

Purpose of Salvation

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of salvation and the importance of sincere commitment to God amidst life's challenges.

Duration: 1:03:13

Scripture: Romans 8:28

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Christian Integrity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the New American Standard translation of Romans 8:28, which states that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. The preacher emphasizes that God can take even destructive and seemingly irreparable situations in our lives and make them work together for good. However, the preacher also emphasizes that God is looking for honest and sincere people with integrity, not perfect individuals. The sermon concludes with a reminder that while God's love is unconditional, the Bible also teaches that we must come out from the world and do our part to receive God's love and blessings.

Transcript

I'm coming to you this morning, Lord. Thank you, Lord. It rings so true.

And Lord, we know you are the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. We praise you, Holy I Am. And Lord, we do remember those of us, Lord, and relatives and loved ones who have never been born again, Lord.

They have never known the renewing touch, Lord. Religion has just been kind of a bondage and a pain in the neck. They have never felt the inner life of Jesus.

Lord, we pray for them, that you might draw them to yourself. Grant them the gift of repentance. Lord, again we pray for the Jews this morning, Lord, as the communists plan another crystal night, another program.

Lord, we remember the days of Esther. And remember, Lord, how the wicked cast lots, Lord, in order to use witchcraft against the Jews. And Lord, how you turned back upon them their own judgment, and the Jews had a great rejoicing.

And Lord, we pray it will be even so today, Lord, that those who are plotting against the Jews, Lord, will be the ones on whom their own desire falls. It is time, Lord, we believe, for you to touch Jacob, to bring him back home, Lord, to make a place for him, to make him prosper, Lord. And so we do pray this morning that those who lay their hand on the Jews, Lord, will even be as those who did in the days of Esther.

And the judgment will come back on them, Lord. And you will redeem your people with a mighty hand, Lord. Hallelujah.

Grant it, Lord. Father, hear from heaven that there not be another holocaust, Lord, that there not be another time, Lord, when the nations stand by, Lord. I pray any nation that has power to help the Jews and does not do so, Lord, will certainly be visited with your judgment, Lord.

God, grant that it never happen again. Whom you have chosen, Lord, that your name may be lifted up. Now as we continue, Lord, you know the will of God for each one of us here and in the house.

Grant that no one leaves this place, Lord. We're out of touch. Chapter 8, verses 28-32.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called.

And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Now, in this short passage, there's an awful lot of very important concepts, major concepts.

We're talking about the New American Standard that translates it just a little different, Romans 8-28. And we know that God causes, we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. So, the things that happen in your life that seem to be destructive without remediation, without any way of making it right or any way of recovering, God can make it work together for good.

God can cause it to work together for good. God is not looking for perfect people. He's looking for sincere people.

People with integrity. People that have, as it says in the parable of the sower, an honest and good heart. And if you set out to serve the Lord, you're going to make a lot of mistakes.

There's times when you're going to fall on your face. Stoetta said, you just get trapped in all kinds of things. Do things you wished you didn't.

Make mistakes, get disgusted with yourself. Do you ever get disgusted with yourself? But God causes all things to work together for good under certain conditions. If you love God and you're called according to God's purpose, then God is going to take those things.

If you stay with the program, now you have to stay with the program. It takes two to make a contract. It takes two people to make a contract.

One person cannot make a contract. It takes two people to make a contract. And God has made a contract.

And He signed it with the blood of the cross. But you have to sign that contract. You have to do your part.

If you don't do your part, then you've broken the contract. So we're not up here saying for one minute, like some of the modern songs say and everything, no matter what you do, God loves you and will never let you go. That's not true.

It's not scriptural. It's human. It appeals to us.

And that's great. It's unconditional love. No matter what we do, God loves us.

We're His children. The Bible does not teach that. It says that, it warns us that, if we come out from the world, then God will receive us.

I will be fond of you when you seek me. It's always conditional. And Jesus said, if you hear my words, and you do them, you'll build your house on a rock, and when the storm comes, that house will stand.

If you build your house on the sand, that house is going to fall. It's always conditional on responding. If any man hear my word, and do it, my Father will love him.

It's conditional. It's conditional. So we have a lot of things being said today, which are humanistic, which are not true, which appeal to the flesh of people.

They're not true. When it says all things work together for good, God causes all things to work together for good. And if you have a heart to love God, you can make mistakes, you can really blow it.

But if you have a heart to love God, and to do His will, you keep going, you keep pressing on and say, God, I am a huge mess. Help me. God will help you.

And He'll make your mistakes work for good. He will turn them to good. You just give Him.

Just say, Lord, here's the mess. Here it is. God will take it.

You don't have to be an overcomer to get the highest crown in God's repertoire. You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to do everything right all the time.

It's not that kind of a race. What you have to do is to keep yourself before God. And say, now Lord, I've made a lot of mistakes.

I've done a lot of things wrong. But God, I love You. I want to serve You.

Help me. As long as you do that, you're an overcomer. Because that's of the nature of overcoming, is to keep that faith, to abide in Jesus.

You know, it's a wonderful thing, when you think of the marriage of the lambs, there's a lot of talk at Canaan about the marriage of the lambs. It's very close to the heart of God, very central to the Bible. But you want to realize that when we come to the Lord in marriage, we don't come perfectly.

We come without our corruption. And the Lord, then that corruption that is in us becomes His responsibility. If we could make ourselves perfect and then come to the Lord, that would be something.

But we come to the Lord in our confusion, in our weakness, in our mistakes. And the Lord will accept that. That's what is the tract that you read.

That's what it's talking about. Give me your love. God makes all things work together for good to those who love Him.

And when we come to Him, we bring Him the mess that we are. And then that's His responsibility, by His power, in the blood, His Holy Spirit, the ministry, circumstances. God works to perfect us.

We don't perfect ourselves. Now, there are traps in that concept. And one of them is, no matter what I do, God will make it work together for good.

That's not true. If you're not in there hanging in with God, then you come under this house, you will escape. If we neglect so great salvation, if you neglect it, if you waste your talent, the Lord didn't come and say, oh, that's all right, honey.

You buried your talent. He was angry. He said, you lazy servant.

So you see, the two thoughts go very close together. And if you don't think carefully, you can get them mixed up. It sounds on the one hand, oh, no matter what I do, He'll never let me go.

That's not true. That's not true. And God is not that kind of a God.

He's not lazy. He's not indifferent. That's not God.

It is talking about people that want God and love Him, and even though they recognize their weakness, they're saying, God, I love you and I want you. Sooner or later, as in the case of Doretta, God is going to pick up His option on you. So there's a fine line between the weak Christian and the careless Christian.

There's a fine line between the weak Christian and the careless Christian. The weak Christian is someone that through whatever circumstances of their life, they've neither heard, maybe never heard, or whatever, it hasn't worked, but they love God. When God shows them what to do, they do it.

The careless Christian is somebody that comes with an attitude of arrogance. It's so common in our country. I've got it made.

I'm going up in the rapture. I'm saved by grace. I've got God's riches at Christ's expense.

That attitude is of hell. That attitude. He suffered and everything so that I might go free.

He became poor so that I might become rich. And here I am and everything. I'm going up in the rapture.

And, you know, carelessness, that's not of God. But the poor soul that goes and stands in the street and says, God, help me, I'm a sinner. That person, God hears that person.

That's why He said the harlots and the tax collectors will go into the kingdom before the priests, before the high-ranking ones of Israel is because they had this overconfident attitude toward God. And God will not put up with that because all of us come short of the glory of God. All of us have problems.

All of us have weaknesses. And until we can treat them one way or another, we can say, it doesn't matter. God loves me anyway.

That's not right. We say, God, help me today. Help me to get the victory.

Pretty soon, God begins to build us up. And we become victorious in the Lord. He gives us that victory.

We get on top of it. That doesn't mean we'll never make any more mistakes or anything, but we get on top of it. We say, thank God my accounts are short.

They're up to date. The book's balanced. We live in victory.

That's possible. That's where God wants us. After you have suffered a while, the Bible says, establish, strengthen, settle you.

Suffering doesn't last forever. God has to put us through all of these things in order to get at the core of our life. Someone said, we're like onions.

When people finally break down and come for deliverance, they're like an onion. What you usually get is just the outer layer. And they've got to go home and think about that for a while.

It takes a long time before you get to the breaking that was demonstrated before us this morning. It's a long time before you get a human being that comes out with it. We come for deliverance, but we're just getting the top layer of the onion.

There's things there that we cannot afford to let people know. And they keep us in bondage. They keep us tied up in knots.

For years, 20 years, they keep us tied up in knots. But if we love God and we don't quit, we keep coming back saying, Lord, help me. Lord, help me.

Even though we're lying to ourselves. Lord, help me. Lord, help me.

There comes a day when God puts His finger on the thing and says, now. When we come to that place sooner or later, we come to that place if we love God. God has got down to the pith.

He's got down to the nucleus of that onion. And I mean, we sit down and then we're ready to let it all go. Say, this is what's really going on in my life.

When we do that, there comes a freedom and a joy that is unmistakable to us and to those around us. We're released. We know it.

And people know it. But until that time, we protect our egos very zealously. And God is not in a hurry.

Very patiently deals with us. And we may think we're Mr. and Mrs. Super Christian. The truth is that God in His patience says, we're not able at this point to lay bare our soul.

We're not able at this point to really come clean. And so God, when we ask for minor deliverances, He gives us minor deliverances. But if we keep on, if we don't quit, the day will come when we're able to get down to rock bottom.

And when we do, there comes a breaking inside. I'll tell you what else happens. That's described in Revelation 12 where the woman, it says that the child is born and he's caught up to God's throne.

I'll tell you, that's what happened to Duetta. And that's what happens to us when that child is finally born. He's caught immediately up to God because he's the heir of the kingdom.

Praise the Lord. So all of us are somewhere on a continuum. And for the people that are on this continuum, though they may be weak, as I said, there's a great difference between weakness and carelessness.

It's my personal opinion that in Isaiah where it says the bruised reedy shall not break and the smoking flaky shall not quench. Talking about weak Christians, I've written on this at length and I've had to go back through all my books because people were interpreting it as another chance. I don't preach a second chance.

I do preach that when the Lord comes, there'll be healing in His wings. And that means there'll be people that are sick. But you see, that can very easily be misconstrued to mean I'm going to flop around now, but later the Lord's going to heal me.

See, there's a fine, subtle poison in this idea. So I have to preach as though if you don't stay up to snuff today, you're going to lose everything. I have to do that because I don't want to give you the impression that you can not quite make it and then be healed when the Lord comes.

I'm not going to do that for you because there's too many Scriptures like the talents and how should we escape and returning as a dog to his mom, etc. There's a good many Scriptures like this which the Lord exhorts us, you know. So I cannot afford to give you the impression that you can do 99% now and the Lord will make up that other... I can't do that for your sake.

I've got to hold your feet to the fire. But I am persuaded that for the weak, there are many, many weak Christians that we've got Song of Solomon 8. What do we do when she's spoken for? And everybody will be spoken for. What do we do when she's spoken for? Well, if she's at least... Well, we'll build on her at Battle of the Silver.

These are talking about Christians that are not up to the bride level. We're going to build on her. Now, I love that thought because I see so many people that are not really 100%.

But see, then I can easily be... When God is dealing with you many times, it is so severe. It is so severe that if you are not in there with everything you've got, you're not going to make it. You're going to cave.

And God is not addressing those people when He's talking about the weak. Those are people that have come up and have counted the cost and have gone the wrong way and the Bible does not offer to them healing. That's a second chance.

The only thing we have in Revelation is the rewards to the overcomer. And in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are extremely strict. You have a few names in Sardis.

You have a few names in the whole church. In Sardis, you have a few names who shall walk with me in white for they are worthy. And He said, He that overcomes shall not be blotted out of the book of life.

Which plainly states that if a Christian does not overcome, he stands in clear danger of being blotted in the book of life. There's no like that preaching. I can't help it.

That's what the book says. We better not err on the side of sloppiness. People's souls are at stake.

I don't want to give any man or woman, boy or girl, the impression that he can do something less than his best and God is going to say, that's okay then. Because the Bible doesn't teach that. It teaches outer darkness.

But you see, we have another group of people who are not careless. Who are not caving when their moment comes. But who, for one reason or another, are just not walking in triumph of faith.

And yet, they've done all they know to do. This, in my mind, is who we Christians and healing and building is for them because it says, the apostles and all these shall minister until we all come to the unity of the faith. The knowledge of the Son of God.

Till we all come. You see, there's a fine line here. But life is not easy.

And serving God is not easy. And for those who will be in the bridal company, God will take them apart bone by bone until everything in them has been transformed by the Lord. So you've got to be 100%.

You've got to be 100% to get God's best. And if you're not, then you're in the hands of Jesus. Am I making myself clear? I'm making provision for the weak person who hates himself.

Oh God, if I was only better in his praying and not making it. God loves that person. That's the sinner who beats his brass and says, God be merciful to me.

That's distinguished from the person who, well I'm okay, you're okay. Okay, we don't have to live that tight. You know, we can, God wants to be happy, etc.

Ad nauseam. That one is good. God will say this night, you'll give an answer for your soul.

So, that's a difference. So, we know that God calls us all things to work together for good to those who love God. We love God.

It's qualified. Not for everyone. And it doesn't have to be right.

He can take something that's wrong and make it right. If we come to Him, He can take that and cause it to be a stepping stone, to cause it to be insight and experience and strength. So, don't give up.

I don't care how you fall on your face. Don't give up. Keep going.

Praise the Lord. Most of the mighty men of Scripture were not perfect. The only one I found was perfect was Ezra.

And I'm sure a lot of people found fault with him in his day. Most of the others are flawed. But God expunges the flaw if we keep going and if we do what is right.

We do what is right. To those who are called. Now, when we come to that word called, we come to something that Paul treats in Romans 9-10 at length.

That doctrine has been abused. It doesn't matter what you do, it's that you're called. And so it isn't preached much anymore.

In fact, it's undemocratic. This doctrine is very undemocratic. And what it's saying is that God chooses people in His kingdom not for salvation.

The emphasis is not He chooses something to be saved. But He places people in His kingdom the way He will. And we'll find in the wind up when all is done and over and the kingdom is here and established that God had planned it all from the beginning.

And we're caught up in this thing, you know, like it was all what we do. So there's got to be a balance there. If you're worried about being called, then say to the Lord, Lord, I want you to call me.

I want to be called. This is what I want. And don't worry about it anymore.

You know, if you love God, the fact that you have that desire indicates that you're called. No person who is not called is going to be praying to God to be called. Because the things of God, the deep things of God will just be foolishness, nothing to that.

So you can understand the things of salvation up to a certain point. And after that you can't understand it. So with the natural mind, the cross, Calvary, water, baptism is out in the courtyard, it's lighted by the sun and anybody can understand it.

But when you go into the holy place and you begin to deal with the holy things of God, it rapidly becomes foolishness to the carnal mind. And that's why if you want a large church and lots of numbers of people to deal with, you stay in the courtyard. You preach basic salvation.

People can understand that and say, oh, Christ has made a way for me to go to heaven. I think that's better than what I'm doing. And you've got a church full of people.

But once you go into the holy place, once you start talking about God's calling, about the priesthood, about judgment, about sanctification, the people leave in droves because it's foolishness to them. Foolishness. So I think that as time progresses and persecution forces the Christians into more secret groups that have to go underground and it calls off a lot of stuff, we're going to find that people that thought they were Christians and we thought they were Christians were never Christians at all.

They're just in their head. They were never called. They were never called of God.

They became a Christian in their mind. They came to the church. The idea of going to heaven appealed to them.

But when persecution comes, they'll fall away because they're not called of God. So we don't have to worry about a thing. We don't have to worry about attracting people.

We don't have to worry about driving people away when they're offended. If people are called and that call is there, they'll make it through. Praise the Lord.

So don't worry about being called. If you want to be called, that want to comes from God. You say, Lord, I want to be called.

I want to be chosen. I want to be faithful. I want the whole banana.

God will give it to you. God will give it to you. So don't ever fuss about who's called and who isn't.

It will all come out in the wash. It's a very important concept. Alright, so we talked... Excuse me.

Please bear with me. I said to Hank, will you take this coughing off the tape? Especially when I blow my nose. So I guess you have to blow it up with something.

You just cough and I'll cough. Now we come to another thing in this verse. Purpose.

Purpose. How many know that God has no idea what he's doing? If we don't go out and say to the world, the idea of what you're supposed to do is just go out and start preaching wherever you are. It's like getting your tool case and going out on the job site.

Never talk to the foreman. Never look at the blueprint or anything. Say, this is a nice spot.

I think I'll build a house here. That's what we do. We don't have any idea what God is doing.

It's interesting. The things that go on and the things that are said is God's will. Someone made a survey, made a poll of major Christian works in the United States.

And they asked the leaders of all these churches, what is God doing? What's going on today in the kingdom? What is going on? Where is it? You know what their answer was? Satan is attacking the pastor and his family. Everyone, all these major works across the United States. The big thing, Satan is attacking the pastor and his family.

Now, who would think that this is what's going on? And so, we are excited about building the kingdom and how God's going to do this in this country. God's going to do that in that country. But when you get down to what visionary people feel in their spirit, about what is really going on, today, Satan is attacking the pastor and his family.

So, all the hoopla goes on. You see, what's happening is that God is beginning to organize his people and Satan, if Satan can get the leadership, he scatters the sheep. So what God is doing is going to his church and organizing it and disciplining it and Satan is attacking that.

And that is what is going on today. God is getting ready for a tremendous move. And the leaders know that, too.

You'll hear that all over now. The greatest revival of all time coming. That's widespread now.

Wherever people are hearing it, the Spirit of God, great revivals coming. So God knows what he's doing. He has a purpose.

Now, we talked about in Romans, we talked in Romans, first of all, in chapters two through five, talking about grace, salvation by grace, God's forgiveness. Then in chapter six, we talked about what? What do we say? What went on in chapter six? We have a choice. We have a choice.

Whether we choose to sin or not, now that we're Christians. And then in chapter seven, what? The struggle between the two natures. And then in chapter eight, where we are now, it started off with what? The solution to this struggle is walking in the Spirit.

And now, we're talking about, still in chapter eight, we're talking about purpose. Why? What all this means. Where it is going.

I suppose every time I clear my throat, it'll come on this mic. Alright, now, this up here, two through five, is probably 85% of what is preached today. Grace.

That's all. Just Romans chapters two through five. God has made a propitiation through the blood to forgive our sins.

That's all. The rest of it is unknown to most of the church. If you don't believe me, try it.

Ask them about that. After you get past Romans five. What is Romans six about? What's Romans seven about? Something about the Jews.

What's Romans eight about? I know. There's no condemnation. And all things work together for good.

And who shall separate us from the love of God? But in the ultimate, you don't know. So, all this ground is to be covered in the next few years by the church. We're going to lose a lot of people.

A lot of people. A lot of people are going to get saved, though. A lot of people are going to come in and accept God.

So, it's going to be that the true body, the true body of the Lord will be refined. Now, purpose. Now, I want to give you a couple of the purposes of God.

If someone were to ask you, what is the purpose? Why did you get saved? What would you say? Why did you get saved? What's the advantage of getting saved? Huh? Well? Yeah, have eternal life. Huh? What is the purpose? It says here in the Bible here, according to His purpose. What is His purpose? Now, I know you're all scared, you'd be wrong, and I'll yell at you.

I know you know. Do you ever know something but not know it? Huh? But you know it, but you don't know it, huh? Alright. Now, whenever you start anything, the best way to start something is with a purpose.

Now, you'd be surprised how often that is violated. How many businesses, and so on, before systems analysis came along, how many businesses were not sure what their purpose was. These are all kinds of things to the employees that maybe have a coffee break at 10 o'clock.

You get all kinds of things going on in an organization. When you start something, you should have a purpose that should be clearly defined. There's two things that are important in starting a business.

One is a clear objective to what you're doing. So the clearer you can get it, the better. It's primary and secondary objectives.

And the next most important thing, or equally important, is personnel. These two things are most important in a business. And if you have a clear objective and appropriate personnel, you're on your way.

That's how you can design everything you need. Now, God started with a purpose, and He's making personnel. God started with a purpose, and He's making personnel.

Now, neither one of these is clear at all in Christianity today. Neither one is clear at all. But the purpose is what God's doing with the personnel.

Neither one is clear. So the assumption is that the purpose is to get people to heaven. And as far as personnel is concerned, the idea is to forgive them.

Two things are preached. The purpose is to go to heaven, and as far as the personnel, is to forgive them. Both of these are incorrect.

So it's no wonder that the church is all over the place trying to build some kind of a Babylonian structure, not knowing, having any idea what's going on. Now, this is not to say that a lot of good is not done. A lot of good is done.

But it's done in spite of the assumptions. Alright, now, I'm going to read you some of the purposes of God. That God has in bringing you through this process of grace and choice and struggle and walking in the Spirit.

I'm going to give you some of His purposes. Now, all of these purposes are dependent upon our being made in the image of Jesus. Every one of them.

If the personnel are not changed, are just forgiven, but are not changed into the image of Jesus, none of these will work. So it becomes, you see, when you have, when you get your goals straightened out, then everything else straightens out. If your goal is to go to heaven, it doesn't matter whether you change the personnel or not.

All you've got to do is forgive them. Get them there. That's served for a time.

But it's not serving anymore because the kingdom is at hand. So now we have to reorient ourselves to what God is doing. And when you see what God is doing, you realize why.

You must be changed. And change is painful. Because we have to get rid of our love of the world, which is, to some people, almost impossible.

Oh, I can't give up the television. I can't give this up. I can't give this up.

Excuse me. We have to get rid of the love of sin. And we've got a pet sin that we take out for a walk every once in a while, and that's very nice and appealing.

Whether it's drugs or lust or profanity or whatever it is, criticism, chewing at some bone. To think of surrendering that bone? Tony, to think of giving up that bone? And I've had this bone of bitterness for 20 years? You mean I can't, I've got to give that bird that bone? Well, that's my life. If I don't have that, I have to chew on it.

That's the whole motivation of my life. Do you know that people are motivated? Some people's primary motivation in life is hate. And unforgiveness is their primary motivation.

Let's keep them going. Without it, they wouldn't have any drive. That's what makes it worthwhile to get up in the morning so they can nourish it.

Well, it sounds silly, but it's the way we are. And God says, I can't accept that in my house. I can't accept that in my house.

And you have to go out and say, I've got this bone, and cloth it up. And let God bury the thing. Do you know that that is very hard for some people? Some people that would find turning off the television a piece of cake.

It comes with that bone of unforgiveness, that bone of, whatever it is they're working on, bitterness. It's just about impossible. It's just about impossible, but it is not impossible.

When you say, Oh Lord, I want you more than I want this bone. He'll bury it for you. And then there comes the question of self-will.

I'll get rid of the will in this, I'll get rid of my sin, but I personally am going to keep my right to be a person. I'm not surrendering this to anybody, anything, even God. I'm reserving to myself the right to be a person, in my own self, separate from God, separate from everything.

I just retain my person. God says no, no, you've got to let that go. I'm going to, I'm going to bring you through suffering until you are willing to let go.

Okay? Then, after we get these three things dealt with, we also have the thing of feeding on the body and blood of Jesus, feeding on him until his nature is born in us and we begin to show love, joy and peace. Christ must be formed in us in addition to getting rid of the negative. We have to have the positive.

We have to keep ourselves in God each day so that we're receiving the Lord and he's being built up in us. On top of that, we have to then take this whole package and give it to God and say, I'm not going to live for myself anymore but as a part of your being. These three things must be true of every single individual who meets the purpose of God.

He cannot fulfill his purposes with people if they have not taken care of the three aspects of sin, the world and lust and self-will, if they have not walked with Jesus so that he's born in them and if they have then not found it necessary to become a part of God, to give everything to him, everything so they become part of God rather than an entity. So you can do the first two and still remain an entity. You can have Christ born in you and get delivered from sin and still remain an entity.

Have your will even broken down to do the will of God and still remain an entity. There's another step for you where you come into God and say, I'm giving myself to you, I'm giving myself to you, Father, to become part of you. Personnel.

And these things may sound difficult. They're not. They're all part of the same thing.

They all happen as we give ourselves to Jesus and walk in Him and abide in Him. He takes care of the sin and He takes care of building Himself up within us and He brings us into marriage and to union with Himself. The image of Christ.

Just like Him. And one with Him. Not only like Him, but one with Him.

Not only like Him, but one with Him. It's not enough to be Christ-like. We're not called to be just Christ-like.

We're called to be branches coming out of a vine. And that requires grafting. And grafting requires cutting.

A cutting in the branch and a cutting in the vine. He does all these things. That's the personnel.

These are some of the purposes. First of all, I put the wife of the Lamb first. Because it's so historic.

Because it's so great. This idea that God issued out from Himself a Son. Christ was not created.

He came forth from God. Just like you don't create your children. They come forth from you.

And Christ came forth from God. He came forth from God's own being. God so loved the world, He gave His Son.

He came forth from God's being. He was not created. He came out of God's person as a Son.

Which is fine. But if God says, Now I'm going to give you a bride. Well, in the scheme of things, could anything be more important than that? Could anything be more important than that? What is God up to? He becomes a Father.

This day of my begotten, He becomes a Father to the Messiah. And then, and now, He's making for Him an Eve. I mean, man, that is historic.

Important. That is important. That has never happened before.

It will never happen again. It's colossal. It's staggering.

It's tremendous. It's stupendous. That God, I know, when it gets down to people like it came, it gets down to the individual.

You know, I'm talking about the great picture. You want me to be your wife? Me? It gets very personal, doesn't it? But think of it in the great sense. This great bride, this great counterpart, compliment.

The Hebrew says in Genesis, I will make a helper, I will make a helper suited to Him. That's the Hebrew. A helper suited to Him.

Here comes the helper suited to Jesus. Hallelujah. Do you think Jesus cares anything about this? Do you think that interests Him at all? Huh? Do you think it interests God the Father at all? Do you think it interests the angels at all? See, we don't know where the angels fit into this thing.

But I want you to know angels are people. Not people, people, but they are creatures, intelligent creatures. Huh? They have a stake in this.

They love Jesus. And now this man is going to have a bride. It's enormous.

It's enormous. We don't think about it. Now, if there's a floating around in heaven, or even in New Jerusalem, we don't think about this.

The man is getting married. Oh, hallelujah. What a thing.

What an unbelievable thing. Purpose of God. To provide a counterpart for His Son.

Well, why would He want to do this? And why would Jesus, who has everything and all power, everything you can think of, want to mess around with a counterpart for? Or a bride? Think about it. You're just thinking about what happened to you. Think about what's happening to Jesus.

Put yourself in His place. Put yourself in God the Father's place. Put yourself in the angels' place.

Look at the whole creation of people in the world. The Lord Jesus is going to have a bride. That's the purpose of God.

For all things according to God's purpose. That's one of the major purposes of God. Now, do you see why to forgive people is not enough? If you take someone and forgive them, and bring them to Jesus for a bride, they are unlike Him.

They are unlike Him. Here He is in the highest place, in the bosom of the Father, walking in the fire of God, and here's some self-centered, sinful, worldly person that's just been forgiven. You're going to make them part of the Messiah? It isn't going to happen.

So, you'll never get serious about sin. You'll never get serious about such a self-will. You'll never get serious about giving yourself to God until you see that until you do, you cannot become part of the purpose of God.

Do you see that? It's not a case of grace. It's not a case of forgiveness. It's a case that God is creating something.

So, therefore, be patient with God. And don't give up. Don't quit.

God is going somewhere. And all things work together for good. If you are called to be in the bride, if you are not, you will never stick with the program.

It is too hard. And somewhere along the line, it will become foolishness to you, and you will turn aside. Watch yourself.

How do I know if I'm called? If you want it, go for it. I remember there's a little allegory about, what is it called? The three witches or the three beggars. I don't know how to get it mixed up.

But the three hags. That's better yet. But there's one point that sticks in my mind.

Do you remember that one that refused the gifts and wanted the prince? What he put her through? I mean, he dragged her through the desert and he finally leaves her and gallops off in the distance. And there she is struggling through the sand and flops on her face in the sand. Remember that? That's what happens.

I mean, if you've got any second thoughts, and say, hey, buster, you're not treating me like this. You know, it's all right. We have a big wedding and all the bells and presents and everything.

You're not taking me out here in the desert and go galloping off. You see? If you're not part of the true bride, there has to be something that says in you, I don't care what he does. This is where I am going.

This is what I am. And if I die, I die. If that is in you, if that calling is in you, you will make it.

If it isn't, it's going to get too rough and you're going to turn aside. So guard your heart and guard your spirit. It's not easy to be calm.

By any means, people are making up those, you know, they say the four steps of salvation, that you're automatically a part of the bride of the Lamb. Nonsense. Nonsense.

You have to go through the most extreme dealings as Esther did. The six months of spices, six months of the other things that went through in preparation to come into His royal presence. And His desire, Jesus' desire, is to take you and bring you with Him where He is.

He wants to take you. Jesus lives in the holiness of God. He lives in the center of God's fiery being.

And when you come to Him, you're a blob. You're a hag. We're all hags when we come to Him.

And here He is, the glorious Son of God in the holy bosom of God's fiery holiness and presence. And we come with all our wretchedness and our flesh and our worldliness and our sin. And the Lord says, you know, the choice is made by God the Father.

Who's going to be in the bride is made by God the Father. I truly believe that the Lord doesn't even know who they are. I believe that.

I don't think the Lord knows who they are. I think He looks at the annex of the churches and wonders which one's got the stuff. I think that's how it goes.

And God makes that, you know. And the sticks jump up and wobble all over the place and the high hills leap. But when it's all through, there's going to come out of this whole mess a bride from everywhere.

The least ones you would expect. But they're the ones who keep going. And the Lord looks on the whole business and He loves people and He wants to bring them where He is into that holy of holies.

But God will not permit that. God knows who is appointed to that holy of holies. God knows.

And so He lets it all be worked out. It's all worked out. But if you stay with it, what the Lord is after is to bring you to Himself and where He is, that where I am, there I may be also.

And where He is is in the supremely holy place of God the Father. And that's where He wants to bring us. So we just... Whatever He does is necessary.

Whatever He takes from us is necessary. Whatever He gives to us is necessary. And those who are really called will keep on going.

They just keep on going. Like Peter. We have no place else to go.

But those who are not called to the bride have alternatives. They have alternatives. And when it gets rough enough, they'll choose one of those alternatives.

And when the day comes and the bride shines forth, they will not have one word to say because they will know in their heart that I of my own choice chose a different path. I chose it. And now I'm reaping the result.

It isn't a case of good or evil or bad or you were bad or mischievous or you didn't get the goody because you didn't behave yourself. It runs way deeper than that. It has to do with calling.

Are you called to be part of Messiah? Is that calling in you? If it is, the calling will carry you. If it is not, you will hear the words and it will appeal to you. The end product appeals to you.

Oh boy, to be up there with Jesus and everybody bowing and scraping or whatever. But you'll never make it on that basis. The calling.

Who are called according to His purpose. That has to be in there. That divine thing has to be in there.

So the desire that you have for the Lord, guard it with all your heart. It's the most precious thing you have. Who knows, you may be called to the throne.

Guard it, treasure it. If you don't, you have no one to blame but yourself. God causes all things to work together for good.

Causes them. To those who love God. And that's where it is.

It's that love for God is so great it overcomes everything else. It overcomes everything else. It'll overcome life itself according to His purpose.

Another one of His purposes is the temple of God. To make a temple for itself. God has no way of relating to people.

He can't come down to earth and relate to people. He cannot show His love to the nations. He can't come down in the middle of Russia, stand in the streets of Leningrad and say, you'll not treat my people this way.

He can't do it. The people can't relate to Him. The Jews couldn't relate to Him.

The Russians... Nobody could relate to Him. The governors couldn't relate to Him. Nobody knows what to do with anything.

So God is making a temple. He's making a house so that He can dwell among people. So that He can come down.

I don't know if He's going to do anything to save the Jews. I hope so. We pray so.

But the day will come when God's house will be on the earth and His people will be everywhere with His name, the name of the new Jerusalem on them. Ministering, judging, bringing order, disciplining, delivering, blessing. A house.

God is making a house for Himself. A house. God needs a house.

Go out and ask your friends. Say, why am I saved? And see if any of them say to you, because God needs a house. Because God needs a house.

Not because we're anything. Because God needs a house and Jesus needs a bride. The Messiah needs a bride.

The Lamb needs a bride. They need. He needs a bride.

I wonder about Eve. I wonder how she perceived her role. Did she perceive herself as being a blessing to Adam? Or Adam was created to be a blessing to her? What do you think? Huh? When she came out and looked over the situation, I wonder when Adam looked at her, she instantly began to think, how can I manipulate this situation? How can I get this farmer to do what I want? Huh? That's the way the church is with God.

How can somebody teach me a prayer that will move the hand of God? How can I get this farmer to do what I want? C.S. Lewis has written at length. Other authors have written at length about that. As a woman matures, how she matures away from this idea that this whole thing exists for my aggrandizement.

Rather than seeing herself as something that God has added to complete man. It's a different concept and foreign to American thinking. And that makes it difficult for us because we can't picture how in the world could this thing be for God? It's got to be for me.

Picture that it's something for God and that God isn't interested in being manipulated by us nor is He interested in hearing all about our prayers to save the world. Our ideas to save the world. He loves us because we're beautiful.

Did that do anything for you, Larry? God loves us because we're fresh and beautiful. Who wouldn't like that? You know, some woman said, I want to be considered interesting. Interesting and creative.

Every woman should be interesting, able and creative. But they get love for being beautiful. And that's the way God sees us.

As something that's fulfilled in God. What is His purpose? His purpose is to have a house. To have a bride.

To have something that will bring pleasure to Him. And we have to get a change of viewpoint because we see it all as how we're going to go to heaven and we're going to have mansions and we're going to get gold and slippers and we're going to walk on streets of gold and we're going to play on it. We, we, we, we, me, mommy, me, mommy, me, mommy.

The idea that God has created us because He has a need and because He's seeking pleasure and because He wants something beautiful. I don't know, do you think Christ, the Lamb, considers His bride beautiful? In the Song of Solomon, for example. And see how many times it says in there, you are interesting and creative.

Oh my beloved. That's what everyone wants to be. I don't want to be just considered something fresh and beautiful.

I want to be interesting. I've got a brain. I've got abilities, talents.

Y'all are talented, oh my beloved. You are interesting, oh my beloved. You have a brain, oh my beloved.

I think the Song of Solomon had something to do with God and His bride. Purpose of God. Alright, hallelujah.

To be the house of God, then, we have to be made in His image. I want to touch a couple of the purposes of God. There's a lot of them.

I want to talk to you about becoming an angel and flying around with wings, but I don't have time to do that. People flying around with great wings, singing, some baritones, some sopranos. I'm not crazy.

I think of these things. I think, where's all this going? How many of you know that God does not have wings? And that's why we don't have wings, because we're in His image. I've got some more to say about that.

Behold of God, people, just to be saved, in the sense of going to heaven. Then all this getting uptight about sin and self-will, and all this doesn't follow. But that's not where it's going.

God has many great purposes. I only touched on two of them. The Bride of the Lamb and the Temple of God.

None of these are possible, except that we're called, and then that we respond to that call by being very diligent in the realm of sin, in the realm of worldliness. It isn't, as I said, that, you know, we've been bad boys and girls until we don't get the good. That isn't what it is.

It's cause and effect. We can't do it because we haven't been prepared. So if you're here this morning, maybe Duetta's testimony touched you.

He said, Lord, I haven't opened up. I'm an onion. Man, all they've got off me is the least of the exterior peel.

And I need to really press into my program with God because where I'm going is not going up to sit in a mansion. God is creating me to be a part of Himself. God is creating me to be a part of His temple and to judge the mighty man and all these other wonderful things.

Great city, God is doing. But in order to be a part of that, I have to be made in the image of Jesus. And I have to be one with Him.

And I want that. And I want to be a part of the bride. I want to be that that God has called me to be.

If you're here this morning, we invite you to come. Duetta said, there's not a dry eye in the house. I was looking at the people, trying to see through the tears myself.

This is real, people. This is real, you know. Hallelujah.

I wasn't doing it. I was going through the church. I thought Duetta was doing fine.

All of the discernment I have. But she knew, and God knew, that it wasn't right in there. If you're here this morning and you recognize that and it touched a familiar chord and you thought, I'm just putting on a front for these people.

I'm not really down to the basics with God. You come up today to this altar and you can tell the Lord, say, Lord, I want all the seals off this onion. I want to get born again.

I want to get this thing right in my heart with you so that I know that my accounts are all balanced. That it's right in the sight of God. Praise the Lord.

Come this morning if there's something that you need to talk to the Lord about. Praise your holy name, Lord. Hallelujah.

Get that up with the Lord. That will knock you right out of the bridal company. As I said, you don't have to be perfect.

You don't have to have made everyone. But you do have to up to date be dealing with the things that God has shown you. You can't put them off.

You can't be careless. God will not... This bridal thing, I tell you, is the first time. It's never happened before.

It will never happen again. This is the first fruits unto God and the Lamb that He's calling for today. And this is why it's so strict.

This is why it's so strict. This is the first fruits of the earth as it says in Revelation 14. It's the first reaping unto God.

The first beans off the vine are now. And there's an opportunity for you to have God's best. But you must... You don't have to be perfect.

You don't have to have done everything right in your life. But you do have to right now this morning be doing what God wants. And if you're not and you need strength, why don't you come and tell the Lord about it.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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