

# Where in the World Is the Church?

by Paul Washer

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*The church is in a state of disarray due to a lack of men of God, a practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture, a rampant ignorance of God, a failure to address man's malady, and an ignorance of the gospel.*

**Duration:** 1:18:33

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:15

**Topics:** "Reformation", "The Nature of the Church", "The Sufficiency of Scripture"

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## Description

Paul Washer emphasizes the urgent need for the church to return to the sufficiency of Scripture and the importance of deep theological understanding. He laments the current state of the church, which he believes has strayed from biblical truth and is filled with ignorance about God, the gospel, and the nature of true conversion. Washer calls for men of God to be grounded in prayer and the Word, warning against the distractions of modern culture and the superficiality of contemporary church practices. He stresses that true regeneration and understanding of the gospel are essential for a vibrant faith and a healthy church. Ultimately, he encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God and to uphold the truth of Scripture in all aspects of church life.

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## Transcript

It is a tremendous privilege for me to be here. You have no idea. I'm almost ashamed to be here, to be in a conference even associated with a man who has been the greatest of influence in my life.

It is a moment of great joy. But I think to myself, the caliber of men, our standard must have lessened to let someone like me in a conference like this. As you hear me preach, you might say to yourself, well, here we go again.

Another yank has come to England to tell us all what to do when his own country is as messed up as ours. That's true. Maybe we ought to simply dismiss right now and all fall on the floor and weeping and fasting.

Because our nations have fallen. They have fallen. We need such a move of God.

But we need men of God. God seems to always work through His men. But we must be men set on fire by the Holy Spirit and men founded in the truth of the living God.

We must stand in the gap, but we must also build up the wall and we must know how to do it. We must be men of prayer who intercede, but we must be men who know how to place block upon block until the

church is strengthened. Yes, we need fire.

We need theology. We need doctrine. It is not a mystery why the church limps so poorly in the U.S. and in England and in Europe.

It is because we have departed from our God. It is because the men who ought to be standing in the pulpit preaching the truth are like busy little boys playing games instead of staying in their study to know their God. We need men, not just zealots, but men who stand more in the presence of God than they do in the presence of other men.

Deep men. There are great maladies in the church today and I'm going to address some of those as time allows. These are not whims.

These are not personal opinions. And these are not just slight problems. And these are not just things that we can say depend upon culture.

These are foundational to having a healthy church. Having a healthy Christianity. And so let's take a look.

Let's begin. I'm going to give you several indictments, if you will, with regard to the church of Jesus Christ. Things that must be changed.

Deficiencies. But I want you to realize this. As a man who preaches, and a man who has pastored, and although it may cause some degree of anger, I want you to know this.

I lay the blame most at the feet of those of us who call ourselves men of God. Some of the things I say today may anger you, but ask yourself, is it true? Some of you who are younger and zealous for reforming the church may say amen and pump your hand in the air and say, that's right, but you need to understand something. You, as well as I, carry the blame.

And if you do have some biblical knowledge, then my question to you would be, what do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast? Also take heart. The Bible describes the Messiah as a refiner's fire and a fuller soap. The evidence that Christ is still among the candlesticks is that He is rebuking the church and purifying the church.

It is when there is no longer an exhortation from Christ, there is no longer a rebuke from our Lord, that we must realize that Ichabod has been written over the doors of our congregation for the glory of the Lord has departed. Also know this. That no matter how hard Christ's rebuke is to His people, He never, never leaves His people without the greatest of hope.

Hope. Because He who began a good work in us will finish it. Now the first thing that I want to point out, and it is extremely important, extremely important.

Don't think that this is superficial. If you think it's superficial, you do not understand your day, nor do you understand the Scriptures. The first problem in the church is this, a practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture.

A practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture. Let me read to you from 2 Timothy 3, 15-17. And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, and here's the point, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. Now, if you have come to embrace that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word of God, you have done well. But you need to understand something, you have only fought half the battle.

There is another portion of the battle left to be fought, and if you do not win this battle, the first half, well, the meaning of it is unknown. You must not only embrace the inspiration of Scripture, the infallibility of Scripture, you must embrace the sufficiency of Scripture. That everything the man of God needs, everything the church of Jesus Christ needs, is found in the Scriptures.

And the man of God and the church of God has no need of going outside the Scripture to discover more truth about how they should function or minister. I want to tell you today that there is the greatest of influence in the church of sociology, anthropology, and psychology. And because of it, because the men of God are not often enough in the Word of God, they cannot discern when something is actually biblical or it is just a product of the social sciences of the day.

And because of that, the church is disorientated. The church is functioning in a way that she should not function because much of what we do is based upon a slippery slope, sinking sand of social sciences. One theory is grasp.

It lasts for two or three years in our culture and it is kicked out and replaced by another social theory. The church cannot exist in that way. The church must stand upon the Scriptures and the Scriptures alone.

In order to know how to minister as a church, in order to know how to minister as a preacher, we do not go to the anthropologist, we do not go to the sociologist, we do not go to the psychologist, and we do not go to the culturally relevant church growth expert. We go to the Scriptures. Our foundation is built upon the work of the exegete and the theologian.

Let me give you an example. A young man wants to go into youth ministry. So he goes off to some Bible college where they teach him how to do youth ministry, which is absolutely preposterous.

He ought to go to school to learn how to do Greek, Hebrew, hermeneutics, biblical exegesis, systematic theology, so that he can take the Scriptures and minister according to it, not according to some program. We must have the Scriptures. I want to share with you a text that's extremely important.

When they say to you, Isaiah 8, verse 19, when they say to you, consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter. Is this not a perfect example of psychology? No clear word. No certain word at all.

Just whispering and muttering. A mutable, changing word. Should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead? The spiritually dead? On behalf of the living? The spiritually alive? Should we go outside the church to find information with regard to how the church should function? Absolutely not.

We have the full content of the truth we need in the Scriptures. Young man, if you're here and you're a street preacher, if you want to be a preacher, know this. Your greatest task is to know the Word of God.

To the law and the testimony. If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because they have no dawn. Will you consult the enemies of Christianity in order to answer the deepest questions with regard to life? Now let me share with you something, a practical application of this.

We are not to send out questionnaires to carnal people in order to find out what kind of church they want. We're to go to the Scriptures to find out what kind of church God wants. We are to be seeker friendly, but we need to realize there is only one seeker and it is God.

And if you want to be friendly to someone in the church, be friendly to Him. If you want to accommodate someone in the church, accommodate God. After all, whose church is it? It is His.

To the wind with what men desire. We are called upon to serve God above all things. God does not bend to the will of men, but men are to bend to the will of God.

In the church's attempt to be relevant, she is now powerless. We are not relevant to our godless culture because we look like our godless culture and we act like our godless culture and we give our godless culture what they want. We are relevant because we stand in opposition to the culture and we are a clear-cut alternative to the culture.

A second indictment. A rampant ignorance of God. Let's know what Jeremiah says in chapter 9, verse 23 and 24.

Thus says the Lord, Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom and let not the mighty man boast of his might. Let not a rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me. Let me ask you a question for everyone.

In your church, where either you preach or you attend, when was the last time the church dealt with, taught the attributes of God? How much time in your church, in your pulpit, in all that you do in the name of Christianity, how much time have you personally studied the attributes of God? Let me ask you this question. In Bible college or seminary, how much time was dedicated to simply studying the attributes of God? It is men who know their God that will be strong. Look at this.

I go throughout America. I don't know that much about Europe, but I don't assume you're far more advanced than us in these things. And I ask people, how much time in your life have you given simply to knowing God, which is the greatest of all knowledges? Most of the people I come into contact with, even pastors, have never given a serious study to the attributes of God, and yet they call themselves men of God.

As men of God, our primary responsibility is to know Him. Do you know what one of the problems with the church? It doesn't know it's God. It doesn't.

Listen to this dangerous text. Psalms 50, verse 16 through 22. But to the wicked, God says, what right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you.

When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother.

You slander your own mother's sons. These things you have done, and I kept silent. You thought that I was like you.

I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. Now listen to what he says here.

You thought that I was like you. That will always be the tendency in the mind of a man to bring God down to His level unless that man is regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and unless that regenerate man is constantly renewing his mind in the Word of God with regard to the doctrine of God. That is our most precious knowledge.

We are to be a people who know their God and can clearly proclaim their God. Sunday morning is the greatest hour of idolatry in the week. Why? Because people are gathered together all over the world, especially all over the West, worshiping a God that is a figment of their own imagination, a projection of their own thoughts about God.

And I can prove it. You go into a church and you preach an entire week on the attributes of God. Not something new.

Not a new revelation. No, not at all. Classical orthodoxy with regard to the attributes of God.

And many of those people who the Sunday prior were worshiping God will come up to you and say this. That's not my God. I could never love a God like that.

That's the truth. What is our great need? To know God. Theologically, intellectually, doctrinally.

But also to experience Him. To know Him intimately. You know, we have all these conferences in the United States.

We're famous for them. To get people excited. What kind of offense would it be to my wife if I had to go to a husband's class in order to get excited about my relationship with her? It is the same thing.

Pumping people up with false fire because they do not know God. You know God and you know His Gospel. No one will have to come around to motivate you.

Third indictment. A failure to address man's malady. We must speak much of man's depravity.

First of all, it's theologically correct. What do you mean? The closest thing we have to a systematic theology in the Bible is the Book of Romans. And if you'll notice that Paul dedicates the first three chapters seeking to do only one thing.

Are you ready? Condemn every human being on the face of the earth. That's his goal. Why? Does he take some joy in that? No.

It is a means to a greater end. It is to convince men of their lostness and their inability to save themselves through their own righteousness. It is to shut off every human hope in the heart of a man so that he will then throw himself upon the mercies of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Look what he's doing. This staggering intellect of the Apostle Paul. He's using everything that God has given him in order to argue with man and prove to man and shut man up in a cage so that man has nowhere to go but to hope in Christ.

We do a great disservice to men. And greatly do we dishonor God when we do not speak of man's depravity. First of all, when we treat sin superficially, we're fighting against the Holy Spirit.

Let me just give you a verse from John 16.8. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin. I don't know about here, but there are preachers in the United States of America who even boast that they do not mention sin in the pulpit and that sin cannot be mentioned in their church. I have news for them as well as you.

I can guarantee that the Holy Spirit of God has absolutely nothing to do with their ministries. Nothing. Why? Because one of His primary ministries is to convict the world of sin.

Secondly, we are deceivers if we do not make much of sin. Yes, we are deceivers. As Jeremiah says this, speaking of the shepherds, the pastors of his day, they have healed the brokenness of my people superficially, saying, peace, peace.

But there is no peace. Also, we are immoral if we do not speak much about sin. A doctor takes an oath that he will do absolutely everything within his power to save the patient.

Part of that saving work of medical science is to tell the patient of their malady. But if a doctor, for the sake of his own self-preservation or reputation or he just wants people to like him, if a doctor withholds from the patient the crucial information that they have a fatal malady, he is considered immoral. How much more immoral is the pastor, the preacher, who will not deal with the malady of man.

Also, we're thieves. Why are we thieves? Because we are robbing God of glory and we are robbing men of being able to correctly contemplate the gospel. Now, what do I mean by that? I gave my wife an engagement ring three years after we were married.

We were missionaries. Didn't have a whole lot of money. And so I go to the jeweler and I laid out, I don't know, \$200.

What can you give me for this? Kind of looked at me in disdain. He went in the back and he brought out a ring. I said, where's the diamond? And so then he spread out, clever fellow that he was, he spread out a piece of pitch black velvet.

And then he set that ring on that velvet. In the background of darkness, I could see that diamond shine. Where did all the stars go this morning? Did some giant come by and put them all in a basket and carry them to the other side of the world? They're still there.

Why can't you see them? You cannot see them because there's so much light. You paint that sky pitch black and you'll see the stars. You paint man as he is pitch black and you will see the stars of the glory of God and so will that man.

So will that man. Now, a fourth indictment. An ignorance of the gospel.

I know that the West is in a sense gospel hardened. I know that. It is much easier to preach in the jungles of Peru than it is in England or the United States or Ireland or Wales or Scotland.

There is the sense of a hardening, but I don't think that's our greatest problem. Our greatest problem is not the hardened heart of the unbeliever, but the ignorance of the preacher with regard to the gospel. I can travel far and wide.

I can listen to a multitude of sermons and never hear the gospel. I would encourage every one of you to go to Martin Lloyd-Jones' work on Romans and read chapter 3. The whole chapter several times. Why? He

delineates something that has been forgotten.

That in chapter 3, especially when it is talking about propitiation, justification, God being just and the justifier of the wicked. He is coming to the very heart of the gospel. Do you want to know what the gospel is all about? And then ask yourself if you've ever even preached this.

The gospel is all about this. If God is good, if God is just, He cannot forgive man. That's what the gospel is all about.

Have you ever put that before a lost person? Then I submit to you, you don't know the gospel as well as you think you do. It says in the book of Proverbs, chapter 17, verse 15, that it is an abomination for anyone to justify the wicked. An abomination.

There is no stronger word. Anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination before God. So the question is, how can God justify the wicked without being an abomination Himself? How can He be just and the justifier of the wicked? An illustration I often use is this.

If you go home today and someone has slaughtered your entire family, and you see the murderer standing over the dead bodies of your loved ones, and you grab the man with blood on his hands, and you throw him to the ground, and you tie him up, then you call the police, and the police come and take him to prison, and then his day in court is settled, and he appears before the judge, and the judge looks down at him and says, I'm a very loving judge, therefore I pardon you. You are going to be writing the newspapers, you are going to be on television, you're going to be writing the government and every sort of person in authority saying that there is a judge on the bench far more wicked than the criminals he pardons. Because a judge must do justice.

And therein lies the great divine dilemma. How can God be just, and at the same time the justifier of the wicked? There is only one way. God in His Son becomes a man.

He walks on this earth as a perfect man. He goes to that tree, and on that tree, He bears the guilt of His people. The sins of His people are imputed to Him.

And all the wrath, the fierce holy hatred of a good and loving God against evil, fell down upon the head of the Son, as it says in Isaiah, it pleased the Lord to crush Him. You are not saved if you are saved here today merely because of what the Romans did to Jesus. You're saved because of what God the Father did to His only Son.

He crushed Him under the wrath of God. And when Christ died, He satisfied divine justice. He appeased the wrath of God for His people.

And now God can be just and the justifier of the wicked because He has put away their sins. When was the last time you read that on a gospel tract? When was the last time you shared it? When was the last time you preached it? Oh, my friend, this country is not so much gospel-hardened. My country is not so much gospel-hardened.

It's just that the preachers of the gospel are gospel-ignorant. A gospel reductionism. We've reduced the gospel of Jesus Christ down to five things God wants you to know.

And then if we can get someone to repeat the prayer at the end of it, we popishly declare them born again. What a travesty. Another thing about the gospel that you need to understand.

When the gospel is properly understood, it becomes the greatest motivation in the life of the Christian. The gospel in the West is treated as though it were Christianity 101. The little thing you learn at the beginning of the Christian life, by five minutes when you pass down forward and talk to the preacher, you're taught on the gospel.

For a few minutes, you're declared saved and now you're supposed to go on to bigger things. There is nothing bigger than the gospel. There is nothing deeper than the gospel.

Listen to me. On the day of the Second Coming, you'll understand absolutely everything about the Second Coming. But you will be an eternity of eternities in heaven and you will not have even reached the foothills of understanding the glory of God revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the gospel that motivates men. Fifth indictment. And this is extremely important.

It is an ignorance of the doctrine of regeneration. We have taken one of the most powerful, splendid, powerful, I must say it again, doctrines of scripture and turned it down to nothing more than a mere human decision of somebody accepting Jesus. Every great awakening, in my opinion, has been the result of the rediscovery of the doctrine of regeneration.

What it truly means to be born again. As opposed to trusting in salvation because of infant baptism, confirmation, or, especially among the Baptists in the world today, praying that little prayer. Now I want you to look at what we've done.

We could literally travel all over England. We most certainly could travel all over my country, talk to every manner of person and ask them, are they going to heaven? And so many, at least in my country, probably 60-70% of the people in my country would say yes. Why? Because one time in my life, after a certain crusade, I prayed a prayer and asked Jesus to come in.

Has your life changed in any way? No. Is there any fruit? No. Is there any reality of the things of God? Absolutely not.

But they are convinced they are born again. It is decisionism. They are lost.

What is regeneration? It is a supernatural work of the Spirit of God whereby, according to Ezekiel 36, He literally takes out our heart of stone. He removes our heart of stone, that heart that cannot, will not respond to divine stimuli. And He replaces that heart with what? A heart of flesh that can respond to God.

There, I submit to you, there is a greater demonstration of the power of God in regeneration. The regeneration of one depraved sinner than there is in the very creation of the universe. He created the universe ex nihilo, out of nothing.

But with the sinner, He must make a new creation out of a mass of moral corruption. That is why we have such things as Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones. Ezekiel, can these bones live? He will not presume upon God and say yes.

He will not doubt God's power and say no. He says this, You know, Lord, if they live, it will be Your doing. Do we have any idea what kind of practical application this has in our preaching? When a man grasps this

truth, he realizes that his ministry must be supernatural.

That he brings nothing to the table except proclaiming the scandalous, foolish message of the gospel. He walks out on the platform, not an entertainer, not an eloquent speaker, not a jokester, not a manipulator of men. No, he walks out there as a man walking out in a valley of dry bones.

He walks out as a prophet. He preaches the Word of God. And he knows that unless the Spirit of God moves upon the heart of these dead people, nothing will happen.

But he knows also that in the sovereignty and the goodness, the loving kindness of God, that if he walks out there and stays out there long enough and preaches the gospel faithfully without trusting in the arm of the flesh, someone is coming out of there resurrected. The doctrine of regeneration. Oh, what a doctrine.

If any man be in Christ, he's a new creature. Spurgeon's illustration of a pig is so appropriate. Here I'm standing here with, on one hand, the finest food in England.

In the other, a bucket of slop. A pig is in the back of the auditorium and I say, loose him and let him go. He comes running up here.

To where will he run? To the slop. Why? Because that's what pigs do. It's their nature.

They are a pig. And they love the food of pigs. He will run up here.

He will stick his head in this bucket. He will eat without shame. He will engulf it down with all his might, with great joy.

But if I have the power in that moment to change his nature into that of a man, he will immediately throw his head out of that bucket and the very thing he was eating down, he will vomit up. Why? Because he has a nature of a man and a man can't eat those things. It's impossible.

I just described your conversion and mine and everyone else's. You see, the nature of a man determines the will. And man's nature is utterly defiled prior to Christ's intervention.

Man's nature hates God and loves sin. And it will turn that man always away from God and towards sin. He relishes sin.

He boasts in his sin. He's proud of his sin. But when the Holy Spirit of God comes and removes that heart and puts in its place a new one, we see a transformation in the man's life because the man himself has become a new creature.

My dear friend, you can take a timber wolf or a coyote and put him in a cage and he'll no longer eat sheep. But he's miserable in that cage. He's miserable in that cage.

You can't let him out for a moment. If you do, he'll bolt on you and eat every sheep in the pasture. But if you can change his nature from a coyote to a sheep, then let him go and he'll do well.

This is essential in our understanding of all things dealing with the souls of men. In the early part of the 20th century, more and more, we begin to lose the proclamation of the gospel and therefore, the power of the gospel. And we started, especially in the United States of America, going to every sort of circus and entertainment technique to manipulate people.

Therefore, the church was filled up with carnal people. Now, what is the explanation for that? First of all, we say, well, they're carnal because they're not being disciplined. Or they're coming into the front door but they're running out the back door of the church because we're not disciplining them.

Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Now, do we need to do discipleship? Yes. Most certainly do we need to disciple.

But that is not the issue. You get men converted, you'll not have near the trouble you have now. Trying to teach a bunch of goats to act like sheep is very difficult.

Turn them into sheep, it won't be much of a problem. And let me share with you this. I don't know if it's a popular saying in England, but in my country it is and I hate it.

I abominate it. And it's this. When I hear pastors say, well, you know, Jesus called us sheep because sheep are dumb.

I don't find that in the text. What I find in the text is sheep are not dumb and that His sheep hear His voice clearly and they follow Him. Why do we think sheep are so dumb? Because our churches are so carnal.

And why are they so carnal? Because they are so lost. And why are they so lost? Because we know nothing anymore about the doctrine of regeneration and if we do, we're not proclaiming it. And we know very little about the gospel.

Oh, my friend, just let me challenge you. Go into a Christian bookstore filled with contemporary Christian books and try to find one book written on the attributes of God. Or a book written on the true gospel.

Or a book written on true conversion or regeneration or how to help someone have biblical assurance. You'll have difficulty finding one. Now go back farther to the old books and you will find that most of them are written on those very topics.

We've skipped over the gospel, conversion, dealing with men's souls and we go on to other things and we busy ourselves with so many things yet to no avail we have little success in the things of advancing the kingdom because we've missed the main part. Now also, an unbiblical gospel invitation. That is our sixth invitation.

Do I believe we ought to invite men to Christ? I believe we ought to beg men to come to Christ. With tears running down our cheeks, we ought to beg men, implore men to come to Christ. Sir, you have not preached the gospel of Jesus Christ unless you cry out for men to come to Him.

So I'm not against invitations. I'm just against the way they're done today. Just look with me for a moment.

Someone walks up to a lost man and starts off by saying this, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. Well, now there is a sense that God loves men and has a wonderful plan for their life, but unless that's properly explained, when it enters into the mind of the self-centered westerner, what does it sound like? God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. And the man from the west says, what? God loves me? That's great, because I love me too.

And God has a wonderful plan for my life? I have all kinds of wonderful plans for my life. And you're telling me that if I accept this God, He will love me as much as I love me and He has plans and will help me with my plans and make me get everything I want and have my best life now? Do you have more than one of

those? I'll take two, three gods like that. You say you're mocking.

Yes, I am. It's proper. Because this is devastating.

Instead of walking up to someone and saying, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, what about walking up to them and telling them who God is? Let me give you an example from Exodus 34. God passes by Moses. This is what He says.

The Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. So, God passes by Moses doing what? Proclaiming His attributes. Telling Moses who He is.

What is Moses' response? Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. There's a saying, Lou Friolo talks about this, that what is the first requirement if you want to teach a parakeet how to talk? You have to have a larger vocabulary than a parakeet. To preach the gospel correctly, you must have a biblical vocabulary.

Go to men and explain to them who God is. And if that doesn't lay them low, I don't know what will. The person of God, the revelation of His law, who He is.

Now, we walk up to a person today and say, do you know you're a sinner? Go ask the devil if he knows he's a sinner. Why, yes, I am. Thank you very much.

A mighty fine one. You walk up to someone and say, do you know you're a sinner? If he says yes, it means nothing. You've won nothing.

You can't then go on to the next question. You see, the issue is not, sir, do you know you're a sinner? The question is this, sir, I have preached to you the gospel. On hearing the gospel, has the Spirit of God worked in such a way in your heart that your mind and your attitude is changing towards sin and the sin you once loved you are beginning to hate and the sin that you once sought out you are beginning to seek to separate from? Has God done anything? Is there repentance? Do you know you're a sinner? If they say yes, then they go on to, would you like to go to heaven? Have you ever met anyone say, well, no, I'd rather go to hell? My dear friend, everybody wants to go to heaven.

That's what political theory is all about, creating a utopia here on earth. Everyone wants to go to heaven. They just don't want God to be there when they get there.

The question is not, do you want to go to heaven? The question is, do you want God? As I have preached to you, the gospel has something changed in you. The God that you have hated, the God that you have fought against, the God that you have ignored. Do you now sense that you esteem Him in any way? Do you desire Him, long for Him, fellowship with Him? Because eternal life is not swinging on gates of glory in some heavenly utopia.

Eternal life is to know Him. If a person says, yes, I'd like to go to heaven, then usually it's followed by, well, then pray this prayer. My dear friend, that's nowhere in Scripture.

And no, you cannot get that out of Romans 10. Pray this prayer. And then you'll hear it.

If it's a track, at the bottom of it says, if you have repeated these words, you are now saved, a Christian, welcome to the family of God. What type of superficial, superstitious, creedalism is that? No. When the gospel is preached, then compassionately, lovingly, but with authority, we say, and now God has commanded all men everywhere to repent.

Jesus our Lord said, repent and believe the gospel. And then we stay there with them. Sometimes evangelism is very hard work.

I tell people, when I step down from the platform, my work begins. Brother Paul, you said that I must repent. What is that? Well, let's go through the biblical characteristics of repentance and see if there's any reality of that in your life.

And I've had seekers come up to me and after sharing with them the biblical characteristics of repentance, they go, yes, that's me. And I say, you lack one thing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

Now, let's go through and look at what faith is. That's what I'm doing, Brother Paul. I mean, I wasn't doing that when I came in here, but that's what I'm doing now.

I'm believing, I see. And then gospel warnings. If you have truly believed, my friend, you are indeed saved.

But these are the evidences. First of all, there is the evidence of just the logical conclusion of Scripture that tells us if you believe, you have eternal life. But then there is also the experience of conversion that you testify to this moment that God has done something supernatural in you.

But then also, there is the testimony of the rest of your life. If He has truly begun a good work in you, He will finish it. And the evidence of justification is the continuing, ongoing work of sanctification.

And if you depart from this and turn back to the world, never to be disciplined and never to return to God, then know this, you've got nothing here today. A seventh indictment. Ignorance regarding the nature of the church.

I want us to go for a moment, if you'd open up your Bibles with me, to Jeremiah 31. There is a great problem today when we look at Israel in the Old Covenant, and then we think that the New Covenant is identical and the workings of God in the New Covenant with the church are identical. Now, what do I mean? We see God deliver a nation, a physical nation, from Egypt.

You see that? He brings out a physical nation. Now, that physical nation is brought out, crosses the Red Sea, sees the great works of God and everything else, and immediately falls into idolatry. And continues in idolatry generation after generation after generation.

Now let me ask you a question. Do you honestly believe that everyone who crossed the Red Sea, who was brought out of Egypt, was truly a regenerate believer? No. We all know that that is not the case.

That within the nation of Israel, a physical nation that God called forth in that time, His people, there was a remnant, wasn't there? A remnant of godly people who shunned idolatry, who were a special treasure, who walked with Him, who had the faith of their father, Abraham, and they did the works of Abraham. So what do we have? We have this huge physical nation of, by and large, people given over to idolatry and in the midst of that, we have a remnant. Now the problem is, today, is people say the same thing about the

church.

And it's not true. There is not a godly remnant within a larger carnal church. What you have to understand is the church is the remnant.

That if someone is walking in carnality all their life, no growth spiritually, no discipline, they may call themselves part of the church, they may confess themselves to be a member of the church, but they are not of the church. I want you to look at this text. Verse 31.

The whole days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Now this is used in Hebrews 8 with regard to the church. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

This new covenant won't be like that. My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. So what is it? We see in that old covenant was basically God's redemptive work, but by and large, the covenant was constantly being broken.

Then he goes on. But, verse 33, this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord. He's going to do something supernatural.

I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it. Now, when Israel came out of Egypt, they were given a law written on tablets of stone. Think he's trying to tell us something about man's heart? Written on tablets of stone.

The law was external. The law had no power whatsoever to transform a people. But he says, I'm not going to do that.

He says, I'm going to do something different. I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it. Now look, the next statement is not just wishful musing on the part of God, but it is a certainty.

And I will be their God. And they shall be my people. That's why I'm saying, listen to me.

Conversion is a supernatural work of God whereby He literally changes. This is not biblical poetry. This is reality.

He changes the heart of a man and upon his heart He writes the law. And because He has so changed the nature of that human being, God is His God. And He belongs to God.

It is a supernatural work of God. I am not saying that after the conversion of a person, they do not sin. For one of the greatest evidences that we are Christian is that we acknowledge our sin.

I am not saying that a Christian cannot backslide. I am not saying that a Christian cannot commit a terrible deed. What I am saying is they cannot continue in a continuous state of carnality all the days of their life unchanged.

They cannot be marked as a continuous procedure by the world. Because He who began a good work in them will finish it. Because if any man be in Christ, he's a new creature.

Let me go on. He says this, And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the Lord. For they will all know me.

They will all have, although it may be meager, they will all have a genuine, doctrinal, and personal, intimate knowledge of God, particularly regarding the next thing. He says, They will all know me. For they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord.

For I will forgive their iniquity and their sins. I will remember no more. They will have knowledge of their redemption in the person of Jesus Christ.

And that knowledge will so impact their life that it will direct them and drive them and change them. I heard an apologist say several years ago this, and it just shows you the state of Christianity. He says, We've got to do something with our youth.

Over 75% of the Christian youth that were interviewed said they did not think the resurrection of Jesus Christ was an essential issue. We've got to do more discipleship with our Christian youth. My dear friend, if they do not believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a central issue or even important, they're not Christian.

They have not been converted. Just quickly, go with me to chapter 32 of Jeremiah, verse 38. They shall be my people and I will be their God.

And I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me always for their own good and for the good of their children after them. Verse 40, I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good. God is making an eternal covenant with His people that He will not turn away from them to do them good.

But then look at the next part. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from me. Every one of His children.

Every one that has truly been redeemed. Every one that is truly in the covenant. He says, I make an everlasting covenant with them to do them good.

But, know this, everyone who is truly my child, I will put the fear of me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from me. Today we have this idea of biblical security or eternal security. Perseverance of the saints is a true essential doctrine of orthodoxy.

If God saves a man, God keeps a man by the same power. But what you need to realize is this, the person who says, I am eternally secure, and yet there is no evidence whatsoever of the fear of God in their heart, keeping them close to God, ought to tremble at the superficiality of their confession. And they ought to be warned by ministers.

That is one of the tasks of ministers, is to go to the carnal who dwell within the church and say, I am afraid for your soul. And if we do not do that, it is not because we love. Well, we love.

It's just that we love ourselves. Self-preservation. What will people say if I challenge them? What will God say if you don't? Also, with regard to the church, whatever happened to Matthew 18, why is church discipline no longer practiced? I would submit to most ministers that they ought to simply rip that chapter out of the Bible.

Loving, compassionate church discipline is not punitive. It is redemptive. It is an essential aspect of the ministry of the church that if someone is walking in sin compassionately, they ought to be confronted.

They ought to be worked with patiently, lovingly. They ought to be rebuked. If they do not listen, then other brothers should be brought along to judge.

If they continue in their sin and will not listen to them, it ought to be put before the church. If the church judges and sees that this person is truly in sin and the person will not repent, they ought to be put out. Not to destroy them, but to keep them from being destroyed so that they, being outside the church, if they are a child of God, might be greatly afflicted and they might run back to Christ.

You know, my dear friend, let's say that you come up to me and you have a bloody forehead, a massive, bloody forehead. And you say, Brother Paul, I've gone to every doctor in the world and I just don't know what to do. Could you just pray about it? Maybe God will give you an answer.

So I decide that I will pray, but I'll also follow you around for 24 hours. And I notice that at 1 o'clock in the morning the clock strikes. And you get up out of bed, go to the brick wall in your bedroom, and you smash your head against it.

Then you get back in bed. And at 2 o'clock, it rings twice. And you get up and hit your head twice.

And you go around the full course of 24 hours. And after I watch you at every hour increasingly banging your head against the wall, I come to you and go, now I'm no doctor, but I think I have figured out your problem. My dear friend, it's almost that simple.

Many of the most important things in the Christian ministry we are no longer doing for fear of man, for fear of our congregations. Before I go on, let me share this. Now this is, I don't know you.

I'm only speaking my own country. But because of our watered down gospel, because of watered down preaching, because of the lack of church discipline, the church, the majority of those in most congregations are carnal and lost. But since they are the majority, they direct how the congregation goes.

So the congregation continues on in carnality. And because it began with carnality, it must continue with carnality. Pastor, if you use carnal means to bring people into the church, you will continue having to give them greater and greater carnal extravaganzas to keep them in the church.

And so you have a church, by and large, filled with carnal people. And then you have this tiny group of saints who they don't want shows. They don't need multimedia extravaganzas.

They don't need all this wonderful worship in 15 minutes of a sermon that's nothing more than a little bit of morality. They long for Jesus. They're starving for Jesus.

And the pastor, instead of listening and caring for this little bride, this little group of lambs that belong to Christ, he caters to the carnal majority. What a terrifying thing it will be for that pastor when the prince of pastors returns. When the great shepherd of his sheep returns.

We cater to the carnal majority. We ask the lost man in the street what kind of church he wants. Why not go to the hungry sheep who just want Jesus and say, what do you want? Sir, we would see Christ.

We want to hear His Word preached, line upon line. We don't want entertainment. We don't want lights or show.

Sir, we don't even need to be healed. And we don't even need to prosper. We just want Christ.

Now, another indictment. A silence on separation. Let me read to you a text.

Hebrews 12, 14. Pursue peace with all men and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. How often is that preached? He says pursue sanctification.

Pursue holiness. Because without holiness, no one will see the Lord. I don't care if they've prayed that sinner's prayer a million times.

Now what's going on here? Is the writer of Hebrews telling us that we begin by faith and finish by works? Absolutely not. Again, you can't understand this text apart from an understanding of the biblical doctrine of regeneration. This is what he's saying.

Those who have been truly justified by faith in Christ alone have been regenerated. And those who are regenerated have changed and will continue to change because God will do a work of sanctification in their life throughout the full course of their life making them more and more like Jesus because the goal of the Christian life is not prosperity in this life. The goal of the Christian life is conformity to the image of Jesus Christ according to the Apostle Paul in Romans 8. To put it succinctly, my friend, the ongoing work of sanctification is evidence of justification.

If God has justified you, He will continue to sanctify you. Let me share something really quickly. Israel comes out of the Promised Land, out of Egypt.

They're headed toward the Promised Land. They commit a great idolatry and God tests Moses. He said, Moses, get out of the way.

I'm going to kill them all. I'll make a people out of you. Moses says, Lord, no.

You can't. He stands in the gap. Why? Because your enemies will say that although you were able to bring them out of Egypt, you were not able to bring them into the land.

They will blaspheme your name. See, it's all about the glory of God, isn't it? He said, God, your reputation is at stake. You must bring them into the Promised Land.

I want to tell you something. Because of our preaching, there are many ways in which the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. Why? Because we are basically saying to people, God is strong enough to justify, but He's not strong enough to sanctify.

God can save a people from the condemnation of sin, but He has no power to save them from the power of sin. And that is not true. Sanctification.

Let me share with you just quickly. I'm going to have to... When we talk about holiness, we're talking about separation. But separation is not the end.

It is not the goal. We are to separate from the world so that we might separate unto Him. Separation from the world can be nothing more than pride and legalism, unless that separation from the world leads us to

the greater end, which is God, Christ, a relationship with Him.

Holiness in the life of a man is merely this, that as he grows, he begins to esteem the worth of God more and more, so that the name of God is distinct for him. It is unique. It is separate.

It is not common. There is no category in which God fits. God is in His own category.

He is separated from all things. Higher than all things. And in that man's heart, he esteems God.

He esteems Christ above everything. And therefore, he turns away from the world as rubbish and he runs to God, seeking more and more and more of God. And that seeking of God, that personal relationship with God, leads to a renewed and refined morality.

So holiness is ultimately an esteeming of the worth of God, which leads to a morality that honors God. Now, the ninth indictment, the tenth we're going to separate for this afternoon, which is with regard to the family. But the ninth indictment has to do with the distraction of ministers.

The distraction of Christ's ministers. Let's go to 1 Timothy 4, verse 1. But the Spirit explicitly says that in latter times, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience, as with the branding iron. What he's literally saying is, Timothy, in our day, the latter days, throughout the course, the age of the church, men will be departing from the faith.

And they will be following not merely the doctrines of men, but the doctrines of demons. The very word of the enemy himself. They will go out from us.

They will seek to come back into us and pollute us. They will twist. They will distort.

They will be men who are led by a conscience that has been completely seared. And oh, do we see that today. Mainly among the prosperity preachers, but among others, men seared in their conscience who can pillage and rape the poor in the name of a word of faith.

This world is filled with deceivers and snake oil salesmen in the name of Jesus. He's saying that all around you, the very foundations of society are going to be collapsing. The church herself will be in the midst of turmoil.

Now, Timothy, what ought you to do? He doesn't say you need to start an evangelistic association. He doesn't say you need to start a political crusade. This is what he says.

Verse 7. But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, what does he say? Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. Tozer said this one time.

He said all these young men saying that they want to be used of God, they want to be used of God. Oh, how they want to be used of God. Tozer said, I have discovered that if a man will make himself usable, God will wear him out.

Godliness. And all the noise. I don't even know the word.

The goofiness of contemporary Christianity. The methodologies and the strategies and the church growth procedures and men being movers and shakers. Give me the man who dwells in the prayer closet, who

saturates himself in the Word of God, who has a plan that he follows to grow in godliness.

That is one of the great differences between the Robert Murray McShanes of yesteryear and the little boys wearing preacher mantles today. Hours alone with God, striving, scheming even, with plans of how to become more godly, more Christ-like, more filled with the Word of God, saturated with the Word of God, and filled with the Spirit of God. Men who have given themselves over to know God, to know His Word, to be filled with Him.

Men who when they preach, they preach as one who has stood before God and so therefore has little fear to stand before men. My first pastor, when I was just converted, and then called into the ministry, called to preach, he looked at me in the office when I came in and said, Pastor, God's called me to preach. He turned around and looked at me and he said, Boy, can you be alone? And I thought he meant, if I preach the truth, I will be alone.

People won't like me. They won't want to be around me. That's not what he meant.

What he meant was this. Boy, while all your other friends are running around in bachelor groups, going to retreats, conferences, listening to Christian music, and wearing Christian t-shirts, and sitting around Starbucks talking about Jesus, can you go be alone? Can you go into the closet and stay there? Can you go into your study and stay there? To be a man of God. He's not saying that we should not fellowship.

Oh, we should fellowship. He's not saying that we should not read others. I have benefited so greatly from others and fellowship with others.

And my life is surrounded by godly men who are constantly sharpening me, rebuking me, teaching me. But, there is something that only God can give a minister. The minister is not an entertainer.

He is not a mover and a shaker. He is not an organizer. He is first and foremost one who wears a mantle.

He dwells, he lives with God. God is the greatest reality in his life. Now, I want us to look just over here quickly.

Look down for a moment at verse 15 of chapter 4. He says, take pains with these things. Be absorbed in them. Imagine a table, this table up here, and someone pours out a spot of water on it about that big.

You walk by and you see the water. There it is. But then I come by with a towel, very absorbent towel, and I lay it over the water and I pull it up and the water's gone.

And you say, where is the water? I say, it's been absorbed in the towel in Peru and still until today. There are people who call my wife the cherubim. Why? Because they used to say, she stands in front of the door of my study with a flaming sword and she will lop off the head of any man who draws near.

There's a reality to it. It's part of you now. It's not just preaching an outline.

It's part of you. If it doesn't get out, it'll burn you in two. It'll set you aflame.

One last thing. I have five minutes and I want to say this. Because of all the heresy regarding the Holy Spirit today, because of the blasphemies taught about Him, we have become afraid of His person.

We have allowed false teachers to steal our inheritance from us. Apart from the Holy Spirit, you cannot. You cannot preach.

You cannot breathe. We must be crying out. Although, the moment a man is converted, he is converted because he has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

He has been indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Yes, yes, yes. He is complete in Christ.

But as ministers, as men of God, as laypersons, it does not matter. We ought to be constantly crying out for ourselves and for the church for greater and greater infusions of the power of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the things that separated Dr. Jones from the rest of the pack.

Not only did he have sound orthodoxy, he knew. He knew. Martin Lloyd Jones knew that apart from the Spirit of God, nothing could be done.

And he would not allow men to steal that heritage from him. I want you to just listen to some texts that I'm quoting that were written in a book by Ian Murray, Pentecost Today. Other books.

Just listen. George Smeaton. No more mischievous and misleading theory could be propounded nor any more dishonoring to the Holy Spirit than the principle that because the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, the church has no need and no warrant to pray for infusions of the Spirit of God.

On the contrary, the more the church asks for the Spirit and waits for His communion, the more she receives. Jonathan Edwards. The Scriptures do not only direct and encourage us in general to pray for the Holy Spirit above all things else, but it is the expressly revealed will of God that His church should be very much in prayer for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit which is to be in the latter days and for what shall be accomplished by it.

Thomas Boston writes, Wherefore, breathe, pause, and long for the Spirit of Christ. We need an outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God upon men with biblical, historical theology. We are not going to be able to fight this battle just by our intellect.

Just by a moral form of living. The only way the West is going to be turned around is through a mighty movement of God. Through the Spirit of God.

And through a biblical delineation preaching of the Gospel of God.

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