

# The Supremacy and Sweetness of God

## Preaching for Radical Obedience

by John Piper

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of radical obedience to God, rooted in a deep satisfaction in all that God is for us in Jesus, leading to a life that reflects God's glory. The speaker highlights the need to preach in a way that kindles contrition, portrays God as supremely satisfying, and motivates faith that produces genuine obedience. The goal is to produce a church filled with people who joyfully embrace suffering for Christ, prioritize God above all fleeting pleasures, and are willing to make radical sacrifices for the sake of the gospel.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 11:24, Hebrews 10:32, John 6:35, Romans 14:23, Galatians 5:6, 1 Thessalonians 1:3

**Topics:** "Radical Obedience", "Joyful Sacrifice for the Gospel"

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### Description

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### Transcript

Well, I want to add my personal gratitude to Colonel Conger and to Timothy George and to Greg Morrison, who's been such a caring and vigilant host for me, and to all of you for coming and being such absorbent listeners for me. This has been a very great pleasure to be here, and I said to these brothers beforehand that every group I've been in has been very earnest and the kind of people that I love to talk to. So before we begin, may I pray one more time that God would help us in our time together.

Father, we are so keenly aware that we are utterly dependent upon You. Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing, which is exactly what I would accomplish here if it weren't for You, living Christ, coming and strengthening, enabling, empowering. And so I ask for Your help.

Father, guard us from the evil one who plucks up seeds so quickly, who distorts the truth, who discourages and distracts. Guard us from him, I pray. Deliver us from this evil, and grant that there would be an anointing for this work and a receptivity, a heart to give heed.

Would You transform us into the image of Your Son? And grant that we would be lured to You and satisfied in You so that we would be weaned off of the breast of sin and be made holy so that our lives would reflect Your glory and You would be made supreme in all things for the joy of all peoples. Through Christ I pray. The title is Preaching for Radical Obedience, Luring Our People to God.

So let me begin with a definition and then try to connect the message this morning with the message from yesterday. What do I mean by radical obedience? I mean the kind of obedience to God that comes from the root of your life, which is planted in God and is drinking up joy and hope and satisfaction from the subterranean streams of grace embodied in the promises of God. So if the root of your life is sunk in grace and you're feeding that root on promises and that's coming up and giving hope and joy and satisfaction and on the limbs of that strong tree are growing the fruit of obedience, that's what I mean by radical obedience.

It's the kind of obedience that's described in Hebrews 10 when the early church found out that some of their friends were in jail and at the cost of plundering, the plundering of their property, they joyfully went to the jail to visit them. That's radical obedience when you do such a thing joyfully. Or like Moses when he had the opportunity to stay in the posh palaces of Egypt, chose rather to share ill treatment with the people of God because he looked joyfully to the reward.

That's radical obedience. Or St. Paul counting everything as refuse in order to gain Christ. That abandonment of all of his rich pedigree and all of the easy life of what he might have lived for the sake of obeying the call of the Lord and gaining Christ, that's radical obedience.

Or like Jesus said, taking up your cross daily and following Him precisely because if you lose your life, you will find it. That's radical obedience. Now I think you should preach to that end.

I want people like that in my church, don't you? If we preach and that kind of people are not begotten, to what end is it all? But you should ask the question, okay, what's the connection between that and yesterday? Yesterday's message was all about the supremacy of God in preaching, magnifying God, making Him central in preaching, and so the connection needs to be asked, what does this goal, radical obedience, have to do with that goal of the supremacy of God in preaching? The answer is very simple and it's very easy to find in the Bible. The obedience of our people like that is the way that God manifests His glory in our culture. Psalm 23.3, He leads me in paths of righteousness.

Finish it. Obedience exists for the glory of God. We are led in paths of righteousness for His namesake.

And so if you, by your preaching, can move people somehow to walk in paths of righteousness, the name of God is magnified in the world. That's the connection between yesterday and today. Or Matthew 5.16, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds, that's radical obedience, and give glory to your Father in heaven.

So if we preachers want to be used of God to spread a passion for the supremacy of God and His glory in Birmingham or wherever, we have to so preach that our people radically obey God. Every day, all day. This is not a Sunday morning event where preaching ends in its significance.

Preaching must be designed to produce a certain kind of person if preaching is driven by a passion for the supremacy of God in the world and not just in this little teeny event. See the connection between preaching for radical obedience, I hope, and preaching to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all

things. When you or your people cast to the winds their fears and risk their lives and spend themselves not for any particular human fortune, but for the glory of Christ, then He will be supreme in the city because of your preaching.

So we preach for radical obedience out of a love for the glory of God. The question now then becomes, what kind of preaching does that? How does that kind of obedience get stirred up in a people? Here's my thesis for this morning, at least a first part of the thesis. The most powerful and painful acts of worship or acts of obedience, I should say, the most powerful and painful acts of obedience must be motivated by a supreme passion for pleasure in God.

And the preaching that kindles that kind of obedience must constantly portray God as supremely and everlastingly satisfying. Let me say that again. There's two parts to it.

All radical obedience must be motivated by a passion for satisfaction in God. And therefore the preaching that leads to that kind of obedience must portray God week in and week out as supremely and everlastingly satisfying. Helps the people who won't experience God that way, will not pursue God that way, and they will not obey God evangelically.

They might legalistically, which is of no value to anyone, but not gospel obedience. Now let me begin to unfold this thesis with an illustration from my experience from some years ago in prayer week in our church. We have a prayer week at the beginning of each year and on the Friday night of that prayer week, we pray all night from 10 until six in the morning and we divide the night up into hours and different people are assigned an hour to lead.

And that year, I think it was 1991, I was assigned a hour on repentance and contrition. So I was to lead our people during the night, one in the morning or whenever they gave me the slot, I don't remember, into a time of repentance and contrition, penitence. And I want to describe for you what happened in my preparation for that, which shed light on how you preach for evangelical obedience.

Now, the point is that connects the two is this contrition and repentance are the necessary first steps of radical obedience. It is radical obedience to be contrite before God and to repent of your sins and all true gospel obedience begins there. So if I can figure out how to preach to produce contrition and repentance in people, I will have discovered at least the first steps of how to preach toward radical obedience.

Now, what I did to get ready for that night was to read excerpts from David Brainerd. David Brainerd, you remember, was a missionary to the Indians in New England 250 years ago or so, and a good, he would have married Jonathan Edwards' daughter had he lived. He died when he was 29, I believe, or maybe it was 32, I can't remember.

I get these young fellows mixed up who died at such young ages. On August 9, 1745, he preached to the Indians at Cross Weeks in New Jersey with these words, or he wrote in his journal about preaching. There were many tears among them while I was discoursing publicly, but no considerable outcry.

Yet some of them were much affected with a few words spoken to them in a powerful manner which caused the persons to cry out in anguish of soul, although I had spoken not a word of terror, but on the contrary set before them the fullness and all sufficiency of Christ's merits and His willingness to save all that come to Him and thereupon press them to come without delay. Now August 6, it was surprising to see how their hearts seemed to be pierced with the tender and melting invitations of the Gospel when there

was not a word of terror spoken to them. November 30, preaching on Luke 16 concerning the rich man and Lazarus, he wrote this in his journal, The Word made powerful impressions upon many in the assembly, especially while I discoursed of the blessedness of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

This I could perceive affected them much more than when I spoke of the rich man's misery and torments, and thus it has been usually with them. They have almost always appeared much more affected with the comfortable than the dreadful truths of God's Word. That which has distressed many of them under convictions is that they found that they lacked and could not obtain the happiness of the godly.

I read that in preparation for my hour on repentance and contrition and it struck me because I had never heard anybody say it quite like that before, that this is the way he brought about tears of contrition and broken heartedness because of sin. So I want to examine with you what happened in those moments when Brainerd preached. But before I do that, let me give you a biblical example of this.

Comes from Luke 5. You don't need to look it up. I'm not going to read it all. I'm going to use it as an illustration.

The situation you remember is that Jesus has just been preaching. He's been in a little boat. He's done preaching and he wants the disciples to cast out into the water and throw down their nets for a catch.

Well, they had fished all night and there weren't any fish down there. So Peter, in verse four of Luke 5, says, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing. But at your word, I will let down the nets.

And when they let them down, the nets were filled with fish so full that they were breaking. Peter's response to this miracle of grace, not a chastisement, but a miracle of mercy is very unlike 20th century self-esteeming responses to grace. Here's what happened.

It says in verses 8, 9, 10 of Luke 5, when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him at the catch of fish which they had taken. In other words, he did not say, My, if God does such things for me, I must be somebody.

That's the way American evangelicals talk about the cross and about miracles of grace. It's not what Peter did. When Peter was treated with mercy, he fell on his face and said, Leave me, leave me.

Get it? Most people wouldn't get it. Why did he do that? Why didn't he feel like somebody? Because he knew he wasn't worthy of that miracle. And he knew that to have a Christ like that would result in a lifestyle on his part so different than the lifestyle he was presently living.

If he really believed in such a Christ and had such a Christ on his side, he couldn't stand what he saw in the mirror. And he was on his face saying, Jesus, if there's any place you should be, it shouldn't be in my presence, and so get out of my life. So, here you have Brainerd saying, These Indians don't cry when I preach judgment.

They cry over their sin when I describe heaven and mercy and the freedom of grace and that they can have it. And Peter cries and falls on his face when he's treated with undeserved grace and mercy with all these fish being brought at just a word of the Lord for the dropping of a net. Now what is going on here? We need to analyze this.

We need to figure this out. Genuine, I'm entering on an analysis here of what's going on. Genuine gospel contrition, repentance, sorrow for sin is only possible where you feel bad about not having holiness.

You feel sorrow about not having the God of holiness. Now, there's an ambiguity in this. See if I can get at it with you.

There are criminals who when they're confronted with their crime and are sentenced, weep. So weeping at the point of the discovery of your crime may or may not be a sign of contrition and repentance. The weeping may be not because they've discovered the beauty of holiness and love holiness, but that they've discovered the freedom to do unholiness as being taken away from them.

They're going to jail. And so they no longer are free to do as much unrighteousness as they would, and they're sorrowful about that. And so you see the weeping and you cannot for sure know what it is.

Weeping means little, folks. Weeping means little. People cry in my office over the most selfish things.

So we must be careful here how we say this. A criminal may cry at the indictment of his crime because the freedom to do more crimes is being taken away. The only true sorrow for not having holiness is a sorrow that comes from the love of holiness and the realization that you haven't loved it as you ought and have fallen so far short.

It's not the fear of the consequences, hell, that results in the tears of evangelical obedience or evangelical contrition. It's the realization that you have missed it. You have missed the joy.

You have missed the wonder. You have missed the awe. You have missed the blessedness.

You have missed the purity. You have missed the fellowship of the holiness of God in your life. Now, that's odd when you think about it.

That's really strange because it means that before you can have genuine evangelical tears, you must have discovered joy. This has huge implications for how you preach. You see what I'm saying? A person, in order to weep over the lack of holiness, must have been brought to a point of delighting in holiness for its own sake.

Delight must precede brokenness. If you want tears, you must preach joy. Isn't that odd? You must so preach that people see the beauty and the glory and the desirableness of what they have trampled.

And until they get it, their tears, if they come, will be legal tears, tears, not evangelical tears. Tears out of fear of hell. Tears that they've let down some loved one.

But not tears that I've missed holiness, which is the most beautiful, glorious reality in the universe. The holiness of God, tasting it, fellowshiping with it, beholding it, living it. I missed it and I want it so bad.

Nobody weeps over the departure of a young woman until they love the young woman. You've got to love holiness before the lack of it will bring you any tears. We must preach so as to portray to sinners who have no holiness, holiness in such a way that by the anointing and power, the regenerating, illuminating work of the Holy Spirit, they are enabled to taste the beauty of holiness and then they are struck at the horror of their lives.

That they've missed it. That this treasure has been treated like dirt. They've been indifferent to it.

They've stomped on it. They've ignored it. They've made fun of it.

And now they've been suddenly awakened to taste it. That's called conversion. It's called awakening.

And when it happens to a lot of people at the same time, it's called, what? Revival. Oh, you are well taught by that. Amen.

That's revival. Now, so we need to talk about this kind of preaching. Let me state my thesis again so I can try to keep you up to date with where I am in my sequence of thought.

The most powerful, painful acts of radical obedience are motivated by a supreme passion for pleasure in God. I would add now, in the holiness of God. And the preaching that will kindle that kind of obedience must portray God as supremely and everlastingly satisfying.

Now all we've done so far in this message is get you just inside a life of obedience called contrition and repentance. The beginning of the Christian life is the discovery of how wrong everything has been, how out of sync with God, how your values have been inverted, how your tastes have been blunted, and suddenly by the awakening of the Holy Spirit, you can now taste the beauty of holiness, the beauty of Christ, the delightfulness of God, that He's a treasure and a wonder. And then your whole life comes into perspective.

I used the analogy one time at my church that somebody early on in your darkened life puts an ebony brooch around your neck. It hangs there and you feel it, and it's dark. The darkness of sin is all over you.

And Satan, commending sin to you, puts this wonderful ebony brooch around your neck and you feel it, and it feels like ebony, and you hold it up in the dark and it's beautiful black ebony, and then God turns the light on in your life, and you're able to see holiness for what it is, and you hold it up and the brooch is a roach hanging around your neck. That's—somebody asked me yesterday, do you preach about sin? That's what I'm talking about. Yes, you preach about sin, but if you want the brooch to look like the roach that it is, the lights have to go on so people see beauty for what it is, and that's not beautiful anymore when the lights go on.

Other things are delicious and beautiful. So first step toward radical obedience is bringing people to radical contrition, and you do it by portraying God and His holiness alluringly—hence the subtitle of my talk—alluring people to God, not pounding them to God. They'll never come.

They may do some legalistic shop cleaning and become nice, well-dressed Baptist or Presbyterian or Anglican or Methodist churchgoers, but they won't be born again. Our churches have many non-born-again, upright, moral, keep-your-nose-clean, legalistic, impress God and everybody else, moralists, and they're not going to heaven because they're not born again because they don't delight in holiness with their soul and their heart. They've never fallen in love with God, to all form.

Now, what we have to do next in my sequence of thought is say this. The ongoing obedience that comes after the obedience of contrition and repentance must also now be motivated by a passion for joy in God. Now, to demonstrate that, I want to show you that all genuine gospel obedience that pleases God comes from faith.

Let me give you some texts and then tell you why that's a step in the argument. Romans 9, 31, 32, Israel pursuing a law of righteousness did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith,

but as though it were by works.

So how should the law be obeyed? By faith. All obedience must be by faith. I wrote my whole book, *Living by Faith in Future Grace*, to get at this.

It took me 20 years to figure this out, and I'm still working on it. Some more texts to show this. Romans 14, 23, whatever does not come from faith is sin.

Hebrews 11, 6, without faith it is impossible to please God. You can do as many good works as you want without trusting Christ for the divine enablement by grace, and they don't please God. Frightening how many people in our churches are in that category.

Or 1 Thessalonians 1, 3, you get this phrase, your work of faith. What is a work of faith? It is a work that springs out like fruit on the branches of faith. Or Galatians 5, 6, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love.

Love comes from faith. The works that are called for by a Christian are not legal works. They don't merit.

They don't earn. They are fruit that demonstrate the reality of faith. And if they aren't there, the faith isn't there.

That's the point of James 2. Ok, that's enough texts. I could go on and on. The list goes on.

To show you that obedience in the New Testament comes from faith. Now, years ago, as I got to this point in my developing understanding, I would just stop here and end the message and say, therefore, preach for faith. If you want to bring about radical evangelical obedience to the glory of God, beget faith with all your might.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Therefore preach it. People will believe.

They'll produce obedience. That's the end of the message. I'll go eat lunch and get on a plane.

I don't do that anymore, because you know why? Hardly anybody in America knows what faith is anymore. We got this easy-believism thing that guts faith, guts it, takes the guts right out of it, makes it a signature, or a prayer, or a decision, nothing happens any different at all in the life, and it's called faith, and the whole motive is to give assurance on the spot. Well, that's not New Testament faith.

And of course we've got carnal people filling our churches then. That faith changes nobody. So I don't stop here.

I've got another 15 minutes or so. What is faith then? What is the faith that changes people? That begets the fruit of the deeds that are radical obedience that brings glory to God? That's what I'm preaching for. Not just any old faith.

All right, I'll give you a definition. I wrote 400 pages to explain this, but I'll just take 10 minutes to do it here. Here's my definition of saving faith.

It's not all that needs to be said, but it's, I think, what John Piper needs to say everywhere he goes in the last part of the 20th century. The essence of faith is being satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus, especially what he promises to be for us in the age to come. Saving faith is being satisfied with all that

God is for you in Jesus, especially what he promises to be for you this afternoon and in the age to come.

Let me unpack that definition for a minute. It's got two pieces that are intended to be very God-centered. The first is it's faith in all that God is for you.

It's not faith in His gifts. It's faith in God. It's not being satisfied with forgiveness of sins.

That's a gift. There's a lot of people who would like to have their sins forgiven and not go to hell who could care less if God were in heaven. Just so there's golf and health and you name it.

I often ask my people, maybe not as often as I used to, but I ask them, test yourself. If you could have everything you desire in heaven forever minus God, would you be happy? That's a scary question. Because I think if many of our people were honest, they'd say, sure.

Health, all the toys, all the sex, all the health, all the food, all the play, all the nature, and that tests where your satisfaction is. Saving faith is satisfaction in God. Not heaven, not restoration with loved ones, not health, not spouse, not family, not ministry, not success, but God.

Now that's the first thing. The second thing this definition highlights is the word satisfaction. And I could use other words.

I could use the word delight or pleasure or whatever, they're all in the Bible. But I have used the word satisfaction simply to highlight the fact that faith is not a mere intellectual assent to doctrine or decision to do any particular thing. Pray a prayer, sign a card, go to church.

It is a real, deep, inner, emotional, soul contentment in who God is for you. Now, just a brief biblical defense of that, John 6.35, Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me believes, here we are at faith, believes in me shall never thirst.

So what is faith on the basis of that verse? I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger. He who believes in me, see parallelism, he who believes in me shall never thirst.

Saving faith in Johannine theology is a coming to Jesus so as to find such satisfaction in him that you neither hunger nor thirst any longer at the well and the bread of sin. It does not mean you do not sin anymore. It means you now have such a revolutionary new taste capacity that you have found in the fountain of life and in the bread of heaven such amazing satisfaction that when Satan and sin commend their bread and their water and their wine to you, though you may be temporarily allured in very quickly, it will taste awful, you will feel bad, you will do the John 1-9 thing, 1 John 1-9, you will confess it, you'll be sorry, you'll say I'm sorry, yuck, out of my mouth, you'll be back to the cross and you'll be looking up and you'll be saying, fill me, because you'll have discovered the fountain.

It's not that other fountains cease to be attractive, it's that now you know where it's found, your quest is over. Jesus is the end of the quest here. And you go back and you lay down and you drink satisfaction over and over again.

That's saving faith, to have been awakened, to be satisfied in all that God is for you in Jesus. Now, this is second grade here to make the next point, but I'll make it anyway. You all see, don't you, how that kind of faith produces radical obedience? You could preach the rest of this sermon, couldn't you? I think you could, but that's my job, so a few more minutes to finish it.

If the heart is satisfied with all that God is for us in Jesus, the power of sin to lure you away is broken. You wonder how to break the sin of lust in your life, pornography, how to break the sin of greed in your life and your insatiable desire to have more money and more security in retirement. How do you break that power? And the answer is a radically superior satisfaction.

Another promise, the promise of money comes and says, if you come my way, if you serve me, I'll give you this. And now your eyes have been opened and that's rubbish, Paul says, compared to Christ. But your eyes have to be opened to the beauty and the desirableness of Christ.

Same thing with sex, same thing with power. Every sin has power to the degree that it makes promises to you. Nobody sins out of duty.

You only sin because sin lies to you, promising you either short term or long term pleasures. The only way to defeat those pleasures evangelically and not legalistically is with the power of a superior promise or a superior satisfaction. So if you want to produce radical obedience in your people that forsakes sin and embraces the hard Calvary road of obedience.

They must feel the superior desirability of God day in and day out, and you must preach it week in and week out. Your main job is to portray God as better than sin. You preach duty and hammer away at your people.

God said not to sin. God told you to do righteousness. He's God.

Do it. You won't produce radical obedience. You'll produce legalists.

You've got to win them. You've got to open their eyes. You've got to ravish them with God.

They've got to love God, delight in God, be enamored with God so that when sin beckons them, they say, why would I ever want to do that? I've got God. In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore.

I'm going to give you a couple of snapshots as I move toward conclusion here. A couple of biblical snapshots of how this faith, faith understood as being satisfied with all that God is to you and Jesus, produces radical obedience. And my whole goal here is to motivate you to preach for it.

Hebrews 11, verse 24. By faith, Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. Before I read the next verse, which is the key one, make sure you get the picture.

This is a picture of your life, especially most of the people in this room are well to do. You may not feel well to do, but you've got clothes and a roof over your head and you will eat lunch. You are well to do, believe me, because 90 percent of the world doesn't have those things like you.

And therefore you are like you're like Moses. Shall I stay in the palaces of the comforts of Birmingham or shall I go to the 90 percent of the world who has almost no gospel? This is turning into a mission sermon. Excuse me.

It's in my blood. And if God were to call you to that end and you could say to me, you're in Minneapolis. I'm in Minneapolis, I hope, for the sake of the nations.

Are you going to embrace the comforts of Egypt, Moses? Are you going to let it go and embrace the sufferings of the people of God? And Moses chooses suffering, radical obedience and calls that the fleeting, fleeting pleasures of sin. Somebody got through to Moses that they're fleeting. That's your job as a preacher.

You say to every teenager, you say to every 70 year old, it's fleeting because they don't need to be persuaded anymore. Every 40 year old, the money's fleeting. The joy of that younger woman instead of your plump wife is fleeting.

Here's the next verse. What happened? How did he get to this point? Moses considered abuse, suffered for the Christ, greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. That's why I'm a Christian hedonist, folks.

I want people to produce radical obedience. I want Moses's. I want people to leave Minneapolis and go to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and Oman.

I want them to leave it all. Therefore, I'm a hedonist. Look to the reward.

Forget the rewards of Minneapolis, forget the rewards of a well-to-do lifestyle in the suburbs. Forget it. It's all fleeting.

It's all rubbish compared to the Apostle or as the Apostle Paul said, compared to knowing or gaining Christ. Well, maybe one other quick glimpse in chapter 10 of Hebrews. I love this is one of my favorite stories.

Recall the former days. This is Hebrews 10, 32. Recall the former days when after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with suffering, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction, sometimes being partners with those so treated.

So here they are suffering, making decisions that result in being mistreated. For you had compassion on the prisoners. In other words, they went and identified with the prisoners and got themselves into big trouble.

You joyfully accepted the plundering of your property. Test yourself. Test yourself here.

You live in a nice house. If you get home today and it's burned down, what are you going to do if enemies of Christ torched it or threw rocks through your window? What are you going to do? They joyfully accepted the you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property. Since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding, what's your agenda in preaching now? If you want to get people who rejoice at the plundering of their properties in the path of obedience, you want to produce it.

And I assume I'm preaching to people like me. You do want to produce people like that in your churches, don't you? OK, if you want to produce this kind of Christian. You must preach the reward.

Who is God? My exceeding great reward is God. Full, deep, sweet, intimate, unending fellowship in the presence of an infinitely glorious, all satisfying God. If your people don't want that, they will not obey.

You got to portray him. You got to portray him that way. So let me close with an exhortation that you do that preaching that aims to kindle contrition that has tears over the failure to see and delight in and follow the holiness of God must portray holiness as delectable so that the taste is awakened so that they can see

that the rejection of it and the trampling on it is a horrible thing.

Joy must precede grief so that the grief is evangelical and not legal. And then for the rest of their lives, as you preach, you want them to do radical obedience, changing their lifestyles, leaving all their possessions, doing whatever they have to do to meet the radical call of God on their lives and take the gospel where it isn't. You want to produce that.

And therefore, you must persuade them by week in and week out, portraying this Christ at the end of that path as more to be desired than anything, anything. Now, if I were here for three lectures instead of two, I would tomorrow or the next time talk about how do you become that kind of person? You'll never preach it if you don't taste it. So my concluding exhortation is simply of God, delight in God, enjoy God, cut off your hand if you must to have God, gouge out your eye if you must to see God, become a God-besotted person, and then week after week, stand up and overflow.

Father, I feel so keenly that I preach beyond myself here. I know that I have a long way to go in a consistent life that is flowing from your infinite value to me. I respond to my wife and my children.

I respond to people at church in ways that break my heart because they're so out of sync with your preciousness, your sufficiency, your promise, your goodness in my life. So I just want to make sure these people hear that and know that we collectively right now are contrite. We're contrite before you.

And we're asking that in your mercy, our taste buds would be reawakened and we would be granted a fresh, new, deep, profound satisfaction in you. So that next Sunday and the rest of our ministries, we will be able to speak of you and portray you in a way that will be so compelling in its beauty that the wicked will be awakened to see what they have missed and weep. And the godly will be reawakened to have a new, deep sense of wonder and awe and gladness in you that will free them to let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also, the body they may kill.

God's glorious, all satisfying truth abideth still. Your kingdom is forever.

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