

The Ultimate Statistic

by Ray Comfort

Ray Comfort's sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, repentance, and the transformative power of God's grace in our lives.

Duration: 36:04

Scripture: Exodus 20:13, Exodus 20:17, Matthew 5:21-22, Mark 16:15, Acts 17:28, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 1 Corinthians 3:19

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal story about running a club for kids and distributing candy. He notices the greed and unfairness in the line and decides to give the candy to the meek and sickly ones instead. The speaker then uses the analogy of a man trying to fly and suffering the consequences of transgressing the law of gravity to explain that God's law is the law of sin and death. He emphasizes that the soul that sins shall die because we have all transgressed God's law. The speaker also compares God's law to a mirror that reflects our true selves and asks the audience if they have ever lied or sinned. He encourages them to open their hearts to the Gospel and highlights that they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Transcript

Earlier on, Pastor asked everyone to bow in prayer for a moment. It reminded me of an incident that happened a number of years ago. I'm an associate pastor in a rather large church.

I have an itinerant ministry. But one weekend I didn't have ministry and I was standing in the back and a friend of mine walked past. He's an L.A. police officer.

He's rather buff. His shoulder's even bigger than mine. And as he... As he walked past me, he thumped me on the shoulder really hard.

And I just stood there because he's a real close friend. I really like the guy. And just a few moments after that, a senior pastor said, let's just bow in prayer.

And everyone bowed in prayer. I thought, this is my opportunity. So I ran down the aisle, down the pews, and went straight into the shoulder of my friend as he prayed.

Then I snuck back to my seat and just smiled and glee. It was after the service that I found out how many people in that church actually pray with their eyes open. About a dozen people must have come up and

said, man, I couldn't believe that.

I just cracked up. It was so funny. But sometimes it does us good to pray with our eyes open.

Jesus did. It reminds us of the omnipresence of God. That God doesn't just somehow appear because we bow reverently in prayer.

When people go into a church building, they will creep and they will whisper and they'll show reverence within the building, thinking that somehow God's presence is more in a building we call a church when the church is actually the people. No, God is omnipresent. In him we live and move and have our being.

And today, if you're searching for God, if you're saying, as Job said, where is God, that I might speak to him, you're like a fish in the ocean saying, where is the ocean? In him we live and move and have our being. Let's now look at 1 Corinthians 1, verse 26. Today, with the help of God, I'd like firstly to address those of you who don't know the Lord, those of you who are perhaps searching, or those who aren't searching for you.

You're here because somebody dragged you here. You're here out of a curiosity, whatever. And then secondly, I would like to speak to those of you who know the Lord for a few moments.

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.

And the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. And now, 1 Corinthians 3, verse 19. Just over the page.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he takes the wise in their own craftiness. In 1976, during the British fireman's strike, the army were called in to discharge the duties of the fire brigade.

They received a telephone call from an elderly woman that said her cat was stuck up a tree. The army came out, they rescued the cat. The woman was so thrilled, she invited the army in for tea and cookies.

Afterwards, fond farewells were given. Off drove the army over the cat and killed it. Now if you look around Christendom, now as you begin listening to Christians give their testimony, you'll find quite a number, not all, but quite a number of those who are Christians came through a ran over the cat and killed it experience.

That is, things were sweet. There was tea and cookies when suddenly there was an experience that brought them to their senses. Why are Christians weak? No.

All that happened was that they were suddenly stopped in their tracks. They were humbled by the circumstances of life to say, where is God? What is life all about? A number of years ago, I ran a club for kids. I like kids.

I used to be one myself. I had about a hundred kids in this club. I said, kids, today I've got a big bag of candy for you.

I said, line up and I'll give you a free candy. So they lined up. As I stood and looked at this line of about a hundred kids, I thought, man, I have got a line of greed in front of me because at the front were these big bullies pushing people back and it went downward to the little ones, the meek ones, the quiet ones, the sickly ones.

I thought, this is a line of greed. So I said, kids, stay where you are. If you move, you're not getting any candy.

Everybody, turn about face 180 degrees. And then I had great joy in taking my big bag of candy to the other end of the line and giving it to the quiet, the meek, and the sickly ones. Much to the disgust of the bullies at the back.

But that's exactly what God has done with the message of the gospel. Eternal life is given to the meek, the quiet, the poor, the humble, the sickly. God has turned the line around.

In this world where the rich get richer and the poor get stomped on, the Bible says the poor heard Jesus gladly. You may be familiar with the Bible story of a man called Naaman. Naaman was the captain of the Syrian guard.

But he found that he had leprosy. There was no hope he was going to be a leper for life. Discarded.

When he heard about a prophet in Israel that could cure leprosy, so he made his way to the prophet. And the prophet says, Do you want to be cured? Okay, go and wash in the river Jordan seven times. Now Naaman was offended.

He was the captain of the Syrian guard. He said, I thought you'd wave your hand over me. Now you've told me to go and wash in the river Jordan, that dirty little river.

We'll get cleaner rivers back home. And he went off on his high horse. He was a very proud man.

But someone said to him, You have got nothing to lose. Go and do this seeming foolish thing. And that's what Naaman did.

He went out. The captain of the Syrian guard. In front of his other soldiers.

He went out in the river. He began bobbing up and down like a rubber ducky. I mean it is really humbling.

I have tried to do it in public, just to show people how humbling it was. Down he went. Up he came.

Down he went. Up he came. I mean it's embarrassing.

Steam rising from the poor guy each time he went down. The sixth time he went down, still with leprosy, but he came up the seventh time. And his flesh was like that of a babe.

He was healed. Why? Because of his faith and his humility. He believed the word of the prophet.

But he had nothing to lose. Absolutely nothing to lose. Years ago I turned on the television.

And I saw a sight that I will never forget. It was a grown man playing castanets to his tomatoes. I thought, what? I thought this guy is a nut, playing music to his fruit.

And I thought, what are they giving this guy a year time for? And then suddenly they show him with the earphones on his tomatoes playing classical music to them. I thought, this is ridiculous. I was really offended at the stupidity of it until I heard one thing.

And this is what I heard. Changed my mind radically. They said, this man, his name is in the Guinness Book of Records for growing the world's biggest tomato.

Four and a half pounds. And I learned a very interesting lesson. Don't mock something until you see its results.

Now you and I, when we see a little caterpillar winding itself around, tying itself in knots, we say, we don't say it's stupidity. What's it doing? We know it's making a cocoon. And it's going to get into that cocoon.

And a miracle of God is going to take place. Metamorphosis. And out of the cocoon is going to come this beautiful butterfly.

We don't mock it because we know the results. But so many in the world mock Christianity. They say, look at those dumb Christians hiding in the unreal world, cocoon of Christianity, tying themselves in rules and regulations.

Ah, don't mock it until you see the results. You see, you're looking at the grub at the moment. You're looking at the caterpillar.

But God is at work in me to will and do of His good pleasure. And one day there's going to be a transformation. There's going to be a miracle of God.

There's going to be a butterfly come out of this. God says He'll give new bodies to all those that trust Him. Say, how do you know that? Walt Disney.

Just a fairy tale. Ah. God says He'll prove it to you.

He'll give you the earnest of a spirit. What does that mean? Well, say I said I'm a billionaire and today at the end of the service at 11 o'clock I'm going to give each of you a million dollars. And as a token of good faith I'm going to come down now and give you \$100,000 on your lap.

As you sit there and look at that hundred grand sitting on your lap you say, this guy really means it. Otherwise he wouldn't have given me \$100,000. He's going to give me a million dollars at 11 o'clock.

This is a token of good faith. That's what this is, the \$100,000. God says He's given us the earnest of the spirit.

A token of good faith. He will seal you with the Holy Spirit. He'll reveal Himself to you.

It's like this. I mean, people say you can't know for sure that God is real, that everlasting life is for those that trust Jesus Christ. Well, yes you can.

Think of it like this. A little kid is looking at a heater. His dad comes and he says, son, don't touch that heater, it's hot.

The kid says, okay, I know it's hot. Father goes out of the room. He says, I really wonder if it really is hot.

So he takes his little hand and grabs that heater bar with his pink little fingers. As his flesh burns, he stops believing the heat is hot. He now knows it's hot.

He moves out of the realm of belief into the realm of personal experience. Now before I was a Christian, I prayed every night. I used to say the Lord's Prayer.

I could rattle through it in about 15 seconds. It was just a habit. I believed in God.

I believed that Jesus was the Son of God. I believed the Bible was the Word of God, but I was not a Christian. My belief was purely intellectual.

I just had an intellectual belief. But on the 25th of April, 1972, at 1.30 in the morning, suddenly I realized I was a sinner when I was confronted with the Ten Commandments. I realized I had sinned against heaven.

And I reached out and touched the heater bar of God's love and mercy. And I moved out of the realm of belief into the realm of personal experience. The Bible says when the gospel came, it came in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance so that you will know that you passed from death to life because you're not in the realm of belief, but in the realm of personal experience.

Now think of that kid. He's sitting there with a burned hand. I mean it's burning.

In comes a heater expert and a scientist and says, Little kid, that heater couldn't be hot. We will prove it to you with this equation. The kid would say, Get out of here because he's not in the realm of the intellect.

He's in the realm of experience. And it doesn't matter what the world says. The man with an experience is not at the mercy of a man with an argument.

You say, well, why should I repent? Because you've got nothing to lose. Let me remind you of something real important. That is, you have an appointment to keep.

The Bible says it's appointed a man once to die, and after this the judgment. Now what is it that causes death? Well, you say car accidents, etc. Now what is it that causes everybody to die? I mean I've heard of people dying healthy.

I heard it on the news. They said a politician died at 55. He was very healthy at the time.

I said, great. What is it that causes people to die? This is what the Bible says. It says the wages of sin is death.

The soul that sins, it shall die. That's the law of God. The soul that sins, it shall die.

And there's another law that we can all understand, the law of gravity. If a man stands on the edge of a building and he says, I don't believe in the law of gravity. I can't see it, hear it, touch it, taste it, or smell it.

Besides, I can see birds flying and I'm more intelligent than birds. I'm going to fly. So he leads off this tall building and begins flapping his wings.

Down he comes. He's gone past the third floor. He yells out as he goes past, see, I'm flying.

He is. But he's going to suffer the consequence when he hits the bottom. He's going to suffer the consequence of transgressing the law of gravity.

God's law is the law of sin and death. The soul that sins, it shall die. The reason you'll die is because you've sinned against heaven.

You have transgressed God's law. You see, God's law is like a mirror. The Ten Commandments are like a mirror.

When you look into a mirror, all the mirror does is show you yourself in truth. It doesn't do anything for you. It just reflects what you are in truth.

And when you and I look into the law of liberty, God's law, all we do is see ourselves in truth. Let me ask you a few questions. Have you ever told a lie? Yeah, one or two.

Okay, what does that make you? That makes you a liar. Isn't that true? How many lies do you have to tell to be a liar? I mean, I often confront people like this. And they say, well, I'm not a liar.

Oh, so how many lies do you tell to become a liar? Is it ten and a bell rings? Oh, liar. No, you tell one lie, you're a liar. So be honest with yourself.

Have you ever told a lie? So you're a liar. Have you ever stolen anything, even if it's small? You say, no. Come on, we've just found out you're a liar.

Speak the truth. Who hasn't taken something that belonged to somebody else, even if it's small? God's not impressed with the value of what you've stolen. So if you've stolen one thing, you're a thief.

I used to steal as a kid. I used to reach through to my neighbors and I'd take apples from their apple tree. I used to love doing it.

It was exciting. We had apples on our refrigerator, but I just took them because it was exciting. I was a thief.

There's no other word for it. People say, well, it's just petty theft. Well, when does petty theft become big theft? I mean, what would be theft to God? When you steal a million dollars, God goes, theft.

No, you take one thing that belongs to someone else, you're a thief. And Jesus said, if you look with lust, you commit adultery in your heart. Has God ever done that? Who hasn't done that? Well, from your own admission, you're a lying, thieving, adulterer at heart.

And you have to face God on judgment day because Jesus said, whoever looks with lust commits adultery in the heart. And that's the standard God is going to judge with. And if you're honest, if you look in the mirror, even if it's an ugly sight you see, you say, boy, I have sinned against God.

I've broken. That's only three of the ten commandments. There's another seven pointed at us.

You shall not covet. That means you should not desire that which belongs to other people, whether it be the car, the wife, the husband. You shall not kill.

But Jesus said, well, the Bible says, if you hate someone, you're a murderer. If you get angry without cause, you're in danger of judgment. It says keep the Sabbath holy.

We don't do that. Honor your father and mother. Who of us can say, I've always had a perfect attitude toward my parents? You should not make yourself a graven image.

That is, you should not make your own image of God. Create a God to suit yourself. Oh, I believe God is like this.

And shape a God to suit your sins. That's the oldest sin in the book, idolatry. And the Bible says, idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The first commandment says, you shall have no other gods before me. That means you should love the God who gave you life with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. The third is, you should not take God's name in vain.

You should always give God's name utter reverence and honor due to it. And it's only when you see your disease that you'll seek the cure. If Naaman hadn't been honest and said, this is leprosy, he wouldn't have sought to be cured.

And if you'll not say, yeah, I'm a sinner, I've broken God's commandments, and on the day of judgment, if God is going to make manifest the thoughts of my heart, the deeds done in darkness, I'll be condemned to hell for sure. It's only when you're honest with yourself and admit that you've sinned that you'll seek God's mercy, which is alone in Jesus Christ. You know, hell is the most reasonable thing I can think of.

You say, what do you mean by that? Well, in the Bible there was a man called Felix. He was a governor, and Paul reasoned with him about temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come. And the Bible says Felix trembled.

You see, it is reasonable to think that God should punish murderers. Isn't that right? Should God punish murderers or should he just let them go? I mean, why is all this money spent on murder cases? Millions and millions of dollars is spent to bring a murderer to justice. Why? Can't bring the people back that were murdered? Why not just let them go? Make him promise he'll never do it again.

No. We believe in justice, even us sinners. But in between 1976 and 86 in the U.S. alone, there were 63,000 unsolved murders.

63,000 murderers went away utterly scot-free. Should God punish them? If a man raped and strangled your mother to death, would you just forget about it? Say, oh, oh, God, you're full of love. Who cares? Just let the guy go.

No, no. God is going to bring every work to justice. Every sin will be punished.

God should, if he's good, punish murderers, rapists, thieves, liars. Why would you think of a judge in, say, Florida who turned a blind eye to the workings of the mafia? He saw all the murder, all the rape, all the things they were doing and he just turned a blind eye. That's a corrupt judge.

And that judge should be brought to justice himself for corruption. And God will not turn a blind eye to murder, rape, lust, pride, jealousy, envy. He'll punish sin wherever it's found.

And the Bible says it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Turn, if you will, to Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 14. Very interesting scripture.

One that's relevant to all of us. Hebrews 2, verse 14. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same.

For as much as you and I are made of flesh and blood, God became flesh and blood. Why? That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death. That is the devil.

And deliver them who through the fear of death all their lifetime subject to bondage. A number of years ago my brother, a number of years, when I was about 7 years old, my brother took me to see a movie called The Scarlet Pimpernel. Now if you want to scare a 7 year old, make his eyes go like saucers during a movie, take him to see The Scarlet Pimpernel.

It's a movie about the French Revolution. And these Frenchmen would take the rich, the aristocrats, parade them through the streets of Paris, take them to the square in Paris, and chop their heads off with a guillotine. And I was terrified as I sat and watched this take place.

And around the guillotine were these ugly old hags, toothless hags. Looked like 17th century punk rockers. They were so ugly if they went down the beach the tide wouldn't have come in.

I mean, they were ugly if they went down the beach old hags. And they were knitting. They were knitting.

And every time a head was lopped off, they'd knit another stitch onto these scarves. And these scarves were yards long. And I sat there terrified as a little kid.

And as I grew up, I began thinking, imagine how horrific it would be to be waiting in a cell waiting to die. I mean, condemned to death. Knowing that your number was going to come up one day and your head was going to be lopped off.

What a horrific thing. But at about the age of 20, I realized that is the fate of humanity. Did you know that the number one killer in the U.S. is death? Did you realize that? That we're all part of the ultimate statistic 10 out of 10 die.

But Andy Williams is right in his hit song. Ain't it true no matter what you do they're going to bury you beneath the cold, cold ground. Big or tall, long or short, fat or small, it's going to get you all.

That was the number one hit years ago. But it's true. Now, our holding cell is rather large.

We've got good lighting, we've got a nice blue roof, we've got good ventilation, we can travel around all we want. But we are waiting to die. Every beat of our heart is a drumbeat of our own funeral march.

A number of years ago, I had a friend who was 20 years old. His name was Craig. He had no interest in Christian things whatsoever.

Not an ounce of interest. Until one day the doctor said to him, young man, you've got cancer. I'm sorry, I can only give you six months to live.

His friend said to him, do a brothel crawl and enjoy the last six months of your life. He was not interested. Why? Because he had a cry come deep from within his heart, far stronger than a sexual drive.

It was a cry that says, oh, I don't want to die. Now, all of us can identify with that. Why? Because the Bible says we are held captive through the fear of death until we come to Jesus Christ.

Now, instead of calling that the fear of death, let's change it a little and call it the will to live. God has placed eternity in our hearts. We have a will to live.

Humanity is not like animals. Animals have no sense of God as far as they know. I'll be at the herd of cows down one end of a paddock or a field worshipping God and mewling hymns on Sunday mornings.

They're not interested. I mean, my dog doesn't think much about life and death. To my dog it's just ball, eat, sleep, play.

That's all life is. But you and I have a will to live. There's something in our hearts that says, Oh, I don't want to die.

Why not let your will to live open your heart to the gospel? I mean, you've got nothing to lose and everything to gain. Years ago I saw a John Wayne movie. John Wayne was on horseback.

This girl was lying on top of this ridge. She had him in her sight. She was going to kill him because he had killed her kid brother.

As he went past she went blam. He hit the deck. She ran down with glee and kicked what she thought was the corpse.

Suddenly he went right into the back of her legs. She hit the deck. He stood over her.

She looked up at him and said, How could I have missed? And he said, You didn't. And got his hand and cut blood from his shoulder and smeared it across her jacket. Tough is John Wayne.

He's the guy that's still shooting Indians with 200 arrows in his back. Well, that's Hollywood. But how did John Wayne die in real life? Well, in real life, when he was dying of cancer, he called to Billy Graham to come to his bedside and pray with him.

You see, there's a Hollywood world and there's a real world. And the Hollywood part of you says, Oh, when your number's up, it's up. When you're dead, you're dead.

You kick the bucket. I'm not scared of dying. Uh-uh.

Be honest with yourself. Put aside that Hollywood world, that one that wants to impress other people and say, Hey, I really don't want to die. See, that's one of the things that brought me to the Savior.

Because I knew I was going to die one day, that death was going to rip from my hands everything I held dear to me. Everything. And it didn't make sense.

I haven't got a brick for a brain. I wasn't going to just stand there. I began to search, is there an answer? I remember going to the medical profession and seeing a whole pile of dead doctors.

Go to the scientists and say, Can science help? Big pile of dead scientists. I mean, everybody dies. I couldn't find an answer.

So, in a sense, I gave up. And I didn't realize that God, the author of life, had the answer to man's great dilemma. Death itself.

I don't know if you've noticed, but when there is a big tragedy in life and a lot of people die, what the world does is call in the traditional church with its tombstone faces and monotone voices. And what the traditional church does is it cranks open the Bible, dusts it off, and reads Psalm 23. That old faithful Psalm.

That Psalm about death. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Because they think that Psalm has got something to do with death when it hasn't. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. You see, if you're in the shadow of something, you are not in the reality, you're just in close proximity to it.

If I stand next to a wall, I'm in the shadow of the wall. I'm not in the wall, I'm just very close to the wall. And the Bible says, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

You see, that's not speaking of death, that's speaking of this life. We are in close proximity to death. Speaking of the birth of Jesus, it said, to them that sat in the shadow of death, a light has sprung up.

If you look at the words of Jesus, never a man spoke like this man. He said, I am the light of the world, and he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. When you come to Christ, that shadow disappears completely.

You have the light of life itself. See, today, if I said to you, which would you prefer? If I was to offer you a fistful of diamonds, or a glass of cool, clear water, which would you take? You'd say, Oh, give me the diamonds. And quite rightly so.

What do you want water for? You just want the diamonds. But if you were crawling through a desert, and your lips were blistered, and your tongue was swollen, and you were dying of thirst, and I came up and said, Hey, you, which do you prefer? A fistful of diamonds, or a glass of cool, clear water? You'd say, Give me the water, lest I die. Circumstantial priorities.

Your priorities change because of your circumstances. And today, the world far prefers the sparkling diamonds of sin, the pleasures of sin for a season, than the cool, clear waters of the forgiveness of God and Jesus Christ. But on the day of judgment, when God manifests His righteous anger to humanity, when He judges all humanity on the desert of the day of judgment, when the burning heat of God's law comes upon humanity, they'll say, Give me water, lest I die.

Give me the waters of God's forgiveness, and then it'll be too late. There's no purgatory. There's no second chance.

Jesus said, If you believe not that I am the Christ, you shall die in your sins. It's appointed a man once to die and after this the judgment. And when you die, you seal your eternal fate.

If you die in Jesus Christ, you die in God's mercy. If you die in your sins, you die into God's wrath and His judgment. God will give to every person who is contentious and obeys not the truth tribulation, anguish, wrath upon every soul that works evil.

But today, if you'll admit your sins and say, God, I'm a sinner. I've transgressed your law. Forgive me.

God can wash you clean with the pure waters of the gospel. Swing over to Galatians 6, if you would, verse 14. See, I never understood why Jesus Christ died on the cross.

It didn't make any sense to me until I realized I had sinned against heaven. When I realized I had sinned against heaven, I said, Well, what must I do to be saved? And suddenly, I understood why Jesus suffered on that cross. Never a man spoke like this man.

Never a man said the things that this man said. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

He said, Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear my voice. He said, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me though he dies, yet shall he live.

And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. The scriptures say, He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. He that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

You see, if you trust in Jesus, what he did on the cross becomes effectual for you. It's like this. Imagine if I had broken a very serious law and the judge says, You're guilty.

All the evidence is here. There's a \$50,000 fine or imprisonment. Can you pay the fine? And I say, I haven't got two cents to rub together.

And the judge says, Okay, you're going to prison for a long time. When suddenly, somebody steps in and pays the fine for me. Just pays \$50,000 in good hearted money.

The judge can then say to me, Okay, you can go. Your case is dismissed. I say, But judge.

He said, Get out of here. I've got other cases to do. My case is dismissed because your sacrifice, your payment satisfied the demands of justice.

And that's what the death of Jesus Christ did. The last words Jesus said were, The debt has been paid. He satisfied eternal justice.

The moment he suffered and died in your place. Then he rose from the dead, defeated the grave, gave his Holy Spirit to the world. And whoever receives the Spirit of Christ is sealed, is forgiven, is washed, and granted everlasting life by the grace of God.

You say, Oh well, I just don't understand it. You see, when someone receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they don't receive a belief. They don't receive a religion.

They receive the very source of life itself. God, who is life, dwells within them. That's why the Bible says, He that has the Son has life.

He that has not the Son of God has not life. Paul said, Christ, who is our life? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. In the beginning was the Word.

The Word was with God. In him was life. And the life became flesh.

The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Jesus said, My words are spirit, they are life. So when you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you receive the life of God itself.

Now, I don't know if you realize, but most of the church does not evangelize. In fact, Christianity Today, an evangelical magazine, had a survey among their readership and found that one percent of their readership had witnessed of their faith recently. That means 99 percent of the readers of Christianity Today and Evangelical Magazine did not share their faith on a regular basis.

In other words, they didn't really care about the loss. The Barna Research Institute recently had a survey and found 75 percent of those adults in the U.S. who call themselves born-again Christians could not

quote the Great Commission, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It was Oswald J. Smith who said, Oh, my friends, we're loaded down with countless church activities.

While the real work of the church, that of evangelizing and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected. Why did Jesus suffer on the cross? To open the doors of everlasting life for humanity. And if you're a Christian, you and I have great, great responsibility towards the lost.

Charles Spurgeon said, Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. You can be sure of that. Saints, we need to say, if we got the love of God, do we care enough to give out a tract, to invite somebody to church, to say, God, give me wisdom, give me compassion, give me boldness, give me courage to open my mouth and speak boldly as I ought to speak.

Because if anybody had an excuse not to share his faith, it was the Apostle Paul. He was. Then there'd be a true understanding of the cross.

That God commended his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. An Olympic high diver was once lying on his bed thinking about all the medals that he had won in his life. And he thought, man, all my medals mean nothing to me.

It's transient. Death is going to take me in the end. And he began thinking about the futility of life.

The fact that death will ultimately come to every one of us. We don't even know when it will come. He couldn't sleep.

He had no peace. So he got up, picked the keys up, he thought, I'll go down and do some diving, do some practice. He took the keys, he went to unlock the door of the swimming pool room.

The door was already unlocked, so he just went in. Didn't even turn the lights on because he'd done this so many times. Went up the high stairs out the end of the diving board, stretched out his hand.

And suddenly, as he stood there, he saw a shadow cast on a wall by the moonlight. From the shadow, he saw a perfect cross. And he was reminded that when he was a child, he was told that Jesus died for us since.

And he remembered, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes or trusts in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And suddenly, he began to be confronted with the Ten Commandments as he was taught in Sunday school and realized he had broken every one of them and spewed, if not in letter. Tears came to his eyes as he realized that God loved him enough to provide a way of his escape.

He turned around and walked back, got down the ladder, dropped to his knees and said, God forgive me, I'm a sinner. And he willfully placed his faith in Jesus Christ. He went back, read the Bible for an hour or so, went off to sleep.

Woke in the morning knowing his sins were forgiven, knowing that he passed from death into life. Went to the diving pool, opened up the door and to his horror, looked in and the caretaker was in there. He was refilling the pool.

That pool was completely empty. The caretaker had emptied it the night before and he was in the process of refilling it. Imagine if you went out there into that diving pool and a shadow was cast on the wall.

He thought, Jesus died for me on the cross. And he thought about his sins. He thought how he had sinned against heaven.

He thought, Jesus died on my behalf. Tomorrow, I'll become a Christian. Ah, today is the day of salvation.

Don't boast of tomorrow. Don't be so arrogant. We walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

You and I have only got the breath that's going in at this moment. That next breath comes by the grace of God. Let your will to live cause you to open your heart to the claims of the gospel.

We're not after your money. We're not saying join a church. We're saying get right with God.

Turn from your sins. Isn't it so hard to say, God, I'm sorry? It's human pride that destroys marriages. Husband and wife rather than turn to each other and say, I'm sorry, please forgive me.

They'd rather destroy the marriage. They'd rather destroy the lives of their children. Split a marriage rather than humble themselves.

No wonder the Bible says God hates pride. Everyone who is proud of heart is an abomination to the Lord. Just say, God, I'm sorry.

Forgive my sins. Create in me a clean heart. Renew within me a right spirit.

And God will do it. I give you my word and I give you God's word. He has faithfully promised.

And you will pass from death into life the moment you repent and put your faith in Jesus Christ. Let's bear in prayer as we close. Father, this day we pray that you would do a work in our hearts.

Firstly, primarily for those that don't know you. Those that are in the shadow of death. Those that are under the wrath of God.

We pray that they would call God, be merciful to me, a sinner. You would grant them understanding. Give them light.

Grant them repentance, the knowledge of the truth. They might recover themselves or the snare of the devil has taken them captive to do as well. Father, we pray for the rest of us who profess to love you.

We pray that we would worship and serve you. That we would be true and faithful witnesses. That we would study to show ourselves approved.

That we would cry, Oh God, give me the tongue of the learned. That may I know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. In Jesus name.

If you are ready to turn from your sins and believe in Jesus Christ so that you can receive the forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life, then take a moment to bow your head and pray a prayer like this one. Right now. God, I am sorry for my sin.

I turn from it right now. I thank you for sending Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sin. Jesus, I ask you to come into my heart and life right now.

Be my Lord, Savior and friend. Help me to follow you all the days of my life. Thank you for forgiving and receiving me right now.

Thank you that my sin is forgiven and that I am going to heaven. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

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