My name is graven on His hands. My name is written on His heart. One of the hardest things.

For example, I remember one time a group of Pentecostals came. Dear friends of mine, I love them very much. Great blessing for me.

I just love them, care about them. And they were telling me, Boy, Brother Paul, you know the great sign that you have faith is if you can raise the dead. And I said, that's nothing for a Baptist.

And they said, what's the greatest sign of faith to you? For me, what requires the greatest faith is when I stand in front of the mirror of God's Word. And I see my failure. And I see my wrong.

And I see my blemishes. And I see my spot. And I see my leprosy.

What requires the greatest faith is for me to believe that God loves me exactly as He says He does. That's what requires faith. And do you want to know why it requires so much faith? Because you've never seen love like that before.

Not in any place is there an example of the love of God towards you if you are in Christ Jesus. There is no example. God cannot, even in His omnipotence, look outside of Himself and point to a mother's love or a father's love or the love of a person for another person and say, behold, this love is like my love.

It's not even the beginning of His love. And so, my name is not only written on His hands externally, but my name is written on His heart. Upon His heart.

Upon His heart. I would that we would sing this song every night. Every night.

It is the most precious Word to me. Everything that is wrong with me becomes right through the truth that is in that song. I'd probably preach this song tonight, except some of you would walk out of here saying, he doesn't preach the Bible.

Now I want us to go... Thank you. I want us to go to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Paul says in verse 9, Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God. And I hope that we are made manifest also to your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you, but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer to those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. And if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.

And he died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things passed away, behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God.

In verse 9, Therefore we have as our ambition, whether at home or present, to be pleasing to Him. Now I know that this is an outreach to the community, and I am assured that even if we were in a great and mighty biblical church, there would still be many, many lost people listening to the sermon. But this sermon will touch, by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, anyone who listens to it, whether saved or lost.

Because the Word of God is a double-edged sword. It is a powerful, powerful thing. He says, Therefore we have as our ambition, so many people, not just so many, everyone, every man I have ever met, has ambition.

Some only have ambition to live. Some only have ambition to breathe. In Peru we say, Tu vives porque el aire es gratis, which means, you only live because air is free.

You have no ambition whatsoever. You have no purpose, no cause. But in a sense, everyone has an ambition.

But every ambition with the exception of one is useless, frivolous, stupid, and vain. So many people. In this town right now, there are great men and poor men.

There are mighty men and men without power. And all of them have ambition. And most of those ambitions are vain.

And they are vain because they are temporal. It doesn't matter what you become in this world, what you own, your fame. No matter what you do, or the name you wear, you are going to die.

And most men are living for that ambition. And I dare say, many of the people of God have a wrong ambition. Living for the wrong things.

Things that cannot bring peace. Things that cannot bring life. Things that cannot save us, or make us whole.

Paul says, we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. Now here's the thing. Many people who go to church today, many people in different religions, think, oh, we're in the house of God, therefore we must act a certain way.

Oh, it's Sunday, therefore be careful what you say. Oh, here comes the pastor. You better straighten up.

My friend, none of these are your worries. Because God is omniscient. To seek to be pleasing to Him in some places, is only self-preservation and hypocrisy.

You only seek to act good because you think you're going to get in trouble if you don't. Or you maybe think that there are some places where you can hide from Him. None.

No. Many have tried it, and even in hell, there is no covering from God. So many people wrongly say today, hell is hell because God's not there.

No my friend, hell is hell because He is. So Paul says, no matter where he's at, whether home or absent, no matter what happened, what is going on, the circumstance of his life, his greatest ambition is to please the Lord. Whom do you wish to please? Couldn't I say that even for the most mature Christian, it is a battle in our hearts not to be constantly thinking about pleasing ourselves.

And yet when we please ourselves, we find no joy whatsoever, just gravel in our gut. But when we seek to please the Lord, it doesn't matter what it results in or what circumstances we may enter, because of obedience, we are still happy. I can remember one time when I was going to Bible college, I had to go down this highway, about 19 miles of stretch of highway, every day that I was going to school.

And there was a great big trucking company over there, reputation of being a mean group of men. And every time I'd go by there, the Holy Spirit was just saying, go in, go in, witness. Lord, if I go in there, they'll throw me out.

I don't care. I want you to go in. This is not so much about them as about you.

Whom do you wish to please? And I went by there for weeks afraid to go into that place. And finally I pulled the car off the side of the road there on the highway and just wept and wept and wept. Because I just didn't have the courage to go in there and finally said, I just can't take it anymore.

And I pulled the car in there. I went in. I began to witness to the truck drivers.

And they threw me out. But when I walked across that parking lot, my feet were not touching the ground. I was so filled with joy, Lord, even though, look how kind our Master is.

Even though my true ambition was nothing more than self-preservation. The Holy Spirit hounded me until I had to go in. And I obeyed, not willingly, but by compulsion I obeyed.

And still my Master blessed me with joy. What a kind Master. There is no one that can stand up and testify that they obeyed the Lord or made the Lord their ambition and they were sorry for it later.

But everyone in this room can stand up and say there were times when they sought to please self, and it still sticks in your gut like gravel. He says in verse 10, the reason, one of the reasons, why the Apostle Paul said he sought to be pleasing. Now this is not the only reason.

We're going to go on later and we're going to see another reason. But this is a reason and this reason is not being preached enough today. This is the reason why Paul sought to be pleasing.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. A dear man that's mentored me for years who has forgotten more about God than I'll ever know, he said one time he was sharing about men standing before Christ and another man stood up and said, I'll not be afraid on that day. My friend responded by saying, Sir, you will melt before Him like a tiny wax figurine before a blast furnace.

You will not be bold on that day. There is a real sense in which you and I need to take in consideration something. Not only that life is fleeting and that you are going to die, but that when you open your eyes you shall stand before the judgment throne of Christ.

You will stand before Him on that great day. I tell the young men that I disciple and I will tell my sons when they are old enough to hear, you must live between two days. You must live between two days.

There should be two days that affect the entirety of your life. And what are those two days? The day Christ hung before men and the day all men will fall before the Christ. Those two days ought to be the thing that control you.

On the one we see love, that the love of God would be so great towards even His enemies that He would die on that tree to redeem them. So love of that day that comes forth from the cross and the heart of the Christ, it ought to be our motivation. But there is another day and there is a real sense in which that day should fill you with the right kind of fear.

The day that all men will stand before the judgment throne of Christ. He says, for we must all appear. You try to escape.

You hide under a rock. You cry out to the mountains, fall upon me. And you hear a voice from an angel, no, you must appear.

I have another thing to do. No, the angel will say, you had another thing to do on the day the preacher came to call. You had no time, but now you must come and you must stand before the judgment throne of Christ.

You must. Doesn't matter how big you are, you will not escape. Doesn't matter how small you are, you will not be passed over.

I worked for three years in inner city Fort Worth. For my last bit of time there I even lived in a street mission. And I can remember all the time when I would preach the gospel, many poor would come to me and say, yes, God is against the rich.

I said, no, God is against the proud. Whether they're rich or poor. And I've met just as many proud poor people as I have proud rich people.

It's not a case of rich or poor. It is a case of will you bow before the Christ now? Or will you bow before Him later? But you will bow. He says, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body.

Very important word here, your deeds in the body. There is such a religiosity in America. It's unbelievable.

There are so many people who are just religious. And they are filled with their hallelujahs and their goosebumps and their tears and their big teachers that they go from channel to channel to hear and travel across the country to see. And they're all filled with emotion and everything else.

And they say, yes, I love Jesus. He's in my heart. Yes, I feel Jesus.

Yes, He's in my heart. Your heart tells us nothing about your relationship with God, but your body most certainly does. How does that heart of yours direct that body of yours into a thing we call holiness and obedience? Someone says, well, you can't judge a book by its cover.

Jesus didn't tell you that. As a matter of fact, He said just the opposite. You will know them by their fruits.

Don't talk to me about the inward workings of Christ. Show me the inward workings of Christ through the deeds in the body. Through the deeds in the body.

He goes on and He says, we will be recompensed for our deeds in the body according to what we have done, whether good. My dear friend, to be here tonight to hear what I've just said and not to have what we talked about earlier as your great hope is a terrifying thing. I sometimes use this as an illustration.

I tell people, I was a missionary in South America for 11 years, 12 years. I served in the jungles. I served in the deserts.

I served in the Andes Mountains. I served through a war. I risked my life.

I went without food. And I go on and on with the story of the mission activities in Peru. And then in the end, I tell them, and if I died right now, I would go to heaven, not for any one of those reasons.

If I died right now, I would go to heaven because 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ shed His own blood for my soul. It's the only hope. I await this day of judgment with joy, with joy unspeakable.

Why? Because all my ducks are in a row? Why? Because I am just the greatest Christian ever walked on the earth? No, not at all. But His blood is sufficient. His death is sufficient.

What He did for me, my hope does not come, my joy does not come from my performance or my ability to serve God. My joy and my hope come from the perfect, finished work of Jesus Christ on my behalf. It is Jesus, and only Jesus.

We go on and He says this. Now look at verse 11. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men.

Some of my brethren are so without balance when it comes to the sovereignty of God. They're afraid to witness to someone. They think they might interrupt what God's trying to do.

I don't know. I want you to know something. If I could drag you into heaven, I would do it.

I want you to know. Someone said one time I was preaching, they said, oh, you're trying to scare us. I said, you discern correctly.

You're trying to win an argument and persuade me. You bet I am. I'll argue with you all night.

I'll go through logic, whatever you want to do. The fact of the matter is, knowing the fear of the Lord, I persuade men. I beg men to repent and to believe the Gospel because that is your only hope.

That is your only hope. You can't be a preacher. Well, I guess you could.

You can't pray much. You can't read the Word much on your knees without, in a sense, being filled with a holy, holy fear of what will fall upon this earth. My dear friend, you've read the book of Revelation.

You need to understand some things about it. It's apocalyptic language. It's written in symbols and signs.

And anytime you look even in the Old Testament, you find the prophets talking about wheels within a wheel. Things that we can't even begin to understand. How can these things be? What is this man talking about? Let me share with you what's going on.

When those prophets saw the things of God, God is so big, so great. When they saw those things, their mind could not comprehend them, nor could their language speak them forth. And they just began to talk using anything they could possibly say to try to describe what could not even be imagined.

When the Bible talks about the judgments of God, it is the same way. Men are speaking almost as men. They have gone mad because they've seen something too big for their mind, too horrible for their language.

We treat God today as though He were nothing more than a Santa Claus or an old benign grandfather, and we do not realize what is going to fall upon this earth. We have no idea. And so when I preach, I want to preach as a dying man to dying people.

Even the youngest, most beautiful infant sitting here tonight listening to my voice is dying along with my little boys. Their mother is dying. Their father is dying.

We are all dying. And there is a real sense in which this world is dying under the wrath of God. Some people come to me sometimes and they say, Brother Paul, you talk about the wrath of God, the judgment of God.

We don't see it on the earth. Do you realize that every day millions of people are swept off by death into hell? The wrath and judgment of God is manifested every day against the wicked. But one day, there will be a colossal manifestation when all of humanity will stand before Him and all humanity will be judged.

And if Christ is not there for you, if He is not your High Priest now, He will not be your High Priest then. I'm reminded of the book of Proverbs. When wisdom calls out in the streets, cries out for men to turn in and to listen and learn and live, but they refuse.

And so in the end, when their calamity comes upon them, they cry out to wisdom and wisdom mocks them. Too late! Too late! Too late is the word! Men that have had so many opportunities to come to know Christ, young people who sit in church every Sunday and yet do not hear the Word of God, they will hear, Too late! Too late! And the very salvation that called out to them will then mock them in judgment. Oh, my dear friend, preaching is a terrible thing.

It is a terrible thing. Oh, I know it's not for most. For most, it's a career.

For most, it's entertainment. For most, it's a talent show. But for some, it is a heavy, heavy, terrible burden.

A dying man preaching to dying men and preaching as though he shall never preach again. Knowing that in this very tent, in this very part of this city, I am looking at some people who will stand before God and hear, Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.

And then I am also looking at some under this very tent who will be cast into hell. And the last thing they will hear when they take their first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because He has rid the earth of them. And he says, Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God, and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

We are not, again, commending ourselves to you, but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. My dear friend, I count it the greatest of privilege to be here tonight. The greatest of privileges.

A dear man who mentors me, they asked him one time, they said, about big churches and things like that, and he said this, Some of the greatest sermons that have ever been preached have been preached to six people. It is a privilege to come here and preach to you. But I will not come here and dazzle you.

I will not come here and flatter you. I will not come here and seek to have an appearance with you. I will come here and tell you the truth.

This night, the next night, the next and the morning, I will tell you the truth. Whether it's old-fashioned, whether it's received, it does not matter. I will tell you the truth because I am not here for gain.

False prophets come for gain. False prophets turn up their noses today at tents in inner cities and look for coliseums in the suburbs. The preachers see this as a wonderful opportunity to spread forth the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is where God is. Is it well with your soul? Is it well with your soul? If you die tonight, will you enter into glory or will you split hell wide open? I don't care about your self-esteem so much. And I'm not really concerned about whether or not your checkbook is balanced.

My only question is this. Is it well with your soul? Now he goes on and he says this, For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. And if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

I was preaching at a church a while back, several years ago now. A very posh, very large, very beautiful church filled with people. The balcony, all the finest of people from that area there.

And the Lord laid it upon my heart to preach like a madman. And when I finished, I remember looking up in the balcony saying, some of you think I have gone mad. Then come back tonight and hear a madman rave.

Now what's the point? Let me ask you a question. Well, let me tell you something first. I know it's not quoting from Augustine, it's quoting from Rocky, but it will have to do.

The trainer looked at Rocky and said, Rock, the worst thing that could ever happen to a fighter has happened to you. You've gotten civilized. The worst thing that can ever happen to a preacher is for a preacher to get civilized and respectable.

The Bible says that even with Paul, sometimes he seemed to talk like a madman. And why is it? We're not talking about computers. We're not talking about some technical difficulty.

We're talking about heaven and hell, life and death, God and the devil, sin and righteousness. We're talking about judgment. We're talking about eternity.

How can a man not rave? How can a man not lift his voice? How can a man not have passion when he's looking at people who will die? So Paul says there was a sense in which sometimes he seemed like a madman, and if that was the case, it was for God. But also, if he's in his right mind, it was for them. What does it mean? He'd become all things to all people.

To the philosopher, he would seek to speak to him on his terms. To the Jew, he sought to be a Jew. He didn't want to put a stumbling block in front of anyone for any reason.

And that is why in true preaching, what sometimes you're going to come across is this. It's going to seem as though a madman is raging. And then at other times, it's going to seem as though a scientist were sitting down trying to lead you through the finest, most technical of sciences.

Have you been moved by the words, but you don't understand? Then guess what? This preacher will stay here all night along with the other pastors and talk to you about what has been spoken. Do we seem to be out of our mind and it's confused you, but it has intrigued you and you want to know? Then come and sit with us. And we'll talk to you about the things of God in ways you can understand.

That's what Paul is getting at. Now let's go on. My favorite part, verse 14.

For the love of Christ controls us. Love of Christ that did not spring forth from Paul's piety. That's something very important to understand.

It was the love of Christ that came out from Christ through Paul. I want to tell you something, that prior to my conversion, I was a student at the University of Texas. And I don't know how most adequately to describe who I was, except maybe the word self-centered jerk would be good.

The only thing I thought about was me. And I couldn't do anything else. It destroyed all my relationships with people.

Why? Because I was all about me. That's it. When Christ came into my life, I didn't gain some piety that now I'm pious and therefore I love people.

But Christ changed my heart. And He put in my heart a love for people. What am I to gain here tonight preaching under a tent? Except to have the joy of in the name of love preaching to you the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why would anyone come here to be a missionary except for the love of Christ? Why would anyone go off to some of the darkest, most remote places on the face of the earth except for the love of Christ? Now let me give you a warning. There are some who make great gain out of preaching. There are some who line their pockets and feed off the sheep of God.

And maybe you doubt any preacher or gospel because of these wolves. But recognize this, not all of them are the same. There are people, God still has men, who preach for one reason and it is here.

For the love of Christ controls us. It constrains us. It pushes us on to leave house and home and career and everything else to do what? To go out into the highways and the byways and sow the seed of the Gospel.

And why is it so important? Because we know it's the world's only hope. And why do we know that? Because it is our only hope. Preaching in the church in Austin this Sunday, I said, come unto Christ.

All of you, come to Christ. It doesn't matter what you've done or what you have become. Come to Christ.

And I use my own life as an example. Twenty-two years ago, the Lord found me half naked in my apartment, having slept the entire night in my own vomit, so drunk I couldn't stand. And yet He is mighty to save.

And the love that He manifested to me on that day as I looked in the mirror and saw my own face covered in vomit, the love He manifested that day, surely it was enough to not only forgive all my sins, but to cleanse me from all unrighteousness and a guilty conscience. To cleanse it. The love of Christ constrains us to be here.

He goes on. The love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died, and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Two things from this.

First of all, sometimes when I'm preaching, and I've done this, I've learned this well from older preachers. Sometimes I'm preaching and someone will pass and come forward or come and talk to me after the service, and they say, oh, Brother Paul, I'm so afraid of hell. I want to be saved.

And I say, I'm sorry, that's not enough. Any snake will run to save its life when a field is on fire, but it's still a snake. Young man, if you're going to come to Him, you have to come to Him because you're broken out of love for your trespasses against Him and His kindness to you, and you want to love Him and adore Him and glorify Him.

Salvation is not a ticket to escape hell. It is a relationship with God. But another thing that those of you who are saints here tonight, who are Christians, I want you to look at this.

Look what it says. The love of Christ, does it control you? The Bible said, in every true believer, the love of God has been manifested, shed abroad in their hearts. Do you know that love? I know so many Christians who are so many people who are actually quite moral.

They dot every I, cross every T, and I don't even think they're saved. They're religious and they're moral, but when you begin to talk about the love of God, they don't have a clue as to what you're talking about. Can you honestly say that the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart and that love compels you to want to follow hard after Jesus and to obey Jesus? He goes on and he says, now this is very, very simple logic.

Paul says, I've concluded something. What has he concluded? One died for all, therefore all died. And he died for all.

Why? Just to get you out of hell? He died just to fix you? He died just to bring salvation? No, he said he died so that they who live might no longer live for themselves. But for him who died and rose again on their behalf. I live in Illinois on a farm.

And years ago when I had to leave for Peru, I had to leave my widowed mother there on the farm. And I'll never forget that day of saying goodbye to her. And she is crying, and I'm crying.

And I said, Mom, Mom, I am not my own. I did not choose Peru for myself, but my Master is calling and I must go. And she said, Son, before you were born, I gave you to God.

You are not your own and you are not mine. You must go. It is no longer your life, but your life belongs to Him.

You go where He tells you to go. You do what He tells you to do. And the wonderful thing is the commandments and callings of Christ are not burdensome.

They are a joy for those who have been truly regenerated. They are a joy. You are not your own, Christian. Nothing you have is your own, Christian. You belong to Him. My children belong to Him.

My wife belongs to Him. Everything belongs to Him. You'll never be happy and I'll never be happy until we grow into that truth and learn to obey that truth.

He goes on and He says this, verse 16, Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh yet, now we know Him in this way no longer. There is something very important here about the Gospel that is being said.

I think if you look at all the teachings of Paul, you begin to understand something. A little bit more than just what it appears at first. How did Paul first view Jesus in the flesh? As some country bumpkin that came from Nazareth that had not been taught in the schools where he had been taught.

Did not wear the finery of a very well kept rabbi. He had nothing of the appearance of a Messiah or a King and he judged Him according to the flesh. A madman from some far away place on the borders of Israel.

But then what happened? On the road to Damascus, God opened up the eyes of Paul and Paul saw Jesus now not according to the flesh, but according to who He truly, truly was. I can remember in my own life when I was a weight lifter, it's hard to believe that now. There's one time when that's all I did.

Now my body is wracked with arthritis. I have a degenerative disease in my bones. This bone is dead.

That's why they have a cast on it. And I praise God for all that. But I can remember there was a church just right across this little alley from our gym.

And on Wednesday night, I would see them all going to church. I would open up the garage doors and the windows of the gym and the door and I'd turn up the stereo as loud as it would go to ACDC's song, Highway to Hell, just to bother them. On campus at UT and everywhere else, mock the Christians.

Mock the idea. On and on and on and on. And then one day, God opened up my eyes and Jesus became most precious, exceedingly, abundantly more precious.

You see, you say, well, I look at Jesus and I don't see that much precious there. Do you want to know why? You say, yes. Are you sure? Because it's going to be quite offensive when I tell you why.

This is the reason why you look at Jesus and you find nothing that attracts you. Because He is holy, righteous, and good. And if you have not Christ, you are depraved and wicked and hateful.

And you no more can like what you see in Jesus than Satan likes when he sees Jesus. You have a wicked, degenerate heart. And the only way you're ever going to think Jesus in His holiness is beautiful is if God comes and changes your heart and gives you a new one.

And that is why, my dear friend, I can't lead you in a prayer tonight and expect you to be saved. And I can't manipulate you or get you to hold your hand up. God has to move and supernaturally change your heart.

That is all. That is why preaching is so foolish and seems so weak. I can preach my heart out.

The pastor can follow me. The other pastors that are here can jump up and follow him. We can preach to the point where blood is coming forth from our throats because we have preached with such passion.

And yet you will sit there cold as a stone unless God moves on your behalf. But God often does move on people's behalf. Now, he says, therefore from now on, verse 16, we recognize no one according to the flesh.

This is most beautiful. Most beautiful. Most beautiful.

I can sit down on a plane to Nigeria, sit down beside a man who has lived 10,000 miles away from me, sit down beside him, open up my Bible, and hear him say, are you a Christian? Yes, sir. And to see his eyes light up, I'm a Christian too, brother. Oh, we've got six hours here over the Atlantic.

Can we talk a bit about him? You know him. I mean, you've never met the man. He's closer than a brother in one second.

He means more to me than my own flesh. You say blood's thicker than water? Fine, spirit's thicker than blood. I mean, I just know him.

And he knows me. And you sit down, and you fellowship, and you get off and wait in the airport in Brussels, and you can't be separated. Let's go eat together.

Talk more. Why? No more do I notice anyone according to the flesh. What does it matter? Rich man, poor man, black man, white man, red man, yellow man.

I suppose a green man I would take notice of. But it doesn't matter anymore. Do you know Christ? And let me tell you this.

I spend hours a day studying theology, and my main job in Europe and Africa and everywhere else is teaching theology. But I want to tell you something. They may very well know Christ and not have quite all the theology I have, and I will not judge them or condemn them for it, because, sir, what truth do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as though you haven't? I will not make a certain doctrine come in and cause division between me and someone.

I remember on the mission field, there were people who labeled me. Missionaries said, Paul Washer is a charismatic. I am no more charismatic than a man on the moon.

And I went to them, I said, why are you saying this? You went over to that church over there, that charismatic church, and you preached. I said, yes, I did. There were some charismatic or Assemblies of God or Pentecostal people over there at that meeting, and they asked you to come and instruct them, and you went.

I said, yes, I did. I said, listen to me. I said, men, if I walked across this street right now or I walked across this entire town on my hands and knees over broken glass to witness to a God-hating, wife-beating, child-molesting, drunk, what would you say about me? They said, well, we'd say you were a man of God.

You were evangelizing. So, I go across the street to help teach some brothers who have some error in some places in their life, and you're all mad at me? Look at what we've become. Never forget this.

In the New Covenant, love isn't a thing. Love is the thing. It is the litmus test for everything you claim to be.

We're supposed to love our enemies, how much more our friends, and how much more our brothers. The rule is love now, church. That's all it is.

I can quote Scripture, and I can preach to the cows, come home, but how I love my wife determines how godly I am. And how I love those who speak against me. It's all about love.

And it is about becoming a new creature. Paul the Apostle in another place said, don't talk to me about circumcision or uncircumcision. I want to know about a new creation.

He goes on and he says this, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creature. The old things passed away. Behold, new things have come.

Now, I'm going to save that passage for tomorrow night because I want to build upon that. What is the invitation? My friend, the invitation's been going on for the last hour. It's the same that it started with.

If you're here right now, you might be saying, can I be saved? Well, let me answer that. I don't know. I just don't know.

You say, well, I've never heard anybody say that. Well, you should have. I don't know if you can be saved.

Let me ask you some questions. Are you sitting here right now only thinking about how hot it is? Nothing's touched your heart about the love of Christ? You're just sitting there kind of cold as a stone. You fulfilled your obligation.

Now it's time to go home. I've got bad news for you. You cannot be saved.

At least, not right now. You say, why do you say that? Without repentance, there's no salvation. Without a moving of God in your heart, there's no salvation.

But if you're sitting here right now, you say, yes, when I first got here, I was just fulfilling an obligation. Someone asked me to come. It was hot.

I just wanted to get through the singing. I thought it was boring. But something started happening.

And as I was listening to the songs and maybe as the preaching was going on or something, my heart was strangely warmed. I see my sin. I see the holiness of God.

I know I can't save myself. I want to be saved. I want to be saved.

I want to follow God. You can be saved. That's the beginning of repentance.

You lack one thing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Believe on Him.

I'll tell you a story. I'll finish with this. It was about 30 kilometers south of Alaska I was preaching.

And it was one of the most special things that ever happened to me. I was getting ready to get up in the pulpit. We were actually in a place where there were more grizzly bears than people.

And I got up in the pulpit and when I turned around, get ready to preach, a mountain of a man walked through the door. He was one of those men whose fingers seemed to be that big around. Just a mountain.

A man in his 60's. The saddest man I've ever seen in my life. And so I immediately just began to preach the Gospel.

The Gospel. And he just sat there the whole time with his head down on the front row. And so when I finished preaching, I went to him and I said, Sir, what's wrong with you? He pulled out a manila envelope and he pulled out some x-rays and he showed it to me.

He said, I'm going to die in three weeks. I've been wandering around this town looking for a thing they call a church. I'm going to die in three weeks.

Now he said this, I've lived in the outback all my life. I've never been in a church building. I've never really seen a church building.

I believe there's a God. And I heard one time somebody talk about some fellow named Jesus. Now I'm going to die in three weeks.

And I'm scared. And I have never been afraid in my life of anything. And so you know what most evangelists would have done at that moment? They would have said, Well, sir, repeat this prayer after me.

And he would have gone to hell. I said, Sir, you heard the message. Did you not understand what was preached? He said, I understood it.

But I didn't understand it. Now think about that. He said, I understood it.

He said, I understood the logic of it. I understood the words. Your words were clear and simple.

But I did not understand. So I said, Okay, sir, faith cometh by hearing. We've got all night.

At least we have three weeks. And I opened up my Bible and I started going through every promise in the Bible about salvation. We read John 3.16. I don't know how many times we just went from the book of John all the way to the book of Revelation and back again.

And when I finished, I said, Sir, do you understand it? He said, I understand it. But I don't understand it. Most men would have taken him then and dropped him down on a knee and got him to pray a prayer.

And then declared him saved. And told him that if he did not believe God had saved him, he was calling God a liar. That's what they would have done with him.

I said, Sir, okay, let's start again. Faith cometh by hearing. Let's go through it.

We went through it again and again and it was over an hour. And then we got back at John 3.16. I said, Sir, your life depends on this. Read it again.

And he goes, For God so loved the world. And then he went. And I said, Sir, what's wrong? He said, I'm saved.

I'm saved. All my sins are forgiven. I'm saved.

I'm saved. And I said, Sir, how do you know that? He said, haven't you ever read this verse before? I'm saved. When God tells them they're saved, you don't have to tell them they're saved.

You never tell them they're saved. You tell them how to be saved. God tells them they're saved.

Do you desire to be saved? Is there a stirring in your heart? I'm going to turn this service over to the pastor. I don't know what he'll do, but I'll tell you this. Don't leave here tonight.

We will literally sit here all night if that's what it takes so that you may come to know the One who we sang about in that song. Pastor.

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