

Purpose of the Cross

by David Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the purpose of the cross and its relation to our spiritual maturity and our relationship with God.

Duration: 1:18:45

Scripture: 1 John 2:12

Topics: "Cross of Christ", "Surrender to God", "Purpose of the Cross"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the profound purpose of the cross, urging believers to understand that Jesus died not just for personal salvation but to reclaim a people for God. He critiques the selfish interpretations of the atonement, highlighting that true faith involves surrendering one's life to God's will and purpose. Ravenhill illustrates the need for spiritual maturity, moving from a self-centered faith to one that recognizes our lives are meant to glorify God. He calls for a radical re-evaluation of how we view our relationship with Christ, emphasizing that we are not our own but have been bought with a price. The sermon challenges listeners to fully commit their lives to God, seeking His direction and purpose.

Transcript

Let's look to the Lord in prayer again, shall we? Father, once again we bow before you tonight. Lord, we recognize again that apart from you we can do nothing. Father, we present to you this Word that came by revelation and inspiration the first time, and we ask that, Lord, again tonight, that, Lord, you would quicken it, make it alive, let it be that which would impart life to us, that would challenge us, that would change us.

Father, we give us a sense of destiny, a sense of purpose. So, Father, we commit this meeting to you. Have your way, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. I want to challenge you tonight concerning the cross. If there's one area that I believe needs to be adjusted in the church, it's our understanding as to why Jesus Christ died.

And I'm going to be looking at a number of scriptures, and I trust that you'll be able to follow along and turn with me to these various passages, because I'm going to, for a little while, sort of excavate. How many of you know that the taller the building, the greater the excavation, the greater the foundation? And I'm convinced that so many Christians have a wrong foundation in their life concerning why Jesus Christ died. In other words, it gets to the very basic essence of what Christianity is all about.

Most of us really don't understand it. We have a very selfish interpretation of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. And we need to correct that, and I trust tonight, as we look at these scriptures together, that God will bring again an understanding to you as to why He sent His Son, what the death of Jesus Christ was all about.

I want to begin in 1 John, the epistle of John. 1 John 2, and reading from verse 12. And he says, I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have forgiven you for His name's sake.

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him that is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him that is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. John is addressing here three levels of spiritual maturity in the church.

He is not writing to the children. He's not writing to the youth department. He's not writing to the over 50s.

He's addressing three levels of spiritual maturity. He begins by saying, I write to you, little children. We begin the natural life as children.

We begin the spiritual life as children. The wonderful thing about a child in the natural is, a child has no past. We talk about sleeping like a baby.

The reason a baby sleeps so well, again, he's not tossing and turning, wishing he hadn't done this and that and the other thing, and hoping that his past won't catch up with him. He's got a clear conscience. And thank God that as children, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin.

And so John says, I write to you, children, because your sins are being forgiven. It's a whole new beginning. And if I were to take one word to describe children, it would be the word regeneration.

Regeneration. I'm not using the word salvation, because the word salvation is an all-inclusive term that deals with the moment you get saved to your ultimate glorification. But the word regeneration, we've been regenerated by the Spirit of God.

We've been born again. We've been saved. And then he goes on to say, I've written to you, young men, because you've overcome the evil one.

And then he elaborates again on that in verse 14. I've written to you, young men, because you are strong. The Word of God abides in you, and you've overcome the evil one.

If I were to use a word there, it would be the word maturation, because we begin to grow, we begin to develop. And once we begin to develop spiritually, we realize that we have an adversary, the devil, who is out to, again, undermine, out to attack, out to discourage. And the only way that we can successfully stand against him, again, is to be strong.

How do we become strong? We become strong by, again, reading the Word of God and abiding in the Word of God. And then once we are strong, we can overcome. Again, if I were to put that in a more logical sequence, I would put it this way.

I write unto you, young men, because the Word of God abides in you. Because the Word of God abides in you, you're strong. Because you are strong, you can overcome the evil one.

And then he goes on to speak to the fathers. And he says, I write to you, fathers, because you know him, that he's from the beginning. And the thing that has puzzled me about this portion of Scripture is the fact that he doesn't seem to say that much about fathers.

In other words, there seems to be a progression here. I write to you, children, your sins have forgiven you. He even says, and you know the father.

Notice there in, again, verse 12. I'm writing to you, little children, because your sins have forgiven you for his namesake. He goes on to say, in verse 13, I've written to you, children, because you know the father.

And what is the difference then between knowing the father and knowing him, that he's from the beginning? And this was the puzzlement to me. In other words, I thought John would have said, I write to you, children, your sins are forgiven, you know the father. I write to you, young men, you're strong, the Word of God abides in you, you've overcome the evil one.

And then the ultimate expression of maturity would have been something like, I write unto you, fathers, because you understand, you have all wisdom and all knowledge, and you exercise all the gifts of the Spirit, and you're men of character, you're men that understand the deep things of God, and so on and so forth. You're men that fast and pray, you're men of discipline. You know, something that has a measure of what I would consider real maturity about it.

And yet all he says is, I write to you, fathers, because you know him, that he's from the beginning. Again, what is the difference between knowing him, that he's from the beginning, and knowing the father? Well, I would suggest to you, that those of you who've got children, that the only reason you exist is for the children's sake. Isn't that right? You know, it's daddy do this, and daddy do that, and mommy do this, and mommy do that, and daddy take me here, and daddy do that.

In other words, I write to you, children, because you know the father. They know the father from a very selfish point of view. The father is there just to meet every whim, and every fancy, to meet every need, to protect them, to bless them, and so on.

And I'm not saying that those things are wrong, necessarily, but they are a sign of spiritual immaturity. Children, in one sense, are worthless. I take that in a right sense.

But, you know, they're a blessing, and we love them, and they're cuddly, and so on and so forth. But they're, in another sense, are useless. You know, if you're doing anything, they can't really help you.

They can't really be about the father's business, because they're immature. They can hardly talk. They can hardly walk.

They can't pick up an implement, and so on. Dad's busy doing something, laboring, changing a tire or something. The two-year-old is pretty worthless when it comes to changing tires, or painting the house, and so on.

And so, spiritually, the same thing is true. We need to grow up. And so, he says, I write to your fathers.

Because you know him, that he's from the beginning. I think the key word here is the word beginning. The beginning of things is so important.

You see, a father sees the beginning of things. In other words, he sees the big picture. I would use the word consummation.

The bringing together of everything. The tying together of everything. Fathers understand, again, the past and the future.

That's why the Bible says in Hebrews, that no chastening for the present seems joyous. Here is a child that's got out of line, and the father disciplines that child, and all the child feels is the immediate pain at that precise moment. But the father is looking beyond that moment, and he's doing something that is, hopefully, going to be a blessing to that child in the years to come.

And John, more than any other writer, talks about the beginning of things. He begins his epistle, what was from the beginning. He begins his gospel, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and so on.

The book of Revelation, he talks about the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, the ending, the one who is, the one who was, the one who is to come. And something like, I think it's 30 times, that John uses this word beginning, beginning, beginning. And we need to understand the beginning of things.

Let me just give you, for instance, an illustration of the importance of that. There was a time when Jesus was confronted by the scribes and the Pharisees, and they wanted to know where he stood on the issue of divorce. And there were two schools, one very liberal, you could divorce your wife for any reason, put on a few pounds, got a few wrinkles, you got rid of her, any reason whatsoever.

She snored, she burnt the toast, you know, you just didn't like the way she was anymore, for any reason at all. That was one very liberal school. The other was very conservative.

And so they come to Jesus and say, well, you know, basically, Master, where do you stand in this debate? And then to back up their claims, they said, even Moses gave us permission to divorce our wives. And Jesus takes it out of the present situation, and he goes back to the beginning, and he says, in the beginning it was not so. You see, that is the value, the beginning of things.

We need to understand the beginning of things. And when it comes to the cross, we need to understand the beginning of things, otherwise we will never understand the cross, because the cross is God's answer to man's problem. The cross is God's remedy for man's rebellion, man's sin.

But we need to know what was in the mind of God from the beginning. In other words, what was man like before there was sin, before there was rebellion? Because the cross answers to that. The cross is to bring us back to a place of restoration.

When my wife and I first went to New Zealand, many years ago now, we've actually lived in New Zealand three times, over, you know, periods of years. But we first went there in 1966. And the first thing that I was amazed about in New Zealand was the amount of old cars.

I'm not talking about old bombs, there were a lot of those, but old vintage cars. And for a nation of three million people, it's got some of the best collection of old cars that I've ever seen. And every once in a

while, there's one of these vintage car rallies, and you see all these beautiful old cars, immaculately restored, going down the street of some town or city.

And these cars, again, going back to the 20s and 30s, American cars, British cars, Rolls-Royces and Bentleys and Packards and Cadillacs and so on, Fords. And I've often stood there watching these cars go by, sort of drooling, thinking, wouldn't it be great to have one of those? But those cars have been restored. Let's suppose that I want to restore one of those cars.

Let's say that Frank and I share a similar interest, and we live close by, and he says to me one day, he says, Dave, I found the car we've been looking for. It's out here in the backside of the desert here. And, you know, it's a 1925 Ford.

And I think we can get it for a song, because it's been here in Arizona. You know, it hasn't suffered too much of a rust problem. It's got a few parts missing, but, you know, I'm sure we can get it.

We can restore it. So we go, we get the car, and sure enough, the body is intact. The wheels have gone.

Headlights are missing. The bumper's missing, but the engine's intact, and most of the body's in reasonable shape. And we begin to restore that car.

Now, the problem is that I was not around in 1925, and I don't think Frank was. But we now have a problem. You see, neither one of us saw that car in its original condition.

And so we begin to restore it, and we, you know, rebuild the engine. We take all the rust off the body, give it an undercoat, and, you know, three or four coats of lacquer. And here is this car now.

It's beginning to, you know, take on a beautiful restoration. And I say to Frank, listen, we're not going to get very far unless we get some wheels. And he says, well, leave it to me.

And at the end of the day, he comes back from Goodyear or somewhere, and he's got these beautiful mag wheels, great big fat-soled tires. And we get them fitted on this car, thinking nothing much of it. And I say, Frank, we can't drive this thing at night unless we get some headlights.

He says, leave it to me. He goes down to, you know, the auto place, comes back with little square halogen headlights. We get those fitted on the car.

I say, Frank, we've now got just about everything we need. This car runs smoothly. It's beautiful.

But we need a bumper to protect our investment. By this time, we've spent hundreds of hours, thousands of dollars in restoring this car. He goes down to the wrecking yard.

He comes back with a great big sort of rubber monstrosity off a late model Cadillac. And we get this bumper fitted, and now the car is intact. It's got a bumper.

It's got wheels. It's got headlights. And we decide to take it out on its first trip.

And we're driving downtown, and here is this old man. He stands on the street corner. He sees us go by.

His eyes sort of bulge out of his head. And I say, Frank, slow down. Back up a little bit.

This man's obviously been overcome with nostalgia. And we pull up, and we're very proud of what we've done. I mean, we're convinced that this is the greatest 25 Ford you've ever seen.

And we say to the old man, well, what do you think of it? Our chest sort of bulging out there. Much to our dismay, he says, what is it? We say, how old are you? He says, well, I'll be 95 in a few days. We say, well, surely you recognize this 1925 Ford.

He shakes his head. He says, boys, you've got it all wrong. He says, that is not a 1925 Ford.

Some of it is. Some of it isn't. He begins to point out all the things that are wrong with that car.

Beginning with the tires. The tires should be about this wide. Instead of this wide.

Instead of mag wheels, should be wooden spoke wheels. Instead of those little square halogen headlights, should be great big round headlights. Instead of that great big rubber plastic bumper, it should be a little chrome strip.

Begins to tell us all the things that are wrong. You see, I think that illustrates what would happen if the apostle Paul, or some New Testament individual came back and looked at the average Christian today. And we sort of puff out our chests and say, Paul, glad to meet your brother.

And he says, who are you? I say, well, I'm a fellow believer. And he looks us over and he says, not according to my book. And he begins to point out again all the discrepancies and all the weaknesses.

They say, if we're going to restore that car to its original condition, we need to contact the manufacturer of that car. We need to ask him, listen, what was in your mind when you created that car? What did you envision? What was it going to look like? And he may send us, Ford Motor Company, a catalog of some sort with all the specifications. Send us a photograph and there we have something now to compare it to and say, boy, I guess it really doesn't look that much like it.

And so we need to go back to the book of Genesis. And we need to look at man before there was any sin, before there was any rebellion, before he lost his headlights and his wheels, so to speak, and see what was in the mind of God. You see, what we're going to do now, we're going to lay a foundation.

Because the cross is the means of restoration. But we need to know, what are we restoring it to? What was man like? What was the intention of God? What was the purpose of God when He created man? And in Genesis 2 and verse 15, it says, The Lord God took the man and He placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it. Now that may not say too much to you, but let me break it down for you.

First of all, the Lord God took the man. In other words, man when he was created was under the lordship of God. He was under the authority.

He was under the dominion. He was under the control, the rule of God. And God was able to take him.

The Bible doesn't say that man objected. The Bible doesn't say that man dug in his heels. That man resisted and said, God, I don't want to go your way.

I don't want to do what you want me to do. No, man was totally subservient to the will and the purpose of God. And so God took him and He says, this is what I want you to do.

I want you to live here. And this is what I want you to do here. I want you to do my will.

Now there are three words that you can summarize that verse with. The word submission, the word location, the word vocation. In other words, man was in total submission to God.

God was able to place him in the geographical place of His choosing, of God's choosing, not man. Man was never consulted. God says, this is where I want you, right here.

And this is what I want you to do. I want you to do my will, my bidding. I'm going to give you the exact details of what I want you to do with your life.

Now that was man, again, before there was any sin. Now I'm convinced that God is wanting to restore us to those three areas. Where God can reach into your life and my life at any given time without any objection on our part.

Where we are totally and completely submissive to Him. Where He rules and reigns over our life in such a way that He can take us and He can place us in the geographical place of His choosing. And in that geographical place, reveal why He placed us there.

Now let's look at some other scriptures to substantiate all of this. In the book of Colossians. We're going to be jumping around a little bit tonight.

Colossians 1 and verse 16. Let's pause there. I trust you don't have a problem with that.

All things were created by God. He is the author, He is the finisher. He is the alpha, He is the omega.

The Bible says by faith we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God. He spoke them into being. And it doesn't worry me in the slightest if the earth is a hundred million years age or fifty million years of age or whatever.

I believe God can create something with vintage. After all, He created Adam with vintage. He created wine that had vintage.

At Cana of Galilee, why can't He create the earth with vintage? God is God. He can do whatever He wants. So that's no problem.

All things were created by Him. The problem is in all things were created for Him. Now it begins to get a little awkward, doesn't it? Because all of a sudden, while we can gladly acknowledge and recognize that He's the creator of all things, we don't want to know that we were created for Him.

You see, you and I exist for one reason and one reason alone, we exist for God. We were created by Him, but we also were created for Him. Over into the book of Revelation.

Revelation chapter 4, verse 11. Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou didst create all things. Again, no problem.

He created all things. And because of Thy will, they existed and were created. And King James says, and for Thy pleasure, they were created.

Notice, He is the creator of all things, but everything was created for His will and His purpose. So again, we need to understand that this applies to each one of us. You were created by God, but you were

created for His will, for His pleasure.

Over in the book of Hebrews. Again, all these verses are just simply saying the same thing in one way or another. Hebrews chapter 2, verse 10.

For it was fitting for Him, speaking of Christ, for whom are all things and through whom are all things. Now, if we put this in the order of the other verses, we'd read it this way. For it was fitting for Him, through whom are all things.

In other words, everything came into being through Him, and for whom are all things. Again, keep these things in your mind right now as we lay this foundation. That God created the heavens and the earth, but He created it for Himself.

Romans 11, 32. For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever.

Amen. Notice, from Him, through Him, to Him are all things. Everything originated from God.

Everything is held together by God. In Him we live, we move, we have our being. Therefore, everything should terminate with God.

It should belong to God. From Him, through Him, and to Him are all things. That includes you, that includes me.

This is an excellent verse of scripture to judge doctrine by. Is it from God? Is it through God? Does it go back to God? Take the prosperity message. Is it from God? Yes.

Riches and honor come from the Lord. Is it through God? Yes. He's blessed us in Jesus Christ with every spiritual blessing, every material blessing in one sense.

Is it to God? Most of the time, no. It terminates in man. That's it.

In other words, if it doesn't ultimately go back to God, there's something wrong with the presentation of that doctrine. It may be based in the Word of God, but it has to ultimately go back to God. That's why the Bible says that if you sow seed, what happens? You get more seed.

The Bible says you get more seed in order to what? Sow. Not in order to keep. But the evangelist tells you that if you give to my ministry, God will give you.

If you give \$100, God will give you \$1,000. And that's where it stops. And it's a very selfish presentation.

He doesn't say, he'll give you \$1,000 worth of seed to sow again so that you get a million. And he appeals to our selfishness. My father used to tell a story, if I can digress for a minute, because I enjoy it.

The man that was standing up testifying, he was a multimillionaire. And he said it all began when I was a young boy during the years of the Depression. And he said I'd saved up to buy a bicycle.

I had \$5 in my pocket. I went to church, just a little boy. And he said there was a missionary there talking about the needs of the mission field.

And he was taking an offering. He said he kept on pleading for money. And he said I reached into my pocket.

I didn't really want to give up, you know, the chances of having a new bicycle. But he said I took out \$0.25 and put it in the offering. And the missionary kept asking.

He said I took out another \$0.25, put it in the offering, and then another \$0.25. He said ultimately, he said, you know, I was so convicted. I just reached in. I took all the change.

He said I put every penny in the offering. And he says as a result of giving everything to God, he said I am now a multimillionaire. Of course, the place erupted in applause.

You can imagine they were all excited. And the excitement sort of died down. There was a little old lady on the front row that wasn't as impressed as everybody else.

And in a whisper that everybody could hear, she said, I dare you to do it again. You see, really that's what it's all about. It's from Him.

It's through Him. But does it go to Him? And Paul goes right on to say, therefore, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice. You see, there's no chapter division.

These were put in by man. The inspiration, again, is all one continuous thought. Paul is laying a foundation.

Everything comes from God. Romans. He's writing to the church in Rome.

Everything is held together by Him. Therefore, everything belongs to Him. Therefore, I beseech you, brethren, give back to God that which is from Him, that which is through Him.

Therefore, that which is to Him. 1 Corinthians 8. And verse 6. Yet for us, he says, there is but one God, the Father. From whom are all things.

And we exist for Him. One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. And we exist through Him.

Notice from, through, and for. Let me read again. For us, there is but one God, the Father.

From whom are all things. Paul says everything originates from God. Everything derives its existence from God.

And we exist, he says, for Him. The only reason we exist is for Him. And there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.

And we exist through Him. So here again, from Him, through Him, and for Him, or to Him, are all things. Now, having laid that foundation, we have now gone back to the beginning.

We've gotten, if you like, an understanding of the mind of God. When He created man. Before, again, there was sin.

Before, there was rebellion. This is God's intention, all laid out very, very clearly in these verses. All substantiating the same thing.

That God created man for Himself. Everything was created for Him. But something went wrong.

Man chose to rebel against God. Man chose to live independently. Man chose to live a selfish life.

It became me and mine. I'll do it my way. The Bible summarizes man's condition in Isaiah 53 and verse 6. And it says, all we like sheep.

Not some of us, all of us like sheep. I've gone astray. We've turned everyone to His own way.

As opposed to what? God's way. In other words, we've forsaken God. We've forsaken serving Him, loving Him, being subject to Him.

And we've said, listen, I'll do my own thing. Now, when Jesus challenged people to follow Him, He dealt with the issue of selfishness. He says, if any man come after Me, let him what? Die to self.

His selfishness. His own way of doing things. Take up his cross, again the cross of means of death, and let him once again turn from his own way and let him follow Me.

In other words, Jesus Christ is looking for followers. He wants to lead. He wants to direct.

He wants to be in charge. He wants to take control. And He says, in order for Me to be in control, you've got to die to self-control.

You've got to die to your own plans, your own desires. You've got to turn from the way in which you're going. And you've got to be prepared now to follow Me.

I'm in charge. I'm going to lead. Now, notice, if any man would come after Me.

That implies, again, every single believer has to come to that place of dying. Dying to self, dying to your own plans. And now we become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the problem is, from the moment you and I are born, self occupies the throne of our life. And we learn, don't we? Even in the cradle. To begin to get our own way.

Kids have got, you know, different types of cries. One is just a sort of a tantrum. Mother comes in, running in, picks him up and so on.

And he learns, or she learns, to manipulate and control. We go through life, basically, wanting to satisfy ourselves. The reason we cheat, the reason we commit adultery, the reason we do what we do, steal and so on, is to gratify ourselves.

Self is always in control. And so we find it hard to die to self. Now the problem is, because we're all selfish, when we hear about the cross, do we have a cross? We do have a cross.

Good, it's an old rugged one instead of a modern plastic one. But anyway. Looks a little more genuine.

But you see, we look at the cross, and we look at the cross selfishly. And we look at the cross and we say, what did Jesus Christ do for me? What can I get out of it? What benefit can I derive from the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ? And out of that comes this teaching. Jesus Christ suffered on the cross in order to take away my sin.

So that when I die, I'll go to heaven. I'll have a free ticket, as my father used to say, to the marriage supper of the Lamb, life everlasting, and all the goodies and everything else. You know, what an incredible deal.

How can I refuse? I escape the flames of hell, eternal punishment. I become a child of God. I have peace, joy, happiness, and so on and so forth.

Now, obviously, there is a measure of truth to that. But that is not the real reason that Jesus Christ died. Now let's look at some Scriptures, and before I give them, let me use another illustration.

Let's suppose that my wife and I have only been married for a year. And let's suppose that when we started our married life together, we had a number of debts. And now we're at the end of our first year, and we've paid off our debts.

We've also, because of both working hard, we've accumulated \$1,000. And because we've been in debt and we've wanted to get out of debt, we've forgone buying a car. We've been dependent upon others picking us up and taking us places.

And I've been in a carpool to get to work or whatever. And it's getting to a place where it's getting embarrassing. And I say to my wife one day, Darling, you know, we need to buy a car.

I don't want to call the Browns anymore, and we called the Smiths last week. And, you know, I'm getting embarrassed about constantly calling people. After all, we've now got \$1,000.

Let's go buy a car. And she says, Well, I'm in agreement. And so I say, You pray and I'll go looking for a car.

And so I go out and I scour all the, you know, various car yards. You don't get much for \$1,000, but I come across this car that, you know, the engine sounds good, and I buy it. Now let's also assume that my wife and I have established a reputation in the area where we live as being Mr. and Mrs. Clean.

In other words, everything about our house is immaculate. The windows are immaculate. The lawn is beautifully manicured.

Everything is spotless. The drive is always swept, and leaves always picked up, and so on and so forth. And here I buy this car.

Now it's 15 years old. It's filthy. It's got a lot of stains on it, a lot of mud and grease and grime and so on.

And I drive this car home, and I immediately drive it around to the back of the house, and I start washing the car. And I spend two or three hours washing the car. I cut and I polish it.

I restore the paint to its former luster. It begins to glow again. You know, I blacken the tires.

I do all the chrome work. I shampoo the rugs inside. I Windex the windows.

I armor all the dash. You know, the car now is sparkling. I mean, you can run your finger anywhere on that car.

There's not a trace of dirt. I've taken all the solvents, and I've removed all the tar and everything else. And here it is, this beautiful, shining car.

And I walk into the house with the contents of the vacuum cleaner in one hand, a great, big, huge pile of dust and stuff that I vacuumed out of the car. And in the other hand, I've got a pile of filthy rags and a bucket of absolutely filthy water. And I call my wife from prayer, and I say, Darling, quick, come.

And there on the kitchen table, I spread out all this garbage, and I said, Isn't this incredible what we got for \$1,000? \$1,000. Now, obviously, she is going to be upset that we have taken our life savings, all that we have made over the course of the last year, all of our hard work, and what do we get for it? The very thing that both of us hate. You see, we've got a reputation.

We're known as Mr. and Mrs. Clean in the community. And here is all this filth. And so, obviously, my wife is upset about it.

Now, obviously, that doesn't make sense, does it? Nobody in their right mind goes out, spends \$1,000 to accumulate something that they don't want. You see, the reason for buying the car was not because I had an interest in the dirt of the car. The reason for buying the car was I had an interest in the car.

It was the car that I was after. That was the real object of my payment. But because I have a reputation to uphold, because I am Mr. Clean or Mr. Righteous, Mr. Holy in the terms of God's nature, I have to bring that car up to the same standard because it's going to be an extension of who I am.

It is going to represent me. Therefore, it has to be clean like the rest of the house and everything else that I have to do with. And so I clean that car, again, because it is going to be an extension of who I am.

But my object of payment, again, was the car and not the dirt. That is a big difference, isn't it? You see, we're so used to giving God the garbage. We're so used to sort of going through the car wash, if I can be as crude as to say that the cross is a car wash, a sin wash.

And we sort of go through the sin wash and we get our lives cleaned up, but we keep on driving and we're very much in control. And we say, boy, it feels good to be clean. Man, I am so glad to have all that garbage taken away.

I was embarrassed, you know. Now let's look at some scriptures, because I know you're looking at me like, I knew this guy after the third night would throw in some heresy. Romans chapter 14, even Moses would get more in here.

All these scriptures that we're going to look at deal with the cross. And over a number of years now, when I see the cross, I look at it again from God's perspective. And it says in verse 7 of Romans chapter 14, For no one lives for himself, and no one dies for himself.

If we live, we live for the Lord. If we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Now notice who you belong to, would you please? Whether we live or die, and some of you are almost dead, but, you know, the rest of you, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. Now, verse 9, For to this end, or for this reason, Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why did He die? To establish His Lordship.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Sounds like the verse we looked at back in Genesis 2, verse 15. The Lord God took the man. Not that He might be Savior of the dead and the living.

Now, obviously, that's implied and involved in it. But that He might be Lord of the dead and the living. We come under His authority.

We come under His domain. We come under His rule. Titus chapter 2. Titus 2. And verse 14.

Who gave Himself for us. Speaking of the cross. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed.

Let's stop there. There are two sides to the cross. There is man's side, there is God's side.

Man's side is presented here in the first portion of this verse. He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us or free us from every lawless deed, every sinful thing that you and I have ever done. He has redeemed us from that.

He has forgiven us. He has cleansed us from every single thing. That is man's side.

We do become a child of God. We are forgiven. Everything is buried in the sea of God's forgetfulness.

But it doesn't stop there because there is also God's side. In other words, God gets something out of the cross as well. Man is not the only one that benefits.

So what does He say? He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession. You see, man is forgiven his sin but God gets the people. In other words, we go through the car wash and we get the dirt taken off.

But God claims the car. See how clear that is? Again, let me read it again. These are so important, these scriptures.

He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession. In other words, when Jesus Christ suffered on the cross, He had in mind a people for Himself. Why? Because He created a people for Himself in the beginning.

All things were created by Him. All things were created for Him. Therefore, He went to redeem for Himself a people for Himself.

2 Corinthians 5.15 Let me suggest to you that if you want one single verse of Scripture in the Bible that ties together, in my understanding, the purpose of the cross, this is the best one. It's time we gave John 3.16 a little bit of a rest because the word believed today doesn't really mean what the Bible had in mind. I used to work with Youth with a Mission, YWAM.

For seven years, I've knocked on doors across America from Chinatown in San Francisco to Halifax in Nova Scotia to the South Pacific, to the Caribbean. Grass huts and mansions. And every time you knock on a door and introduce yourself along with your partner and so on and say we're here to just share with you about the love of God and so on and so forth.

The door is politely closed many times in your face. Who do you think I am? A heathen or something? I believe in God. And they no more believe in God in the Biblical sense than the man in the moon.

Anyway, here's a good verse to change. From John 3.16 to 2 Corinthians 5.15. He died for all. Again, notice it's dealing with the cross.

He died for everyone or died for all that they who live should no longer live for themselves. But for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Now notice, He did die on our behalf.

But He also died that we who live should no longer live for ourselves. If we're not living for self, who are we living for? For Him who died and rose again on our behalf. In other words, the cross is to revolutionize the reason that we live.

It's to change our whole purpose. It's to change our destiny. It's to change our outlook in life.

Everything we do, the moment we wake up in the morning to the moment we go to bed at night should be lived again to the glory of God. Whatever you do, word or deed, do all to the glory of God. Revelation 5 and verse 9. And they sang a new song saying, Worthy art thou to take the book and to break its seals, for thou was slain.

Now obviously it's referring to Lord Jesus Christ, the context, talking about the lamb. Verse 6. And it says the lamb was slain. The Lord Jesus Christ died, in other words.

For thou was slain and it's purchased for God with thy blood sins. My Bible doesn't say that. For thou was slain, you died Lord, and you purchased for God with your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation and thou has made them to be kings and priests to our God.

And notice why He died. He died to purchase something for God. Now can you imagine purchasing something for somebody? Especially for God.

But let's say that you have had somebody help you for the summer. Let's say you're building a house. Building the church next door.

And somebody's off work and so he donates his services to the pastor and he says, Pastor, you know I've got two months off and I'm an expert in electrical work. Could I help you? I said, Boy, could you ever. And so here he is two months.

He's there at 8 o'clock in the morning. He leaves at 5.30. He puts in a full day on Saturday and he has labored and labored and labored. And the pastor says to his wife, you know, we really need to get somebody, something for Fred.

You know, he has worked flat out here for two or three months, hour after hour. Hasn't asked for a single thing. I think we need to buy him something.

What do you think, honey? She says, Yep. What do you think we could get him? Well, I know one thing he hates. Now that doesn't make sense, does it? To reward somebody by giving him something he hates.

Now Jesus Christ went to buy something for God. And do you think he would buy him something that he hates? What does he hate? Sin. You see, he didn't go to buy sin.

He went to buy a people that were the creation of God. And so he purchased for God with his blood men from every tribe and tongue, people and nation. You see, there's a major shift here now in our theology, I hope.

You see, because all of a sudden now, this begins to deal with where we're at. What am I doing with my life? Have I honestly ever really given back to God that which is rightfully His? 1 Corinthians 6. While you're turning to this, let me give you just a brief testimony. I was raised in a Christian home.

Father was in the ministry ever since I was born. My father was a hellfire preacher. I felt the flames on more than one occasion of hell.

I knew there was a hell to shun at all costs and a heaven to gain. And I may, as a young man, I can't remember, as a little boy, may have given my life to the Lord, but during my teenage years, I had one goal. I had two brothers that were brilliant, and I was the one that struggled all the way through school.

My mother sat up with me by the hours at night and we sort of graduated together. But I had one ability that they didn't have. They had an intellectual ability.

I had a creative aspect to my life. I loved to draw. And I wanted to go into the field of graphics.

That was my goal. That was my object in life. My purpose.

And somehow, don't ask me how, intuitively I guess, I knew that God was after more than my sin. And so from the age of about 13 or 14 until the age of 18, when I surrendered my life to the Lord, there was a battle that went on. I can honestly say, hundreds of times, literally shaken under conviction of sin.

It didn't matter who was preaching. When the altar call was given and the song was sung, the final song, and I was standing there holding a hymn book, you know, I would literally just tremble, knowing that God was wanting to call me to Himself and yet refusing to go. Not because I didn't want to have peace with God.

I longed to have peace with God. I knew my condition. I knew that if I were to die, I would immediately go into a Christless eternity.

That would have been made very real to me. But the issue was over lordship. I wanted Jesus Christ on my terms.

I wanted Him to put me through the car wash. I wanted Him to cleanse me. I wanted to be able to sleep at night.

I wanted to be free from the past. But I did not want to be controlled by anybody else than myself. I did not want to give to God that which He was really after.

And so for years, from the age of 14 to 18, I battled with that issue. Again, I had plans of my own. I knew where I wanted to go, what I wanted to do with my life.

And finally, at the age of 18, I surrendered to the Lord and I came and I knelt at the altar. My prayer was something like this, Lord, I not only confess my sin to you and ask you to cleanse me and forgive you, but I give you my life. All that I am, all that I have, I lay it at your feet.

Whatever you can do with me, Lord, from this moment on, I'm yours. And this verse became very real to me in 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own, for you have been bought with a price? And notice again, speaking of the death of Christ, speaking of the atonement, speaking of the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ, He bought us.

He says, you are not your own, you've been purchased. I purchased you. When I died, I paid the price for you.

Not just your sin, it was you as after. I didn't want to just wash you and cleanse you and send you on your merry way. I wanted to redeem you for myself.

And you're not your own, David. You're mine. And I would say on the authority of the Word of God tonight, you are not your own.

You're bought with a price. You belong to somebody else. Now you can see how we veered off in the presentation of the Gospel today.

We've Americanized it. We've made it very selfish, very appealing to the flesh. We've said, listen, you can get rid of your sin.

You can still go to heaven. Still have all the benefits. And yet at the same time, you can do your own thing.

Or now you've got to do your own thing in a religious way, of course. You can no longer cheat on your wife or cheat on the IRS. You can no longer do this and that and the other thing.

But as long as you sort of keep your nose clean, so to speak, you can basically do your own thing. Now let me illustrate this further to you. Let's take a young boy.

Here he is. He's 10 years of age. His name is Johnny.

And Johnny is representative of all of us because somewhere between the age of 10 and 20, hopefully, we make up our mind what we're going to do with our life. And Johnny's already determined that when I grow up, I'm going to be a physician. I'm going to be a surgeon.

Johnny's fascinated with dissecting frogs and earthworms. Can't wait to get a hold of his first cadaver and work his way up and so on. And so Johnny goes through school, gets into high school.

He's faced like all of us with all sorts of electives. He goes to the counselor. He says, listen, this is my goal in life.

I'm going to be a surgeon one day. What do I need to do? And the counselor very wisely says, well, you know, I don't think you need to do basket weaving. You know, possibly the sciences and so on and so forth points him in the right direction.

Johnny studies hard because he's got a vision for his life. He graduates, goes to college, does well in college, graduates, gets accepted in medical school, goes into medical school. He's now got six or eight tough years ahead of him.

And let's say during his third year of medical school that Johnny comes to a meeting. And Johnny's had a nominal sort of Christian background and he hears the presentation of the gospel. He's convicted of sin.

He comes forward. Some well-meaning believer goes up to him and says, Johnny, oh, what's your name? He says, my name's Johnny. He says, well, you know, my name's Fred.

How can I help you? He said, well, I realize I'm a sinner tonight. I want to accept Christ as my Savior. Well, are you prepared to acknowledge your sin? Yes, I am.

Are you prepared to confess your sin and forsake it? Yes, I am. Okay, say this prayer after me. Dear Lord Jesus, dear Lord Jesus, goes down the Romans road, shakes him by the hand, and the Bible says,

Johnny, you know, if we confess our sin, He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And you've confessed your sin, so therefore, it says what? He's forgiven me. Right. So you're forgiven.

Don't go by feelings. The Word of God declares it. You know, shakes him by the hand.

Welcome to the family of God, Johnny. And that's sort of the typical salvation message and acceptance. He's never told about Lordship.

He's never told that from this moment on that Jesus Christ died, that they who live should no longer live for themselves. And so Johnny goes back to medical school. He graduates.

And he is now, you know, the Christian doctor that all the churches know about in town and try and grab him because he's worth a lot of tithe. But you see, Johnny really never changed. Johnny determined what Johnny would do when Johnny was 10.

And all he did, he went through the car wash. But Johnny's still doing what he's always wanted to do. Oh, he's no longer cheating on his wife.

Again, he's no longer cheating on the IRS. He's no longer falsifying the records so he can get some more money from the HMO. You know, Johnny's sort of cleaned up his act, but Johnny really is still living very much for himself.

Johnny's goal again is to have that big house, that big car, that, you know, vacation spot, being able to take cruises and so on and so forth. Johnny's very much into selfishness. Oh, a sort of sanitized selfishness, but nevertheless selfish.

Now you see, all of us are like that. Somewhere between the age of 10 and 20, we decide I'll be a doctor, I'll be a lawyer, I'll be a nurse, I'll be a mechanic, I'll be a school teacher, you know. I'll do this, I'll do that, and then we get saved.

But the Bible says you're not your own. You have been bought with a price. You have no rights.

You see, when Paul wrote this, you could go down to any marketplace in any major city and you could buy yourself a slave. And after you bought that slave, you took that slave home and he was your property or she was your property. You could work that slave to death, starve that slave to death, feed that slave to death, love that slave to death, whatever you want to do with that slave, that slave was yours.

And that slave had only one thing to do, serve his master. When that slave waked up in the morning, he didn't say, boy, what an incredible day, I think I'll go fishing. Or maybe it was a nice cold morning like this morning and he sort of snuggles into his sleeping bag a little bit and says, well, I think I'll spend another couple of hours in here, it's too cold to get up right now.

No, he had no rights whatsoever. His whole life revolved around serving his master. Now when the Apostle Paul got saved on the road to Damascus as he's going along persecuting the church and all of a sudden he has a divine encounter with the living God, the very first words out of his mouth are these, Lord, what would you have me to do? You see, he understood something.

There was a genuine biblical salvation that took place. Lord, what are your plans? Not save you, thank you for taking away my sin, obviously that was true. He talks about that writing to Timothy, I was a blasphemer and a violent aggressor and a persecutor and so on and so forth.

He talks about the grace of God. You see, he also recognized that there was now somebody over his life that had total dominion over his life. And he says, Lord, he bows the knee in surrender.

And he says, what are your plans for my life? And the Lord says, get up, go into such and such town and I'll tell you exactly what I want you to do. I appeared unto you for this reason. You see, being a Christian is a lot more, there's a lot more to it than we have understood.

There's a cost. And see, we've taken the cost out of it. The disciples said, Lord, this is a hard thing, who can say these things? Jesus said, would you also go away? In other words, people left.

Lord, I don't want to do that. I don't want to take up my cross. They understood.

You see, the cross in those days was something you could see. I mean, you walk down the street, somebody was being crucified. They knew what the cross was all about.

To us, it's just a sort of a, almost a mythical thing. But they understood the cross. It meant death.

It meant that person wasn't going to be on the job. The next day. It meant that person was cut off from friend and family and everything else.

He died. There was no longer Johnny Brown. Johnny Brown died on the cross today.

And David Ravenhill has to die. And you have to die. We die to self.

We die to our own plans. The Bible says that we are to be raised up. What a newness of life.

Dead to self. Now, let's look at a couple of verses before we close. The book of Peter.

2 Peter, chapter 2 and verse 1. But false prophets arose among the people. Now, that's past tense. English grammar was not my forte in school.

But even I'm bright enough to know that that's past tense. False prophets arose. In other words, Peter says, we've had a problem with false prophets in the church.

Then he makes a prophetic statement. Just as there will be. Past or future.

Future. Just as there will be. False teachers among you.

Who will secretly introduce destructive heresies. Now, when something is done secretly, we are unaware of it. When my wife and I were missionaries in New Guinea, we'd had a number of break-ins on the street that we lived on.

In fact, there'd been one lady that'd been raped. And so we made sure that our house was locked. Our house was built up on stilts about 8 or 10 feet high.

Concrete pylons, partly for circulation with no air conditioning. Partly to keep us out of the range of snakes. And one morning I got up and I walked from our bedroom down the hallway into the living area.

And I noticed the front door was wide open. And I thought, that's unusual. I'm sure I locked it, but I proceeded to close it.

Nothing seemed to be out of place. I walked around into the kitchen and the kitchen door was open. Then I knew that something was wrong.

Somebody had cut through the mosquito netting, removed all the louvers from the windows, and came into the house. They'd gone into our bedroom where my wife and I were sleeping, reached under my wife's side of the bed, unplugged the tape recorder. We'd gone to bed listening to a tape.

Gone around to my side, removed my wallet, and a number of other items as we searched the house for missing. It was all done secretly. And it all took place without us even being aware that it happened.

And Peter is prophesying here. There is going to come a day, he says, when false teaching will come into the church. And it will come into the church secretly.

You won't even know it takes place. And this false teaching will be destructive. It will be damnable.

You can put in brackets if you like, to the purpose of God. And then notice what he says after that. Even.

In other words, he emphasizes the extreme to which this false teaching will go. Even denying the Master who bought them. False teaching.

Heresy. We've bought into it. It's now commonplace.

We don't regard it as false teaching. We regard it as the presentation of the Gospel. But the false teaching is that it will go to this extreme.

Even denying the Master who bought what? Them. Not their sin. The Master who bought them.

See, there's that subtle little thing. Jesus Christ, He died to take away your sin. And then we escape.

Because it's our sin that He wants. And so we come forward. God, take away my filthy mind.

Take away, you know, this tendency and that tendency. And this bondage and that bondage. And Lord, I've done this and I've done that.

And I've stolen and I've taken drugs. And, you know, I'm an alcoholic. And I've slept with different people.

And blah, blah, blah. And Lord, I'm just going to present all this garbage to you. And I want you to forgive me and cleanse me.

And He says, well, I'll do that. But that's not really what I'm interested in. See, the Bible says, as far as the east is from the west.

So far as He removed our transgressions from it. In other words, God's not interested in your sin. He doesn't collect sin.

He buries it in the depths of the sea, the Bible says. He's taken our sins. He's buried it in the depths of the sea.

Corrie ten Boone said, He's put up a little sign, no fishing. You see, what He's after is, He's after you. Even denying the Master who bought them.

Let me read another verse just to substantiate that. In the book of Jude, verses 3 and 4. Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you, appealing to you, to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. In other words, He says, listen, you know, I started off writing about our common salvation.

But He says, then I changed it because I feel that we need to contend earnestly for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed, those who long beforehand were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. We've got to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

And He says, there are those that now have crept in and they deny Him. The right. To rule their life.

See, denying the Master who bought them. Remember the parable that Jesus told about a certain man that came to establish a kingdom and he gave various gifts. He went away and he came back.

And after he left, the people said, we will not have this man what? Rule over us. In other words, let's kill him. We don't want this man to reign over us.

Isn't it fascinating now that we accept this king's forgiveness. We're very quick to do that because we want to make sure we don't go to hell. Very sure we want to go to heaven.

And so we receive his forgiveness, but we will not have this man reign over us. See, even denying the Master, and that word in the Greek is the strongest word for Master. It means the despot, one who's got total and complete authority.

Even denying the Master who bought them. The book of James, and then we'll close. James chapter 4. Verse 13.

Come now, you who say today or tomorrow, we shall go into such and such a city, spend a year there, engage in business, and make a profit. Now, the thing I love about the book of James, it's very easy to understand. I've said that when I get to heaven, I'm going to ask the Lord why he didn't allow James to write the book of Romans.

But notice something here. And let me sort of embellish this in a distorted way. But let's assume here is James, the senior man, an older, loving shepherd.

And there are two young people that have just got married. And they come to James, and they make an appointment to see him and say, James, we just want to let you know that we're going to be leaving the church. We're here to thank you.

We were raised in the church. Both of us were saved in the church. We went through Sunday school together.

You've been our pastor for all of these years. We've only been married now a number of months. But there's an opportunity for us to move to, let's say, the city of Ephesus.

And we're going to move from this city. Let's say it's Corinth. We're going to be leaving Corinth.

We're going to be going to Ephesus. We're going to spend at least a year or so there. My husband's going to go through college.

And we're going to open up a business and make a profit. Now, what is wrong with that? They're not talking about, you know, going to Vegas and opening some lewd place. They're not talking about going down to Columbia and joining the cartel.

They're not talking about going to Chicago and joining the mob. They're not talking about, you know, doing some counterfeit bills in the basement. There's nothing sinful.

They're just simply making plans. Here's a young couple. They're married.

You know, there's not much going on here in Corinth. And so, we hear there's some openings in Ephesus. Starbucks is looking for, you know, manager.

And so, they're here to tell him that they're leaving. Now, notice what James says. I can see him sitting there and say, hey, before you go any further.

You do not know, verse 14, what your life will be like tomorrow. It's just a vapor. It appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

And I can see this old man saying to these young kids, hey, kids. Listen, let me tell you something about life. Before you know it, it's gone.

Before you know it, you'll be an old man yourself like me. You will not believe how quickly the years go by. Instead, he says, verse 15.

In fact, my margin says, instead of your saying. Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. In other words, James says, listen, let me ask you, young people, something.

Do you know if it's God's will? Is it God that's sending you to Ephesus? Have you prayed about this? I mean, is this the leading of the Lord? Is God got some purpose? Is God's will involved in this whole thing? Or is this something that you're just doing? He says, as it is, you boast in your arrogance. In other words, they were sort of, you know, this is what we're going to do. And he says, that sort of boasting is evil.

Therefore, to the one that knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. What is sin? Sin is living for yourself. Sin is you making your own plans.

I'll do this. I'll do that. I'll go here.

I'll go there. I'll have my own business. I'll have my own life.

This is how I'm going to live. This is what I'm going to do with my life. And he says, that's the essence of sin.

It doesn't include the will of God. It doesn't present itself as a servant to the will of God, to the purpose of God. It has no regard for the fact that God has a plan for your life, a destiny.

See, being a Christian means a lot more. Getting excited about a few songs, dancing and twirling. As good as all of those things are, it's what we do the rest of the day and what we do the rest of our lives.

Am I honestly in a place where He is Lord? You see, this is really revival. It's when God comes down and takes control. And it's 24 hours a day.

It's the rest of your life. It's giving back to God that which is rightfully His. There's a verse in the book of Malachi you're all very familiar with.

It's when the coffers are down in the church, the pastor always turns to it. And it says this, will a man rob God? And you say, God, would we ever rob you? No way. And he says, but you have.

And they're amazed. They say, we've robbed you? How have we robbed you? And God says, you've robbed me in your tithes and your offerings. 10% of everything you make belongs to me.

And if you don't give it to me, you're robbing me because it's mine. Let me suggest to you that there's a far greater robbery. It's withholding from God that which He's already paid for.

Far greater. You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

You're His. And most of us have never given Him what is His. He won't force Himself on us.

He'll appeal to us through His word. You see, He's wanting one type of slave. He's wanting a bond slave.

In the Old Testament, there were two types of slave. One that was just purchased on the block and he didn't have any rights. He just had to serve his master.

And then the year of Jubilee came and he was free. And he could sort of thumb his nose if he wanted to at his master and walk out. And the master couldn't do anything.

He was totally free. Free to do his own thing. But the Bible made a provision.

The provision was that if that master was a good master, that slave could go to his master and say, Listen, I've never had a master like you before. You've been kind. You've been honest.

You've been fair. You've loved me. You've provided for me.

You've given me my own home. You've given me all these blessings. And I don't want to go out free.

I'm better off serving you than I've ever been in my life. And I want to be a bond slave. I want to serve you now, not because I have to.

I want to serve you now because I want to. The master would take his slave to the door of the house and he would punch a hole in his ear and it would signify to the community, I'm not serving now out of a sense of duty. I'm serving out of a sense of devotion.

You see, God is wanting us to come and say, God, I've never had a master like you before. You've washed me. You've cleansed me.

Put my marriage back together. Deliver me from drugs. You've taken this thing and that thing.

And Lord, without you, I'm nothing. And I will serve you because I love you. And he's looking for a response because his word demands a response.

And it begins by saying, Lord, here I am. From tonight on, I'm yours. I want you to begin to direct me.

I'm not suggesting that you're radical. I'm not suggesting that you don't show up for your job in the morning. I am suggesting that you begin to cry out to God and say, Lord, what would you have me to do? Just like Paul, what would you have me to do? It may take a week.

It may take a month. It may take a year. God will begin to direct you.

He'll begin to put desires within you. See, a soldier is entitled to his orders. But first of all, we've got to yield ourselves.

Young people, you've got a lifetime ahead of you. Some of you have got plans. What are you going to do? Where are you going to go? Very selfish.

Selfish. Needs to come to the cross. There's only one worthy of serving.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Let's cross. I'm going to ask you tonight what your response is going to be.

It's either acceptance or rejection. That's all the choice is. He either becomes Lord or he doesn't become Lord.

You either bow in submission to him or you turn your back and say, Lord, I'm going to continue to do my own thing. But when you bow in submission, remember, it's giving everything to God. It's going to cost you everything, but there's no greater joy, there's no greater thrill than finding your destiny.

God's destiny. God's design for your life. Jesus said, I delight to do thy will, O Lord.

And there's a delight in doing the will of God. It doesn't mean it's always going to be easy, but there's a deep, deep sense of fulfillment because we're serving again the one that created us. I'm going to ask you to stand again quietly as Brother plays.

I want you to just come and to kneel here or to stand and make that prayer tonight. You don't need anybody praying with you. I'll be glad to pray with people afterwards, but right now you just need to say, Lord, I give you my life.

I don't know what the future holds. I don't know all the details. It's like a marriage.

You say, I do, and you don't know what's going to happen after that. Don't know where you're going to end up. What's, you know, where you're going to live a year from now or ten years from now.

But you see, the only way this community is going to be changed, the only way this world is going to be changed is if God can get a hold of some instruments, some vessels, some willing servants that will say, Lord, I'll go wherever you want to go. If you want me to go overseas, I'll sell everything and I'll go. I'm yours, Lord.

Yours to command, yours to serve. Hallelujah. Lead us, brethren.

Hallelujah. Hear the Spirit call. Come, just as you are.

Forevermore.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30145.mp3>

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