

Sinners in the Hands of a God Who Keeps the Books

by Rolfe Barnard

The sermon emphasizes the condition of humanity as corrupt and determined to bypass God, and the hope of forgiveness through Christ's death and resurrection.

Duration: 43:27

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Sinners"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the state of America and its rebellion against God. He emphasizes that salvation in this godless and religious nation will only come through a miracle. The preacher refers to the 14th Psalm, describing the foolishness of those who deny God and engage in abominable works. He also shares a story about a farmer who sent his son to college, only for him to lose faith in God through his studies. The sermon concludes with the preacher highlighting the significance of Jesus' death on the cross and the assurance of salvation for those who repent and have faith, regardless of their past sins or righteousness.

Transcript

I just found out the interpretation of a scripture so involving a millstone tied around your neck. That's what this is. Now, if you'll open God's Word tonight to the 130th Psalm.

Psalms 130. Speak and speak tonight on sinners in the hands of a God who keeps books. Sinners in the hands of a God who keeps books.

Psalms 130. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice.

Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord.

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. The old song says on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame.

We do not need a Bible to tell us that there was a man by the name of Jesus of Nazareth who wound up his earthly pilgrimage on a tree outside the holy city of Jerusalem. We do need a Bible, and thank God we have such, to tell us who that person is and why he hung there. And there are some things that have been settled by what took place outside the city of Jerusalem.

One of the things that will, there's no option about it, it's just set, it's accomplished, it's done, is that the worst man that ever lived, who can exercise saving repentance and faith, will be saved. And that the best man that ever lived, who is unable to exercise saving repentance toward God and faith in Christ, shall be damned. That's settled.

One trembles as he reflects upon that truth. At the attitude of men and women in every generation, for the Bible is so written, it is that kind of a book that it speaks to every generation of mankind. The Bible isn't just up to date here lately, it's been up to date all the time.

And it talks to people in every generation and describes the actions of men and the answer of God. One trembles, especially in this day when apparently, I want to look at it a little more tomorrow night, apparently, as far as I can see, America's about done its due. If anybody gets saved in this godless religious America from now on, it is going to be a miracle.

One trembles as he remembers that this is a generation lost in the wilderness of rebellion against the thrice holy God. And that the only thing that God Almighty has done or ever will do about it, is to put his son on a tree and cause him to die a death that demanded a resurrection, and told his people to confront men with an accomplished fact, the cross and the throne. That's God's last word.

That doesn't get the job done. Men and women have no other remedy proposed. And yet, in every generation, the multitudes of men and women, boys and girls, can be described in three passages of scripture.

The first one to which I call your attention is the 14th Psalm. The fool hath said in his heart, No God for me. They are corrupt.

They have done abominable works. There is none that do it good. Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.

But instead he found that all are gone aside. They are all together become filthy. There is none that do it good.

Somehow or another, if you read the newspapers, and attend public places of worship, and get the feel of the day in which we live, it looks like that this psalm is increasingly telling the truth about the condition of a generation into which you and I have been placed and called to be the people of God and to go unto Him wherever it takes us outside the camp and hold up trembling holy hands and beseech men and women who lack understanding who seem to be deterred to get rid of all consciousness of a holy God. And it looks like it is heading up mighty fast in our day. It looks like that the old quip of the preacher who says if there ever was a time when it looked like men are doubling up their fists and racking their brains to deter themselves not to recognize God, this is at hour.

The fool has said in his heart, he got too much sense to say in his head because he knows he is lying, but in his heart, that means if that part of a man that controls him and makes him tick, he says in his heart, because he is desperately wicked and set on accomplishing his desires if hell freezes over and God has to be done away with. This text talks about men, corrupt men, morally depraved men, men dirty and filthy in the uncleanness of the flesh and rotten with the cancer of the corruption of the spirit. Or say, it is the verdict of our heart that as far as I am concerned, God can go to hell.

He is not going to run my life. This text implies, it looks like a bunch of people seeking out arguments as to much applies. If anybody could come and give them a little shout to help them receive a slight assurance that maybe after all there isn't any God.

This text implies a readiness to accept any kind of argument that will help us sleep well at night, go to our work and pursue our pleasures without being hounded and harassed by bookkeeping God, the God of the Bible. The word fool in the Hebrew, scholars tell me, suggests a withered spirit. A person who is withered and shriveled in his own moral depravity and fleshly uncleanness and spiritual corruption.

And this is that that withers a man. And it's a man whose heart has thus been eaten out of him that says and thinks, no God for me. We need to face the fact that there ain't no such animal as an atheist.

There's no such animal as a human being that doesn't believe there's a God. Can't be a human because God fixed it. So you know there is a supreme being.

Last night we learned that men who do not like to retain the knowledge they had of God press down the truth so they can be comfortable in their ungodliness and take their pocket knives and cut themselves a God with whom they can be comfortable. Paul adds that testimony in Romans chapter 1 to that of the psalmist in Psalm 14. He says that men gave themselves to idolatry and unspeakable wickedness because they rolled up their sleeves and spat on their hands and refused to have God in their knowledge and professing themselves to be wise they became fools.

Such terrible fools that not willing to retain what knowledge God gives to every human being they cut themselves out gods and they wound up, they started cutting out gods after they liked this man and wound up cutting out gods out of creeping things that creep along. They refused to retain the knowledge God endowed them with of himself. They thought that it was not worth the trouble to retain the knowledge of God.

They supposed that they could bypass the God of creation and live in the world that came direct from the fire word of God and get by with it. What fools men are. An old farmer up in Minnesota, old phlegmatic, ganky, didn't talk much.

He sent his boy to college, University of Minnesota. And the boy got home after the first year of college and the old man said, son, where did you go? He said, what did you learn? College. Well, he said, Paul, I took a course in biology and found out the Bible ain't so.

The old man said, is that right? He said, yes. The boy helped him work on the farm all summer. Next year the old man sent him back to college.

He went to sophomore year. Came back. The old man said, son, glad you're home.

He said, what did you learn in college this year? He said, well, Paul, I took a course in philosophy and found out there ain't no God. The old man said, is that so? He said, yes. The boy helped his dad all summer.

The old man sent him back to college for the third year. Came back after the third year. The old man said, son, glad you're home.

He said, what did you learn in college this year? He said, well, Paul, I took a course in sociology and found out I ain't got no soul. The boy helped his daddy work on the farm that summer. In the fall of the year, when it's time to go back to fourth year and get his degree, the old man said, son, you won't be going back.

You stay and help me this year. The neighbor came along in a few days and kind of remonstrated with the old farmer. He said, I don't understand.

He said, you worked and slaved and did without. Sent your boy to college three years. Now, when he ought to go back for his last year and get his degree and be educated, he said, you won't let him go back.

The old man said, well, I didn't hardly know what to do, so I sent my boy to college the first year. He took a course in biology and found out the Bible's not so, so I sent him back the second year. He took a course in philosophy, found out there ain't no God, sent him back the third year.

He took a course in sociology and found out it didn't have him so. He said, I feared if I sent him back the fourth year, he wouldn't have sense enough to come home. But that's exactly what we're up against now.

The Lord Jesus Christ added his testimony to the actions of men who lack understanding and are withered and corrupt and determined to bypass God and live as if there were no God. Our Lord said, and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Now, as a boy out in Alabama Hills, the spring of the year, we'd get out and turn up rocks just to see the bugs.

Skeet at them. You'd turn up a great big old rock or a log and a bug's been under there out of the ray of the sun all winter, I reckon, I don't know. And you'd turn that rock over and the sun starts shining on those bugs and they'd depart from hence.

My Lord said, light's come, turned over the rock, and men don't like the light. They'd rather be in darkness. And they run.

And the rest, they don't like the light. They'd rather be in darkness because their deeds were evil. Not because they're a bunch of ignoramuses, but their deeds were evil.

For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. That's the reason you're going to hell. Not because you don't understand the doctrine of the election, because your deeds are evil and you don't want the light to shine on you.

But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest. That's a little embarrassing, but better for it to come up now than to send us to hell. That there a rock in God.

You know, if I read the description of Houston, Texas tonight, you got the witness in it. This is the only day we've got. We can't wait for times to get better.

We can't live on victories of yesterday. This hell and gone generation is the group of people the church of Jesus Christ is to confront with the holy claims of a thrice holy God in Jesus Christ. These verses from my letter describe why Houston and Pasadena are going to spit hell wide open because they love the darkness that enables them to be comfortable in their wickedness.

And they run from light. And the pity of it is under God if a man were to burn and then spit hell wide open. That's the tragedy of it.

If a beast from Mars, if it got anybody up there, the moon, they'd fix you to go up there. I don't know why. But if they come down here and read the Houston Post or the Houston Chronicle and watch the people tonight and tomorrow night and all day Sunday feeding the lust of the flesh bypassing God, paying out like you don't have a Bible, ignoring the fact that Christ hung on a cross, ignoring the fact that God's Son has been given the totalitarian rule over everything that rises and quiggles, thinking we can get rid of God and his rule and his son and his church and his gospel by closing our eyes.

That's the way men will do from now till Monday morning and show up Monday morning with a headache and a hangover to give a half a day's work to some employer and wind up that night and inhale if a vista came to Pasadena and read your newspapers and watch the deeds of men. He'd not preach that myth in the nation that is planted by men and women seeking a place to be free from the bondage of religion and free to the claims of Christ. He's never dreaming about this country.

Believe there's a God or a Bible or a hell or a heaven or anything else. But when men are deterred not to have God rule in their hearts and lives, they don't mind having somebody keep them out of hell. That's what the claim of the gospel is.

But that ain't a million miles of the gospel. Oh, the good news is the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God is the rule of God. And the first time you ever hear the gospel as gospel, you'll be saved.

But the gospel makes its demands that instead of being under the rule of sin, you'll be brought under the rule of God. And you don't want to make that kind of a swap, so you just go on to hell. Men are determined not to have God rule in their lives.

Then they've got to do something in one way or the other when they're confronted with the fact of God or the commandments of God. Aren't they awful? Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Well, my, so wouldn't that be awful? Ain't nobody paying attention to that now.

Well, my goodness, you know how hard I work, God. And I've got to have a little relaxation, raise a little hair and calm my nerves so I can go see Grandma and take in something. And why is that? And I can't be worried about no foolish God saying remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And this generation, the holiness of God, the Word of God, when men are faced with those, they're compelled if they're going to keep on living like the devil to find some way as far as they're concerned to get rid of God. That ain't God's purpose. It is not that men cannot believe there's a God.

It is that they refuse to believe it. Hell ain't going to be full of a bunch of nice little sweet people. Hell's going to be full of folks that roll up their sleeves and spat in the nostrils of God and said we will not have this man to reign over us.

And the actions of men break the heart of a child of God when he remembers that men as they do as they do are in the hands of a bookkeeping God. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who shall stand? That's all it is, Charlie. Goodbye.

You just have to go to hell. That's it. Because he dead sure, you ain't pulling the wool over his eyes.

God's keeping books. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity. I saw a great white throne and there's some books there.

If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, who should be able to stand? H.G. Wells. You've got his book, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in your school library. He said of his early boyhood, I was so set against God.

He and his hell were the nightmares of my childhood. If he lived today, why, he could have gone to church all his life and every priest never heard of God or hell either. And he wouldn't have hated himself.

But at the end of it, he had some preaching in his day and some I've soaked in on H.G. And he said, I was so set against God and his hell. He and his hell were the nightmares of my childhood. They're nightmares.

Your precious little child. You wouldn't want him to get concerned about how holy God is and how hot hell is, would you? H.G. said, I hated him while I still believed in him. He's up against the rock and hard place and road.

Of course, the very God you hate, you just can't get rid of him. You know he's God. If you go to hell, you make your bed in hell.

He'll be there. I can't interpret that. That's what Scripture says.

I'll make my bed in hell. I'll knock down Hauntman, Harris. Oh, boy.

He said, I hated him while I still believed in him. And who could help but hate such a God, said H.G. Wells. He said, I thought of him as a fantastic monster, perpetually spying, perpetually listening, perpetually waiting to condemn me.

He said, that's a monster. Well, if God's a monster, we'd just roll up our sleeves and get ready to fight because there ain't no way on God's earth we can change him. We can curse him, but we can't change him.

We can run from him, but we can't change him. We can try to bypass him, but if you meet a fact in the road, you just will camp there. You can't get around to save your life.

People tell me a lot of times, God, you preach to the monster. I don't know about the God I preach, but the God of the Bible, he's a monster. Well, we're in the hands of a monster.

They come out and run everybody away. So somebody gave us the idea that people were nice. No, people are rotten.

Rotten to the core. Corrupt tend like to drown in their own vomit. The Bible says we drink iniquity like water.

God, this generation of little old pussy-foot, marshy old-haired preachers that occupy the pulpits, combing the hair of this generation and putting perfume on them so they'll smell better in heaven. In hell, instead of telling men how rotten we are, God keeps books. God keeps books.

But my only hope is if thou shalt smite iniquity, who shall stand? A poor or a foreign teenager. And God gets to stirring up the secrets of my heart, judging them. Every sin, big ones and little ones, shall be brought to judgment.

That word iniquity means secret rebellion. I rebel against the Lord about a thousand times every day. Every day a man or a woman has to choose whether sin or Christ shall have dominion in his life about a thousand times.

If you're as mean as I am, you have to repent and cry to God for mercy about a hundred times at least a day. You folks that say, good, you don't have to pray every day and repent every day, you're going to split hell wide open, you know nothing about sanity. Ah, we're rotten folks.

What on God's earth God wants with us, I don't know. If thou shalt smite iniquity, who shall stand? Nobody. But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.

This grand salvation that doesn't set you out to walk in fear and tremble in your sojourn down here ain't no count, honey. The forgiveness that's with the Lord is His boon to you that God may be feared. May be feared.

There is forgiveness with thee. Hallelujah. But there ain't anywhere else There's no forgiveness in bypassing the cross.

There's no forgiveness in thinking you can ignore God. There's just forgiveness with this God who keeps books. He's found a way by punishing sin in the precious body of the darling of His eye.

God help you if that old story of the old rugged cross has got commonplace to you, and you're in bad shape. My only hope, my only plea, Christ Jesus died and He died for me. That's all the hope I got.

I can't make it if that ain't so. I'm a goner if that's not so. I'm a goner if it ain't so that we have redemption and forgiveness in His blood.

That don't fix it up for poor Brother Barnett, no hope for him. I'm a preacher, but hell be full of preachers. Their feet will be sticking out to win.

I'm a Baptist, but Baptists are grinding folks into hell now. It's a fast you can't count. I think I've prayed a few times and the Lord's answered, but answered prayers, no sign you're a Christian.

I ain't got but one hope, that's forgiveness for me. If I believed that Brother Barnett, I'd get saved and live life today. Well, that's what this generation of church members are doing.

But if you believe that, you'd fear God. Oh, you've joined twelve-year-old Charlie Spurgeon trying to figure out how a holy God could have a thing on earth to do with him. You'd spend the rest of your lives singing, Oh, what a wonder He put His great arm under and wonder of wonders He saved even me.

And he who delighteth in the praise of his people would often hear from your lips, I'm viral, but He is precious. My little girl who's living was four years old. We lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Grandpa and Grandma came to spend Christmas with us. I have a movie projector and Christmas Day, as the shades of night were falling, we got in the front room, lowered the screens and shades, put up the screen, turned on the projector and showed a very poor picture, of course, of the crucifixion of Christ. It all had to be poor.

I sat down on the floor to run the projector and the little girl sat on the left. Of course, the picture was a poor picture. Nobody could even describe the horror and the agony.

There. But the picture showed them whipping the man who took the place of the Lord. The picture showed them making him bear that old tree up that rugged hill, and a colored man took it, trudged up the tree for Jesus.

The picture showed them laying the body of Christ down, holding His arms thusly and His feet crossing them and putting the nail in the hands this way, and then in the feet this way, drove it through this bone, clear through the leg, through there and there. It wasn't a cross. It was a tree, you know.

He wasn't crucified on a board that goes this way and that way. He was crucified on a tree. Of course, cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.

The Lord hadn't died on a tree. He couldn't save nobody. And so they nailed Him.

And then the picture showed them pressing the crown of thorns on His head and that old blue blood flowing down. And then after they nailed Him to the tree, they picked the tree with the body on it, lifted it as high as they could and let it fall in a hole so as to tear His flesh as they dropped in it. My little four-year-old girl, I don't know what she said, but she knew but she put her little old chubby arms around Daddy's neck and said, Daddy, why they do Jesus that way? And I said, so He could be our Savior.

And she said, four years old, I'm not saying she was saved, but she wasn't dumb. She didn't have an old withered, cankered heart yet. And she said, Daddy, Jesus do that for me? I said, yes.

She said, I love Him. And oh, if it ever dawns on your soul that He hung there for you, you'll love Him. You will.

You will love Him. Let us pray. Now, Lord, poor old preacher, go as far as you can.

You know the hearts and the conditions of everybody here, and I don't know a thing about anybody. And I can't save anybody. You can save people.

I can't get inside people, and you can with the Holy Spirit. Lord, we're weak here. I wish you would, if you could, be merciful to this congregation.

I don't want you to split your judgment down on us. Hold off the fire. Every last one of us ought to be sent to hell right now.

We're not coming asking for justice, Lord. Show mercy. Show mercy.

Quicken the truth to men's hearts right now. And give enabling grace to men and women tonight. I think it's prayer meeting time.

I think it's time to seek the Lord. I never tell anybody what God will do. I wouldn't dare tell you if you'd walk this aisle, God save you.

I tell you to start seeking the Lord and seek Him the rest of your life. If it pleases Him in His own good time, He saves sinners. I say bow to Him even if He sends you to hell.

He's worthy. I say your only hope is to plead for mercy, not for justice. God's not under any obligation, but He's a God that delighteth in mercy.

It's time to seek the Lord. There's a place here to pray. There are rooms where people will pray with you.

People are not saved by praying, but they're not saved apart from praying. Oh, it's time to seek the Lord. And we're going to make it our plea to you just now while we stand and sing the song.

God's Spirit moves in your heart. He don't say anything to you. I haven't got a thing to say to you.

I wouldn't know what to say. My voice is the only voice you've heard tonight. You'd pay attention to me, but if He's talking to you, you come tell us what it is.

Here, come, go on. Here, Brother Jackson. It's time to seek the Lord.

Time to seek the Lord. Pass me not, O gentle Savior. That person standing by you now may need your prayers.

Be quiet before the Lord. God bless you. If He speaks to you, you do what He tells you to do.

That's still a small voice. That's God. That's the only Spirit that can get inside of you.

Be obedient to Him. Let's sing a verse out of it, Brother Jackson. Come on.

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