

Blood Bought

by David Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the cross as a God-centered event, requiring us to die to self and live for God.

Duration: 1:09:45

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19

Topics: "The Cross", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of understanding the true meaning of the cross and the inadequacy of presenting the gospel without the full understanding of the cross. It emphasizes that the cross is God's medicine for man's sickness, bringing us back to His original intention and purpose. The message highlights the need to surrender to God's original plan, focusing on submission to His lordship, being placed where He chooses, and fulfilling His purpose for our lives. It also discusses the significance of repentance, the reward system in heaven, the purpose of hell, and the warning against false teachers who deny the Master who bought them.

Transcript

Ecclesia. You know, the very first message God ever gave me was on the cross. We had graduated from Bible school, my wife and I, in 1964.

We were working with David Wilkerson in New York City, and possibly a couple of months had gone by, and I was sitting one Sunday afternoon asking myself the question, why is the world still un-evangelized? Two thousand years since the cross, two thousand years since the baptism of the Spirit, and, you know, what's wrong? And out of that, over a period of time, God began to say, you know, we're missing the true understanding of the cross. There's an element of our presentation of the gospel that is inadequate. It's not the whole package, if you like.

And so from that came this message, and over the years, I finally got it in print and sort of elaborated on it a little bit, and got some other writers like Spurgeon and so on to give their view, and so I called it Blood Board. Blood Board The first thing, I think, was a revelation, if you like, that the cross really is God's medicine for man's sickness. If I got sick and I had a runny nose, aches and pains, and I go to the doctor, and he prescribes medication, at the end of that course of medication, let's say ten days on penicillin or whatever, if I still have all the same symptoms, something is not right.

The medication has not worked, or the doctor has misdiagnosed my situation. Because if the medication works, it's to bring you back to your original condition. You know, we say, I'm feeling my old self again.

You know, this is the way I used to be. You know, I had energy and so on. And so the cross really is God's medicine for man's sickness.

Having said that, it's to bring us back to his original intention and purpose. And so I developed the thought of trying to get into the mind of God, pertaining to his original plan. And I tell people, we live in a crooked and perverse generation.

In other words, everything we see right now was not the way God intended it to be. You know, I have two dispensations, before the fall and after the fall. And before the fall, obviously, everything was perfect.

And so we've got to go back to before sin, before corruption, before selfishness, and so on, and say, what was God's original plan? Some of the old timers that, you know, taught used an expression, the law of first mention, or the law of beginnings. And a good example of that is like divorce. They came to Jesus, and of course, they were always kind of embroiled in some controversy.

And on this occasion, it's divorce. And they say, listen, even Moses gave us permission to divorce our wives. You know, what say you type thing.

And Jesus very wisely took it out of the present debate, and he said, in the beginning, it was not so. In other words, the beginning always gives us a different perspective. Divorce came in because of sin, because of the hardness of our heart, and so on.

And so in order to understand what man was like when he was healthy, to use the illustration again, we have to go back to before he was sick. And so I take them back to Genesis, which is the book of beginnings. And Genesis 2, verse 15 says, The Lord God took the man, placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it.

And I say there's three things that you can take from that verse. First of all, submission. The Lord God, not just God in a sort of generic sense, but God as Lord, Master, Creator, took the man.

In other words, man was totally compliant. There's no resistance. We don't have any arguments on man's part.

So God had total lordship over him. And then he placed him in a geographical location. In this case, of course, the Garden of Eden.

And then in that location, revealed his vocation. This is what I want you to do. He didn't give man a choice of saying, would you like to do this or do that, and so on.

He said, I have a plan for your life, basically, and this is what it is. So I devout that and I say, you know, if we truly understand the cross, God wants to bring us back to his original plan. And that is, he wants access to our life.

He wants to be able to take us without any resistance on our part. Place us wherever he chooses, whether it's India or Africa, China, whatever. And then say, I've sent you here or placed you here for this reason, to serve me.

And this is what I want you to do. And so then I go to the New Testament, look at a number of scriptures. Colossians, for instance, 1.16 says that all things were created by him.

And then it adds a little P.S., if you like, to tweak it, and for him. I say, most of us don't have trouble with the fact that God created all things. But why did he create all things? He created all things for himself.

They were created by him and for him. And so I devout that with other scriptures, Revelation 4, verse 11. But it says, and for your pleasure we were created.

And so I try and get into the mind of God, if you like, as to why he created man. The earth is Lord's, the fullness of love. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture, and so on.

In other words, he never created us to just simply live for ourselves. And so that's sort of the beginning of the book. How should people hear without a preacher? Number one, how shall they hear without a preacher? And so because we have de-emphasized lordship, people just do their own thing.

And so even if God is calling them to go to Africa, China, because he's not willing that any should perish, then people are not responding, and therefore people are not hearing. And the other side is when we do preach it, again, we have sort of an optional discipleship. You can accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and then if you want to, it'll cost you a little more.

You make him Lord, almost like buying a car, with or without automatic sunroof. And you can get the basic model, and you can get the deluxe model. And we've produced a gospel that has a basic package, which is very self-centered.

I say again in the book that man's problem is selfishness, and the root of all sin is selfishness. The reason Jesus didn't say, if any man follow me, he's got to give up, and he listed 30 or 60 or 100 sins. He simply took the ax and laid it at the root and said, if any man come after me, he's got to die to self, because the reason we do all those sins is basically self-gratification.

The reason I steal, the reason I cheat, or whatever, is all for self-gratification. And so we've got to die to self. And the problem with that is that from the moment we are born, self occupies the throne of our life.

And so because we're always, and always have been, geared around what's in it for me, when we look at the cross, we immediately look at the cross from a selfish point of view. What has Jesus Christ done for me? How can I benefit? And so the cross then all becomes about me, and not about him. And I tell people, you know, I've got various scriptures, but the cross really is about God.

It says in Revelation 5, I think verse 9, that Jesus Christ died, and he purchased for God with his blood, men from every tribe, tongue, and nation. In other words, it's really a God-centered thing. We benefit, obviously we benefit, but the ultimate benefit is supposed to be God himself.

And we fail to emphasize that because we have a man-centered view. And so I teach that there are two sides to the cross. And normally, hopefully, in the church I'm in, if there's a cross, which is an advantage.

And I say, imagine a cross here in front of you. And the left side of the cross is how man benefits. And the right side of the cross is how God benefits.

And I take them to Titus 2, verse 14. And it says he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed. I said, that's the side we know, that we're redeemed from every sinful act, every

transgression, and so on.

And the left side of the cross, we'll reconcile to God. We have peace with God. We have the peace of God.

We're taken out of one kingdom, transferred to another kingdom. You know, all of those things that we are familiar with. But then it goes on to say, and purify for himself a people for his own possession.

And I said, that's God's side. I said, what the blood cleanses on this side of the cross, the blood claims on this side of the cross. And I use an illustration, and I've used it for years, and I've had people around the world say, you know, you were at our church 20 years ago, or whatever, and I'll never forget that illustration.

The illustration is this. I say, suppose my wife and I have only been married for a year. And we started our married life with a number of debts.

And we've agreed together that before we go into buy any luxury items, we are going to pay off our debt. So a year goes by, and we have been successful. Our debts have been totally eradicated.

And not only that, but we have \$1,000 in the bank. We go out to celebrate, because we've hardly eaten out for a year. And across the dinner table, I say to my wife, wouldn't it be great if we had our own car? One of the things we've gone without is a car.

And we've cut down to the bare minimal in order to pay off this debt. And she said, boy, it would be great to have a car. And I said, well, why don't we buy one? And she points her finger and says, oh, no, no.

We're not going back into debt. And I said, but we've got \$1,000 in the bank. She said, well, you know, laughs and said, well, if you think you can buy \$1,000, a car for \$1,000, you know, good on you.

And I said, well, I think I can, you know. She said, okay, \$1,000, but no more. We're not going back into debt.

I say, let's suppose also by way of illustration that that one year that we have lived as a married couple, we've established a reputation in the town or the community as being Mr. and Mrs. Clean. Everything about our house is immaculate. Lawns are always beautifully manicured.

You know, everything is pristine. Windows are always windexed and so on. So, I go out looking for a car.

And I say to her, darling, this is my department. You pray, and I'll go looking for a car. At the end of several hours of looking around, I finally come across a car, 25 years old, but it seems to be running pretty good.

And it cost me \$995. I buy the car, and I drive it home. I drive it around the back of the house, and I start washing that car.

And I mean, I am meticulous. I wash that car thoroughly. I take solvents.

I remove all the grease grime and so on. I take the seats out, vacuum the carpets, shampoo the carpets, you know, just windex the windows, arm roll the dash, even steam clean the engine. And at the end of four or five hours of work, that car is absolutely without a trace of dirt.

I then take all the cleaning paraphernalia and all the filth that I've got from that car, and I take it into the house, pile it on the kitchen table, shred the contents of the vacuum cleaner, shake out all the dust and so

on. And I call my wife, and I say, look what we got for \$1,000, and here's a huge pile of dirt. And she says to me, you're crazy.

You know, I thought you went to buy a car. And I say, what was the object of my payment? I took my last penny, all that I had, and was it in exchange for all this dirt because I value the dirt, or was it in exchange for the car? And I said, I think this is where the gospel has got, you know, sort of perverted somewhat. You know, Jesus did die to wash us, but what he really wanted was the car.

It was the car that I was really after, and almost as a byproduct, and I say that, you know, a little bit tongue-in-cheek, but almost as a byproduct, he washed us because he has a reputation to uphold, just as I do. If I drive around in that filthy car, there goes my reputation. People are going to say, that guy's not Mr. Clean.

Look at the car he drives around in, you know. And so God brings us up to his standard, you know, let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity, you know. And so if I'm going to call myself a Christian, I have to live as a Christian, but the ultimate purpose is he went to redeem for himself a people for his own possession.

And so I emphasize that, you know, the cross really is about God purchasing and buying us, and therefore he has a claim to our life. We benefit by being cleansed, we benefit by having eternal life and ultimately getting to heaven, but God's benefit is the people that he created for himself, he now has as his own again. And I emphasize 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20, you're not your own, you've been bought with a price, you know.

And it's you that's being bought, not your sin. I tell people God does not have a sin collection, he doesn't relish, you know, collecting sin. As soon as he gets it, he buries it in the depths of the city.

I said, your sin has no value to God. It can't testify, it can't prophesy, it can't tithe, it can't go on a mission trip. It has no value.

You do, and that's what he wants. He wants your body as his house, his temple, so that he can continue what he did through the original body of Christ, if you like, the Lord Jesus Christ. That body eventually fell into the ground and died, and it brought forth, if you like, the mystical body of Christ.

The original body of Christ, if I can put it that way, could only be in one place at one time. If Jesus was in Nazareth, he couldn't be in Capernaum. If he was in Capernaum, he couldn't be in, you know, Jericho.

If he was in Jericho, he couldn't be in, you know, Jerusalem, and so on. But that corn of wheat would abide alone, unless it died. Now we have the body of Christ, and it can be in Africa and China and India and so on and so forth, but it's to do what the original body of Christ did.

And that is, you know, as the Father sent me, so send I you. What is the cost of the gospel? Well, first of all, you know, I don't believe in ultimate reconciliation or universalism, that everybody's going to be saved. And I think it depends on how the gospel is presented.

If it truly is presented, you know, biblically, there is a cost. Nobody wants to die, you know. In fact, when I wrote my book, I sent it into a large charismatic publishing company.

And it passed the first hurdle, and then it went to the committee. And the committee said, this is not a book that really will make money. That was the gist of it.

They put it nicely, but, I mean, this is not a book that we think will appeal. And they said, it's not that the contents, there's anything wrong with the content. It's just it's a message that is not popular, basically.

And I wrote the go back that was the go I went through. And I said, you know, the cross has never been popular. Most people would rather go to the beauty salon and have a makeover than they would to the coroner's office to, you know, to be buried.

And, you know, we have this makeover gospel. You know, it's all about me, your best day yet, and, you know, your finest this. And it's all appeals to the flesh.

But Jesus said, you've got to die. And even the disciples said, this is a hard saying. You know, who can bear it? And so many forsook him because of that.

On the other hand, I think if we truly understand the cross, and it may take time, you know, it can be the happiest thing in the world because you're coming back to your original condition. God never made us to operate selfishly and for us to be in control. And the Bible puts it this way, you know, if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it.

If you lose your life, you really find it. And so when you find it, there is happiness because you know you're in the center of God's will. You're doing what God originally called you to do, so to speak.

Whereas if you persist in doing your own thing, it will never work. It's like, you know, it's like, well, let me put it this way. I think the majority of Christians in the church are really sort of frustrated with their Christian life because it's not working the way God intended it to work.

And I think it's only when you lose yourself and truly die to self that you find yourself and then there's meaning to life. How did you find Jesus Christ? Well, I mean, he took our place so that we could have eternal life, but we are also, the Bible says, crucified with him. And in that sense, he spared nothing.

In other words, I can't have a partial crucifixion and say, God, I'll give you this, but I won't give you that. You know, I'll give up my career, but I won't give up my girlfriend, or I'll give up my girlfriend, but I won't give up my career. So in that sense, you know, spared nothing, I assume, is what he's referring to there.

You know, the cross today, we would call it the electric chair, I guess, because, you know, we don't have crosses. But if somebody said they were being crucified in the New Testament, you know that they were not going to be back at work on Monday morning. And, you know, you'd never see them again.

It was a total death process, and the cross in our own life is a death to self. Paul said, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, and yet not I, but Christ lives in me, you know.

And we've got to come to that place where we truly die to my goals, my dreams. I had one passion in life, and that was to go into the field of graphics. I had two brothers that were brilliant, straight-A students.

I was a dummy in the family. Brought home F-sum my report card on more than one occasion, as I tell people, if the job's worth doing, it's worth doing well. But I loathed school, but I excelled in art.

And I was gifted in that area, and it gave me a sense of self-esteem. And so I wanted to pursue that. And so from the age of 14 to 18, I mean, I wrestled with God.

I wanted to be saved. My father was a hellfire preacher. I mean, you know, I've been dangled all the hell.

I know there is a hell in that sense. And I knew where I was going, even though I was a good kid. You know, I never smoked.

I never drank. I never slept around with anybody. I've never, you know, all of those things that I tell people I should be in Guinness Book of Records.

They just haven't discovered me yet or I haven't applied. But I was the worst sort of sinner. I was a religious sinner, you know, like the Pharisee.

I thank God that I'm not like you, you, you. You know, I've never taken drugs, never. But I had this overwhelming desire to please myself.

And that was to do what I enjoyed doing. And so from the age of 14 to 18, I mean, I literally came under conviction of sin almost every meeting. It was just God after me.

It didn't matter who was preaching hardly. God was after me. I would literally shake under conviction.

We were living at a Bible school at the time in Minneapolis. And then finally at the age of 18, I came to the altar before anybody came to pray. I said, Lord, you know I'm a sinner.

I need your forgiveness. I need you to cleanse me from sin and so on. But I said, Lord, I'm not here just to give you my sin.

I'm here to give you my life. And I said, I'm going to just surrender totally all my dreams, goals, ambitions. And I tell people, you know, I think in the average church that maybe 90%, maybe that's high, but let's say 80% of the people have accepted Christ as their Savior.

But I'd only say 10% have given God their life. In other words, we readily give God the garbage. But the thing he really wants to cost, so to speak, we're reluctant to give him.

And so that's the key, I think, to evangelism. If God had everybody that claims to be a Christian, if he was Lord over those people, he would be sending them out left, right, and center to do his will. But instead, we claim to be Christians, and yet we're pursuing our own thing.

We may clean up our life a little bit. We don't cheat. We don't smoke.

We don't sleep around, you know, type thing. But basically, we're still motivated by selfishness. How do you grow spiritually? There's a maturing process.

In 1 John 2, Paul says, or John rather says, I write unto you children, I write unto you young men, I write to you fathers. So just as we grow spiritually, we grow, just as we grow naturally rather, we grow spiritually. And so, you know, not everything happens at once.

But I think as we begin to grow, we learn to trust God more and more as he answers prayer and so on. And I think the biggest hindrance is that that foundation of lordship, you know, we never make. And so it's hard for God to lead us.

And it's hard, you know, for instance, Psalm 23, which everybody in his brother knows, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not know. But it's the Lord is my shepherd. He can't be your shepherd unless he's your Lord.

You know, the Savior is not my shepherd unless I'm prepared to make him Lord. Because unless I'm prepared to follow, take up your cross and follow, unless I'm prepared to do that, things are not going to work out. And so part of it is there is a frustration, I think, with a lot of believers because they've never made that initial commitment to lordship.

And therefore, God really can't lead them because they're doing their own thing. And so, you know, but I think once we make him Lord and truly make him Lord and we seek to do his will, then there's going to be answers to prayer. There's going to be God leading us and so on.

And then we grow in grace. We grow in the knowledge of God. And so there's always that growth process.

We don't arrive overnight. And I think God understands that. You know, if you have children, you don't put demands on a 2-year-old that you put on a 6-year-old and you don't put the same demands on a 6-year-old that you put on a 12-year-old and so on.

And so I think God, you know, is a God that understands our position. For instance, in the Old Testament, when God took the children of Israel out of Egypt, it said that his desire was to take them by way of the land of the Philistines because it was shorter into the promised land. And then it says, but if I take you that way, there will be war and you're not yet ready to fight.

And so God looked at their spiritual condition and he bypassed the problem and he bypasses the Philistines. A little while later in Judges, it says that there were those that never learned war. And so God left in the land and the first one that he left was the Philistines.

In other words, there's a time when God will bypass a Philistine because you're immature. There's another time when he says, you should have learned to fight by now. I'm going to give you a problem.

And so he places a Philistine directly in front of them so they can learn to fight. And so, you know, God deals with us according to our spiritual age, I think, too. Why is it that the Philistines have never learned war? Boy, that is a sort of complex question.

I don't know if I've ever tried to correlate the covering cherub with the covering of the skins. Obviously, you know, man sought to cover his nakedness because he suddenly was aware that the glory had departed. Most people feel, you know, we've come short of the glory of God and the glory of God was some sort of covering.

And when that covering left, then man became aware of his own sin and so tried to cover himself with fig leaves. Of course, Jesus came along or God came along and provided the covering of the skin of an animal. But, you know, the covering in the body of Christ, when you say we need the covering of an elder or so on, I believe that only pertains to the local church.

In other words, I don't believe that my local pastor here in Siloam Springs has the right to knock on the door and tell me what to do, how many children to have, you know, this and that and the other thing. I do believe that if I were to stand up in church and prophesy and he felt it was off, he has a right to sort of shut me down in a nice way, hopefully, because he watches over the flock. And so I think there's a difference.

I think we do have direct access to God. Obviously, everybody does as a believer and that I have a right to seek the mind of God. And if I'm wise, yeah, I may bounce that off my pastor and say, listen, I've had a real sense in which God wants me to do ABC and my wife feels the same.

You know, I'd love you to pray about it. Now, when I say I'd love you to pray about it, I mean pray about it. I don't mean that all of a sudden he just comes up with God's will for my life because I happen to own the Toyota dealership and I'm paying, you know, \$2,000 tithe into the kitty every week.

And he says, oh, I don't feel good about that. You know, you go into California because in the back of his mind, he knows he's going to lose, you know, a big contributor. But if he genuinely prays about it and says, you know, I've prayed about this and I have a check of my spirit, then, you know, if I'm wise, I may say to my wife, listen, let's wait a little longer.

Let's not rush this thing. This is a major move, you know. And so I think there's a place of covering.

I don't think there's a place of dictatorship. And that has happened in a lot of circles. You know, the whole discipleship movement that got into that heavy shepherding.

And they were telling people, you know, literally, you know, what to do moment by moment almost. But I do believe there's a protection that says they take, oh, they watch over our souls as those that must give an account. But, you know, I actually wrote to a man, I won't mention his name, who wrote a book called Undercover.

And I wrote a letter to him. I have to be honest, I don't know if he got the letter or not. But I did get his email address and called the office and sent it to him.

But at least I think I got a response. And I said, I've just read your book Undercover. And I said, you know, God hates an imbalance.

A false balance is an abomination to the Lord. And I said, so also is weighted teaching. In other words, we can weight things in a way that is a false balance.

And I said, your book is all about submission, submission, submission. But it's not about those who are in a position of authority. And I said, Jesus was far harder on those in authority than those under authority.

And I said, I can readily, if I'm a wife, submit to my husband if he loves me. But I said, your book basically says submit, submit, submit. It doesn't say, you know, husbands love your wife.

Or those that rule over you, you know, you take those things to God. You know, you don't just say, well, listen, I'm the pastor, I can tell you what to do. No, you are also under authority.

And so I felt there was a false balance there. You know, Jesus made it very, very clear to the scribes and the Pharisees and so on. You know, you weigh people down with heavy burdens, tell them what to do, and so on and so forth.

But basically, you don't do what I'm telling you to do. Well, the Bible defines sin as a transgression of the law. So, you know, the essence of sin, again, is breaking the law.

I steal, thou shalt not steal. I commit adultery, thou shalt not commit adultery. You know, I've got other gods before God.

And so the cross deals with that by, of course, taking all of that. Jesus took that penalty of the wages of sin, his death. And so he died in my place and became a substitute.

And therefore, I got off the hook. And I mean, that's, you know, in a very basic way, what Jesus did for us. He died for me.

Well, talking about the cross and prayer, there is a place, obviously, where we can pray for our needs. God is a father, and, you know, we have needs. Give us this day our daily bread.

But ultimately, I think we've got to also put in our prayer life, if you like, thy will be done. What is your will? So it's not just a selfish type of prayer. You know, meet my needs.

Here's my shopping list for today, God. You know, take care of all of this. You know, we've got to get to the place where we understand what God is about.

One of my favorite scriptures is Acts 13.36. David served the purpose of God in his generation. And afterwards, he slept or he died. And I said, we've got to find out what is the purpose of God in our generation.

And how do we become laborers together with God in that? And so, you know, in our prayer life, God, what are you doing? And how do I pray effectively, you know, for whatever your purpose is? Now, obviously, we can't, you know, necessarily cover the globe. But I think God can lay things on our heart. And then we've got to pray accordingly.

And it may have nothing to do with my own personal needs. You know, it may be praying for a missionary that we know of that's going through a difficult time. It may be praying for a nation like Japan right now with the earthquake or something like that.

It may be praying for the next elections. You know, I mean, a variety of things. But we need to at least seek to understand, you know, what is God's will? And how do I pray in accordance with that? And I think the enemy has over the years, you know, number one, eradicated prayer virtually from the church, which is sad.

And yet my house should be called a house of prayer more than anything else. You know, more than a house of worship, more than a house of teaching. I mean, those are implied as well.

But my house should be called a house of prayer. And, you know, I do a little bit of teaching on prayer. And I say to people, which shocks them a little bit, if I could eliminate one word from our Christian vocabulary, it would be the word prayer.

They sort of look at me like, you know, your dad spoke about prayer his entire life, you know. And I said, well, I'm not saying I'd eliminate prayer. I'm saying the word prayer.

Because I said prayer has lost its appeal. You say you're going to have a prayer meeting and, you know, there's an inward sigh, if not an outward sigh. If you say, you know, we're going to have some recording artist, you know, you'll jam the place to the gills and even sell tickets.

If we say some famous preacher is going to be there, you know, everybody will come. But if we say we're going to have a prayer meeting, nobody shows up, you know. And so, and then we've tried to supersize prayer by using the word intercession.

And, you know, that's sort of replayed. Prayer now is like a first grade stuff. And an intercessor is like a prayer warrior on steroids.

You know, and I tell people, the book of James says Elijah was a man of like passions as we are. And he prayed and God shut up the heavens. I said, imagine what would have happened if it had interceded.

In other words, the impression is that prayer is, you know, intercession really gets the job done. No, he prayed, you know. And so instead of using the word prayer, I'd say let's touch the throne of God together.

There's that hymn from I think it's Hillsong, you know, touching heaven, changing earth. That's really what prayer is about. It's touching heaven.

And so we've got to learn to touch heaven. And when we touch heaven, obviously we get the mind of God or should be getting the mind of God. I had the privilege of working with an older man in New Zealand years ago.

His name was Neville Winger. And he said that you've got to walk in God's revealed will before you can know his concealed will. By that, there's the revealed will of God that is the same for everybody.

This is the will of God, your sanctification that you abstain from fornication. So God's will for your life, my life, every other Christian is we don't get involved in fornication. So there's the general will of God that is revealed clearly in the word of God.

So unless we're doing that, you know, we can't really know his personal will, if I can put it that way, or his concealed will. So I think the first thing to do is, you know, make sure that we're walking in the light, we're walking in obedience. And then we start saying, well, Lord, you know, what do you want me to do? You know, Paul, when he got converted on the Damascus Road, the very first words out of his mouth was, not Savior, thank you for taking away my sin, obviously that happened.

But he said, Lord, what would you have me to do? So he recognized that Jesus is Lord, and then bowed the knee, and as Lord, what do you want me to do? And so I think we've, you know, we've got to get to that place where we say, Lord, what do you want me to do? And then it may take time, it's not necessarily an instant thing. It could be that, you know, Jeremiah talks about set up for yourself road markers to direct you in the way. And so it's like driving somewhere, and you've never been there before, but you follow the signs.

You know, Minneapolis, you know, 98 miles, and you keep following the signs, eventually you get to Minneapolis. And so many times, you know, God will reveal his will that way. It may be that, you know, you're thinking about, say, Africa.

Excuse me. Turn on the TV that night, and there's a documentary on Africa. I think, oh, that's interesting.

I've been thinking about Africa. And then you go to church that Sunday, and maybe there's a speaker there from Africa, and talking about the needs of the mission field, and that they need a schoolteacher for their school. Maybe you're a schoolteacher.

You think, oh, that's interesting. I've had Africa on my heart the last couple of days. And now, you know, and I've been praying God's will.

I'm a schoolteacher. Here's a need. And you talk to him.

And, you know, and so there's road markers many times, confirmations that come along. I mean, I would never make a major decision based on one, you know, one word, whether it's a prophetic word or whatever, you know, in the mouth of two or three witnesses of safety. And so I think, you know, sometimes it is a little bit of trial and error, unless you have some sort of sovereign experience, you know, where God gives you, you know, three dreams in a row and an audible voice, that thing.

But most of the time, you know, I think it's an incremental leading that God leads you into. And, you know, we just have that deep peace that this is a little girl. You know, it's the forgiveness of sin.

It's not covering sin. A lot of songs these days, of course, are written by people that don't have too much of a theological basis. And they'll talk about, you know, Jesus covered my sin.

That's an Old Testament concept. It was covered in the Old Testament until the New Testament, where it was totally forgiven or eradicated. And so Jesus forgives us our sin.

It's gone. It's blotted out. I'm justified, as somebody said, just as it never happened.

And so, you know, I've never heard the word He dismissed our sin, but certainly He forgives us and cleanses us. You know, I think we're talking really about the grace of God. But grace came to us at an incredible cost.

You know, I wrote new words to Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound That Saved a Wretch Like Me. And it went like this, Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound That Saved a Wretch Like Me. It cost the Son of God His life to give that grace to me.

You know, and so when we see grace being only available to us because somebody literally died and took my sin, it shows you the horrendousness of sin, that, you know, it wasn't a light thing that God passed over. You know, my sin literally crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. It cost Him His life.

He didn't send an archangel. He didn't send, you know, one of those zillion angels sort of thing. He sent His only Son.

And so I've got to see my sin, you know, as for what it really is, horrendous. You know, and so often we sort of belittle sin. Oh, it was just a white lie that I told, you know, instead of a black lie and all of this.

No, it was sin. And grace is free, which is amazing. But there is our response to grace.

We don't, just because grace is free, we don't take that grace in vain, Paul says. And I think many times we take that grace in vain by just going back into sin and wallowing in sin like a pig in the mire sort of thing. The Bible says if we sin, we have an advocate with a father or an eraser, if you like, not when we sin.

And there's a difference between if and when. My dad used to use the illustration when I was a boy of eight and ten. He was coming to America on a regular basis and he came by ship because in those days it was cheaper to go by ship than it was to fly.

And it would take seven days to go from Southampton in the south of England to New York City. And he said on every ship voyage, they would, within a couple of hours of you getting on that ship, they would have you go through lifeboat drill. And so the alarm would sound, there would be an announcement, bring your life jacket, report to whatever deck it is.

And then they'd assign you a particular lifeboat. And he said they'd run through the drill of how to put the thing on and so on and so forth. And then he would say, they would say, now if the boat goes down, this is what you have to do.

He said they never said when the boat goes down. If he said when the boat goes down, he said, I'd have said, hey, back up, let me off. Because when means it will, if means it might.

And the Bible says if we sin, not when we sin. Unfortunately, I think there's a lot of people who say, well, I can always call on the blood to cleanse me. That's not the attitude that God is looking for.

It's if I sin, if I stumble, if I'm overcome with a fault or whatever. He expects us to live by that same grace, that empowering grace of God, a life free from sin. But if we sin, we have forgiveness.

I think, number one, to show us the horrendousness of our sin, that this is what it costs. It costs the life of his son. But then having shed that blood, we now have peace with God.

And it takes the forgiveness of sin to bring reconciliation or to bring us back into a right standing with God. And the Bible says without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness. But once we do have that shedding of blood, then we have peace with God.

And that was God's way of establishing genuine peace, was on the basis of, you know, sin has to be, it's costly. And so God hates sin. I mean, he has a holy hatred of sin.

The Bible says he has purer eyes than to behold iniquity or look on iniquity. And so the love of God has to hate sin. Just as a doctor, if he really loves health, has to hate sickness.

You know, if I went to a doctor and I'm dying of cancer, and he knows I'm dying of cancer, but he doesn't want to upset me. And he says, oh, you're fine, baby. You know, just, hey, you're in great shape.

You know, just do whatever you want and blah, blah, blah. And then six months later, I'm on my deathbed. And I go back to him and he says, well, you know, cancer's too advanced now.

We can't operate. Sorry, but, you know, at least you had six good months. You know, I don't want to upset you.

Boy, I'm going to be mad. You know, I want him to take radical surgery if necessary, and there may be pain involved and so on and so forth. But if I can have life out of it, you know, and so that doctor has to hate the very thing that destroys a person's life.

And the thing that destroys a person's life is sin. And God has a holy hatred for that which ultimately destroys my life and destroys his purpose. And so he deals with it, and it is bloody in that sense, yeah.

But it's also to show us, you know, that look what it's costing. Whereas if there was no cost, we would treat it very lightly, you know. But a person that's been through surgery is far more prone not to, you know, do the things that's going to get him back in the operating table.

Whereas if it's just, you know, the doctor says, hey, take a Dysprin or an Aspirin or whatever, you know, you'll go back and do that thing a thousand times. Oh, I can just take an Aspirin and it's fine, you know. But no, I don't want to go through that again.

That was terrible. You know, I was in bed for three months and it really cost me, you know, I'm not going to touch it. For instance, I had kidney stones years ago.

And, I mean, they are the most painful thing they say a man can have and the equivalent of having a baby. And so at least I can identify a little bit with a woman having a child. But they said it could have been because I drank coffee.

Well, I wasn't a heavy coffee drinker, but they thought the acidity in the coffee. I mean, I dropped coffee from that day till this. I didn't want to go back to that incredible pain, you know.

Whereas, you know, if it hadn't been that, I'd still be drinking coffee. I think repentance is, you know, one of the missing keys these days. You know, we don't really preach against sin.

We have this seeker-friendly thing. Again, we go to the doctor and he doesn't want to offend us. And so we go to the church and it's all about, you know, your best life yet.

And it's all about, you know, how God is for you. And obviously God is for us. But first of all, he has to deal with sin.

And I think, you know, we become sin conscious through conviction. And conviction is missing. They say that during the time of Finney, you know, people would learn.

Jonathan Edwards, people would literally, you know, shred their hymn books. They were so under conviction of sin. The Day of Pentecost, when Peter began to preach, it says they were pierced in the heart.

It's the same word that is used when they took the spear. And thrust it inside of Jesus on the cross. And so, you know, we're missing that dimension of conviction.

And so there's a lot of what I would call just repenting because somebody sort of convinced you that you're a sinner. And, you know, I don't know how to produce this other than, you know, waiting on God and asking God. But I think a lot of people have an intellectual conversion.

You're a sinner. I guess so. You know, have you ever stolen? I guess, you know, I've stolen.

I've done this. Well, you know, you're prepared to repent. Yeah, Lord, I'm sorry.

You know, but it's not that deep conviction of how bad that thing really is. That comes from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, you know. And so I wonder sometimes, you know, if we've got to convince a person that they're saved, if they really are saved.

You know, they haven't, have they really passed from death unto life? Do they really have the witness and assurance in the spirit, you know, that something has happened, that God really truly has forgiven them? Or is it the soul winner, so to speak, or the counselor that's convinced them they're a Christian? Well, you've done this and that, therefore this has happened, you know. But there's no real radical change. And so, you know, I think we do need to get back to the message of repentance.

John preached it. Jesus preached it. Everybody preached it in the Bible.

You know, repent and be saved. And if there isn't repentance, there can't be salvation. You know, he shall save his people from their sin.

And yet we have a salvation today that saves people in sin. You know, in other words, they're still going on and practicing it just as much as they did before they were so-called saved. If I save somebody from drowning, they're not in the water anymore.

They're on land. If I save somebody from a burning building, they're out of the building. If I save somebody from sin, they're away from sin.

You can't be saved in it. You know, you can't be saved from drowning and still be in the water. You can't be saved from the fire and still be in the fire.

And so, you know, repentance is a message that has to be proclaimed. People don't want to hear it because they don't want to be told they're a sinner. You know, we're basically good people.

I mean, that's what everybody wants to believe. I'm not a sinner. You know, I've never murdered.

And they don't see sin the way God sees sin, you know, as a transgression of the law, basically living for themselves. That's the essence of it, you know, living for self. And I've got to die to that.

It's not my will. It's his will, you know. I asked people, you know, I said, I guess everybody has seen the Passion by Mel Gibson.

And I said, you see the horrendous death that Jesus went through. But I asked the question, we know why God sent his son to die. It pleased the Lord to bruise him.

God so loved the world. But I said, why did man put Jesus on the cross? And I said, Jesus told us why in the form of a story, parable. He said there was a certain landowner who went to establish a kingdom for himself.

And after putting things in order, he left. And the inhabitants then got together. And they said, we will not have this man reign over us.

And so, therefore, they crucified him. You know, he calls himself the king of the Jews. But he's not our king.

You know, we'd rather have Barabbas. And I said, this is what we do with the cross. You know, we come along.

Here's the left side of the cross whereby we're forgiven from sin. And we say, Jesus, I need you as my savior. I recognize there's no other way of eternal life, and so on and so forth.

And then we come to this side of the cross. And we put up our hand, basically. And we say, we will not have you reign over us.

You know, and I said, that's crazy. You know, you can't accept him as your savior and deny him as your lord or your king. And yet he came to be king.

The whole New Testament is about a kingdom. You can't have a kingdom without a king. And you can't have a king without being in submission to that king.

If we're in rebellion against that king, then, boy, it's dangerous ground, you know. So, you know, it comes back again to me. Lordship, it's not an optional thing.

Paul says, I die daily. And there's two ways of looking at that. I die daily in the sense of peril.

You know, he was in, obviously, with these travels, he could die any time. But I think there's a dying daily in the sense of once again dying to self. For instance, let's say I give every penny away.

And I can say, you know, I don't have a penny left, and so on. And then, you know, I live that way for a year. And I can say, listen, I've died to materialism, and so on and so forth.

I don't have a penny to my name. And then, all of a sudden, a rich aunt dies. And all of a sudden, I've got a million dollars.

I've got to die all over again now, you know. So I think there's a dying daily in the sense that new things come along. I'm presented with a job offer.

But God's been speaking to me about, you know, continuing my Bible school. And my father calls, who owns a business, and says, Son, you know, I really would like you back here to, you know, take over the position. I've never been offered this position before.

I've got to die to that now. You know, in other words, there's a dying daily, I think, as we just go along and deny ourselves. You know, even when sin is presented to us, you know, we die to that thing, a temptation.

You know, I think we've fallen in love with the Lord when we realize His Word really is true. And that if we give up everything, we gain everything. And so, you know, it's looking beyond.

It's like, you know, God says, if you give me this, I'll give you that. And when you realize, listen, if I hold on to these things, I'm really not going to find life. Jesus is not a killjoy, you know.

Blessed is the man, you know, that does this and that. All the blessings. I came across a book, and I'll have to find it again, that defined the word blessing as not just being happy.

They said the root word is a word, I think it's asher in the Hebrew. And it has behind it a sense of right orientation. So let's suppose I'm lost in the woods.

It's, you know, it's fall. It's plummeting to 20 degrees at night or maybe winter. And I'm totally lost.

And the sun's beginning to set. And I think, you know, I could freeze to death tonight. You know, it could very easily snow.

Or there's a, you know, frost warning or whatever, and I don't have a coat on. And then all of a sudden I come across the trail that I recognize. I've got the right orientation.

I'm going to be one happy camper. You know, I'm going to make it out of here alive. That's really the word blessing, to have the right orientation.

And I think when we realize that Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And I am come that you might have life. Once we get rightly orientated to that, we do find true happiness.

Because that's what we were created for. You know, I use, I think, you know, you'll remember in my book, the crazy illustration of me going into a kitchen. And there is a man using a Stradivarius to stir the soup with.

After all, nice paddle shape. And he's stirring the soup. Now, if that Stradivarius could talk, it would say, there's got to be more to life than this.

And I recognize that Stradivarius. And I pay a supreme price for it. And I get that Stradivarius because I made it.

And I restring it and clean it up and so on. And I begin to play it. Then that Stradivarius is going to say, if it could speak, boy, this is what I was created for.

What I was doing before had absolutely no meaning. And so I think if we see the big picture, that Jesus Christ rescued us from this miry clay. And he wants to play us, if you like, because he created us for his glory.

And then when we're involved in the will of God, it doesn't mean there's not going to be trials and problems and so on. But the overall, you know, I delight to do thy will. There's a delight in knowing that you're in the will of God.

And, you know, you're not absolved. I mean, I flew to Houston on Saturday and got to Atlanta. The plane took off.

The engine caught on fire. Had to turn around and land. They put us after a while on another plane.

We taxied out. There was a smell of fuel. They pulled us to the side, brought some guys on.

They canceled that flight. They took us back again. They were going to put us on a third flight.

Then they canceled the flight. They put us up for the night. I got to my hotel to bed at 1.15. It was daylight savings, so it moved forward.

So it was 12.15, but it was 1.15 technically. I had to get up at 4 o'clock to be at the airport for a 6 o'clock flight in Atlanta. And then I got to Houston at 10.

I had to get my baggage, and I had to speak at the 11 o'clock service. So I went directly there with about three hours sleep, and I had to preach. So, I mean, those sort of things happen.

But the overall thing is I delight in knowing that I'm in the will of God. And so I think we fall in love with God knowing that his will is the very highest, the very best. It's like the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 8, isn't it, where God says, I led you through the wilderness, and I caused you to be hungry, and I caused you to be this, but to do good for you in the end.

In other words, the end is what really matters. And the ultimate end is when we stand before God, and he says, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, rather than, you know, you wasted your life. 1 Corinthians is at 3, where it says, you know, be careful how you build.

Every man's work will be tested as to what sort it is. And we will receive a reward. And it isn't a test as to whether we're saved or not.

That's purely by grace. But it is a test as to how, you know, what sort of rank we're going to have, so to speak, in heaven, what sort of reward we're going to have in heaven. Not everybody's going to be equal in heaven.

There'll be those who'll be rulers over 5 cities or 10 cities or whatever, and so on, because they are going to be rewarded according to the works. And I think there's a lot of Christians that, you know, will make it to heaven. There's no doubt about that.

But they will not have the reward. Revelation talks about beware of, forget the exact quote, lest any man take your crown. And I think, you know, one of the tragedies of heaven, if there is a tragedy in that sense, is that, you know, you'll see somebody that is wearing a crown or has a position of authority, and you think, I could have had that, but I did not respond to the call of God.

And therefore, he asked somebody else to go to Africa, China, whatever, and that man is literally wearing the crown that I could have had. He's got the position that I could have had, you know. That's going to be the heartache of heaven in one sense.

You know, the realization, look, I blew it in this life. I got saved, but I live selfishly instead of for the glory of God. And yet Paul says, you know, I finished the course.

There's a crown. There's a prize. And he says in 1 Corinthians 9, run in such a way that you may win.

And so, you know, I think if we really understand that, then there comes that joy of knowing, Lord, I'm serving you. I'm doing what I can. And it doesn't merit us our forgiveness.

That's purely by grace. But it does, you know, give us a remuneration. Justification is by faith.

Remuneration is by works. Well, you know, I mean, the Bible is somewhat silent on, you know, what we're going to do in heaven a million years from now. Obviously, you and I are still going to be alive.

And what we'll be doing, I don't think we'll just be sitting there playing cards, you know. But at the same time, there are degrees of heaven and hell. The Bible says that the master that did his will will be...one will be beaten with few stripes.

One will be beaten with many stripes. So even hell, because God is God of justice, Hitler's, you know, reward will be far greater. I say reward.

It's not really a punishment. It will be far greater than somebody that maybe lived a godly life but never accepted Christ because shall not the judge of all the earth do right? On the other hand, heaven also has a reward system. And the Bible talks about, you know, the ruler over so many cities and so on.

And I think it's brought out the best in 1 Corinthians where Paul says, you know, I laid the foundation. The foundation is Christ. But then we are responsible for building on it.

And I think there's two levels of repentance in the Bible. There's repentance from dead works which are, to me, things that do not benefit the kingdom of God. And then there's repentance...sorry, there's repentance from sin, I should say.

And then there's repentance from dead works. You know, what am I involved in that's dead? It's unproductive. It's not beneficial to the kingdom.

It's not advancing the kingdom of God. Because the Bible says once we're saved, we're saved for good works. Now, good works don't save us.

But once we are saved, we're saved for good works. And so we need to be careful how we build. Paul says, I delight to do thy will, O God.

Now, you mentioned that we're all in Christ and we all are in Christ as far as our conversion, salvation experience is concerned. But then on top of that, there seems to be a reward system, the ultimate reward, I'm sure, for all of us. It's just the sheer joy of knowing that we're forgiven and that Christ is in us and we'll see him face to face and so on.

But then there has to be some sort of structure in heaven. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God's will is done there.

There will be degrees. I think there are degrees of angels and archangels and cherubims and seraphims and different orders, which I don't understand all of that. But there will be a reward system also.

And we can attain to that by doing the will of God. But God is the one that ultimately is the supreme judge. And we will not on that day be able to argue with him and say, but, but, but, but.

We'll know that this is a right judgment that he gives us. So there's two judgments. My father had an amazing message on the judgment seat of Christ.

And there's the judgment for sinners, but there's also the judgment for believers. And that judgment for believers, again, does not determine whether we go to heaven or hell. That's already determined.

We've already accepted Christ. But it does judge us on our reward. I never, you know, tried to add it up.

But I've heard over and over that Jesus talked more about hell than did about heaven. And made it very clear, you know, that we are, in John the Baptist, we're to flee from the wrath to come. And the Bible says that, you know, there is a judgment and it is eternal.

Eternal separation, eternal damnation. Why is there a hell? Why do we lock people up for the greater good? You know, you can say, oh, well, the head of the police department in Siloam Springs is not a very nice man. He locked up a murderer this week.

You say, man, I'm glad he did lock up a murderer this week. Because look at the carnage that that guy could do if he wasn't locked up. You know, and so God in his infinite mercy and judgment, you know, has established hell for the well-being of the universe, if you like.

And ultimately the devil and everybody else is going to be placed there. And it is a loving thing to do. It may sound unkind for the people.

I think Phinney defined love as doing the highest good for the greater number of people. And so in society, for the greater good, we lock people up or we give them the death penalty. And so on a larger scale, I would put it that way, you know, with God.

Now, there's a lot of teaching these days that, you know, is surfacing now. I think Rob Bell, the emergent church leader that just put out a book. I haven't read it.

I've read a little bit of a blurb on it where he's basically talking about ultimate reconciliation. How can a God of love, you know, send people to hell? You know, that's like saying, you know, how can a surgeon cut out cancer? Well, if he didn't, he'd be an idiot, you know. He's got to hate the thing that's caused all the destruction.

And he's made every provision whereby people can be saved. It's not like they don't have a chance. Now you say, well, what about the heathen in Africa and so on and so forth? Well, you know, ultimately I'm going to leave that to God.

The Bible says they're going to be without excuse. So somewhere, you know, they've had an opportunity of some type and shout at the judge of all the earth to write. I know this, that there's not going to be one single individual that will ever point a finger of accusation against God and say you were unjust.

He will do that which is just. But, you know, if you love something, you have to hate the opposite of it. And God hates sin, and he has made it clear to man that if you don't repent, you will perish.

But there is this ultimate reconciliation that's gaining ground these days. Hannah Hernand way back who wrote the famous book Hinds Feet on High Places. She had such an overwhelming revelation of the love of God that she could not comprehend that God would send people to hell.

Because she, you know, love to her was more of a sort of romantic, I guess, you know, God would never hurt a fleece type thing. But genuine love also has to hate. You know, if I love my wife, I've got to hate somebody that's trying to kill her or I hate the disease that she's got.

I hate, you know, some molester or whatever, you know. I express my love. I express my love for a child by, you know, destroying the dog that's, you know, the pit bull that's got my child by the throat type thing, you know.

And God the same way. Do you believe in God's love? I don't know. I mean, I've never done a, you know, a real thorough study on that.

I mean, I suppose anything's a possibility. But certainly, you know, I don't want to convey in any sort of presentation of the gospel that it's just going to be like a short little thing like, you know, a visit to the dentist. It may cause you a little bit of pain and that's all over, you know, because it does imply forever and ever and ever.

I also think there's a reason for hell and that is to stop everything from happening all over again. In other words, in a perfect heaven, Lucifer fell. There was no devil that tempted him.

There was no sin and so on and so forth. So what in heaven is going to keep another rebellion from happening? Maybe the fact that we can look into hell and see as the rich man of Lazarus. He could see into, you know, the guy in hell could see into heaven, but maybe the reverse.

And I think, boy, these are the consequences. Or that that's one. The other is in Revelation.

It says we saw the lamb as though slain. Imagine if in heaven, Jesus, instead of this beautiful being, in that sense, still has all that marred image. And every time we look on him, we see, you know, like a person that's been through a fire and his face is disfigured.

And you think, man, every time I see that guy, I'm reminded that that's what it cost him to get me out of that burning fire. Because it says we'll look on him whom we've pierced. So there's some sort of carryover, if you like, that Jesus will bear.

So one of those, and maybe both of those, but some reason why we don't start a rebellion in heaven. Some angel shimmers up to us and says, why don't we start our own little kingdom? You know, we're talking about the fact that when Jesus died, he bought us. One of my favorite scriptures, in fact, my life scripture, is 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20.

Do you not know your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and you are not your own? You have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body. You'll notice the emphasis in that verse is our body, not our sin.

You are not your own. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Glorify God in your body.

And you were bought with a price, not your sin. So the thing that God was after on the cross was me. And then I normally take them at the end of my message to 1 Peter 2, verse 1, where it says that false teachers will arise in the last days.

Well, it says false prophets have arisen, past tense. And it says, and false teachers will arise, meaning future. And it's a prophetic statement to me, to the church.

Look out for false teachers. It says these false teachers will come in secretly. And I share in my book how when something is done secretly, you're totally unaware of it.

My wife and I were missionaries in New Guinea with YWAM in the early 70s, 71, 2, and 3. And we had some intruders that came into the house one night. And they came in secretly. We had no idea as to what had happened until it was too late.

And the Bible says these teachers will come in secretly into the church. And then it says, even, meaning going to this extreme, they will deny the Master who bought them. Not the Savior who forgave them, but the Master who bought them.

The word in the Greek there is the word despot. It's the strongest use of the word Lord or Master. And I said, you know, this is how now the pendulum has swung.

We have a Christianity that accepts Jesus as Savior, but denies him as Master. And the Bible in Hebrews talks about drifting. And I said, this is how far we've drifted now in the original message of the gospel to the sort of new message of the gospel that eradicates completely lordship and just says you can accept Christ as Savior.

We've denied the Master. And that's when I also tied in with that verse where Jesus said, we will not have this man reign over us. We deny him.

We say we don't want this king. We want to establish our own little kingdom and do our own thing.

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