

# Gospel Meetings-Shannon Hills 03

by Worth Ellis

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing sin and the need for salvation through Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 54:25

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 3:9-13, Romans 3:23

**Topics:** "Sinfulness", "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the difficulty of getting people to recognize their need for salvation. He shares a personal story of a young girl who attended a series of meetings but still did not understand her need for salvation. The preacher then reflects on his own journey of realizing his sinfulness and the emptiness he felt before accepting Christ. He highlights the importance of recognizing sin as the root problem and emphasizes that everyone, both Jews and Gentiles, are sinners in need of salvation.

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## Transcript

So we turn tonight in our Bibles to the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Romans chapter three. The third chapter of the Book of the Romans, beginning at verse nine.

Shall we pray? Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the word that Thou hast given to us. We know that the word, Father, is that through which Thou dost work, and revealing our true condition to us, and showing us our need of a Savior, and showing to us the all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ. We remember the words of the Son of God, and we claim them afresh tonight, Father.

Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he may give it you. God grant it this night for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus, and for the blessing and salvation of sinners. Amen.

What then are we better than they? No, and no wise, for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Their fruit is an open self-worker, where their tongues they have used to see. The poison of ash is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Now we know that what things serve of the law saith, saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all him that believeth, for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

May God add his blessing tonight to the reading of his word. It's a grand and a glorious privilege to have this afforded to us, to preach this glorious gospel message of the Son of God. And in connection with this work that the Lord has laid to our hands, the most difficult thing with which we are confronted is not so much getting sinners saved as it is getting them lost.

It's extremely difficult to get people to see that they are sinners and that they need to be saved. I remember a few years ago down at the Pittsburgh Christian Home for Children where our brother Eugene Hollingsworth is working. We were having a couple of weeks of meetings, and there was a young girl, about twelve or thirteen, who was visiting her granny down there during the summer.

She came from Chapel Hill, and she listened Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night. So the following week we went out to visit, and we went to see her grandmother, and she was still there. So as we began our conversation, she listened very intently, and you could see that she had something on her mind, but she would not interrupt.

But as we got up to leave, she said to me, she said, Mr. Ellis, I've got something I'd like to tell you. I said, what is that? She said, you know, I got saved last Friday night while you were talking. I said, well, that's wonderful.

And you were there every night during the week. Now I said, would you mind telling me one thing? Oh, she said, I'd be glad to. I said, well, tell me this.

A young girl like you whose heart could not possibly be hardened by sin at your age, why did it take you so long to get saved and listening five consecutive nights to the gospel? Why didn't you trust the Lord Jesus the first night or the second night? Why did you wait till the fifth? Oh, she said, my trouble was, I didn't know I was long. I didn't know you were talking to me. There was one night you preached about people who were drunkards, and I said, well, now somebody must have told him about my daddy, because he's a drunkard.

And you preached one night about people that did this and did that, and so I knew the people you were talking about, but he doesn't mean me. And you talked about sinners, and I said, well, sinners are people who get drunk and kill people and go to prison. Sinners are people who hold up banks.

But she said, you know, on Friday night, all of a sudden, I said, well, you know, Miss Ellis has been talking about me all the week, and I've just found it out. And she said, the moment I learned it, well, I trusted Jesus as my Savior. But she said, my great problem was, I didn't know that I was a sinner.

And I believe without a shadow of a doubt that in the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the one great problem with which we are confronted. Not so much getting people saved, but getting them lost. A sick man needs a physician, a tired man needs rest, a hungry man wants food, a thirsty man wants water, and a lost man wants a Savior.

And the eternal virgin is the Word of God, and the gospel in all of its moralist attraction to sin-burdened souls is absolute nonsense and foolishness to a man who is so self-sufficient within himself that he has no need of anyone to help him row his boat. And so no one will ever have any desire to be a Christian until they realize that they are sinners. Now, I believe that they know that they're a problem.

As a matter of fact, I am personally convinced that the great problem that confronts the sinner is simply the problem of enjoying life. Now, he may think he's enjoying his life, but he realizes sometimes when he wakes up on Monday morning spitting cotton and can't get his head in a bushel basket, and I'm speaking from experience, he knows that somewhere along the line somebody's done sold him a wooden nickel because that's not the way a sensible man has fun. Many a night, all night long, I've peeped at whole carts for 25 cents or two bucks and that's a pretty fast pace, and I'll tell you, it's a rough life.

Now, I never realized until I was 27 years old that I was a sinner, but I'll tell you one thing, I knew all the days of my life when I was an infidel that there was something missing in my life, but I could not lay my hand upon it. I didn't know what it was. And the thing that kept me so absolutely confused and frustrated all the days of my unsaved life was this, that whenever I did pick, I always ran backwards instead of forwards.

Just sideways maybe, but never ahead. Always backwards some other way, but the way I should go. And when I realized I had a problem, I never realized that my problem was sin.

And that's what you've got to learn if you're here tonight without the Lord Jesus Christ. You've got to realize that your problem is sin. And the great thing with which you're confronted this night, and most likely, is to learn the very first step as we sought to emphasize last night in the alphabet of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all have sinned.

And when it says all, that's exactly what it means. Now, it's all the more amazing that people fail to realize that they're sinners in the light of the volume of testimony that you have in God's inspired Word. Did you notice in the ninth verse we read this? What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all on the sin.

And that takes in all of them. Jews and Gentiles are all on the sin. Look at verse 10.

As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, in verse 11. There is none that seeketh after God.

They are all gone out of the way. They have together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Now, I grant you that no human author would have ever written this description of a human race that the Holy Spirit of God is penned in Romans chapter 3. You look at what the Bible says about you, sinner. And bless your heart, I want you to bow your knee to the authority of the Scripture tonight. Now look, in verse 13 it says that our throat is an open sepulcher.

Now, you know what a sepulcher is. The Lord Jesus often accused the Pharisees of being whited sepulchers, painted up on the outside and all whitewashed and pretty, but inside was full of dead men's bones. It was nothing but the modern version of our mausoleum of today, full of rotten, putrefying bodies eaten up by the worms, stinking, rotten, no good.

And the Bible says here that your throat, that my throat in my natural state as an unregenerated man is like a sepulcher and somebody forgot to put the lid on it. And bless your heart, if you don't believe that is right, you get around a bunch of these poor sinners and listen to them run their filthy mouth. If you don't beat them to the start, they'll cover you with garbage before you can bat your eye.

Now what I'm talking about, I've lived on both sides of the fence. Their throat is an open sepulcher. Now look at this, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

All you've got to do is listen. Their feet are swift to shed blood. In verse 16, destruction and misery are in their ways.

And how true that is today. Destruction and misery. And regardless of what man has ever had committed to him by God, he soon turned it into the way of nothing but utter destruction and abject misery and sorrow.

Why? Because everything man puts his hands to will be his imprimatur as long as he has anything to do with it. He puts upon it a curse, and that curse came from his own depraved heart. And whatever man ever put his hands to has always made a mess of it.

And I'll tell you one thing I'm blessedly thankful of tonight, that to grant him the glorious salvation and the forgiveness of all of my sins, no poor filthy sinner ever laid his hands upon the work that Jesus Christ perfected upon the cross to save this poor sinner from hell. No man had anything to do with that. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

That's the text we'd like to use tonight. That's an excerpt from a verse in the First Epistle of John, chapter 1, and verse 7. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. Now, you know, when I first began to try and get people to realize that they were sinners so that I may have the joy of showing them the Lord Jesus as the Savior of sinners.

And incidentally, if you're not a sinner, you can't be saved. You see, that's the reason you've got to learn your law. Because the Bible says this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Jesus said, They that behold do not need a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And the only kind of people that Jesus Christ saved in 1962 are sinners.

Remember that. And unless you learn that you're a sinner, beloved friend, you'll never know what it is to have eternal life. Now, in the beginning, when I approached this problem, I liked to do it in a sort of a process of elimination, or by a process of elimination, to try and determine just what it is that keeps people from seeing that they are sinners.

In spite of the fact the Bible very distinctly says that they are. Notice the volume of testimony in Romans chapter 3, and in Ecclesiastes 7 and verse 20, a way over in the Old Testament, There is not a just man

upon the face of the earth that doeth good and sinneth not. Now, you see? You see how very definite, very specific the Word of God is.

Now, I believe that people who read these verses and are well acquainted with them and believe the Bible from cover to cover, still fail to understand that they are sinners. Well, I said in the beginning, these people just must be sort of shook. They can't possibly believe the Bible and not realize that they're sinners when the Bible says very clearly and distinctly that all have sinned.

But as I talked to them more and more, I learned that there are many sincere and honest people who do believe with all of their heart in the absolute authority of the Word of God. Not in the same degree as one who has been born again, of course, but they have confidence in the Bible. They believe the Bible, and yet they do not believe that they're sinners.

And yet, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Now, I could only arrive at one conclusion. If their failure to realize they are sinners isn't due to unbelief, then it must lie in one other fact alone.

They fail to realize just what constitutes one a sinner in the sight of God. That must be their whole problem. And if I can help you over that hurdle tonight, and if I can help to introduce you to the most needed person in the city of Greensboro, and that's you, the man that wears your shoes and your britches, if I can help to get you acquainted with yourself tonight by the grace of God, it's entirely possible that you might leave here a saved man tonight, knowing that every one of your sins are forgiven, but you've got to learn this, first of all, that you are a sinner.

I remember once when I was speaking to a lady about this subject, and I said to her, well, let me ask you a question, lady. I said, are you a sinner? And you would have thought if you had seen the lady that I had insulted, her mother or grandmother or something. And she drew up the haughtiest look of indignation upon her face.

How dare you, sir? She said, I've never killed anybody in my life, and you call me a sinner. Well, that's the trouble with people. They think you've got to be a murderer, you see, before you're a sinner.

They think if you're not a bank robber, if you're not Jesse James, one of those other notorious characters, then you're not a sinner. Now, I believe the Lord Jesus, in John's Gospel, chapter 8, has given us an example in connection with this business of thinking that people had to be murderers to be sinners. You have the story there of a poor woman who was taken in the very act of adultery.

And these Pharisees, these self-righteous men, brought the woman to the Lord, and they said, Master, we caught this woman in the very act of adultery. Now, Moses in the Old Testament said that she should be stoned, but what do you say? They said this because they wanted to catch him. If he said, well, take her out and stone her.

Oh, then you're not as compassionate and tender and kind as you claim to be. But if he said, no, turn her loose. Oh, then you approve of sin, so you're not as holy and righteous as you would have us think you are.

But blessed be God, the wisdom of the Son of God was never deficient, for Jesus Christ was God in a body of human flesh, the very personification of wisdom. He stooped down and wrote upon the ground. Now, theologians have delved into this, and I don't know where they found the words he wrote, and some have gone so far as to say what he must have written.

But you know what I think he was doing? I doubt seriously if he was writing anything. As far as I know, he might have been just sort of doodling in the sand like you do to pass the time. I believe what the blessed Son of God was trying to do was to give these poor men a chance to get away without being embarrassed.

I believe he wanted to give them a chance to rethink their situation. But they were not to be denied. And just as they took him and shook him and said, now, where are you? What sayest thou? You remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ? He raised up them all to the ground and looked at all these men right in the face, and here's what he said, Let the first one of you that is not what my Bible says.

He said, Let him that is among you that is without sin catch the first stone. Now, this teaches me one thing, if nothing else, that you as a sinner, self-righteous though you may be, should never be guilty of looking down the nose at your neighbor that's a drunkard, because there's absolutely no degree of depth in the pits of the dams, as far as I can tell, for a drunkard any more so than a religious pharisee so steeped in their own self-righteousness that they have no need of a Savior. So the Lord Jesus would impress upon us that it doesn't necessarily mean that you're a murderer just because you're a sinner.

That he that is among you that is without sin cast the first stone. And that's what you need to know. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

You know, I had a fellow tell me one time, he said, well now, I may admit that I'm a sinner, but I'll have you to know this, that I'm not a big sinner. I said, well what difference does it make whether you're a big sinner or a little sinner? There's only one Savior that's a sinner, whether you're a big sinner or a little sinner. There's only one Savior that can save either kind, and that's the Lord Jesus.

And it's the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin. And if you're here tonight, I want to tell you this. You may be a good, clean, moral, upright citizen of the city of Greensboro, but my Bible says if you've committed one sin, the wages of that sin is death.

And you say, now wait a minute, Shorty. You don't know me. You don't know a thing about me.

You ought to ask my neighbors about me. I'll admit that I'm not perfect, but I'll have you to know that I've committed sin, but it wasn't bad. It was a little bitty sin.

Now that's slang for southern language, little bitty. You Yankers will understand if you've been misplaced or transplanted. But it's little bitty means teeny-iny, you know? You see? I've just committed one little sin.

And so I said to this man, well, look, sir. How many lies did you have to tell to be a liar? Oh, he said, I reckon one would do it. I said, that's exactly right.

I said, how many people do you have to kill to be a murderer? I said, look. Suppose I'm standing on the street corner someday in the city, and you come flying down the street and around the corner as fast as you can go with a smoking revolver in your hand, and somebody's coming around behind you. Stop that man.

He just killed a man. And I would grab you and hold on to you. And you'd say, man, turn me loose.

The police are after me. And I said, well, I'll not let you go. I'm a citizen, and I'll hold you until the law gets you.

I'd look at that man and I'd say to you, sir, you're a murderer. And he'd look at me and very indignantly he'd say, how dare you call me a murderer, sir. He was only a little bitty man.

Don't you see the absolute nonsense of such reasoning as that? What difference does it make whether you're six foot six tall or six inches tall if you take a life you're guilty of murder? And if you're sin, you're a sinner. Where's the man and woman? I'm going to take 30 seconds out now. Stand up.

Tell me that you've never committed a sin. All right. The floor is yours.

The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. And some of us have learned the truth that we are sinners. And we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone who shed His blood for us.

And we have eternal life tonight, friend. Now, listen. I believe that there are two things primarily, and I want to mention these now in my little message tonight, that keep men and women from realizing they are sinners.

Number one is this. Most people get sin controlled. And here's what you've got to learn.

This is only an enlargement upon my introduction, which is a reckless sort of way to preach, but nevertheless, here's what I have to say. You should always be careful never to confuse sin with crime. Now, all crime is sin, but all sin is not crime.

Now, I can go down here on the main street of Greensboro tomorrow and get up on one of the busiest corners and get me a soapbox, and I can stand right up there with my arms folded across my chest, and I might commit 500 sins before sundown, and not a one of them the Lord could lay a hand on me for. Not a one. But any one of them would send my poor soul to hell if I were unsaved.

You see? All sin is not crime. Of course, all crime is sin, and what we've got to learn is this, that all the sin we commit, whether it's in the category of crime or not, is definitely directed against God, and remember that. And that's the basic problem.

You need to realize that you sinned against God. If you cheated your grocery man out of a five dollar worth of grocery bill, you didn't sin against the grocery man. The Bible says you sinned against God.

If you've been unfaithful to your wife, the Bible says you sinned against God. Now, I'll prove it to you from the word of God in the case of David in Psalm 51, as a result of his horrible sin against Bathsheba and Uriah, resulting in this poor woman's heartache and the murder of her husband and the death of an innocent baby, when David in that great penitential psalm was completely broken up in the presence of God, he sinned against thee, and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. You take the case of Joseph over in the book of Genesis, who fled the household of Potiphar and changed his coat for his chastity and was willing to sacrifice his garment in order to keep his character.

He fled out of the house, but you remember what he told Potiphar's wife when she propositioned him before he fled to keep his honor? Here is exactly what he said to her. How shall I do this great evil and sin against God? Did he mention her husband? See? And if you sin, you're sinning against God. Now, listen.

The basic difference between sin and crime is this. If you commit crime against a man, then society by way of the court exacts the penalty. But if you sin against God, who is going to intercede for you? And sin is directed against God, whether it be in the category of crime or not.

All sin, all shortcoming, all transgression is directed against the God of heaven. And the Bible says that the wages of that sin are the So you remember this? You don't have to be a murderer to be a sinner. The force of foolishness is sin, the Bible says.

What service? Now, the faith is sin. The plowing of the wicked is sin. You know, one day I was driving along and I saw a man plowing and this verse came to my mind up through the countryside of Virginia.

He was a poor man. Because, bless your heart, he was plowing one mule and his wife was plowing the other right along behind him. I knew he was a poor man.

And I thought of this verse of Scripture that says, The plowing of the wicked is sin. I said, Lord, now how could it be possible that this man could be sinning just by plowing a furrow? And all in the world a poor man is doing is hoping he's going to keep his children's stomachs separated from their backbone. If God is gracious to him, he's going to raise a crop and give them something.

Lord, how could it be sin? And then I learned the second point I want to get across to you tonight in connection with the problem of sin, what God was trying to get across to us is this. What keeps so many people from learning their sin is this, that the problem of sin is not so much one of conduct as it is one of condition. And the reason the plowing of a wicked man is sin is because everything that an unregenerated man does must come in the category of sin because he's naturally unsaved.

And all of his entire moral motor nerves, all the moral motor nerves of his entire being have been paralyzed by this indwelling sin. In other words, you do what you do because you are what you are. Now it's not what you do that takes you to heaven, but now that's exactly what the Bible teaches.

What you do is a direct result of what you do. And the problem of sin that keeps people from being saved and keeps them from learning that they're lost is not so much a matter of what I do, but it's what I am. And that's the big problem you have to learn.

Now let me give you one of my crude illustrations. Suppose I'm here in the city of Greensboro, and I have never in my life been in a more friendly city than Greensboro, almost as good as Durham. Never have I met such friendly people.

Why, even in Greensboro, the policemen smile at you, and the taxi driver actually gave you the right of way. Now that's a pretty friendly city, but you can find things like that. And I am walking down Spring Garden Street one day, you know, just as happy as I can be, just simply carried away with the city of Greensboro.

And a friendliness, and all of a sudden there's a patch of little shrubbery up the house there on the side of the street. A little old dog comes running up behind the shrub, and he grabs ahold of my new pair of pants and my brand new suit, and just rips the cuff half out of him. And there's a whole picture of the friendliness of the city of Greensboro has been completely demolished in a moment of time, and all the goodwill has been just done away with by uncherished citizens.

So I look down at this little dog and I say, aren't you ashamed of yourself running up behind that shrubbery barking at me like that? And that dog would back off a step from me and he'd say, now mister, where are you from? Now, I don't expect you to understand this language because this is just one dog talking to another one. Now, he says to me, he said, look, in the seat of industry and education, there was a dog, his name was Button. Oh, but what does Button do? I said, he chases cars, yeah, and he just loves to play

with my little girl, and he just loves to play with a ball he's got.

Yeah, but what else does he do? I said, well, he loves to eat. Oh, come on, mister, he says, you're hedging. What else does he do? I said, well, he barks.

Oh, he said, I thought you'd get around to that because you see, mister, said he dogs in Greensboro bark just like the dogs in Durham, and you know the reason dogs in Greensboro bark, he said to me, and I learned a tremendous lesson that day, and you know what it was? He said, you know, dogs in Greensboro bark, they're cozy. He said, you know, we've got a lot of dogs in the city of Greensboro, but you never became a sinner by sinning. You were a sinner to begin with, and you sinned because you are a sinner.

You do what you do because you are what you are, and until you are born again and washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and regenerated by God's Holy Spirit, you'll keep living in your filth and you'll reject the worship of sinners. And that's the basic truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and until you learn that, you'll never be saved. Never.

Now, listen. Let me repeat this. The great problem with which you're confronted is not so much what you do, but it's what you are.

That's the reason Jesus said to Nicodemus, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Now, to enlarge upon this third and second point a little, I want to bring to your attention three very prominent words in the Bible which are descriptive of the condition of every sinner of Adam's race. Word number one is iniquity.

The basic or root meaning of this word is crookedness or the inability to stand up straight or upright. Now, if you have your Bible open, I want you to notice a verse of Scripture from Romans chapter five. Iniquity, the crookedness, or inability to walk upright before God.

Now, in chapter five of the book of Romans, in verse twelve, listen to this verse. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all have sin. Now, that does not need much amplification.

Look. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world. You may scoff at the apple store if you want to and make light of Adam and Eve, but here is the inspired word of God.

By one man Adam sinned into the world. And through Adam's sin, all of us were brought into the responsibility of his trespass. Physical death and spiritual death both passed upon Adam when he transgressed.

Immediately he was separated from God. Hundreds of years later, maybe, he died. But, nevertheless, he suffered both physical and spiritual death.

Now, spiritual death, which made it into this world through the transgression of Adam, according to Romans five and twelve, has left every one of us in a state of natural inherent crookedness without the ability to walk upright. I don't care who he is. He may be so sweet as sugar while melting his mouth.

He may put in the biggest collection when they pass around the place. He may make the biggest donation to all the societies. He may be a philosopher of renown.

Now, if you don't believe it, I'll tell you what to do. Have you got a favorite sin? One that you'd give half of your life if you could get rid of it? One that keeps your throat, your nose to the grindstone, keeps your head full of cough air, makes your nose red like mine, gives you cirrhosis of the liver? You got another one favorite? I will not do it again as long as I live. No.

And you'll straighten up, and with all your might and man and your power, I'll never do that again. And you walk along a day or two, a week or two, just as straight as you can, and all of a sudden you feel yourself pulled off to the side, iniquity. That's the inherent tinnitus of the human heart.

Well, I had a friend one time who says, I'm sick and tired of these people telling me you can't quit drinking. Absolute nonsense. I know you can quit drinking, he said, because I quit a thousand times.

Well, that's true. I quit playing stud poker ten thousand times because I was broke and had to quit. But nevertheless, men swear off, you see.

And you have to go right back. Now, why is it, friend, tell me why it is a human being, an intelligent human being who knows that something is very detrimental to his health, his well-being, and the well-being of his wife and his dear innocent children will deliberately turn right around and do something he swore he wouldn't. That's what I'm trying to get across to you, see.

It's what you are that makes you do these things. You see, I want you to get acquainted with yourself. Bless your heart.

If you can get a picture of what you're like, you'll run from yourself, and maybe you'll find refuge in the Rock of Ages who knows. You might be hiding in the Lord Jesus before the night's over and get rid of itself. Oh, friend, listen, number one is iniquity.

I remember hearing a story once of two men who were standing on the street talking. One of them was a Christian and the other was a skeptic. Down the other side came a poor fellow.

He must have been drinking some of this sneaky peach, you know, that's 20 percent wine, and he must have been completely loaded and vouched for the kindness of the telephone poles and the garbage pails on one side and the building on the other. He never would have navigated that stretch of sidewalk. The skeptic looked at him, you know, and he had no compassion upon him.

This poor sinner had been delivered from that and he knew what the man needed. The skeptic said to this Christian, he said, you see that man over there? Ha! Look at him! You know what he needs? The Christian looked at him and he says, what does he need? He needs a prop on each side to hold him up! Oh, he said, friend, that's not what that poor man needs. What that poor man needs is a new stem up his middle.

That makes you stand up straight and that's Jesus Christ. Bless your heart tonight, sinner, if you'll acknowledge the fact that you're full of iniquity, that you're in here as crooked and you can't stand up straight He came short. See? All right, but what does it make the man come short? The cause of iniquity within.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. You have come shorter in the Bible. You remember the example of a man in the Gospel of Luke by the name of Zacchaeus who was a come-shorter.

He thought that God's way up was up, and he climbed a tree to see the Lord Jesus, and he learned that God's way up was down. And Jesus said, Zacchaeus, come down. Come down.

And sinner, if you think God's way is up and you've been trying to climb a tree, God's way up is down. You've got to take the Lord's way. Soon as you can be a Christian.

Now, the third word is transgression, and transgression is simply the overstepping of a boundary. I remember back in the days when I was a very brave young man in school, about 10, 12, 13, 14 years old. You know how I used to line up at recess time.

You fellas remember that, don't you? You know what you mean, you'd draw a line across that and rub it on one side, one on the other. One was scared, the other was scared of it, you know. You'd draw a line and say, I tell you to step across that line.

Now, if you step across the line, you're a transgressor, you see? And God has prescribed certain boundaries in his Word. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Thou shalt not lie. Thou shalt not do all of these things. But every time you step over one of these things, you're a transgressor.

But what makes you transgress? Now there's your problem, see? What makes you? Let me give you an example. Supposing you lived in a certain community, and you walked a couple of blocks down through this nice suburban district to catch the bus to go to work, and you walked right by an apple tree loaded with the most luscious or luscious sort of apples every year, and they were just the prettiest apples in the whole community. There it was on the corner, this vacant lot, you see? And the apples fall off on the ground and roll out on the sidewalk, and you say, well, I don't want to bother to pick that, and you kick the apple out of the way.

You don't even bother to pick where I'm at. No prohibition at all. You could have had all the apples you wanted, but you never thought about eating one of them.

Right on your feet. So one time you went off on your holiday and vacation, and you came back along about the time when the apples were ripe, and lo and behold, when you went down to catch the bus to go back to work the first morning, you look, and there's a high fence around the apple tree, and a big sign says, keep out. Oh, those apples never looked so good to me.

That man, that's sorry no good excuse of a neighbor. You do what you do because you are what you are, and you're going to kill yourself and wind up in hell if you don't learn that. You are friends, but I've got good news for you tonight.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, you listen, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin. Now here is something you need to learn. God hates sin, but he loves sinners.

Now you remember that. God hates sin, but he loves sinners. Paul writing in Romans chapter 5 and verse 8 says, God commendeth his love.

God displayed his own peculiar brand of unexcelled love, undeserved American love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And because of this love that

God had for sinners, Jesus shed his blood.

And now I want to tell you something very distinctly. There is absolutely no remission of sins apart from the shedding of blood. Will you get that down in your thinking? The Bible says without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

And God established the precedent in the book of Leviticus chapter 17. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your soul, for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul. Listen, it's the blood that makes an atonement for the soul.

Now, I am not a theologian. No one ever accused me of that, and you won't either because this week is gone. But I've been doing some serious thinking about certain trite phrases that we're familiar with in some songs that are full of gospel, which are absolutely true but not necessarily theologically correct in this respect.

A man came to me one day and he confronted me with a terrific problem. He asked me this question. He said, We sing that song and I go to church and I hear you preach the gospel.

The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin. What do you mean by that? What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Now, the question the man asked me, and I want to say, what would you have told him? You know what the man asked me? He said, If it's the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth me from all sin and washes my sin away, where am I going to get a hold of it at? Now, that's a sensible question.

I don't mind questions like that at all, for the Bible gives you the answer, which leads us to remember this, that every statement of the Bible is not to be taken literally, but symbolically some of them are. And when the Bible says the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin, let us get away from the idea of a literal bath in the literal blood of the Lord Jesus. Listen to Leviticus 17, the life of the flesh is in the blood, see? Now, when a man says his blood is dead, my Bible says in Romans 6, 23, the wages of sin is not blood, but it's what? Death.

But the shedding of one's blood is irrefutable evidence that the man has died, and the only payment that God accepts for sin is death. Now, way back over in the book of Leviticus chapter 16, we have the story of the great day of atonement. Once a year the high priest would go into the holiest of all in the tabernacle where God had promised to meet with the children of Israel with their high priest, and he would make an atonement for the nation of Israel.

He would kill a sacrifice from the outside, he would take the blood in and put it on the mercy seat. God dwelt in the mobile mercy seat up where the two of them were met together. God said when he established the ordinances for building of this tabernacle and gave the design, I will meet with you there.

And when he placed the blood on the mercy seat, God saw the blood. But what was it about the blood that gave the people atonement for their sins on the outside? No inherent, intrinsic value in the blood itself other than the fact it spoke of this, that a life had been given on the outside. So don't be afraid of these questions, just think them out.

And that's exactly what it means. The only thing that God accepts in payment for sin is death. And I can still sing heartily unto the glory of God, what can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. All precious is the flow that makes me white as snow. And it was white by sin.

And the death of Jesus Christ is a payment for our sin. So children of God and sinner alike, remember that picture. You see what I'm trying to get across to you? I hope that's as clear to you as it is to me.

That's the gospel. That's the truth of salvation, through the vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's what the Bible means when it says the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

All precious is the flow that makes you white as snow. Listen, friends, and I all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Your problem is one of inherent nature and character.

It's an inward problem. You do what you do because you are what you are. But when the blessed Son of God, now look, here's the simplicity of the gospel.

When the Lord Jesus Christ enlashed your soul in three hours of darkness, with this pamphlet I hold before you, where it represents the entire record of all of your sins, God placed them upon the soul of His Son, and in three hours of darkness the judgment of God fell upon the soul of Jesus Christ upon the cross. The Son of God gave His life in order to pay the penalty of your sin. Now, we are too positive that God accepted the payment that Jesus made because He raised Him from the dead.

And here is something else I believe with all of my heart. If the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to tell you tonight just as a poor, guilty sinner, if you'll acknowledge that you're lost tonight, and that you need a Savior, and say, Lord Jesus, if thou hast died for me, I'll put my faith in thy blood alone, thy death for me, O thou Son of God, and I'll receive thee right now into my heart and life as my Lord and Savior. And then you'll learn for the first time in your life the truth of the statement, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

O sinner, tonight it's a grand thing to be saved. I'll tell you, I never knew a moment's peace in my life until I got saved. And I was praying here the other morning, if you'll pardon me, but I was praying and I was just overwhelmed.

In the past 18 years, I have not gotten saved. It's been like the 18 before I got saved. I served in the penitentiary, a dead and gravey... Oh, don't you see the mercy of God? Listen, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.

Do you know something, friend, tonight, in the glory? Listen, seated at the right hand of God is a living man, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the burnt marks and the wounds of Calvary in his body, testifying that his death was accepted by God as payment for your sins. Now you listen, there are two things you need to know to be a Christian. One is this, that God is absolutely right.

Therefore, you need to pray to be saved. Listen, God is righteous and He cannot save you unless you are saved. And He cannot two times have had payment for your sins.

If you accept the payment that Christ made, you will be saved. I'm going to close with one of my favorite stories because it concerns one of my favorite brothers. I have a big brother by the name of Charlie, and he used to weigh 260.

He's awful little now. He's only 5 feet 10, and to get you in his arms is sort of like being on a rock crusher, you know. I've seen him hit a fellow with a six-inch blow and knock him clean across the country road.

He was a giant, a powerful man. Well, in 1944, I went to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had some boys working for him, and I used to meet him, taste him in the kitchen, set him up on top of a table, and I went out under the influence of whiskey.

He was half drunk, and he thought a man was trying to cut him with a pocket knife, and he cut him and broke off a little switch, and he cut that man's face into ribbons until his blood was streaming right down with that switch. It wasn't that he was afraid of the man. He was afraid of his knife.

He's a beast of a man. So when I got out of the army, he asked me to come help him. He couldn't get into help.

They were robbing him blind there in his restaurant. So I gave up my pipe fitting and welding for a while, and I went down to work in the restaurant and began to witness to him how my dear brother got on a conviction. He got so miserable he didn't know what to do.

He began to talk to me and ask me questions, and so one day he got so miserable he sat down and wrote Mr. Detwell, I don't know to many of you, a seven-page letter. Mind you, wrote him a seven-page letter, front and back, enumerating just the most outstanding things he had ever committed. And down at the bottom he said, Preacher, you read this letter over carefully and see all these things I've done.

If you think there's any hope for a man like me, I want you to call me up. I'd like to talk to you. And so welcome was the wise man.

He's still fairly wise, but he let him stew in his own juice. It's good to let a sinner stew in his own juice. Nothing's so unnecessary to real conversion like real conviction.

One, two, three days passed, and Charlie said to me one day when he was about to get off his shift and go home, he said, well, call that preacher and see if he got my letter. I said, I might do it, call him yourself. So he called him.

He said, Preacher, did you get my letter? He said, yes, I got your letter. Well, did you read it? Yes, I read it. Well, what about it? He said, Charlie, come by and see him on your way home from work.

And so he got in his old model jalopy and went tearing off down to the preacher's house and pulled up and welcome met him at the front door and sat down. Welcome had a long, sad look on his face, you know, and my poor brother, he was at the point of death. He was just so miserable, you know.

All his wicked life creeping up upon him and he was about to be cast out. He said to Welcome, he said, Preacher, did you get my letter? Yes. Did you read it? Yes.

Did you read all the things I've done? Yes. All of them? Yes. Well, what about it, Preacher? And Brother Welcome looked at my dear brother Charlie and said, Charlie, I'll tell you, boy.

He said, only one thing I've got to say to a man like you. What's that? What's that? The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses from all sin. My dear brother was saved that day, right there sitting in his car.

Two or three days later I was still working and a man came in and cursed him for everything he could think of. He just smiled at him. I seen the time he had knocked his head clean off of his shoulders.

That's God's salvation. And that's what you need. Bless your heart.

You don't need a lesson on the secret of peaceful living or power of God. But you must trust it. You must determine, Lord, I'm sick and tired of sin.

I'm through with it. I'm fed up with this indecision, not knowing how I stand. And I want to know once and for all whether I'm really saved or not.

God will reward just that kind of determination. I'm going to get it settled tonight. May God give you the courage to do it.

Father, we thank thee tonight for the Lord Jesus Christ who died upon the cross. For the testimony of thy word that thou didst give him, Lord, as a propitiation for our sins, thou hast set him forth crucified, resurrected, ascended, glorified at thy right hand. We thank thee for the promise from thy word that thou hast given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to us men as thou hast given him.

Tonight, Father, we beseech thee, honor the Son of God by causing some sinners this night to enthrone him as the Lord of their lives. For we pray in his name. Amen.

We're going to close our service by singing number 217. We stand as we sing. Now, the servant of the Lord has done his part tonight.

He's preached the gospel simply and in power. That's what he came to do. The Spirit of God has done and is doing his part.

I believe he's brought this gospel to your heart tonight, and I believe he's convicted some of the fact that they are sinners tonight. Now, then, the rest is up to you. And I think those of you who have ever attended here know that we leave it that way.

It's a decision that only you can make. There's no pressure. There's no pulling on our part.

We don't attempt to do that. But we would be amiss if we didn't give you an opportunity tonight, Senator, to accept Christ as your Savior. You may have already done it during the message.

You can. Without batting an eye, you may have taken Christ in your heart where you sit. If not, you may be sitting there and saying, that's me.

I can't wait to get help. And you may want to just slip out of your seat quietly and meet us here at the front. We'll take the Word of God, take you into an inquiry room, and show you how you can be saved.

Or maybe you just like to stay where you are. Sometimes a person doesn't like to move. Just stay in your seat, and we'll be happy to help you that way.

Shall we stand and sing 217? This is a real moment of decision for someone in this service tonight, I feel sure.

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