

# What Death Means

by Robert B. Thompson

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*The sermon emphasizes that death is the source and orientation of Christianity, and that until we are willing to die with Christ, we are in a religion.*

**Duration:** 1:06:29

**Scripture:** Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:1, Revelation 2:8

**Topics:** "Faith And Trust", "Heavenly Treasures"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of committing one's way unto the Lord in practical terms. They emphasize that it is not just major decisions, but also minor ones that should be held before the Lord. The speaker references Psalm 37:5 and Proverbs 3:5-6 to support their point. They also highlight the idea that true value lies in treasures in heaven rather than earthly possessions, and that even in the face of adversity, Christians should remain steadfast and trust in God's wisdom and love.

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## Transcript

All right, praise your name, Lord. We do give you praise. And thank you, Lord, for your goodness.

You keep us in health, you keep us going. And Lord, we praise you for that because we know your eternal purpose is being worked out. Lord, as we come unto you tonight, we remember the burdens and the victories that are represented here tonight.

Lord, we thank you for each one. Pray you'll encourage our hearts, lift us up, cause us to serve you without flagging, Lord, without any hesitation. Thank you for your answers to prayer.

We pray tonight, Lord, as we continue that the things you want said will be said, Lord. They will be said, and they will be perceived. Just help us, Lord.

We look to you alone, in Jesus' name, amen. All right, we're ready for Eddie's debut. July 97th, 98, tape 4135, learning how to play.

Recommended reading, Dying in the Lord. That's funny to have that so close together there. Question one, a short answer.

Psalm 37.5 tells us to commit thy way unto the Lord. What does this mean in practical terms? Yeah, every decision you make, you hold before the Lord. Usually Christians hold a major decision before the Lord, but

it's the minor ones that catch up with you.

You hold everything before the Lord. So important. Randy, you and your mother are awful far back there.

You and Vi. All right, does anyone want to comment on that further? Of course, there's the famous Proverbs 3, verses, what is it, 5 and 6, or 4 and 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord, lean not to your own understanding, and all your ways acknowledge him. Very, very, very important.

All right, Isaiah 59.15 states that he departs from evil, makes himself a prey. Why does this happen, and how are we to respond? Gets saved, makes himself a prey, right? Because we have to do some mental adjustments on that one. It isn't everyone that gets saved, it's everyone that does what? Departs from evil, makes himself a prey.

Now why does this happen? Why would church people attack someone who departs from evil? It makes them realize where they're at and what they're doing, and that they should be doing what the person who departed from evil should be doing. What does it mean, makes himself a prey? What does it mean, makes himself a prey? Peggy? Mark? The only way I've experienced that. Barry? The enemy can work through all kinds of people to try to bring Christians behind you, to provoke you.

You're probably what? You're probably eventually going to get yourself killed. Yeah, I must be getting old. I'm having problems with hearing, so you and Jeannie, if you come forward, I wouldn't have to keep, I wouldn't have to keep saying, huh? Huh? Okay, uh, you, uh, they really, you, huh? Departs from evil, and you become a lamb, and they always are a prey to the wolves and the rabid beasts that come and tear them apart.

How was Jesus attacked? With their power. Huh? Exactly. Slander.

False witness, which is slander. They slandered him. They spoke evil of him.

What the Bible says is that, uh, the common people heard him gladly, um, there's something that comes to my mind about speaking evil, you go around doing good, and people speak evil of your good. Where's that? Oh, I know, if you're good, be evil spoken of. If you're good, be evil spoken of.

But Christ's good was evil, and so they were continually trying to, trying to tear him down from his high place in God. They were continually trying to tear him down from his high place in God, weren't they? By the things they said. They didn't hit him, they didn't stone him, they tried to grab him one time, but mostly it was words.

Mostly it was words. Things they said. Now, does everyone agree with that? He made himself a prey.

He went about dealing, doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. His life was unblemished. There was no, even Pilate said, I find no fault in him, and yet he was the subject all day long of this ridicule and slander and hatred and bitterness.

All day long. Martin! Bienvenido, senior. Where is Lopita? Oh, you tell her we missed her.

All right, so Jesus made him, so Jesus is a perfect example of making yourself a prey by doing good. A man couldn't have done more good than Jesus did. There was no basis for this constant barrage of slander and lies and accusations, and then the Jews did the same thing to Paul, didn't they? He that departs from the, look at the way Jeremiah was treated.

Look at the way that we're, what we're talking about, all slander, ridicule, criticism, hatred. Not by becoming a Christian, but by departing from evil. It troubles the wicked.

It troubles the insincere. The Jews had no basis for attacking Jesus because he did nothing to harm them. It was just pure envy.

Envy figures a lot in this. Satan is behind it, of course, and Satan hates the righteous because they have the blessing of God and they can play, they can enjoy themselves and he cannot, and he wants us to be like him. That's why the homosexuals are so evangelistic.

They want everybody to be like them, and when they're not, then they become angry. So this departing from iniquity, you would think everyone would bless you. On the other hand, it says, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God I gave you some hints as to how you put that together.

Did you pick it up? Or a hint? Remember what I say about the common people? They heard him gladly. See, I still can't hear you back there, Mike. Now, you and Jeannie, it's Jeannie that mumbles, it was the woman you gave me, Lord? That's not nice, Jeannie.

We have a very high opinion of you, believe me. May your husband come up to it, all right? All right. All right.

The common people heard him gladly, then, who then attack him is the key to this whole business. The religious people. Who was it that killed the prophets? It wasn't Arameans, or the Chinese, or somebody else.

It was the religious people. Who went after the Apostle Paul? When you depart from iniquity, you make yourself a prey to the religious people. Whereas, when you do good works, which is departing from iniquity, the common people hear you gladly.

So, that tells us that the great enemy of God is the religious people, and they are the ones who will crucify Christ. Now, think about that. You do good, and people will bless you, all except the religious people.

They'll find fault with you, and they'll say, well, you're trying to be a Pharisee, or you're trying to be holy, or don't you know you're... In fact, someone wrote to me today, and they got in another state, and they got into an argument with a friend. The friend is an evangelical Christian, and this person that wrote to me is someone who follows our teaching. And so, she made the mistake of saying she felt that God had accepted and blessed Mother Teresa because of her good works to the poor.

Well, this evangelical took her on, took her on, said she was a Catholic, her beliefs were not correct, so she'll burn in hell. That's the evangelical viewpoint. I'm not in a position to judge Mother Teresa, but I'll tell you this, that when she died, the press rose up as one man, the press, to bless her, just like they have Roy Rogers, because they recognized integrity.

Let me tell you something about the press. I've noticed consistently, when someone has really got the stuff, the press will usually have a good thing to say about them. They're cynical because they see so much hypocrisy, but I saw two or three major write-ups on Roy Rogers, and they were all positive.

And, of course, he was an outstanding Christian. And they went absolutely into orbit over Mother Teresa because she was good to the poor. But they don't treat the Christian churches like that because they seem to them like a bunch of money grabbers.

So, the problem comes, you know, she's going to burn in hell because she was a Catholic. But in God, if she gave her life for the poor, she's going to burn in hell because she didn't go through the four steps. Well, maybe she did, nobody knows it, you know, who knows.

But the point is, that attitude, that attitude. Imagine Jesus coming up to Mother Teresa and say, you're going to burn in hell. Can you imagine that? I mean, she may have been a Catholic, maybe her ideas about the Virgin Mary were all wrong, but I'm sure when she saw Jesus, she would fall down on her face in worship.

And the penalty comes when you reject Jesus, not when your doctrine is wrong, but when you see Jesus and say, I don't want anything to do with him. And the ones that said that were whom? The Pharisees. The blind man said, I don't know whether he's a sinner or he isn't.

I don't know about that. All I know is I was blind and now I see. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

Well, that's the way it is in 1998. Yes? Religious people hate everybody. They hate the sinners because they didn't do righteously.

So they just, they're the ones that are right and the rest of the world is gone. Well, I think the reason is, it's not because religious people. The problem is that when you get in, see, there's the source.

See, what has happened is, and it only happened with Judaism and it happened with Christianity, is we take a revelation of God, which Judaism is, and turn it into a religion. Now, Judaism is not really a religion. It's a revelation from God.

How in the world can you have a thing like Sinai crossing the Red Sea and call this a religion? It's not a religion. God, who at sundry times spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has, see, it was God speaking. It was revelatory.

But, and there was the law and all, but that, but a religion is something that man puts together so that he can put God on a pedestal somewhere and worship and get God under control. Well, when Jesus came, who brought meaning to the symbols of Judaism, again, men turned it into a religion. And ever since then, the religion of Judaism has fought the religion of Christianity.

And they hate one another. But it isn't God, it wasn't God in the Jews that crucified Jesus. The Christian religionists say, the Jews, Christians, they're against the religion of Judaism.

In fact, the Reconstructionism, I read one prominent Reconstructionist, and he says, Judaism is absolutely of the devil. The hatred of one religion, there's no greater hatred in the world than religious hatred. Everything that God has restored since the time of Martin Luther has been attacked by people in the previous move who came out against it bitterly and burned people at the stake.

Who burned them at the stake? The religious people burned them at the stake. Who drowned them in the buckets? Religious people did this. Who burned down their churches, their synagogues? Religious people did this.

Today, Christians say, speaking in tongues of the devil. They're not, they don't have to make a decision. I mean, there's nothing that they're called upon to decide about that.

It's just that they have to lash out. Now, before these people became Christians, they were probably pretty decent. But after they become Christians, they become murderous.

Now, there's a reason for that. And the reason is this. The orientation, now Martin, make sure Martin gets this.

The orientation and the source of Christianity, and the only orientation, and the only source, hello, are you there? The only source and orientation of Christianity is death. Until you die with Christ, you are in a religion. Everything depends on that.

Everything depends on your willingness to enter with Jesus on the cross. Everything depends on that. And from that point, you enter the resurrection of Jesus and live by his life.

That is not a religion. Now, when people have a yearning to have something more than just the life of the church, than just the life of the world, they come to a church and the minister, well-intentioned, I'm not running down a soul, believe me, I'm talking analytically now, I'm talking about what's going wrong with why this happens like this. The minister, instead of bringing them to death, brings them into the religion.

And so they enter into the life of the church. Now, in the process, they may make a profession of faith in the atonement. They may wait on God until they speak in tongues and prophesy and do gifts of the spirit.

And you would say, well, surely that's a Christian. But remember, Jesus said, they will say to me in that day, we prophesied in your name and we worked miracles in your name, but I never knew you. Now, you can't work miracles in Jesus' name and you can't prophesy in his name until you at least become atonement.

I mean, as far as you know, you're a Christian. As far as all these people in the United States, they believe absolutely they are Christians. Their whole life is staked on being a Christian.

But they are blaspheming the Holy Spirit and don't even realize it. Because blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Now, scholars will not accept that.

They say it means rejecting Jesus and all this other blather because they don't read the Bible. The Bible says the Pharisees were saying he does miracles by Beelzebub and Jesus said that that's... Now, according to the letter of the law, that means you can never be forgiven in this world or in the world to come, which tells us that forgiveness is clearly implied in that statement. Now, well, are all these people in this state? No, why not? Because God doesn't use his book like a rule book, like an algebra book, okay? It doesn't work like that.

God interprets his word. I remember reading a true story about a family in which a Pentecostal lady married a man who was not Pentecostal, and he believed tongues was of the devil. So he kept saying tongues was of the devil, tongues was of the devil.

And meanwhile, she was going ahead, trying to be a good wife, worshiping God, going to Pentecostal church and speaking in tongues. Well, over the period of years, he saw his wife's behavior, saw she... And he was still saying this. So one day he come out with that and his wife had come home from church or

something.

He said, yeah, tongues of the devil. And said, don't ever say that again. See, because he should have known better from seeing his wife.

And as today, somebody was telling me recently that their father was saying tongues of the devil. And the father's a pastor, by the way. Well, that's bad news because people have seen the Pentecostal people now for a hundred years.

And it's obvious, not only as speaking in tongues in the Bible, and to say it isn't good for today is, you can take anything in the New Testament and say it isn't for today. So that's an arbitrary statement. And so it's not scholarly.

And so after seeing all the works of God that Pentecost has done, now to keep saying it's of the devil, it's of the devil, you're getting pretty close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Because it's obvious that it is not the devil. And so what you are is a religious person going through the hatred routine.

Now, why is this? It's because Satan wants to be like Jesus. His original thing, if you remember, was, I will be like the Most High. He wants to be like God.

You've got to understand, this is the motivation of Satan. So he doesn't spend his time, oh, he may send out a few demons out in the bars to harass the dudes out there. But what Satan is interested in is the most fervent church he can find.

Because the glory is there. The Shekinah, the glory of God, is there, and that's what he had once and doesn't have anymore, and he's very upset about it, okay? The one thing that Satan will not, he'll do anything, talk in tongues, prophesy, anything. He will not die.

He will not surrender his life to God. He wants to be like God without surrendering his life to God. That's the difference between the false prophet and the Holy Spirit, between Antichrist and Christian.

Antichrist is not the opposite of Christ. He's the imitation of Christ. Now, when you get a religious person who is into the glory, into the gifts, speaks in tongues, and does all these things, but doesn't do it from a standpoint of personal death, then Satan can enter them and accuse wherever God is actually working.

That's why the religious people, that's why the Jews, the most religious people of their day, were the ones who killed their prophets. Because the prophets had the Shekinah, they had the glory of God, and the Jewish people wanted to be like Moses, that is, to keep the law, and to be esteemed as being religious. That's what they wanted.

Well, here comes some prune picker like Amos out of the woods, or Jeremiah from Anathoth, or some other left field, comes in, although he wasn't so bad though, because there's a priestly business up there, may have been a city of refuge, it's possible. But anyway, when these prophets began to say, the say of the Lord, the Jewish people would say, now wait a minute, that's what we want. That's what we want.

We want to be recognized as the people of God. So every time God really moves in someone, the whole religious community rises up in envy. They want that.

They want to be recognized, that God is with them. And because they haven't died, self-will is strong in them, and the desire for pre-empt. But if they had died with Christ, then when they saw the Lord using

somebody, they would rejoice.

Yes, Sandy? It seems like you could speak in tongues and know Jesus, and you could speak in tongues and not know Jesus, or you could not speak in tongues and know Jesus, or you could not speak in tongues and know Jesus. The point is, you know him, that's the main dealer, so everybody making a big point about that. You know, that's not what's happening.

That's right. In a personal sense, that's true. In a historic sense, it's not true.

I'll tell you why. Because when God moved and restored tongues, He also restored the spirit of revelation and prophecy and miracles which God wanted to further the gospel. And I'll tell you another thing.

The difference between a church, the difference in worship between a church that speaks in tongues and a church that doesn't is awesome. There's a tremendous difference. There is a beneficial effect of speaking in tongues.

In fact, the Bible says concerning tongues, this is the rest wherewith you will cause the weary to rest. Again, Paul said, he that speaks in an unknown tongue built himself up. Now, building ourself up is the name of the game.

Well, if speaking in tongues builds us up, then it's a desirable thing. Why not do it? But if some person is hung up on it, I'll never argue with them. Don't get hung up on it.

It's not a badge of spirituality. Speaking in tongues is not a mark of being spiritual. But since the apostle said, he that speaks in an unknown tongue builds himself up, then as a preacher, I must encourage people to speak in tongues so they will build themselves up.

And it's as simple as that. It's just as simple as that. No, it is not a badge of spirituality.

You can speak in tongues in church and go out and live in adultery. It is not. And that's why Jesus said, you will say we prophesied in your name and we did all these things in your name.

But he said, I never knew you. Never at any time did I. Now, that is awesome. That is awesome and tells us that our values in Pentecost are not always on target.

We're not getting the message. And the message that God is after is death. Because until we are willing to lay down our life at Jesus and quit trying to be religious, quit trying to become something, to take the gifts of God and go with them, to become God's man of faith and power, spiritually preeminent or whatever, we're laying ourselves open to be used of Satan.

Because that's where the murder comes from that has always attended religious people. It started with Cain and Abel. See, the first man murdered the second over a spiritual activity.

And the reason for that is because Satan is very interested in sacrifice, very interested in praise, very interested in the gifts of the Spirit, very interested in anything that goes on at Pentecostal church or Baptist church or any other church. And as long as he has people in there who are trying to be like Jesus or like God or religious or thought of well as being moral, but who have not entered the death of Christ, because it's that death that frees us from the law of Moses. It's that death that it is written, it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment.

So until we surrender and let down and say, God is my all in all, I'm through, I was crucified with Christ, you haven't begun. You're trying to be like Jesus, but you haven't begun. Because to enter Jesus, you have to enter through the cross.

Not just saying I believe in the cross or hanging around your neck. You have to enter the cross. I enter the cross.

I am crucified. And until you do that, one, you're still under the law of Moses. Two, God can't begin the work of judging and cleansing you because you're still alive.

Worse than that, you're trying to be like Jesus. Therefore, when God does move, you will slander that person. You will begin without realizing, you begin to down that person because Satan will speak out in envy against that where he sees God moving.

That's very important to understand these days because we're approaching the time when God will bring his true people out of the great religious structure. And in that day, it will be the religious people who will be the false prophet and who will put anti-Christ up to tormenting the Christians. So you need to understand why this is going on with people that you thought were your Christian friends.

Why they turned on you. They turned on you because they have never died with Christ. Therefore, Christ does not know them.

He does not know them. He does not recognize them. When he died on the cross and he said it is finished, guess what was finished? You and me.

When he said it's finished, he was saying Bob is finished. Tony is finished. Who else will I pick on? Peggy is finished.

We're all finished. And until we grasp that, we are deceivers. We are usurpers because we're trying to perpetuate the Adamic race and decorate it with Christ and make it presentable to God.

God is not interested in saving us. He's interested in saving us from what we are. Martine, you cannot enter the kingdom.

Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom. You have to enter the cross and say Martine is gone. He's a goner.

He's history. And what comes up is a new creation in Jesus Christ, not just as a figure of speech. And they unwisely try to justify themselves, become angry, come down from their high place in God, and then Satan is gone.

And they are very careful of that. Jesus is our example. He answered not.

He came as a lamb to the slaughter. He did not answer. Okay, Lord, your will be done.

You make yourself a prey. And you do not respond. You do not fight.

Jesus had no fight in him when they came to criticize him. And therefore, the channel between him and God was kept clear, and so God gave him such wisdom that he answered them with wisdom instead of getting angry and saying, you bunch of hypocritical. Well, at times he did call him that, but it wasn't

personal.

That was God's judgment. Because all the other times, he just, you know, didn't go through a big tirade. How can you do this to me? I'm an honest man.

I'm a good Jew. I keep the law. I'm trying to do good, and all you guys are trying to hinder me.

He'd just say, whose picture's on this coin? I mean, because the channel was open. And if you don't get angry and fight back when people persecute you, the channel will be open, and God will give you love and peace and wisdom that they cannot gain, say, or resist. But you've got to keep that channel open.

Yes? A dead man doesn't care if he's dead. That's right. He doesn't care.

It's your reputation if you're dead. That's right. But I don't want to overdo that, and I'll tell you why.

Because it rapidly becomes impractical. It's right. I mean, technically, you're right.

Okay? The gauges are on the boiler. You're right. But we got into a lot of that in Bible school many years ago.

What happens? It becomes impractical in that people are saying, well, you know, if somebody insults you, you won't feel anything if you're dead. Well, then when you do feel something, then you're thrown into perplexity. You feel, well, I'm not dead.

So we have to be practical. Yes, when people insult us and slander us, what is hard to stand is perversity. And Jesus felt that all the time.

When you try to do something good, and somebody deliberately twists it so it comes out bad, that's very hard to take. And you'd be less than human if it didn't upset you. It's not that you don't feel it, it's how you handle it.

See, it's how you handle it. Oh yeah, you feel it. So you're dead in the timeless vision of God.

But you're not actually dead in that you don't feel pain. But because you have joined yourself to the timeless vision of God and have chosen to see yourself as God sees you, you have the mental orientation and God will give you the power to deal with the things which are trying to coax you back to life again. Which are trying to make you come alive in your Adamic nature and fight back.

Of course, Adam will always fight back. Adam will never put up with perversity. Adam will never not have his will.

Adam must have his way. Whenever you see a Christian that has to have his way, just get out of their path, because they are destruction in shoe leather. Because that is a self-driven person.

Yes? This is another area that can create a problem with me. I mean, you took everything that was said slanderous and never took it to the Lord to find out if there was ever any truth in it, too. Because every now and then, something is said that adds truth to it.

And so, it would seem to me that an area of being able to get off would become so hard and slander, thinking I'm just dying to cry and I'm not going to get angry. Because you never take anything that actually exists to the Lord to find out if there is any truth in it. That is absolutely true.

And as someone wisely said, when someone shoots a flaming arrow into you, let the Lord pull it out. Don't try to be a superman and pull it out yourself and say I don't feel anything. Go to the Lord and let him pull it out.

And at the same time, ask the Lord, say, Lord is there truth in this? Because many times the reason we react violently is because there is enough truth in it that it makes us fearful and insecure or guilty and then we get all the more fearful and then that is converted into anger against the person that did it. Whereas they actually may have done us a good turn by pointing out to us how they see us and how the world sees us. So it's a good idea when someone does slander, as Larry said, to go to the Lord, let the Lord pull out the flaming dart, the flaming arrow, and at the same time say, Lord is there a basis? Is there something here that I'm doing that is giving ground to the enemy? That is very wise and very necessary.

And if we become so hard we can't take criticism from anyone, saved or unsaved, young or old, then we become too hard. Because sometimes children can tell us a lot of truth if we have ears to hear. And unsaved people.

And people we don't like. And so on. Yes, by all means.

And so that's why the position of death is so necessary because then you don't become defensive and feel all is lost and frightened and everything else. Just say, praise your name Lord for showing me this grave clothes and for sending a helper to pull it off me. Absolutely.

So they ended up doing you a good turn. That which they meant for evil turned into good. Always does.

Satan, everything Satan does turns into good if you bring it to the Lord. Everything he does turns into good if you bring it to the Lord. So we don't have to get angry at anybody.

Jeannie. Those kind of things don't lead to righteousness. But just for her satisfaction, it's in the first chapter where, and it's a quotation from Psalms, it's in the first chapter of Acts where Peter said, it was quoting from Psalms I believe, you will not leave my soul in Hades.

Well, if his soul wasn't in Hades then the expression doesn't make any sense. Because you can't leave something where it's never been. That will not leave my soul in Hades.

But I don't want to go any further with that because what we're talking about is what the Lord is after tonight. I know that because as I was preparing the scripture, it was in Revelation 2 verse 8 to the church in Smyrna. And it's exactly what we've been talking about.

So I know that's the word of the Lord for us tonight. Eddie. Absolutely.

Jeannie, that's the second chapter of Acts, I'm sorry. About halfway down the chapter. It's in Peter's sermon there.

David said, thou will not leave my soul in Hades. That's from Psalms. Alright, in Revelation 2 verse 8, these are the words of him who was the first and the last who died and came to life again.

The way that the Lord speaks to the angel of each church is indicative of the problem in that church. And this church is dealing with dying. And when the Lord is bringing you through death, what you have to know is that he's not only the first but the last.

Now just remember that because when the Lord will bring you through death at some time, it can be severe when you're strong enough to stand it. And boy, what you have to know is Lord, I mean you long past forgotten what it was like to feel good and everything was wrong. But the Lord says, I began it and I'm going to finish it.

I'm the first and the last. I was dead and now I'm alive. And boy, you can hold on to that when you're going through terrible deaths with the Lord that this isn't the end.

This isn't the end. I know your afflictions and your poverty. I know that you're suffering.

And I know that you're poor. Yet you are rich. Do you know something that people have a lot of money.

Maybe they win a million dollars. Okay, what do they do with it? They buy a lot of things. Maybe real nice furniture, a hutch, new china, maybe they get a new house, a lot of clothes, a couple of cars.

You know what they do from then on? They sit and protect it. And if you stop to think about it, they've really become the servants of these things. They take care of them, they keep them clean, they keep them fixed and everything else.

So here's these things are ruling as kings and the people that have them are slaves. That's the truth. Think about it sometime.

If anything happens and you get a new hutch and some of the grandkids comes in and takes a penknife or something and scratches the side, you're going to go crazy. I mean it may be a black mahogany hutch or knock the thing over and broke all your new china. It's crazy.

If you stop to think of it, it doesn't mean anything at all. It's just things. We make ourselves the slaves of things.

Alright, but you're rich. They had the real stuff. Now notice this, because this is tied in with death and resurrection.

I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. In other words, these people the Lord was bringing down to the death of the cross. Now this expression, the synagogue of Satan, appears here and also in the next chapter in verse 9. The fact that it's in there twice tells us that it's important in the sight of God.

So when we determine to really seek the Lord, what's going to get agitated is religious people who claim to be Christians and they're going to slander you. I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not. When you hear a Christian slandering another Christian, speaking evil of them, you know that person is of the synagogue of Satan.

They're not following the Lord because he doesn't do that. That's coming from Satan. Now remember that, because there's an awful lot of slander that goes on in the Christian churches.

And in the New International Version, it's very interesting to trace that word. It appears many, many times. So it must have been quite common in the early church.

So whenever you hear gossip and slander, just get out of there. Don't partake of it. That is not God.

He doesn't work that way, to have one Christian attack another. That's the synagogue of Satan. There are not many true Jews.

That's a fact. Don't try to be popular. But you see, this is all connected in the mind of the spirit.

Suffering and affliction and then slander. See how they're grouped together? Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. See, our main problem is fear.

Nothing to fear but fear itself. Churchill said that. Roosevelt said that.

We have nothing to fear but fear itself. It's the fear. Don't be afraid.

It's a commandment. Don't be afraid of it. Don't let yourself be afraid of it.

That's a function of the old man. It doesn't matter what happens to me. I'm dead on the cross.

Get the fear out. Lord, take the fear out. It isn't that you don't have fear.

You do have fear. If you were dead, you wouldn't have fear. That isn't the issue.

The issue is God will give you the power to kick it. You can roll over and play dead and put your paws in the air like a pup or you can kick it. You make that choice.

God will give you the power. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. There was a big flap some years ago about Christians aren't supposed to suffer and if they have faith they won't suffer.

Have any of you ever heard that? Then why didn't he say it here? Fear not what you are about to suffer but don't worry you can't suffer if you have faith. Did you ever contact that? Have you ever wrecked something? Wrecks is the old hand at this. Over and over again more than once.

And just to not have anything to do I laid there in bed. Fortunately Audrey got me a private room somewhere. I don't know how she did that.

I don't think they could do that anymore. But I had a private room in Genesee Hospital. I had a radio, an FM radio playing classical music under my pillow and I was just gloriously happy.

I didn't have any piano students. I didn't have any kids to teach in the 5th grade. I was working as a professional choir director and all.

I didn't have any responsibility. I just laid there. And then when I come back to my class the 5th graders that I had been teaching algebra and the slide rule and found out that the substitute had been teaching the raphia work I was a little upset at that but maybe it did the kids good to get a break.

But what a wonderful rest that was. But see you can think I'm going to go to the hospital and like this. Suffer, suffer, suffer.

So sometimes the Lord just wants to give you an upward look and if you don't fight it it really isn't half bad. Now there are times of course with brain tumors and other things it can be extremely painful. But barring actual physical pain a lot of our suffering is in our head.

Because we're afraid of, we're just afraid of what it will mean and what this will happen and how will this happen and the next thing will happen and all this and all. So it's good to go with the flow. Just take advantage of it if the Lord gives you the upward look.

I was reading about the last days of C.S. Lewis and he had enlarged prostate which caused heart problems because the medicine interacted with his heart so he couldn't do anything about either his heart or his prostate and that caused uremic poisoning and the old fellow was in pretty bad shape. But they kept him doped up pretty good and he didn't have to do anything and he said being old isn't so bad after all. He gave him a chance to read.

All he had to do was sit and read and everybody's around taking care of him and everything and the uremic poisoning was making him sleepy so he'd keep dropping off to sleep and that's the way he finally just tried to get out of bed, fell over and hit his head and he was up with his wife that had died a few years previously. So a lot of suffering is what we make it but sometimes there is actual intense physical pain and that we just have to keep praying until God brings us through. I tell you the devil will put some of you in prison to test you.

The devil, where does he get in here? The devil. I don't care if Jesus puts me in prison but I don't want the devil to put me. Do you ever hear kids say that? I don't want you to tell me that but if my mother tells me that I'll do it but if you tell me that I won't do it.

Is that right Karen? Does Chantal do that? I bet your brothers say that. If you tell me to do it I'm not going to do it but if mother tells me to do it I'll do it. Jesus would put us in prison okay but the devil, but he didn't say I won't let him do it did he? You remember, how many remember when the apostles were arguing about who would be the greatest? And what did Jesus say? The devil has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.

He didn't say I won't let him. He said I'll pray for you that your faith doesn't fail. Now that's a picture of the end time.

These were the stars of God and they were around Jesus. Are you following me? But they were full of self will and personal ambition. And that's why Jesus allowed Satan to shake them because that cannot be permitted around the throne.

And that's the reason why in the last days God is going to permit Antichrist to reach up and tear down the host, the stars, because they're around Jesus but in their heart is a desire to be preeminent and God does not want that near his throne. And so he won't do anything, he lets Satan do it. Satan is only too glad to do it because he hopes he can pick up a little winnings along the way.

He hopes he can really knock somebody out of the ballpark for good and that's the game God plays with him. Go ahead. See Jesus didn't say well I'm letting him on you but you know you'll be alright don't worry about it.

He said I'm going to pray for you that your faith doesn't fail which means that there was a possibility that his faith would fail. So it was kind of a gamble there, that was a game. Satan was motivated by the fact that he might really get Peter but God knew he was worthless as long as that desire was in him to be greater than the other apostles.

Now that's what's going to happen in the end time, it's kind of a gamble. Now God is saying alright Antichrist, take your shot at the host. Go ahead.

And he will in the hopes that he can pick up a few along the way. But those, but Jesus will be praying for every one of his stars, every one of his apostles, every one of his saints, he'll be praying for everyone that their faith doesn't fail because that's where the issue is. Whatever happens to me, it doesn't matter.

I believe that God means good, knows my circumstances and has the power to bring me to good. And that's what faith is. That God knows you, all about you.

That he is seeking your good and that he has the power to bring you to good. Those three things, he knows everything about you, he's seeking your good and he has the power to do it. Now that was the issue Satan raised with Adam and Eve, was the issue.

Does God know all about you? Is he seeking your good? Does he have your power to bring you to good? And Satan's answer was, no he doesn't want good for you. He doesn't want you to be wise. See that? Now when you are tempted, when God decides that it's your time, your number has come up to be tested and remember if you're going to be with Christ, you must be called, you must be chosen and then you must be proven faithful.

And so when your time comes up to be proven faithful to God, you just remember what I said. The thing on you, the pressure on you will be, if you keep on with God, it's going to be bad news. That will be the bottom line.

Remember that, that will be the bottom line. If you stay true to God, it's going to be bad news for you. And you have to keep putting your faith in the goodness and faithfulness of God.

He knows what's happening to me, he's seeking my good and he has the power to bring me to good. And if you will hold and never, that is what Jesus is praying for you, that your faith in God's faithfulness and goodness and love for you will not fail no matter what happens. But you see when Christians get into enough pain, then some of them turn against God in hatred.

How could you take my child? How could you let my husband leave me? How could you let my boy that I've raised and he's been such a model and now he's gone off and run off, I don't know where he is or what he's doing. How could you let my husband of all these years just run off with some floozy? How could you let my wife be taken up with some floozy? How could you do this God? And then you get angry at God. And see what you have done is you have lost your faith that God is bringing you to good.

You have just cast it out and said well all my circumstances tell me that it isn't working, God seems a million miles away and that's the way you're going to be tempted. And it's going to be a prison, you're not going to get out of it right away and you don't know if you're ever going to get out of it. And the only thing that stands between you and absolute rebellion is this, I am dead with Christ, I am crucified with Christ, I've taken that position, I know that my Redeemer lives and I'm not letting go.

God is good, he's bringing me to goodness and this is just a symptom of death and it's no worse than I deserve and you don't quit. You don't save your life, let it go. If you do that you'll end up in Joel's army because they're living dead men, or dead living men I should say.

Mark? Yeah, it sounds like the present is pain in this life. Even the Christians, and then you just say it doesn't matter when everything like Job said when your light was on my head and everything was perfect, I served you. It's no different now.

I just keep on the same. Blessed be the name of the Lord. The Lord gives, the Lord takes away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Now do you see why it's so important to enter the Christian life from the position of death and resurrection? Because if you do that you can't be moved. But until you do, you're an imitation, you're a member of a religion, you've got all the marks, everybody could swear up and down that you're a Christian, you talk in tongues, you prophesy, and to all appearances you are a Christian, but you have an open door in you for Satan.

And that door is your self-will. It has never died. And until it does, you are an enemy of God.

I mean that literally because God will never, never tolerate rebellion in his creation. And Bill Brown said something to me, very insightful. We were talking Saturday morning at the breakfast about the Christian mythology and all the mythological ideas we have about heaven and everything else and how it all goes.

And Bill, and you know that we're saved by grace no matter how we live, etc. And this is what Bill said, and it's a masterpiece. He said it all comes from the arrogance of man.

The evangelical doctrines come from the arrogance of man. I put it in one of my books I'm writing now. And it's so true.

That's the base of the pride of man. I'm eternally saved no matter what I do. God's going to rapture me out of here so I won't suffer.

And all these things that we've made up, we have no, you know, our idea is to get ourselves into heaven. We don't care if we're meeting God's needs at all. We don't care if God has any needs.

It's all me, me, me, mommy, make me happy, me, me. And the fact that God has a world that is enslaved in chains and God's heart is broken and he gave his son on the cross and all this, we could not care less. Just get me into the happy place and forget about it.

And so all the things that we've made up about what God can do and God can't do is all coming from our arrogance. Because when we come to the Bible, God says, I'm going to let Satan put you in prison and test you. Be faithful to death, I'll give you a crown of life.

So it's not, you know, a crown. That is, I'm going to keep you at my right hand in rulership. It's the rulership.

And that's why God is coming down so hard today on self-will. Because the issue is God does not want anyone around his throne that has a trace of self-will in him. Know it.

What's at issue today is the throne. Satan's going to be cast from the heavens. The stars are going to be cast down.

Several scriptures say this. Everything. God says, and Jesus said, get out of here.

You're not doing what God said. That's what he said. You're not obeying God.

And then he said, you're working iniquity. Those two things he said. I never knew you.

Don't talk to me about prophesy, all your religious antics and all the rest of it. I never knew you. Your heart is not right.

You have never done what I said. And therefore you're an enemy of God in the universe. You're a rebel.

You're a rebel against God. You can call yourself Christian or saint or religious or anything you want to. Or a Jew or whatever.

But in your heart you've got preserved your will against the will of God. See, that was Gethsemane. Not my will, but thine be done.

Until we die that death and drink that cup. We cannot please God. Though we gave our body to be burned, we cannot please God.

He says obedience is better than sacrifice. And he wants us just to come down and say, Father, not my will. Let's stand and pray.

Father, we come unto you tonight. Father, the panorama, the tapestry seems so clear, Lord. And the threads become radiantly clear.

Lord, you had a rebellion in heaven and passed down to the extent, Lord, that God must accept us as we are. All coming from our arrogance, Father. And yet we know that your plan is to install your kingdom in the earth, to install righteousness in the earth with an iron rod that admits to no rebellion of any kind whatever.

We know that you're going to shake everything, shake it, shake it, shake it. As you did, Peter, until we get out of us this idea that we're going to exert ourselves against God and over our brothers. Like Satan said, I'll be above the stars of God.

Exactly what Peter was doing. And the apostles trying to be above the stars of God. And so, Lord, you shake us and you sift us.

Jesus, I thank you for it, Lord. Who among us can know our own heart, Lord? We can't know it unless you shake us and bring us into places where we have to stop our frantic striving to do something other than God's will. Oh, Lord, help us to enter your rest.

Help us to enter your rest, Lord. Oh, hallelujah. Oh, Lord, make us rejoicing over your will.

We rejoice. We eat your words. Your commandments are sweeter than the honey.

You commanded us. Indeed, Lord, crucified, indeed, that we may find peace. We may dwell with the consuming fire that your will may become so intensely our will and our will that there is not.

It is a delightful thing to do your will, Lord. We love you, Lord. Your ways are right.

And we hate all your enemies. We hate rebellion against your will. We hate that thing.

We want, Lord, only that you may be exalted. We seek only to please God. Establish it in us.

It's iron righteousness, fiery holiness, and stern obedience to God. Let it be multiplied unto us, all of us. Hallelujah.

And these ripples that we see in our flesh, well, they are troublers. They are achins. They are troublers of Israel because they covet.

Lord, we want no part of it. Blessed be the Lord, our God, who only does wondrous things. Hallelujah, Lord.

Hallelujah, Lord. Bless your name. Bless your name.

Now, everyone that's come tonight, Lord, I know I can see that some have come heavy laden, Lord. I pray right now that you will lift that thing in the name of Jesus. Lift it.

Give them supernatural health and peace and assurance, Lord. So we glory, Lord, and we put our treasures in heaven. They may be given to us when you come, Lord.

We may rejoice and dance for joy, enter into the joy of the Lord. Oh, hallelujah. Hallelujah, Lord.

Blessed be God, who has so good to draw us out of this scene of rebellion and sin, Lord. And may we be a blessing to others, Lord. And may they see our good works and glorify God.

Grant it, Lord. Grant it, Lord. Grant it, Lord.

In the name of Jesus. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

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