

# Position vs Experience

by Robert B. Thompson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the difference between our position in Christ and our experience in Christ, and how dealing with this difference correctly is crucial for our success and testimony as Christians.*

**Duration:** 1:18:00

**Scripture:** Romans 6:6-8, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Hebrews 4:16

**Topics:** "Christian Redemption", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, Eddie discusses the disconnect between our experience in Christ and our position in Christ as described in the scriptures. He emphasizes the importance of understanding Romans 8:2, which explains that the law does not work in bringing us closer to God. Eddie encourages the young warriors in the audience, who represent the next generation, to familiarize themselves with this scripture. He also highlights the significance of the sixth chapter of Romans in understanding the true nature of Christian redemption. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for courage and a deeper understanding of scripture to align our experience with our position in Christ.

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## Transcript

For all your wonderful love to us. Thank you, Lord. It makes me think of Bob Porcelli.

Lord, we pray your hand will be on him. Keep him in Singapore. Bring him back safely, Lord.

Bring Audrey back safely. Lord, we're looking to you for Jack Hose. Lord, that he'll be all right and recover.

Praise your name. And the little girl that Bill mentioned was praying, Lord, for your old child. We pray you'll be with her, Lord.

Heal her from this diarrhea. Lord, we thank you. We have had so many answers to prayer in our families, Lord.

We just appreciate it. Just thank you, Lord. We pray that you'll be with us tonight.

Hear the prayers that are here, the burdens, Lord. We had our prayers with them. We pray, Lord, that you will be with those in Capeland and those of us here that will pursue that which is of your will, Lord, that everyone will get something that they need.

We ask and thank you in Jesus' name. Okay, we'll start then with Eddie's verse, Dave. All right, for those out in the tape, our internet address is, I forgot what it is, [www.wor.org](http://www.wor.org). All right, now we're in week two, summer session of 97, 27 May, tape number 3961, Handling God's Timeless Vision.

Recommended reading, The Eternal Purpose of God. In his timeless vision, God sees us as completed in his Son. However, oftentimes our experience in Christ does not entirely match up with our position in Christ as described in the scriptures, for example, 2 Corinthians 5.17, Galatians 2.20. Now, first of all, because I've got young warriors here, I want to explain what we're doing here.

How many see the word experience? You see that up there? It's in italics, the second sentence down, our experience in Christ, second line down, see that? And then the next line down says position, and that's in the funny letters that lean over. Those are called italics, okay? You know all that, I'm out that. All right, there's a difference between our experience in Christ and our position in Christ, and it can be explained very simply.

God calls us about great things. He says we're new creatures in Christ. He says, it's at our right hand.

That's our position. But when we look at ourselves, we don't see an entirely new creature, and we don't see ourselves at the right hand of God. We don't see ourselves glorified.

We don't see ourselves in Mount Zion. We don't see ourselves sometimes healed. There's a difference between what we see in ourselves now and what God says is true.

God says we're new creatures. All things have passed away. All things are new, and all things are of God, but we don't see it in our personality that all things are of God.

Is that right? There's a few things that aren't of God, okay? But God said if any man be in Christ, all things are of God. Yet we look at ourselves and don't see all things of God. So there's a difference between what God says about our position and what we are actually experiencing.

That's got to be very clear. You want to understand what we're doing. God says great things about us, but when we look at ourselves, Mother, are we there yet? No, we're not there yet.

And how you deal with these two things, the difference, makes a difference on how successful you are in your Christian life because there's ways that you can mess up. And so that's what we're talking about in this particular overhead, ways you can mess up by the fact that what God has said is true and what you see to be true in yourself. You can mess up on that.

That's a deeper life. Teachers have taught that for years. They have different terms for it.

I call it the position and the experience, but any other terms are acceptable. All right, 2 Corinthians 5.7, what does that say? You should know that, warriors. That's a key situation there, 2 Corinthians 5.17. What does that say, Chantal? Does that sound like our position in God or our experience that we see? You have to go slowly with people.

People of all ages. As you think they understand what you're talking about and they're just sitting there being nice. Oh, I see Tara's with us.

Tara, you have your Bible? Are you listening about the position and the experience? And the young fellow there, the hockey player? Okay, I never did get your name from your dad. What? Neil, Neil Jr. Okay, all

right. We have soccer players here, and we have wrestlers here, but they only have one hockey player.

All right, what did you come up with, Chantal? Does that sound like our experience or does it sound like our position in God? That's our position. All right, and then Galatians 2.20, you also should have memorized. What is Galatians 2.20? That's another verse you hear a great deal.

What does that say? Galatians 2.20, that should flash in your mind. Anybody find it? What does it say? Now, Linley, does that sound like your position or your experience? You are crucified with Christ, yet it is not. Yeah, all right.

Our position for a while at least, and Paul was giving his testimony. Sometimes we misunderstand that. We say, oh, goody, if I'm a Christian, I'm crucified with Christ.

Paul was talking about his experience, and when you read in 2 Corinthians about the things he went through, being shipwrecked and beaten and everything, you can see that Paul was really crucified. He really had died the death, and he wasn't living anymore. It was Christ who was living in him.

All right, so those two verses then tell us their kind of goals. One, 2 Corinthians is what Paul is saying is true of us. Galatians 2.20 is what Paul was saying is true of himself, but both of them are held up before us as a goal or something we aspire to, or like Linley says, we're certainly experiencing it every day.

All right, one incorrect way, one incorrect way to respond to God's timeless vision is textualism. Tozer uses that term, saying a thing is true because the Bible says it is true. Now, you know, that sounds pretty cool.

You know, the Bible says it must be true. How does that work out in people's thinking? Do you have, and we see a lot of that today, and how does that work out in people's thinking? The Bible says it's true, it's true. The Bible says I'm healed, I'm healed.

The Bible says I'm perfect, I'm perfect. The Bible says this, the Bible says that, therefore it's true of me. Now, Neil Jr., can you see how that way of saying this is true of me, because the Bible says it's true, how could that possibly work out wrong? No thanks, you haven't had enough exposure to really come to grips with this, and don't worry, there's a lot of adults scratching their head, Neil, wondering what I'm talking about.

All right, we go to the faith message that was so popular a few years ago, and a lot of that came out of a man by the name of Kenyon, who was a local man who is dead now. He was a pioneer in this thing in which you say a thing is true. It is true.

I believe it. I believe it, and therefore it's true. I'd a friend really go off that way.

Well, now, let's say that someone, I remember an actual thing that happened. We had a young fellow, well, he wasn't so young either, but he was a man in Bible school, and he was a beginning preacher, and his son got appendicitis. Now, he had always believed in healing, and he took this stance.

The Bible says, by his strides, we were healed. Terry, you're in the sisterhood. Do you know what tense were is? Okay, I'll give you a choice.

Is it future, or now, or past tense? Were. I got her in a spot now, but she can't think. She's under pressure.

Anybody, what tense is that? And the Bible says his boy already has been healed. By whose strides you were healed. Now, this was a man who had believed this, but it never had been put to the test.

And I'll tell you, he was one shook up dude, I'm here to tell you. He didn't know what to do. And people have died because they were supposed to take their insulin.

Even children and their parents would be in Christian science, for example, and they approach it somewhat differently, but the idea is the same in that it's split off from reality. It's a mental, I say it's true mentally, and if I don't see it here, that's not real. What's real is in my mind, which is Gnosticism.

But it's very important because it affects a lot of Christians. What do you think he finally ended up doing? He took his boy to the hospital, and it's a good thing he did, too, because the boy had probably died. See, God doesn't honor that.

God does not honor that. Now, this may shake your cage a little bit, but it's not faith, it's presumption. It's the third temptation of Christ.

Jump off the gable because the Bible says so. They, the angels, shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against the stone, Satan said, quoting scripture, at Jesus. See, that's where you hear people say step out in faith.

Do great things for God. That's fashionable in our culture, but it's not scriptural. There's no example in the Bible of aggressive faith.

That's not faith. That's presumption. And God will not honor presumption.

Okay, now I may surprise you because that's kind of a shibboleth among Christian people. The Bible says it and so it's so. Well, that is not how the Bible works.

So, you have to find out how to deal with the gap between position and experience. And if you deal with it incorrectly, you make shipwreck of your life. All right, the Bible says we were healed.

True or not? It is true. God's word is immutably true. But how you appropriate that is another question.

Then it's approached, and that really isn't, that part is not specifically what Tozer means by textualism, but it's close enough. What Tozer means by textualism is slightly different from presumptuous faith. What he means, he's referring to, is the Christian penchant for saying I'm a new creature because the Bible says so.

And they're not trying to use it to manipulate God by presumption. They're just saying the Bible says it, so it must be true of me. And an awful lot of evangelical thinking is textualism.

That's what Tozer said would be a miracle if evangelicals ever get delivered from textualism. Because you can see that textualism is not reality. Another form of textualism, which is historic, historical I should say, it's historic and historical, is the idea of a state of grace.

And you may have heard that expression. Now that's not new. That's a belief of Christians for hundreds of years, that the Christian is in a state of grace.

Something that the Bible, for example, says you are accepted in the Beloved. Therefore I'm accepted in the Beloved and I go into a mental state that the Bible declares to be true, or so we think, but it does not result in the transformation of personality. Now, this state of grace thing, and this textualism, a thing is true of me because the Bible says it is true.

And then three, trying to force things to come about because, quote, the Bible says so, my God shall supply all your needs. So a pastor has a need to pay the mortgage. So he writes a \$5,000 check and cashes it when he doesn't have it in the bank because the Bible says my God shall supply all your needs.

And if you don't think that Christians don't do this, you're mistaken. They do do it. And so these three forms of schizophrenia, because that's really what they are, they're split off from reality.

Maybe a better term would be Gnosticism. Gnosticism comes from the first century and it means that salvation comes from a set of beliefs and that the physical world is not a real world. The real world is in your beliefs.

And this greatly affected the early church. Some of the early Christians became Gnostic because they couldn't see the difference between, say for example, Romans 10, 9, and 10, for by that thou shall confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead. They couldn't see the difference between that and Gnosticism because Gnosticism says you're saved by what you believe.

And that's so close to Christianity, although there is an uncrossable gulf between them. But the church has not spotted this. And even as late as a year and a half ago, David Wilkerson said the church never has really been clear about the difference between God's responsibility and our responsibility.

So this problem of the position and the experience, how you deal with God who works on a timeless vision, makes a great deal of difference in your success and your testimony. In fact, the Christian church, the testimony of the Christian church, which is from God's standpoint one of the most important aspects of the Christian church, because God intends through the church to show not only angels but the nations of the earth his person, his will, his way, and his eternal plan in Christ Jesus. And that's the testimony of the church that tells a lot of things.

That testimony has been almost completely destroyed by these three ways of incorrectly approaching the difference between the experience and the position. And by the way kids, this is on tape, and so your parents are here, your parents are here, Michelle is their own parent, Martha's parents are here, so you might want to play that over and explain to them because it's not some academic thing out here somewhere, be nice, but we need to get back to the real business of finding how to communicate with our teenagers. We're talking about the massive intervention of God in our time to explain what has not been clear in 2,000 years.

The church has not borne testimony. The world is cynical. The Catholic church has not borne testimony.

I like speaking in generalities, there are marvelous exceptions. But the Catholic church has not borne a good testimony to the world throughout the centuries that has played politics, fought wars and tortured and killed heretics. That's no testimony of Jesus Christ.

And the Protestants haven't done any better because the Catholics are hung up on their liturgy and their penances and so on, and the Protestants are hung up on this state of grace thing, and both of them serve

Satan's end, destroy the testimony. And so God is intervening in this day in which we live, and he's explaining to us what has gone wrong with Christian thinking that it has made the church in America, for example, an object of cynicism and scorn. We've got ministry all over the place, but the witness is dead.

We have ministry all over the place, everybody's out ministering. Some people run off with the pastor and leave his wife and children and they go out and cut gospel records. They're ministering all over the place, words of knowledge and everything, and they're living in adultery.

And we can't figure out what's going on because the world isn't interested in the ministry, the world's looking for the witness. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and good works have to do with the experience. And when we can't get the experience together with the position, then Satan's job is accomplished.

We can talk about the rapture going to heaven, we can talk about the mysteries of the faith, and even believe in Christ in Romans 10, 9 and 10, and it doesn't affect the world, and then Satan's not worried about it. He's worried about people seeing Christ in us, his behavior. And this is the day.

And of course, the casting out of demons is a very important part of that. And the growth of Christ is a very important part of that. And the knowledge of the word is a very important part of that.

And there's a lot of things that have to come together, but the end result is that we are brought into the image of Jesus Christ, and then to untroubled rest in God in Christ. Those two things, image and union. And that's what God is after, and when we are there, Christ will appear with us in Romans 10, 9 and 10.

So we're talking right at this time about, we just mentioned three incorrect ways the church has responded to the gap between the position and the experience, between what we are experiencing, which is our testimony, and what God has said is true of us. And we mentioned the state of grace, we're in a state of grace, so we're saved and going to heaven independently of our behavior, because we're saved in a state of grace, which does not exist. That's one of the truisms, it's one of the pillars of the Christian faith for 2,000 years, and it is absolutely false.

There is no such thing as a state of grace. It does not exist. It's a cognitive, it's a mental situation.

I'm in a state of grace. What does that mean? That God has pronounced upon me that I am accepted of him independently of what I do think or believe, or I should say, independently of what I do and speak. I'm in a state of grace.

Yes, Larry? Let's echo hand-in-hand with the teaching of the dispensation of grace, and we're in the dispensation of grace. Yes, that came from a biblical model called dispensationalism, which came into existence in about 1870, in which an Irish Bible teacher by the name of J. N. Darby put together a new brand of--it's a mixture of Gnosticism and a few things that he added of his own, particularly the rapture that came forth at that time, which was supposed to be the exodus of the 144,000 to heaven before the tribulation, and now it includes all believers, and it was a mishmash that came out of the last century. But they did adopt this concept of a dispensation of grace.

Before that, it used to be called a state of grace. We're in a state of grace, and this is, of course, what every minister will learn in seminary. Yes? Do you expect contextualism to explain the times where contextualism doesn't work? In which a man--this has got to be a 1996 publication, widely distributed among evangelicals--in which a man deplored the things going on in the Charismatic Church, and they're

terrible.

But as he started out the book, he said, now, you must recognize this is an exhortation to the Church, because in the final analysis we stand in grace. What he's saying is, all this is wrong, but where the rubber hits the road, it's not going to make any difference. Huh? Charismatic chaos, of course.

And the issue is that what he's saying, I mean, put it together. If I say to you, look, you're a charismatic person, and you should not be running off with somebody else's husband, we'll say. But you were meant for each other.

And your husband is a spiritual klutz. He's got nothing going. And you've met this man that you know, that your soul just says, this is he.

You were created for him, and he was created for you. And you've had spiritual experiences in which you found yourself closed up together in a plastic bubble, and you were floating away. I mean, you have had the most marvelous and delicious exotic experiences, and you've had fleece galore.

I mean, you've had fleeces come through all over the place. And you go to God and say, well, this isn't right. Yes, but I'm making an exception for you, because this is just for you.

And don't tell anybody, because they will not understand. Keep it in the dark. Satan likes stuff kept in the dark.

So you're going along, and you're being sucked into this thing, and you're looking at your husband and your kids, and you figure this isn't right, this isn't right. But oh, it must be God, because it feels so. And then somebody comes to you and says, honey, you shouldn't do that.

But in the last analysis, you're saved by grace. What are you liable to do? Now, somebody comes to you and says, if you forsake your husband and your children, you're turning away from the Lord. You're certainly losing the victor's crown.

And if you are saved, it will be by the most dreadful fire that will last for what will seem eternities as God burns out of you. You'll have no reward in the kingdom. You'll lose a good part of your personality.

And if you appear in the kingdom at all, you'll appear as a child starting all over again. And you may end up in the outer darkness, or worse. And I'll guarantee you this, you'll never get that first blush back.

Because once you, see, it's a love affair with Christ. And once you turn away from Christ, you lose that first blush. Oh, you can be saved, but you can go through hell getting that way too.

It's worth it to keep out of the lake of fire. Do you see what kind of a difference that's going to make in your behavior? You think, boy, my husband is a dumb klutz, that's for sure. But I don't want to live all my life in fear of dying and meeting an angry Christ.

But if I say to you, grace operates up here, it's abstract. You're in a state of grace, it's an unconditional amnesty. It came from God and can't be affected by your behavior.

You're going to succumb to the wiles of the devil. And that is what has happened to the church in America. That's why I say, I'm not talking about some academic thing out here that, when I should be down to where we're actually living, like, you know, what's, you know, what's the newest thing on the diet scene, or

aerobics, or something else.

I'm talking about God has come to his church, in America at least, and maybe throughout the whole world, and he is saying, you're in deception. And as I say, there are notable exceptions. And there are, there are countless Christians who have been true to God, and have left bloody footprints in the snow, even though their doctrine was all monkey business.

And God is not interested in doctrine, God is interested in behavior. So I'm not saying that everybody in the church is going to hell, I'm just saying that because of the demonic pressure in the darkness of our time, God wants a clear testimony coming from his church. And so he's restoring doctrine so that people can get their feet under them, and it will eventually spread to the Christian ministry.

You mark my words. But I'm telling you tonight, because it's true, and it will, and God's interested, it will spread to the Christian ministry. Now, I don't say everyone will accept it, but some will, and it will convert the church before the Lord comes, because he's coming for a church without spot or wrinkle, and that's not by imputation.

That's by actual deliverance and actual forming of Christ in the individual. And it's got to be, because it's written. And we are in this historic time.

It's a historic time for us. Don't miss it, because when God opens a window, it's open for just so long, and everything of God, everything of God, April, is always an opportunity. And it's there, and you either take it, or you neglect it.

And when the window's shut, it's over. There's a terrible finality to God. Let the wicked remain wicked.

Let the righteous remain righteous. That's when the doors of mercy are closed, when that scripture comes into action. There is a dreadful finality about God.

He's not a human being, and Satan's afraid of this. He's trying to turn mankind against God, and so the church is going to triumph, but it's got to get its doctrine straight, because revivals come, and then when the power lifts, the people are back in the pit again, because of this problem of the difference between the position and the experience. All right, now, how can we more appropriately move forward in fulfilling God's vision for our life? How do you think we should approach a thing like, if any man be in Christ, there's a new creature, or a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new, and speaking of our personality, and all things are of God. Now, you can see that's beyond most of us, certainly beyond me.

All things have become new. I mean, every aspect of your emotions, your nervous system, and when the Lord comes, your body, everything becomes new. The Word of God is perfect in all its dimensions, and when God says that, that is what shall happen, and there is no stopping it.

Now, here we are. We're washed in the blood. We've had various experiences that have matured us, and that we can count on, and yet we would be the first to say that it is not true that old things have passed away, and all has become new, and all has become of God.

That's our position in Christ. Now, how do we transform that into reality? Larry, now we need the chalkboard, and we will, if the Lord wills, talk about Romans 8.2 that we started Sunday morning and got

halfway through, because that is the new covenant. Romans 8.2 is the new covenant.

If you want a good understanding of the Christian redemption, it's the 6th chapter of Romans, and make sure that you know it, starting off, what then, shall we sin because we're under grace, and ends up with the wages of sin is death, which we apply to the unsaved. It has nothing to do with the unsaved. It's talking about the Christian who lives in the flesh will slay his own resurrection.

So, get that 6th chapter of Romans, and learn it, read it. It will revolutionize your thinking. It's the best exposition of the true nature of the Christian redemption, is the 6th chapter of Romans.

Okay? It's really wonderful, and what it's saying is that if we Christians, what the 6th chapter of Romans is saying is if we Christians, we're Christians, okay? How many are Christians? Most of us are. Alright, good. If we Christians have a choice that the unsaved do not have, we have a choice of being a slave of righteousness, or being a slave of sin.

That's mentioned 3 or 4 times in that chapter. And then at the end of the chapter it says if you have chosen to be a slave of righteousness, the product of that is eternal life. If you choose to be the slave of sin, then the wages that you're paid are death.

Now, what kind of death? See, not physical death, because you'll die physically whether you're a slave of righteousness or a slave of sin. So, he's obviously not talking about physical death. Then what death is he talking about? He's talking about the time of the coming of the Lord when you're either resurrected unto life or resurrected unto judgment.

You're slaying your own resurrection. When you choose to be the slave of sin, you are affecting your resurrection. That's what the 6th chapter of Romans is about.

We preach that to the unsaved. The wages of sin is death. He's talking to Christians.

The chapter is about Christians who misunderstand his teaching about grace. He says that he preached all this stuff about the law. Now, unless you should misunderstand me, if you as a Christian choose to be a slave of righteousness, you will reap eternal life.

That's God's gift to you. But if you choose, after having been believed and been baptized in water, if you then choose to continue in sin, you will be paid off in death, spiritual death. And, of course, that's repeated many times, repeated in Romans 8. 8.13 is repeated in Galatians 6, verse 7. All this is speaking to Christians.

And because of our misunderstanding of the state of grace, we have said, well, that couldn't apply to a Christian. How could that apply to a Christian? He's saved by grace. Therefore, it must apply to the Jews.

They come out bad on this, Miriam. Or it must apply to the unsaved, when the context is obviously talking about Christians. But we say it conflicts with this idea of the state of grace.

So for 2,000 years, the Bible has not been understood. It makes no sense. But when you see what it's saying is that Jesus Christ didn't come so that we would have an abstract.

But Jesus Christ came to transform us, to change us into his image. Then when Paul gets into verses and says that if you're not interacting with this process, you're heading for death, then it makes perfect sense. And you don't have to strain over any verse at all.

It opens up like a ripe melon. Any question about that so far? You had a question? No, I have a question again. Oh, that's okay.

See, we've had some incorrect definitions. When we say saved, we mean go to heaven. And that's the problem.

That's not what it means to be saved. That is what we have always thought it meant to be saved. But you will not find that in the New Testament.

Remember, search the scripture, see if it's true. What's the lady that said to me? I read my Bible. You read your Bible and you find in the New Testament, of course we know it's not in the Old Testament, find the New Testament where it says Christ came to bring us to heaven.

You find that. Or we're saved to go to heaven. Or it's of God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that we can go to heaven.

Or Jesus is the way to heaven. You find those, any of those in the scripture. They don't exist.

Salvation is a process of transformation. And when the Lord comes, what you are will be revealed. For we must all be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ.

So the issue is not whether you're saved or unsaved. The issue is your state in the kingdom. Are you going to enter the kingdom with glorious reward? Are you going to enter in? Remember Paul said about the man that had committed incest, he says that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

So it's not an issue, it's not an either or thing. It's some reap 60, some 30, some 100. Some go in as a naked spirit.

Some are saved as by fire. And that's a terrible thing. That means a loss of all reward in the kingdom.

But you see, if you're heaven oriented, it doesn't matter. Because you say, well, as long as I get there. But salvation is not pointing toward a there.

It's pointing toward a change in you. It's an altogether different way of approaching it. You have to redefine your terms.

Because as long as you, as long as you have a heaven model in your mind, the kingdom teaching will not make sense. Because the kingdom and heaven are not the same thing. When Paul said, if we sin, we will not inherit the kingdom.

He was not talking about not inheriting heaven. That's so hard. I know it's such a mental change.

But once you make it, you know, the people used to believe the world was flat. And it was, they had a terrible mental change. When somebody come up, well, we're living on top of an orange, you know, fall off.

But then you could fall off by sailing off the end of the world like Columbus. But people had to make that change. They used to believe tomatoes were poison, but they had to make that change.

We used to believe that being saved meant we were going to live in a mansion in heaven. Now we find the Bible doesn't say that. Where change is possible, but it can cause an awful uproar if it isn't handled properly.

Neil, you had another question. When it says that Matthew, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is a kingdom of heaven. Because the same parables that Matthew calls the kingdom of heaven, the other Gospels call the kingdom of God.

For example, the parable of the sower. And Matthew is called the parable of the kingdom, and Luke is called the parable of the kingdom of God. So I know some have made a point of this, but nowhere does the Bible teach that there are two kingdoms.

Kingdom is never plural. Also, there's no such thing as a Gentile church. That is something you'll see.

There's no scripture. There's only the one olive tree. So when you get it right, it's really simple.

And it makes the whole Bible make sense. But the current mythology, you have to have books to help you understand the Bible. I mean, because it doesn't mean apparently what it says.

It says one thing, but we say, well, that's for the Jews, or that's for the unsaved, or that's for this, or that's for that, that's for the Gentile church in heaven, and this is for the unsaved Jews on earth, trying to preach the gospel and the teeth of Antichrist. And we have all this crazy stuff going on. There's only one kingdom.

Matthew called it the kingdom of heaven. It's the kingdom from heaven. It's a kingdom that has come down for us from heaven.

Luke calls it the kingdom of God because God is the king. But all the parables of Jesus are about the kingdom. There is no parable about heaven, because heaven is not the goal.

Heaven is where sin began. God is moving to the earth. He's sick of that place.

Anyway, the earth is a better creation than the spirit realm. God never goes from the greater to the lesser. When he created the physical realm, he created a better realm, and Satan knew it, and that's why he came down here.

Yes? Also, Revelation chapter 21 and verses and verses sort of talks about that very thing. It's not heaven at all. It's paradise.

You're not thinking about heaven. You want to go where there's creatures with foreheads? Is that what you're really into? Does that turn you on? To go where you stand on a sea of glass laced with fire, does that really turn you on? That's what heaven is. What you're thinking about is paradise, where there are trees and children and flowers and clouds and beauty, which at one time was on the earth and will be returned to the earth.

But you wouldn't care for the realm of heaven with the angels. You would not care much for that at all. That's their thing, and they're perfectly happy up there with all the six wings and everything flapping around, wheels and wheels and all.

That isn't going to do, that's not what you want. What you want, first of all, is happy relationships, and secondly, in a beautiful and joyous environment. That's what you're after, and that's all coming to the earth.

You wouldn't want to be up in heaven with all the funny creatures that are up there. You want to be with people, you want to be with the people that you love, and you want to be in an idyllic situation, and that's

what is coming. It's called the kingdom of God.

Praise the Lord. There are no heavenly snakes in it. Eden was ruined because a snake came down from heaven, and he should have said, heavenly snake, go back where you came from.

But see, she was a child, she didn't know. Because God had in mind to develop people who can resist that, because sin will always be possible, always. And the only protection against sin is Christ formed in us, because we always will have the opportunity to sin.

I know that scares people, and they're hoping they can go some place where their troubles are over. We're not heading toward a place, we're heading toward a person, and that person is Jesus Christ, and ultimately to God in him. Jesus is in the bosom of the Father, always.

And he says, I want you to be with me where I am. That's in the bosom of the Father. And that's our goal.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. And you'll never be, quote, home until you're in the Father, because that's what's within you.

That's the craving within you. You may think it's something else, but those are metaphors. What you're really after is the Father, because there's nothing that the human, because we are his children, and we'll never be happy until we are solidly in the Father.

And that's what Jesus came to do, is to bring us to the Father. So we have all this mythology. Okay, so, yes Bill? I was going to backtrack a little bit the idea that the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, in Matthew 19, verse 23, Jesus says, Surely I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The stress is not on going to heaven, it's on entering the kingdom. The entering the kingdom. We make a mental twist, and we say it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven.

See, we make that twist. That's how deeply embedded in our perception that the idea of heaven is. And there's no problem with that.

There's no problem. By heaven, what we're saying is we want paradise, and that's okay. That's okay.

But you see, man had paradise, and he couldn't hold paradise. So God is not just going to throw a bunch of people back into paradise so they can lose it again. And that's what redemption is all about.

It's preparing us so that once we get paradise again, we don't lose it. Make sense? Adam and Eve are still alive, you know, they're with God. But God isn't going to put them back in there to make the same mistake again.

See, they've got to be born again. They've got to have Christ born in them. And when we're born again, we can go to heaven, right? Accept a man, be born again.

He's born in you. It's Christ born in you. Isn't it funny that in 1997, that was preached in the first century.

What happened in 2,000 years in the middle? You know, repent, because the kingdom of God is at hand. All right? Okay? Now, we talked about Romans 8.2. Can anybody quote that? Romans 8.2. We are, got all

our young warriors. Now, we're going to leave the young warriors back there with Neil there for a couple of months.

They're used to this place. But the young warriors are always up in front. See, they're the generation that are coming up.

They're the ones that God is really going to bring up to the summit on this thing. The young warriors, all my young warriors, you need to know Romans 8.2 because there, Paul is telling you that it doesn't work. It's good and acceptable and perfect, but it doesn't work.

Why doesn't the law work? Yes? Because it doesn't cover the intent. Can you imagine why we miss the intent? Because we miss Christ many times. Because the law doesn't make provision for changing our evil nature.

It merely points it out. And in pointing it out, it causes death because it brings us guilt and we lose fellowship with God. So the law of Moses points out how bad we are, but doesn't give us, it gives us animal sacrifice so we can keep getting forgiven and getting forgiven and getting forgiven and getting forgiven and getting forgiven.

But Paul wanted more than that. He wanted real righteousness. He wanted, and so he said, oh God, who can deliver me from this thing? And then he starts off with the new covenant and this is how you enter the kingdom.

And this is how you bring together the position that God has called you to and your actual experience, which is the whole ranch. Because God works in a timeless vision. First of all, Sunday morning, we talked about what? Remember? That Christ had kept the law perfectly, which gave Christ righteousness, which he has then given to those who are in him.

Romans 8.1. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And in Christ Jesus doesn't mean that you've gone through the first four steps of salvation. It means that starts that way, but it means that you are living in daily fellowship.

Like Jesus said, abide in me and I in you. By the way, that word abide is the Greek form. I mean the verbal form of the Greek term translated mansions.

If you want to be lexically consistent, you would say mansion in me and I in you. I like them apples. And we have a resident Greek scholar here.

You'll catch me up anytime I'm wrong. But in John 15, wherever it says abide, the verbal form of the noun that is translated mansions in John 14.2, and abode in John 14.23, and then in John 15 it starts off abide. And that's all one word in the Greek.

So noun and one is a verb, but it's all one word. So what Christ is talking about in John 14, 15, 16, and 17 is our abiding in him. If any man be in Christ, and Paul is an example of what it means to be in Christ.

It doesn't mean get your ticket. It's a way of living. The righteous live by faith.

They live that way in the presence of God. Okay. So first of all, we have ascribed, what? Righteousness.

And that's our beginning into the kingdom. And that's the beginning of pulling together the position and the experience. We have to start, because otherwise God cannot accept us or hear our prayer.

But the blood atonement, which gives us this ascribed or imputed righteousness, registers in God's scale of equity. See, God has scales up there of equity. And when we live in Christ, then Christ's righteousness is thrown into the scale and it balances out.

It balances out. And so we use the expression, God sees us through Christ. That is not a scriptural expression and grossly misleading.

He does not see us through Christ. God sees us when we sin, believe me. He doesn't see the truthfulness of Christ when we're lying.

Well, people say that God sees me through Christ, and that's in the book of Hezekiah, the 67th book of the Bible. God is willing to balance out the scales if we will abide in Christ. Otherwise we couldn't start, because we would be cut off from God.

But we can go right into the throne of glory with the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon him before the mercy seat in heaven. And we can stand there in righteousness before God by an ascribed righteousness so that God can hear us when we cry to him in our struggle against sin. Because the Christian life is basically a fight.

Fight the good fight of faith. And so we fight every day to escape the toils of the devil and to please God. And so we can go in this righteousness.

Otherwise we couldn't enter the kingdom. No way. Because there's no sin in the kingdom.

There's no sin in the kingdom. It will not be permitted in. It's walled out.

You can't go in the kingdom by grace. You can approach God by forgiveness, but you can't enter the kingdom. Sin cannot be brought into the kingdom.

There is no sin in the kingdom of God. The second thing we talked about was immediately we are righteous justified by faith. Immediately the Holy Spirit begins to bring us point by point against the enemies in our land.

And there are basically three forms of idolatry, aren't they? First of all, we have the idolatry of the idolatry of worldliness, which I call the idolatry of material wealth. This is just one way of looking at it. There's a number of different ways.

Remember Jesus said, boy, this is rotten handwriting. Whoa, it isn't even acceptable. I must be nervous in the service.

Idolatry of material wealth. And you remember Jesus referred to that. In fact, it's the only God of all the gods of the Greeks and Romans, the only God Jesus mentioned as being in competition with God was Mammon, the Syrian God of riches.

No man can serve God and Mammon. Money, money is a substitute for God. The reason that people amass money is to protect themselves in case God doesn't come through.

Think about that. That's the reason we amass money. It's the only God that Jesus called into question.

No man can serve God and Mammon. The second idol, I'm going to use quote marks. I seem to be unsteady tonight.

The idolatry of the passions of the flesh. I'm just going to call it lust because many things work out in lust. Violence springs from lust.

Jealousy springs from lust. That's one of the basic problems of our culture is the lust that dwells in the flesh. And again, that's an idol.

If you will think of the problems Israel had in the land, it was because of the statues to lust. And in the Greek times, there were the groves of in Ephesus and so on and the temple prostitutes and then all forms of perversion which occupy the front page of our and the pages of our newspaper. I don't want to go in with their children here, but we're faced with it all the time.

And it's just a pathological situation in America. It's just a national sickness. And it has been throughout the world.

Sodom was destroyed because of it. And it's associated with gods and worship. Very often witchcraft, for example, is associated with immorality.

It is a worship. You go in the African tribes and the totems and the other things are often figurines showing various aspects of lust. And it is pervasive.

It has been with us since ancient times. There's much written in the law of God about it. And I'll tell you, there's no quicker way to destroy your character and your nervous system and make you a foolish, unprincipled person than to succumb to lust.

But because of the demonic influence in our country, it is almost impossible to overcome. I mean, you have to be a Christian of the most sincere integrity and diligence to kick this thing and get it out of you. And I mean, this is all ages, both sexes.

And it's just terrible in our society. And only the most determined people will be able to get this out of themselves. But it will never be permitted in the kingdom of God.

It is not permitted. It's something that has to be done. You know, there are things in life that you have to do.

How many know that? Whether it was pay the rent or your child support or whatever, there are things in life that you have to do. And you have to kick this devil here of lust. You have to kick that thing as tantalizing as it is.

It has to be overcome. I mean, talk about a battle in our culture. It's getting up to the stage where it's almost not possible to resist.

And in a few years, I think this will be the case. When Mount Zion Church, when we started, the church was conceived in my mind back 21 years ago, however long it was, as a fortress. And we called it something else.

But I always in my heart wanted it called Zion because Zion in the Bible is a fortress. A place where people could come that they could get deliverance and get enough instruction and spiritual strength so that they could stand. And the day may come that our culture will be so polluted as early Rome was, so people were forced into catacombs.

And that was over lust. That's what it's all about. We may be meeting every week.

We may be meeting every day in order to stand. That day may come. Because it is coming up to terrible proportions in our country.

And it gets into you, you know, it gets in a little bit at a time, it gets in a little bit at a time, you know, like a little office flirtation or, you know, whatever. You have to watch yourself. Pray.

And that's how we go before the throne of God. This will not be allowed in the kingdom. Third thing is the idolatry of self.

Now, this is peculiarly satanic. I will, seven times, I will be like the Most High. I will sit in the sides of the north.

I will be above the sons of God. And we see of Antichrist in Daniel 11 that he's not bothered with women. He worships the God of forces or of strength or something.

He's occupied with his will, with the worship of himself. And that probably is the highest or the lowest form of rebellion against God, is to worship yourself. And Americans are prone to this.

And that's why they don't want to hear about suffering. And I prophesied years ago that the charismatic move is going to be split on the issue of suffering. When God's true word comes forth, we are going to have to find that we are going to have to deny ourselves.

Do you get that little expression there? Deny ourselves. Take up our cross, which is an engine of destruction. The cross is an engine of destruction.

And follow the master. Now, you can talk all kinds of things to American Christians, tell them how to get rich and God will meet all their needs and everything. You may even get them involved in ministry or giving or whatever.

But when you say to the American Christian, you have got to give up your life and deny yourself in order to be the slave of Jesus Christ, they say, count me out. I am not going to lose my individuality like that. And in order to be one with Christ, by definition you have to lose your individuality.

Your uniqueness is always enhanced and preserved. But by the fact of becoming one with Christ connotes a loss of your individual right to be yourself. You lose your privacy.

Jesus has lost his privacy. He can never be anywhere without God. God has lost his privacy.

He can never be anywhere without Jesus. God has lost his individuality, but his uniqueness is preserved and enhanced. Christ has lost his individuality, but his uniqueness is preserved and enhanced.

Now, Christ is willing to lose his privacy in favor of having you tagging along wherever he is. The problem is, we are never so sure that's what we want. You know, you mean I've got to be with Jesus wherever he

is and a part of him? I don't... Precisely.

Oh, you know, a good businessman says, if I give, what am I going to get, you know? It's way that way. If I give myself to God, what am I going to get? I'll tell you what you get. If you give everything to God, God will give everything to you.

And that's a good deal. That's a good deal. It's like a beggar coming and that wealthy man says, if you give me everything you own, I'll give you everything I own.

I mean, this is a deal. All mine are thine. Therefore, all thine are mine.

And when you can say to God, all mine are thine, then God will say to you, all mine are thine. But you see, there's something in us that draws back. We may be willing to come unto the blood and be forgiven.

We may be willing even to be delivered. But when you talk about, from idolatry, from material wealth and the lust after material wealth and the lust after passion and fleshly ecstasy, we may be willing to be delivered from that. But when you say, give up yourself, you're not talking about something external like material wealth or even like the spirits that inhabit you, which are alien to your turf anyway.

They don't even belong there. Now we're not talking about wealth. We're not talking about aliens that have invaded us.

We're talking about ourself. Leviathan. Numero uno in plain English.

Numero uno. Yourself. Will you give yourself to God? And that's the issue between God and Satan.

See, Satan wants to be like God, but he doesn't want to be part of God. He's settled to be a partner of God, but he doesn't want to be part of God. Now, Christians will settle to be partners of Christ.

But when you're talking about being part of Christ, you say, whoa, I would like power, I'll take it. But you're talking about something else. You're making demands upon what I am.

Not sin and not my possessions, but what I am. That's God's name, isn't it? There's only one lawful will in the universe, and that's God's. And when you try to get things from Christ, you know, the old volleyball game.

I'll give you this, I'll pay my tithes, and you give me money. I'll fast, and you answer my prayer. That's the volleyball game.

You get on the same side of the net. That's the move from Pentecost to Tabernacles, Neil. There are three great platforms of grace.

That's how you move from platform two to platform three. That's where the dominion and fruitfulness are. That's the third death and resurrection.

The first death and resurrection are death to the world and resurrection into the kingdom. And the second death and resurrection are death to sin and resurrection to life. The third death and resurrection is death to self and resurrection to fruitfulness and dominion.

And that's where God is challenging Pentecostal people today. Okay, so you've got your gifts. So what are you going to do with them? And you have a choice.

You're either going to use them, or you're going to give them back to God. If you use them, you become an imitator of Christ. You become another Christ.

And God does not want another Christ. He has one Christ. He wants branches out of the one vine.

He doesn't want a lot of little Christ running around with power, or even with power and holiness. He doesn't want more Christ. He's got one Christ.

So we have to make the decision whether we want to use our gifts or whether we want to throw ourselves before God and say, not my will but thine be done. Now, most of you are familiar with the tabernacle. The table of showbread is the beginning into the kingdom.

The kingdom is represented by the tabernacle, not the courtyard. That's the area ruled by the kingdom. But the kingdom is the church.

And the first thing you come in, you meet the table of showbread, and you're born again. And then you come to the lampstand. That has to do with the charisma, with the anointing.

And it's the most beautiful object. Pentecost is a beautiful thing. There's glory and healing and wisdom and knowledge and all these things.

But to move toward the ark, which represents the very presence of God and the day of the Lord, you have to come to the altar of incense. And in the altar of incense, the incense is compounded from anicostatic galbanum and frankincense. And most of these are produced by piercing, piercing bark.

And frankincense in particular stands for death. And it's the death of Christ. It's the crucifixion of Christ.

And as we come to the, we've been in Pentecost, and it's wonderful, and the light shines in the oil, and I'll pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and it's great, glorious, dynamite from heaven. But then you have a decision to make, because the lampstand is number four of seven furnishings, which means it's at the middle. And at the Pentecost, you decide whether you want God to be your servant or whether you want to be God's servant.

At Pentecost, you decide. So you can go either way. You can stand at the lampstand and turn back, and the good old youth of Christ and wherever you came from and all the happy times, you can look back there.

Or you look ahead and the old timers are calling to you from beyond the veil and from places farther out, and you've never been there, and it sounds like death, and it looks terrible. Because back here, God is serving you. You're a child, just like your parents serve you.

You're a happy child. You get at Pentecost, it's like an adolescence. And you determine there whether you want to go back and be a child or a perpetual adolescent, God forbid.

Children are fun. Adolescent Chantal. God bless Chantal.

She has a good spirit, and all the kids have a good spirit. You choose whether you want to be God's servant or whether you want God to be your servant. Child doesn't make that choice.

That's the teenager. Should I grow up or should I hold on to my childhood? Some people hold on to their childhood until they're 50 years old. Men never grow up.

50 years old, and they marry a motherly type, and she acts as a mother to the man and takes care of him, and he never supports her, takes care of her, does a blessed thing, and the poor soul is stuck with working, doing the housework and everything, while he sits around and drinks, smokes cigarettes, and watches TV. Never, will never take responsibility. Do you know there's men like that? And then you get the other configuration.

You get the man who married a little girl. She's his princess, and believe me, he could put 13 mattresses on the bed, but if it was a pee under the bottom one, she'd feel it. Daddy's princess.

Never grows up. Sometimes Daddy doesn't want her to grow up. He enjoys the role, just like a mother can enjoy the role with her son.

The sign that you're growing up is that you're able to take responsibility and pick up your end of the lock. So you're facing this grim future out here. I may end up being nothing, whereas if I could be a Pentecostal star, I'd be God's man of faith and power with my briefcase.

But you're looking forward. You're looking forward to the cross, and you don't know what it means. And God says, will you lay down your life for me? Will you give up all these delicious things? Will you say no to life itself? Will you say no? Will you say, yes Lord, not my will be done.

And Jesus Christ was brought to that place. You ever been in the garden of Gethsemane there and Ammon of Olives? Oh God. You know what he thought he was giving up? His relationship to God.

That's why he sweat drops the blood. He never knew when he took the sins of the world on himself, if God would ever receive him. That was the terror that Christ went through.

And you say, well, he knew from the scripture that God was going to make him Messiah and Lord of all. So do you. The higher God is going to go, the deeper the foundation is dug.

And if God has great things for you in the kingdom, you'll have your Gethsemane, but it will be within your capacity. You couldn't stand the Gethsemane of Christ. If that hits you, you'd fall on the floor, a raving maniac, and you couldn't even stand up on your feet.

No, God, God has the Gethsemane that we can endure. To sit on my right hand and my left, can you drink my cup? This cup, Father, this cup, this cup. I used to have a cup that had Orphan Annie on the bottom.

You drank all the tea and you could see Orphan Annie and Sandy on the bottom. But you had to drink the whole cup. Well, I'll tell you, you drink the cup of Christ, you drink every drop.

The St. Anthony said, Lord, this is the way you treat your friends. This was after wrestling with some demons. And the Lord said to St. Anthony, the cup that a king drinks from must be tempered in the fire.

You want to go higher? You want to go to waters to swim in? You want to go where you become a tree of life? You want to go where the fruitfulness and dominion? You want the throne of God and of Christ established in you? You'll never sit on the throne of your own life. Never. Until first, God and Christ are established there.

Even the sun sets free is free indeed. So at Pentecost, we have the tools. We have the blood, we have the authority.

Now the job begins to enter the kingdom. Are you up for it? I don't know. I'm scared.

You needn't be. You needn't be. That's a tunnel.

You're going into a tunnel, but it's not a grave. There's light at the end. And when you come out of the other end, you say to people, I know him.

I've been there. You can't say that until you've been there. Shall we stand? You can't seem to get to the other two.

There are four. Oh well. It's a continued story.

I hope I didn't scare anybody. That's why it says, the first class in the lake of fire are the timid. Do you know why that is? Because you can't enter the kingdom unless you have courage.

So we're going to pray tonight that you'll have courage, all right? And God will hear, because Christ has enough courage for everybody in the room and to spare. He's the man of courage. And he'll bring you into the kingdom.

He will bring you into the kingdom if that's what you want. Is that what you want? Brother Dahl used to say, God will pull you through the not holy if you can stand the pulling. And it's so true.

All you've got to do is say, Lord, this is what I want. And it falls in his court. Okay? Amen.

Lord, we come unto you tonight, Father, and we know all your ways are wonderful.

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