

The Fear of the Lord and the Cross of Christ

by William Carrol

The sermon emphasizes the importance of fearing God and trusting in His power and motive, rather than trying to do things in our own strength.

Duration: 40:36

Scripture: Luke 23:32-46, 2 Corinthians 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:10

Topics: "Godly Fear", "Divine Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by reading from Luke 23:32, where Jesus is crucified between two criminals. He challenges the common belief that a deathbed conversion is the only way for a lifelong sinner to be saved. Instead, he emphasizes the importance of acknowledging Jesus as the Savior and surrendering to His grace and strength. The preacher then moves on to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, highlighting the power of God's grace in our weaknesses. He encourages the congregation to put their faith and hope in Jesus, recognizing the need for Godly fear and surrendering their own efforts to rely on God's strength.

Transcript

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And when we, when you get there, brothers and sisters in your Bibles, would you please pray with me that the Lord might be glorified in our midst. Lord Jesus, we so love you. We are so in awe of you.

Every day, you make your great love so obvious, so evident to us. And Jesus, we thank you that we can look to you right now. That we don't have to depend upon ourselves.

We don't have to look to our own strength. We don't have to look to our own experience, Lord. To our own enthusiasm, to our own education.

Lord, we can finally look to you and say, God help us. Lord, we are in utter need of you, Lord. And we enjoy that.

Lord, we enjoy that reality. We enjoy the fact that we look to you with everything that we are. That we have nothing in ourselves of God.

And now we ask you, Lord, for your own namesake, for your own glory, to speak to us tonight so that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be even that much more glorious in our eyes. Oh God, we long to hear from you tonight. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Praise the Lord.

My brothers and sisters, I want to talk to you tonight on this topic. The fear of the Lord and the cross of Christ. The fear of the Lord and the cross of Christ.

Oftentimes as Christians, we find these two concepts on either side of a particular spectrum. Where either we hear or we talk about the fear of the Lord or over against that we talk about the cross of Christ. As though these are two mutually exclusive considerations.

As though either we are in a church that walks in godly fear or we are in a church where people concern themselves with the grace of God and the cross of Christ. And as I spoke to you the last time that I was here, what God has been asking me to do as a student of the word, as a Christian person and as a minister of the gospel, is to find a reconciliation between these two realities. Because in the holy scripture there is a reconciliation.

So what I want us to do is look at the passage of scripture that I spoke to you about. The 32nd verse of Luke 23. It says, There were also two others, criminals, led with him to be put to death.

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, they were crucified with him. And the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.

And they divided his garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on, but even the rulers with them sneered, saying, He saved others. Let him save himself, if he is the Christ, the chosen of God.

The soldiers also mocked him, coming and offering him sour wine and saying, If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself. And an inscription was also written over him in letters of Greek, Latin and Hebrew. This is the king of the Jews.

Then one of the criminals who were hanged, blasphemed him, saying, If you are the Christ, save yourself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we received the rewards of our deeds. But this man has done nothing wrong.

Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise. Brothers and sisters, I've heard this passage spoken about before.

And usually the idea is that there is a man who is a thief. He's a lifelong criminal, as it were. He's a person who doesn't love the Lord, a person who doesn't go to church, a person who doesn't concern himself with the things of God.

And, you know, at the latter part of his life, the late part of his life, he's about to die. And there's a sort of a death bed conversion where, you know, and the moral of the story is if you are a person who doesn't like the Lord and you don't know his way and you don't understand his truth, and you've been a lifelong sinner, even at the very last minute of your life, you can open up your mouth, acknowledge the fact that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross, that he saved, he died to save your soul. And if you put your trust and your faith in him, by the grace of God, you will and can be saved.

Now, I believe that 100%. But I do not believe that that's what this passage is talking about. This passage is talking about a different kind of thief.

In the Greek language, there are two words for thief, particularly two words. One is kleptis, and that's where we get our word kleptomaniac. It's somebody who steals stuff.

And this is somebody who basically is a lifelong criminal, a burglar, whatever the case might be. The other word is the word that's used here. The word is lestes.

It's oftentimes translated a brigand. And it is oftentimes translated an insurrectionist. An insurrectionist is somebody who rises up and in their own strength, they try to overthrow a particular power.

That's what this man was. Among the Hebrews in those days, there were many people who were finding out the things about God, considering the things of God, the Pharisees were one of them. The Sadducees were another of them.

You've heard about the Essenes and the Qumran community and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and they were another group. But then there was another group called the Zealots. Now, these were people who were considered so zealous for the things of God that they believed that they could rise up militarily.

And in their own strength and in their own power, they could overthrow the nations that they at that point were subject to. So these were people who thought that they could overthrow the Romans in their own power. These were not an irreligious people.

In fact, these were the people who were so zealous for the things of God that they were actually willing to die and to kill so that the name of the Lord might be glorified again. If you understand what Jesus was crucified for, if you understand the crime that he was supposedly to have committed, it was because he was an insurrectionist. He was somebody who rose up against the government.

Remember the Jews said, this is a man who's making himself out to be a king, but we have no king but Caesar. And remember the kind of person that he was switched for when they were saying, we have to let one person go at this time of year, who would you rather it be? And they said, give us Barabbas. Now the Bible says Barabbas was what? A robber.

He was a man who had killed somebody in the insurrection. He was a man who had tried to raise himself up. And for the glory of God, for the name of God, according to what he believed to be the will of God, he was going to overthrow the power of the enemy in his own strength for the glory of God.

Now this is the kind of a man who the people asked for instead of Jesus. Now the two people that were hung on either side of Jesus were of the same cloth. They were people who decided that in their own strength, according to their own power, according to their own zeal, they were going to go forth and they were going to bring glory to God even if it killed them.

They were going to do anything and everything that they could so that the name of the Lord might be glorified even if it totally destroyed them. These were the kind of people who were hung on either side of Jesus. The ones who said, you know what? I believe that what God is saying is true.

I just think he's moving a little bit too slow. I believe that God has a great design for our nation but I'm also convinced that he has not in his own heart or in his own hand or whatever the case might be. In other words, he is not willing to or able to make the things happen that I want to see happen as quickly as I want them to see happen.

So all I need to do in essence is to lay my own hand to the plow in my own strength make these things happen myself. Or maybe it was a person who said, you know what? According to the way I read the scriptures God is waiting for me to bring in, as it were, the kingdom. He's waiting for me to make these things happen.

And he's saying to me, in my own strength I have to work these things out until people misinterpret passages like, you know, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. And they misinterpret it because they never read the next passage that said, for it is God who is working in you both to will and to do. In other words, it's God who's making you willing and God who's making you able to do these things that he's calling you to do.

He is not asking for you or for me to do anything in our own strength. Now what usually happens, my good brothers and sisters, when we try to do things in our own strength according to our own power is after a while it gets very, very frustrating. And we get to the point where the cross of Jesus Christ becomes an offense to us.

It becomes a stumbling block to us. Because it's for one of two reasons. One, because the cross is too hard.

We say, God, you asked me to take up my cross. You asked me to do this thing and to do that thing. And because we've tried to do it in our own strength, we've forgotten the passage that Pastor Carter talked about today where he said, you know, my burden or my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

We forget about that part of it. And we try to take up the cross in our own strength. We get frustrated with it.

And we begin, as this man did, to blaspheme Christ. We begin to say, if you are the Christ, why are you allowing this cross in my life? If you are the Christ, why don't you take yourself down from this cross and me too? If you are the Christ, why don't you make this life a little bit better? Make it a little bit easier. Whatever I might be going through, whatever difficulty I might have to undergo, take this thing away from me.

It is hard. It is difficult. It is more than I can bear.

There is an anger that rises up in us whenever we try to walk this thing out in our own strength. We might start out with the best intentions in the world, but it will become very frustrating to us after a certain amount of time. And whether we do it as blatantly as this man did, or whether we do it in some other way, we find ourselves saying to Jesus, why are you allowing me to go through this type of difficulty? Haven't I been trying to serve you? Haven't I been trying to bless you? Haven't I been trying to live my life for you? Why are you allowing this cross into my life? And there becomes this thing that the Bible calls blasphemy.

We usually think of blasphemy as saying something really bad about the Lord, but now here these people are simply saying something bad about his cross. And they are saying, why don't you take me down from this cross? The other side of course, when people have a problem with the cross, is when they think it's just too easy. See, there's no room for boasting.

There's no room for me to lift myself up. And I don't like the cross because it causes me to think that I don't have anything in myself of any significant power. That in and of myself I am weak.

And of course, I don't have anything to boast about. I can't boast in my infirmities. I can't boast in my weakness because in this generation, in this day and age, in our culture, we boast in strength.

We boast in being able to overcome. We boast in being able to stand against the power of the enemy. We boast in being able, in a very real sense, to overthrow the power of the enemy in our own strength, by our own will, by our own tenacity, by our own perseverance, by our own desire to lock ourselves in, you know.

But ultimately, what we find the Lord saying to us is, as Pastor Carter mentioned earlier, we have not been asked to do anything in our own strength. You see, this man was at a place where he thought to himself that I can do this in my own strength. And if I can't, then I have the right to be mad at God.

See, when I come against that brick wall, that says you have no strength to do this thing, you can't walk this out in your own power. When I come against that brick wall, there is usually frustration. That says, God, every day I'm trying to serve you.

Every day I'm clenching my fists and I'm gritting my teeth and I'm doing everything I can to hunker down and I'm doing everything I can to get myself entrenched into your word. And Lord, it is getting frustrating. If you are the Christ, take me down from this cross.

If you are truly loving, if you are truly kind, how many times do we hear people say that to Jesus even in the Bible? If you really cared, if you had cared or if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Lord, don't you care, we're drowning. Time and time again, it is natural for us to say, God, don't you care? I'm trying to live this life out and it doesn't seem to be working.

I'm trying to live this life out and it doesn't seem to be moving along. The Bible says that initially both of these men on either side of him, both of these zealots were saying to him the same thing. But the Bible also says that at a certain point, and I'm not quite sure when it happened in this particular man's life, but at a certain point when he was saying to God, if you had truly cared, if you truly had strength, or if you truly had compassion, you would take us down from this cross.

Right about the time when his neighbor and himself were chiming in against the Lord and railing against the Lord, it seems that there was this turning point in this particular man's life. I want to say to you, it was a time of godly fear. It was a time when the man realized that I am not in a position to tell God how to be God.

When he said, I am not in a position to attempt to be God in my own strength. I have no power to be God and I have no power to tell God how to be God. At a certain point, the Bible says that there was a godly fear that came upon him.

Not quite sure when it happened, but at some point he called out to his neighbor. And in the midst of his railing against his neighbor, you can imagine how difficult it was to speak being hung on a cross. But at

one point he was taking all of the last little bit of energy that he had to question God's power and question God's motive.

And at some point he simply looked over to his neighbor. And I think in a word of exhortation and in a word of encouragement, he simply looked at his neighbor and said, don't you fear God. You see, right in the midst of his neighbor railing against God and right in the midst of his own railing because he's in a situation where he tried it in his own strength and it became very frustrating to him.

But right smack in the midst of that, I don't know what it is. I think God just supernaturally moved upon the man and caused him to realize what he was doing and who it was that he was speaking to. And there was a fear that rose up in him.

I say a godly fear, my brother and sister. And he looked at his neighbor and he said, don't you fear God. Don't you feel a little bit strange speaking this way to the Lord? Isn't it just a little bit upsetting to you that you are speaking to God as though he doesn't care, as though he doesn't know, as though his hand is not stretched out towards you, as though he is not looking to bless you in every particular.

He said, yeah, we're in a place of hardship and of difficulty. Yes, we're in a place, he said, of condemnation, yes. But what he was saying was this.

Now understand the concept here. He was saying that there is Jesus dying on the cross for my sins, dying to save my soul, pouring out his life blood for me. And here am I in a place where I cannot save myself, where I cannot help myself, where I cannot do anything for myself.

Is it wise for me to speak evil or to speak blasphemy against this only one who can save me? He said, if I'm going through any struggle, if I'm going through any difficulty, then it is properly so. I'm saying to you, brothers and sisters, for those of us who are in this congregation, there are some who are not saved, who don't know the name of the Lord. And they say, I'm going through a time of difficulty.

I'm going through a hardship. And God is beginning to cause us to say, you know, beginning to ask us to say, is it not appropriate then to fear God? And to say, Lord, whatever I'm going through, it is because I have turned my face from you. And I need now to look to you and to trust you.

On the one side, this is the case. Now, I also want you to bring it home a little bit. For those of us who are walking with the Lord.

And I want us to be able to say, firstly, I've tried to do some good things and I've tried to do them in my own strength. And those things have backfired. As I've tried to do these things in my own strength, they have proven unhealthy.

And I got a little bit mad at God. I got a little bit upset with God. And I began to say, God, why are you allowing me to encounter the cross? Why are you allowing me to go through this difficulty or that difficulty? Why are you not allowing me to work these things out of my own strength or to come out of this situation in my own strength? Why are you not allowing me to take what I believe to be a victory? And I say to you, brother and sister, at a certain point, there is a godly fear that says, you know what? Whatever the Lord allows in my situation, whatever kind of difficulty He allows me to encounter, I must say, ultimately speaking, Lord, I deserve anything that happens in my life and hell to boot.

It's not an easy thing. Sometimes people, like I said, people don't come to me for counseling very much. I will tell you.

Because there might be some times when I say to them, look, I know what you're going through and I sympathize with you. Don't get me wrong on that. But understand, you and I have no right to say that God is unfair.

Let God be true in every man alive. God is always right. And He said, hey, whatever we're going through, we deserve.

Now, Christian, you are not under condemnation. But whatever difficulty you might have to struggle with, you want to be able to say, God, one thing is certain. You are right.

You are just. You are good. And this man looked at his neighbor and said, don't you fear God? Whatever we're going through, we deserve it.

Justly so. But this man has done nothing wrong. You see, my brother and sister, whenever we find ourselves trying to work out our own salvation in our own strength, we tend to blame God because he is not joining our party.

Because he is not changing his word. He said we can't do it in our own strength, and he is not going to change my brother and sister. When we realize that, we will stop blaming him for not acknowledging our own strength.

You see, that was God's design. He said this man has done nothing wrong. And then he says something that I want to speak to you about for the next few minutes.

He said, remember me when you come into your kingdom. See, he went from being a person of self-provision, a person who was trying to establish, as it were, a kingdom for God. And now he's at a person saying, God, I need you to remember me.

I need you to consider me. See, I cannot do it in my own strength anymore. I can't make myself out to be this or that anymore.

I cannot develop myself. I cannot establish myself. I need you.

So he went from being a person who was establishing himself to a person who said, Lord, remember me. From somebody who thought he could build God's kingdom to somebody who realized God's kingdom is his own. That the Lord establishes his kingdom and establishes us in his kingdom.

That it is God's design. That it is God's power. That it is God's influence.

So this man went from a place where he was saying, it is up to me to say, God, remember me. Lord, I have no strength in myself. God, I can't do any good thing in myself.

I can't bring it to pass. I need you to remember me. I want to say to you, my good brother and sister, when we walk in the fear of the Lord, when we begin to understand godly fear, it is then that we truly avail ourself to the cross.

These are not mutually exclusive concepts. It is not either godly fear or the cross. Either we walk in trembling or we walk in this sense of grace.

No, we never truly appropriate grace on the level that God would have us to appropriate it until we begin to walk in godly fear. Until we begin to say, God, if you don't have grace upon me, I am a dead man. God, if your grace does not come upon me, I have absolutely no hope.

God, if your grace is not covering me, then I am in a just condemnation and I need you, O God. I need you. I can't take one step without you.

This man went from having his own strength in his own right hand to saying, God, you alone are my strength. You alone are my hope. You alone are my healer.

You alone are my redemption. God, there is no hope outside of you. This is godly fear.

This man looked over to his neighbor and said, are you not tired of trying to work this thing out in your own strength? Are you not tired of trying to clench your hands and grit your teeth and make something happen? Are you not tired of trying to be a god unto yourself? Is it not time to put your faith in God? Is it not time to put your hope in Jesus? Is it not time to look over to your brother and to your sister or look deep into your own heart and say, don't you fear God? Brother and sister, this is the beginning of joy because Jesus spoke a word to him and he said, today, this day, you will be with me in paradise, in paradise. Now, I want you to look at a particular scripture in the book of 2nd Corinthians. 2nd Corinthians, beginning at chapter 12 and look at the first verse and we'll read that verse down to about verse 10.

It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2nd Corinthians 12, verse 2, I know a man in Christ who 14 years ago, whether in the body, I do not know or whether out of the body, I do not know.

God knows. Such a one was caught up to the third heaven and I know such a man, whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows.

How he was caught up, where? Into paradise. And what? Heard inexpressible words, which is not lawful for a man to utter of such a one. I will boast yet of myself.

I will not boast except where? In my infirmities, for though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool for I will speak the truth, but I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. Unless I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure concerning this thing. I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

And he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of God may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then I am strong.

This is a man who saw the paradise of God. You see, when this man decided, you remember Paul, he was strong in his own strength and in the power of his own might. You remember him speaking against the cross of Christ? But you remember this man knocked off his high horse on the Damascus road? This man infused with a healthy dose of godly fear.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. And you remember this man turning, repenting. And this man saw a vision of God, the Bible says, outshining the noonday sun.

And now he talks about himself in the third person as though it's somebody else in humility. And he says, this man went to paradise. He saw paradise.

Now remember what Jesus said to this man, this day you shall be with me in paradise. Now I want to say to you brothers and sisters, we are as Christian people, thank God, we are all going to heaven. But I want to say to you as a Christian person, that if we decide to walk in the fear of the Lord, to no longer try to work the works of God in our own strength, but to say to God, Lord, I choose the fear of the Lord.

I know I can't do anything in my own strength, Lord, and I know that if I continue to try, then I am in a place of very serious difficulty. But when I decide to choose the fear of the Lord and to turn away from my own strength, my own power, and I begin to say I would rather rejoice in my weakness and in my infirmity, don't you know I enter into a place that Paul describes as the paradise of God. See, Paul didn't die at that point, he was still alive.

And he said, I don't know whether it was in the body or out of the body, I don't know. But he was simply saying this, there is a place on this side of eternity that the Christian person can attain to. If we stop trying to attain to anything in our own strength, it is a place of godly communion.

See, when he described this place, he didn't describe it the way we describe heaven as streets of gold and so on and so forth. This place was very specific. It was a place of communion.

It was a place where we could hear the voice of God. It was a place where the truths of God were uttered to us, where we could hear His voice, where we could hear His word, because we became a weak people. We became a people who could do nothing in our own strength.

A people who had no power in ourselves. A people who would say, God, take me where you want to take me. If you want to bring me into the wilderness to be buffeted by the enemy, so be it.

As Jesus was led by the hand into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, Lord God, wherever you want to take me, if you want me to be shifted as Peter was shifted, so be it, oh God. If you want there to be a messenger of Satan to buffet me, so be it, oh God. Whatever you want to do, you want me to go to the cross, then that's where I'll go.

There is no room for me to say, if you're the Christ, take me down from this cross. But you say, God, you take me where you want. You see, because the thing that I value in this life is the voice of God.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. And I don't care where I have to hear that voice from.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. If I have to hear it from a cross, then I'll hear it from a cross.

If I have to hear it from a wilderness, I'll hear it from a wilderness. Wherever God wants to speak to me, he said to Jeremiah at a certain time, go to such and such a place, go to the potter's house or whatever the case, and I will speak to you there. Sometimes he will say to us, go to a place of difficulty.

Go to a place of hardship. Go to a place of pain. Go to a place called Bethany, Bethany, a house of pain.

Go to a place of suffering. And I will talk to you there. I will meet you at Lazarus's grave sometime.

Or I will meet you on the tempestuous and the windy and then the thunder-ridden waters sometime. I will meet you in front of your loved one's coffin sometime, my brother and sister. But I will speak to you.

I will give you my own heart. I will give you my own word. I will speak to you.

He said words, unutterable. Sometimes it's a special word just for you. You try to pick up the phone and call your neighbor and something says, no, that one was for you.

That was your word, an unutterable word. I want you to understand it. I want you to know it.

I want you to take it to heart. See, at a certain point, the man got tired. Even of hearing his own neighbor complain about how unfaithful God is.

And he, you know, in love, I think. I think it was in love. You think so, brother and sister? He said, shut up.

And he said, don't you fear God. I would rather hear the voice of God than somebody complaining on my cell phone. Hallelujah.

Praise God. Promise to you and to me, I'm going to talk to you. But I may ask you to come to the cross to hear me.

I'm going to talk to you. But I may ask you to walk with me into a time of difficulty, a time of hardship. Brothers and sisters, at that time, it's good to fear God.

To say, Lord, if you don't take care of me, I'm going to die. If anybody in this room right now says, God, if you don't take care of me, I'm going to die. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise God. Would you stand with me, my brothers and sisters? I want to pray with you tonight.

I want to pray with you. Lord, bless you so much. My brothers and sisters on the ground floor, the balcony and the annex.

I'm going to ask you to come to the front and pray in a minute. And here's what my prayer is. Here's what God has asked us to pray tonight.

There are some of us who are saying, Lord, I'm tired of trying to work anything. And I want so much for you to say, today, you can be with me in paradise. You can hear my voice.

You can know my name. You can hear words. He said, but understand, there are going to be times when I'm going to call you to places of hardship, of difficulty.

And you're going to hear me there. I'm going to speak to you. And you're going to cry out to me.

It may be from the belly of the whale, but you will cry out to me. And you will hear my voice. Brothers and sisters, if you're saying, Lord, I want to hear your voice.

And it doesn't matter what I have to go through. It doesn't matter where you have to take me. God, I want to hear your voice.

I want to rejoice in who you are and what you've done. I want to say, brothers and sisters, come to the front now. Even as we're talking, just come to the front because we're going to pray.

And we're going to say, God, wherever you want to take me, however you want to speak to me, under whatever circumstance, I am willing to go. On the ground floor, on the balcony, in the annex, take the time to come to the front. God wants to speak today.

He wants to move on your heart today. Today, he said, today, you can be with me in paradise. Today, would you begin to come, my brothers and sisters? I want to remind you, my brothers and sisters, if there's somebody who's saying, I'm not a Christian here, and I am under condemnation.

And I acknowledge that. But I want to know the fear of the Lord. And I want to turn to the cross of Jesus.

I want to put my faith in him. I want to know him today. I also invite you to come and pray that Jesus Christ might right now receive your soul as his own, and that the Holy Spirit might immerse you into the body of Christ.

Brother and sister, this is a time to enjoy the paradise of God, the communion, the sweet communion of God in Christ Jesus. Would you pray with me, my brothers and sisters? Lord Jesus, we thank you so much that we can come to you right now. Lord, those of us who don't know you, who have not known you, who are in true condemnation, who can say, Lord, unless you save me right now, I am doomed.

But I look to the cross of Jesus Christ. And by the grace of God, I put my faith in what you have done for me on Calvary and in who you are, O God, that you laid your life down for me, that I might never die, but that I might look into the glorious countenance of the great God because of the mercy of God in Christ. And Lord Jesus, those of us who are here who say, I know Jesus and I love him with all my heart and all my soul.

But every now and again, there is a tendency in me to try and work these things out of my own strength. Lord Jesus, if I have spoken evil against you, if I have spoken evil against your cross, right now I say, by the grace of God, Lord, receive my apology, my heartfelt apology. And God, just draw me closer to yourself.

Hallelujah. And those of us, Lord, who say, God, I'm afraid of that cross. I'm just afraid of it.

And I know you want to speak to me there. I know that you said to me, I'm sort of like what you said to Jeremiah when you told him to go to this particular place and I'll speak to you there. But you said, come to the cross, not simply to be saved, but to that place of sacrifice, that life, that crucified life.

Lord, come to this place and I will speak to you there. That place where we say, Lord, I can't do anything in my own strength. That place that says, Lord, I would rather boast in my infirmities.

Lord, whatever it is that you're asking me to be or to do, Lord, I know it's only in your strength and your grace. Lord, as you call me to that place, God, let me lift up my heart, my hands and say, oh God, it's in your hands now. Lord, as our pastor said earlier today, Lord, Lord, you asked us to come to you.

You said this day you will be with me in paradise. Lord, you asked us to come to you because your yoke is ease, your burden is light. And we thank you so much for that.

Oh, God, we thank you for godly fear that reminds us about great need of the cross. We love you for that. Oh, Jesus, and we thank you for it.

Amen and amen. Praise the Lord. The Lord Jesus bless you.

This is the conclusion of the message.

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