

Cornerstone 50'th Anniversary Des Moines Conference

by Phil Clarkson

The sermon emphasizes the power of God's grace in salvation and the importance of trusting in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

Duration: 28:10

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Mark 8:24, John 5:34, John 14:6, 1 John 5:10

Topics: "Salvation Message", "Divine Judgment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the story of Jesus reading from the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue. He emphasizes the importance of receiving the witness of God, which is greater than the witness of men. The preacher highlights the significance of Jesus coming into the world to save sinners and dying on the cross for them. He also mentions that while this is the day of grace, there will come a day of judgment when God will judge the world in righteousness. The sermon concludes with the preacher expressing his understanding of the message and urging the audience to believe in Jesus for eternal life.

Transcript

And there he is today, a trophy of grace. The first time I met that man, he'd just been saved. He couldn't even stand up and read out of a... How he was an insurance agent, I don't know, but he actually couldn't stand up and read the third chapter of John, so you could recognize it.

That's how ignorant the man was, now an educator. And today he's a splendid preacher of the gospel. Why, he even preaches on the book of Daniel and the seven trumpets and all the horses of the apocalypse, something I couldn't do, but there he does.

Charlie Clossey, a trophy of God's grace. He's got beautiful ashes, dear friends. Just think of him, laying in the gutter on a Saturday night and the police coming along with a paddy wagon and shoving him in.

A worthless bunch of ashes, that's all it was. Poor, sinful flesh in the sight of God worth no more than a bunch of ashes in our sight. And yet God reached him and saved him.

And there he is, a wonderful trophy of grace, with the beauty of Jesus shining out of his face. I wish you could hear him. Maybe you have.

I don't know if he's ever been out this way or not. He's been some places in Iowa preaching the gospel, I know that. Dear old Charlie Clossey, waiting for the day when he can get his pension from the insurance company so he can spend all his time going around preaching the gospel.

Oh, I'll tell you, dear friends, beauty for action. Well, now you notice in that fourth chapter of Luke a very remarkable difference. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he stood up in that synagogue and he took the scroll and he unrolled that scroll of parchment until he came to that 61st chapter of Isaiah and he read those words that we read.

They're translated for us because it's in Greek, you know, translated from the Hebrew. The words are just a trifle different from the New Testament and our version. But there it was, that very same passage.

And he read some of those things that we read. And he read these words. And to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and then he closed the book.

Now, have you noticed what we read in the book of Isaiah? It said to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. And the Lord Jesus Christ didn't quote that in the synagogue at Nazareth. He closed the book.

Oh, I'm so glad he closed the book. I'm so glad he closed the book without quoting the rest of that verse in Isaiah. What's the significance of that? Oh, dear friends, he had come into the world not to usher in the day of vengeance but to usher in the day of God's salvation.

He came into the world to be the savior of the world. He came into the world that he might become the sacrifice of Calvary, bearing in his body on the tree the sins of the world, the Lamb of God, to bear away the sin of the world. That's why he came.

He hadn't come, dear friends, to usher in the day of God's vengeance. No. He came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And here it's gone on for over 1900 years. The wonderful day of grace. And you, by the grace of God, my dear unsaved friend, whether you're boy or girl or whether you're man or woman, by the wonderful grace of God, you're sitting in this gospel hall tonight and you're able to listen with your sound mind and all the faculties that enable you to take the message in.

You're listening to the acceptable year of the Lord being preached. You're listening to the gospel of the grace of God, and you tonight can have the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary to procure for you. Oh, dear friend, where do you stand in regard to these things? Where do you stand? He came to heal the brokenhearted.

He came to give sight to the blind, those that are blinded by sin. And dear friend, if you're here unsaved tonight, you're blind. Oh, you might be able to see me.

You might be able to stare me down with those good eyes of yours. But dear friend, God says you're blind. You're blind as far as eternal things are concerned, blinded by the God of this world.

If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, because the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not. The Lord Jesus Christ came to give you sight, dear friend. He came to heal the brokenhearted.

Oh, is there anyone here tonight that's conscious of your need, conscious of the fact that you're not right with God, conscious of the fact that should you be called out of time into eternity tonight, you'd be lost forever. And you're contrite and brokenhearted about it. The Lord Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted.

Oh, friend, salvation can be yours tonight. He came to set the captives free. And everyone that's here tonight that's unsaved, you're a captive.

Satan holds you in his bond. Sin holds you in his bond. Try as you will and strive as you will, you cannot break those bonds yourself.

But oh, he came to set the captives free. He came to let the prisoner out of the prison, dear friend. To take away the prison bars, to loose the bonds.

And tonight you can have this wonderful salvation. You can be able to sing with those of us that are saved. My chains are snapped, the bonds of sin are broken, and I am free.

Oh, and you can sing the triumphs of the one who made it possible by dying for you. He came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. But then, dear friends, let's revert to Isaiah for a moment.

In Isaiah it says, on the day of vengeance of our God. And while this is the day of grace, and while the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, while he came into the world to die that cruel death on Calvary, my dear friends, God's word tells us this. That God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereby he hath given assurance unto all men, and that he hath raised them from the dead.

And that very one who spake those gracious words, you remember we read in the fourth chapter of Luke, that they wondered at the gracious words that came forth from his lips. Oh, just think of it. You remember one time the powers that were in power in religious Israel, they sent soldiers to take him captive.

They said, go and arrest that man Jesus of Nazareth. And the soldiers went. They made a mistake.

They listened to him. And they, too, heard gracious words that proceeded out of his lips, just like these people at the synagogue. And they went back to their masters, and they had no prisoner, and they said, why did you not bring him? Oh, they said, never may I mistake like this man.

And, dear friends, that's true. Oh, listen to these gracious words that come from his lips. Come unto me, all of you that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

My friend, no person that ever lived upon this earth could say words like that that could have any meaning. No one. Not even your beloved apostle Paul.

He couldn't have said that and fulfilled the promise. But this one said it. This blessed one that stood in the synagogue at Nazareth, he said it.

And he's saying it to you tonight. Boy, girl, man, woman, wherever you might be, you children of Christian parents that have been the subject of so many prayers for so many years, and you're here tonight on stage. Oh, this lovely man.

This lovely person. The loveliest of all persons that ever trod this earth. The one who's the cheapest among ten thousand.

These gracious words are coming out of his lips tonight as they did in that synagogue at Nazareth that morning. And he's saying to you, come unto me, and I will give you rest. Will you come tonight? Will you listen to him? Dear friend, he came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

But the prophet Isaiah preached also the day of vengeance of our God. And that one who came to save, that one who went to Calvary and suffered in blood and died as a victim on the cross, he did die. He accomplished the work of redemption by dying on that cross.

And God raised him from the dead and took him and placed him at his own right hand. And there he sits tonight, a prince and a savior. Able and willing and anxious to save to the uttermost all those that will come unto God by him.

But someday, he's going to rise up from that place that his father's right hand, and he's going to come. First of all, to take the saviors home, and then come down to this earth. And why is he going to come the next time? Oh, there'll be no gracious words proceeding out of his mouth then.

Because he'll come to wash her in the day of vengeance of our God. And the hymn writer has put it this way. If you then, McCall, refuse and all his wondrous love abuse, soon will he sadly from you turn your bitter prayer of pardon's birth.

Too late. Too late will be the cry. Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.

And my friend, that will be your portion if you refuse to listen to these gracious words. Oh, tonight he wants to give you beauty for ashes. He wants to take away your sin.

He wants to take away your trouble. He wants to take away your heartache. And he wants to give you peace and joy and gladness and salvation.

And friend, the choice is yours. No one can take this step for you. It's for you and you alone to make the choice.

What then will you do with Jesus? The gracious man of the synagogue of Nazareth. The man who suffered in Pilate's judgment hall. The man who was crowned with that mocking crown of thorns.

Who was buffeted, beaten with many strikes. Who tore up that hill Roman gray, bearing its cross and sank beneath its weight. And then was taken by wicked men, nailed to that cross.

And that cross raised and thrust into the ground. And he suffered. And he bled.

And he died for you. For you, dear friend. For you.

And I say again, you have to make the choice. What will your answer be? I want to tell you how God reached me before I turned the meeting over to Mr. Rogers. Like I hinted before, I was brought up in the Christian home.

Unfortunately, I've never known the joy and wonderment of a mother's love. Because my mother died when I was an infant. I don't remember my mother.

But I do know that my mother's in heaven because I've had numbers of people that knew my mother tell me what a beautiful Christian my mother was. And I'm sure that ere she went home to be with the Lord,

she prayed to that infant boy who would never know her love down here. But I was blessed with a godly father.

However, my father was taken home to heaven when I was ten years of age. But before he went to heaven, he left impressed on my heart and on my mind and conscience the truth of God. I was born in the old country in England, and of course Sundays over there at that time were spent in either going to meetings or staying in the home and either reading from the Bible or hearing about Bible stories, nothing else.

And I can remember my father taking me on as me and reading to me the stories, the wonderful stories of the Bible. And that's where I learned them. And I can remember him reading the story of Daniel, reading the story of David, reading the story of Joseph.

And I suppose I would be eight or nine years of age at that time. I can remember sobbing my heart out as he read the story of Joseph, poor Joseph, down in the pit and sold down into Egypt. But those stories never left me.

When I was eleven years of age, I was brought out to this country by an older brother and taken to the meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, in Cliff Street. Went to the Sunday school there, sat under the sound of real searching preaching. Some of you remember Mr. William Matthews, a great man of God.

John Smith, Mr. Douglas, men of that type. I really knew how to preach the gospel with convicting power. Many a time I was convicted.

As a matter of fact, I made a profession when I was about, oh, eleven or twelve years of age. But it proved to be not a real profession. It was just a profession.

And so it went on. And about the age of fifteen, I left school. And I didn't want my brother to be spending his money supporting me.

And so I left school after a year of high school and went to work. And, of course, after I went to work, I felt I was quite independent, and I just pulled myself away and stopped going to the gospel hall in Boston. And I went out into the world at that tender age.

And I'm very thankful for this, that God did deliver me from entering into gross sins. I suppose that the worst sin that I was really guilty of was the sin of, I became a very indebted smoker when I was fifteen or sixteen years of age. And also I learned to use profanity with a very great deal of proficiency.

I'm very, very sorry to say that, but that's true. And, of course, I had no use for the gospel, no use for gospel meetings. I did go to some churches once in a while, but just as a lot more than anything else.

But, oh, I'm so glad for the wonderful mercy of God. The riches of his grace, how wonderful they are. That little baby boy that that mother prayed for before she went home to heaven, and that ten-year-old boy that my father prayed for when he lay on his deathbed with pneumonia and then was taken away from me, oh, I know he prayed for me.

And God heard those prayers. And some friends of mine persuaded me to go back to the gospel meeting in Cliff Street, and I heard Mr. Matthews preach the gospel again. And God entered into my heart with a real spirit of conviction.

And for a little over a year, I had no peace of mind. I can remember deep conviction of soul. And during that year or more, about fifteen months I think it was, I tried as hard as any human being ever tried to get saved.

I read every verse in the Bible that had ever been quoted to me. I used to take hymns in the hymn book, and I'd read those hymns, I'd sing those hymns, and think that through the singing or the reading, some way I would find out how I could trust Christ. Oh, I could tell anybody the way of salvation.

When I was going to these churches before I was saved, you know how they do in some of those places? When they have a prayer meeting, there's somebody that stands up in front and he calls on different ones to pray, and sometimes he'd call on me and I could pray better than any of them. I'd been brought up in a gospel hall Sunday school, why shouldn't I be able to pray? I'd heard so many prayers in my day that I could say some of them backwards almost, you know. And yet I wasn't saved.

So that went on, and I really got so bad that I couldn't even do my work. I was learning the trade of a meat cutter at the time. And I went back to the hall Sunday after Sunday, and some of you remember old Mr. John Smith.

Do you remember John Smith from Cleveland? A lot of you remember him. Well, one night he was there preaching the gospel, and Mrs. Matthews, dear soul that she was, she loved me. She'd been in our home when I was a little boy in the old country, Mr. and Mrs. Matthews.

And oh, they loved me, and they loved that poor little orphan boy that came to the United States, and they did their best to help me. And they were so glad when I came back to the gospel meeting. And they knew I was anxious to be saved, and one night Mrs. Matthews brought old Mr. John Smith.

She brought me to him, and she said, Mr. Smith, here's a young man that's very, very anxious to be saved. He's been trying to be saved for a long, long time. Well, you know Mr. Smith.

He had fire in his eyes, and those big long black whiskers of his, you know. And I thought to myself, well, now he'll take me up from the corner, and he'll sit down, and he'll read some verses to me, and maybe I'll see it tonight. But he didn't do anything of the kind.

He took hold of me by the lapel of my coat, and he shook me, just like that. And he said, young man, isn't the word of God good enough for you? And he turned around and left me. And I'll tell you, I was the most disappointed boy you ever looked at.

I really was. I thought, well, is that all he cares about, whether I get saved. But that was the Spirit of God led that man.

Those men were godly men. They were men of God. And about a week from that following Sunday, I went to the gospel meeting again, still anxious.

Nothing happened. I went home, went to work, and Monday, went home Monday night. And I sat in my room.

I was rooming, of course, having no home of my own. I was rooming with a brother there. And everybody had gone out of the house, and I sat by the electric light on my little table in my room, and I tried that method again.

I went through all the hymns. I remember singing that hymn or saying that hymn. I don't know whether I said it or sang it.

I've tried in vain a thousand ways. My fears to quell, my hopes to raise. That struck a responsive chord in my heart, because that was my case.

And I'd say those words several hours to Jesus, but nothing happened. And I closed my Bible, and I said, I'm going to give up. There's no hope for me.

And I sat there despondent. And suddenly, it must have been the Spirit of God prompted me to open my Bible, and I opened my Bible to a verse, some verses Mr. Matthews had quoted to me not very long. In fact, he'd done it two or three times.

And I read these words in the fifth chapter of the first epistle of John. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. Are you here tonight and you'd like to be saved? You've tried to be saved, and you just can't see it or listen to this.

This is the way God opened my eyes. I read these words, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. And this is the record.

This is the witness, which God hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, and he that believeth not God hath made him a liar. Now, Mr. Matthews had quoted that to me, read it to me many times.

Charlie, don't you realize that when you refuse to believe God, you're making God out to be a liar? Do you want to do that? And I said, no. And he said, that's what you're doing. But I'd never realized it, but I realized it this night.

Hath made him a liar. Because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

And I stopped. I went over it again. And suddenly I was like the blind man that saw men as trees walk, and the glimmer of light began to come.

And I said to myself, oh, I think I understand this. What does it say? If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. My brother, Will, who was living with me, if he told me, he said, Charlie, I'm going down to the North Station, and I'm going to take a train to Portland, Maine, I wouldn't take a whole year and three months to try.

And I thought to myself, well, if I can believe my brother as easily as that, this verse says the witness of God is greater. It should be much easier to believe God. Oh, I said, Lord, what do you want me to believe? I'll believe you.

What do you want me to believe? God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Oh, I said, I, God tells me that he's satisfied with the work his Son did when he died on Calvary, as atonement for my sin. I see it.

It's just as easy as that. And I can remember I said, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, I'm going to trust you for my salvation. I'm going to give up everything else, Lord Jesus.

I'm just going to trust you with my soul for eternity. And I remember I said this. It may have been a reverend, but I said it.

And I said, Lord Jesus, if I don't get to heaven that way, there's no use, but I'm trusting you right now. And my dear friends, I want to tell you, it was just as real to me as if a voice had spoken from heaven. You're saved.

You're saved. Why? Oh, because as soon as my all I ventured on the atoning blood, the Holy Spirit entered, and I was born of God. There it was.

The burden was gone just as I told them in the story, and I was free. And I can remember jumping up off that chair and running through the house, trying to find somebody to tell them. A dear old grand lady that had taken care of me for a number of years.

I'd lived with her since I was ever an eleven-year-old boy that came to this country. And she was out, and I was so disappointed. There wasn't anybody there to tell the good news to, and I couldn't wait until they came back.

And when she came back, she was the first one to come. I said, Oh, Mrs. Watson, I'm saved. I'm saved.

And she threw her arms around me, a great big, ample boot, and a big Irish lady. And she just held me to it, and she said, Oh, Charlie, Charlie, I can't believe it. And she just wet my head with her tears.

She was so full of joy. Oh, I'll tell you, dear friend, I feel like a Pentecostal. I'm going to get up and shout and jump.

Hallelujah. I'm going to tell you something. I've heard people talk about getting saved and doubting your salvation.

Now, that can happen. I know it can. I've known people that have that experience.

But I can say before God that from that moment, I have never doubted my salvation. I've been away from God, and he's had to deal with me. But I never for one second doubted my salvation.

Why? Oh, because the word said, If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. And this is the record that God has given to us, eternal life, and that life is in his Son. And I believed that that night and trusted my all in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Friend, you can have that blessed experience tonight. Or, if you'd like to be saved, believe God. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you, too, that know the joy of salvation. Arthur, I've stolen about six or seven minutes. I'm awfully sorry.

Will you forgive me? Come on.

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