

Grace of God Brings Repentance

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's grace in bringing salvation and the importance of living righteously in His presence.

Duration: 46:10

Scripture: Titus 2:11

Topics: "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of listening to the word of God. He quotes Titus 2:11, which speaks about the grace of God that brings salvation to all people. The preacher then shares a personal story about a tragic car accident involving his friend, highlighting the contrast between his own salvation and his friend's fate. He also mentions the book of Ecclesiastes, where Solomon explores different avenues of satisfaction and power, ultimately finding them empty. The sermon encourages listeners to live a godly life and not to despise the authority of God's word.

Transcript

...turn please to Titus, Titus chapter 2, verses 11 to 14. Now, two years ago when it was my joy...the Lord led me to you...scripture. My heart has been strangely directed to it again today, and I trust that the Spirit of God will cause it to become means of blessing...your heart tonight. Titus chapter 2, verses 11 to 14.

If I were to ask how many of you could quote John 3.16, I would expect every hand to be raised. But if I were to ask how many can quote Titus 2.11 to 14, it might be a different matter. But this is one of those summary scriptures, one that you ought to know and understand and frequently use for your own heart need and in the lives of others.

And so may I recommend that you memorize this text, that you commit it to memory so that it will be yours from tonight on. Listen to it. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

And then the fifteenth verse, these things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority, let no man despise thee. Back now to the eleventh verse, the grace of God that bringeth salvation. The question is

asked, and rightly so, how far must this salvation travel to get from God to us? We have an unfortunate geographical concept in relation to God.

So many times we visualize the Lord Jesus Christ on the right hand of the throne in heaven, God and the Father there, and this place to which we all yearn and long to go, and we feel that somehow he is so far away. In that splendid volume from the pen of Dr. Tozer, entitled *The Pursuit of God*, he has a chapter on the universal presence, and he deals with this misconception that many of us have, perhaps all of us have had at some time or at times, and I would like to just have you think with me for a moment about one of the grand truths of the word. Now every statement of Christian doctrine across the centuries has in it the statement of the omnipresence of God.

It's simply this, that God is everywhere. We find that it is given to us by Paul when on Mars Hill he addressed that company of pagan, of heathen, saying, God, in whose presence, in whom you live and move and have your being, is not far from us, for in him we live and move and have our being. David stated it in the 139th Psalm.

We find, Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I send up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the sea, there thy hand leads me, and thy right hand sustains me.

And it's simply this, that God is everywhere. There is no place in the universe that you could go that God isn't. He is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord who is there.

You live, as you may understand, in three atmospheres. When I tell you that you live at the bottom of a sea of air, you're not surprised. You realize that it exerts a pressure upon you when you go up in an elevator, as in the Empire State Building, or in an airplane, or even up a high mountain or hill.

You're aware of the change of pressure. There's the pain in your ears indicating that the pressure within is not equal to that without. Now, we tell you that there is a weight of some 15 pounds per square inch upon your body, and you are aware of that truth.

You live and move and have your being in an ocean of air. There is a second atmosphere, and that's the atmosphere of electronic impulse or sound. Years ago in Africa, I had with me a shortwave radio.

It was one of those cumbersome things, three dials and no great deal of bother. It connected with cords from the battery of the car that I was using, and I would bring it up next to the little mud hut, the rest house, and run the cord out and snap it on the battery terminals and into the radio, and could by this means have a little contact with the outside world. One night I had visitors, three of the Coma tribe.

It was Salia and his wife and his sister-in-law. Now, they only knew about 25 words of Arabic, and I knew probably twice as much, 50, but we had quite a nice visit there, using our few words over and over again, and after a while I reached over and just put the switch on the radio. I knew what was happening, but I wanted to study their reactions, and soon with some crackle of static came the sound of a voice and some music.

Their eyes widened, you could have brushed them off with a stick. The sister-in-law became quite excited. She got up and slipped out.

I watched and saw her come around, and she came in behind the radio and stooped down and looked in and studied it one way and another. Then finally she came back and sat down on the sand floor, spoke to her sister, who spoke to Salia. I said, what did she say? She said, well, she was back there and she saw how it makes the noise.

What did she say makes the noise? She said, well, it's a house. She saw the lights and the windows and that there must be little people in there that are talking, and she just wants to know how you can get the people in there. Well, I said, there aren't any little people in there.

This is a radio. All around you are sounds that you can't hear with your ear. You must have the equipment and then you can hear.

And he gave this to her as best he could, and she started to laugh. She said, you mean to say that that white man is trying to tell me that there are sounds in the air that I can't hear? I can hear a lion roar in the bush further than anyone in our village. If there are any sounds in the air, I can hear them.

You tell him that he can't fool us that way. He's got a little people in that box and I'd like to know what he feeds them. And she was absolutely certain that her explanation was correct.

Well, you understand that all around you tonight are radio waves and now television waves, these electronic impulses that fill the atmosphere. I suppose if we had all of them separated, we would have to have this room filled with shelves and radios in order to get all of the separate sounds that are here in this room now. You're not surprised about that.

You realize that this is just one of the facts of our life. When I tell you that you have to have a receiving set for air, namely your lungs, you're not surprised. Then I tell you you'll have to have a receiving set for electronic sound, and you're not surprised.

Then I would tell you that you're living in a third atmosphere. This is capitalized. That third atmosphere we call God.

God is here. Remember our Lord speaking to the woman by the well, saying, God is spirit. Now, we have a great deal of difficulty comprehending spirit.

The word spirit means breath, or wind, or air. This is the word that was used to designate the third person of the Trinity, God, in his omnipresence, his spirit. Do you realize, dear heart, tonight that God is just as near to you as the air that's coming in the windows and wafts against your cheek, or the light that's come, the illumination that's coming from the light of God is here.

Remember our Lord speaking to the woman by the well, saying, God is spirit. Now, we have a great deal of difficulty comprehending spirit. The word spirit means breath, or wind, or air.

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Oh, yes he is. In heaven he is there in the resurrection body of the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ. And God, his Father, is perfectly revealed in heaven, because there are none but sinless or redeemed beings there who have great tolerance for light.

You see, God is light. He said to Moses when Moses asked to look upon him, he said, you can't look upon me and live. And you understand why.

We have very low tolerance for light. In fact, there are four people in Britain tonight that are totally blind, stone blind, because they made the mistake of looking at the sun when it was in eclipse a few years ago, without the benefit of dark glasses. Just staring at it long enough to irreparably injure the optic nerve, and so they're blind.

We have such a low tolerance for light. This is the reason why we must put on incorruption and bodies like unto his own body of glory. If you could go to heaven in the body you're wearing tonight, God would have to put a sort of a bomb shelter in the third basement somewhere to accommodate you.

You never could come out. You'd be there because seeing him, you'd be destroyed by the glory of what he is. And so we're going to that day have bodies like unto his body of glory, so that we'll have tolerance for his presence and for the revelation of his glory.

But now he remembers that we're dust. He remembers that our flesh is as grass. He knows us.

He made us. So it isn't the question that God has a problem in filling you and blessing you. His problem, if problem he has, is to modulate the revelation of himself to your frame, to what you are.

For were he to answer the prayer, have you ever been with a group of people who prayed, O God, reveal thyself with all thy heavenly glory. I've been in such prayer meetings and spent times when I've said, Lord, please translate this prayer to fit us, because if you do what they're asking, none of us will be here. You've come to understand, and I'm not a physicist in any sense of the word, all my medicine and physics I get from that source book that most of us share, the Reader's Digest, some similar periodical.

But I'm rather interested in that formula that's changed the way of life, the one that was given by Einstein, E equals mc squared, that energy equals mass times the speed of light. That's all I know. I've exhausted my science for tonight.

But it simply means this, that the amount of power in any material is not that which you get by burning or some other process, that the release, this atomic release, is energy. Energy equals the mass times the speed of light. And this has produced the atomic bomb and all the other things which have so completely changed our civilization.

God made it, and he's infinitely greater than anything he's made. And so he surrounds us, in him we live and move and have our being, but in great grace and condescension he modulates this way, because he does remember that we're dust. Did you ever stop to think that God is geographically just as near to Khrushchev as he is to you? He is, you know.

Every crime that Khrushchev has ever been, has ever committed, he's committed in the presence of God. Every plan that's being made in the Kremlin tonight for the destruction of civilization as we know it, is in the presence of God. Oh, they've said he doesn't exist, but he's there.

In him they live and move and have their being, as much as do we. You see, you're a spirit. Have you stopped to realize that? You're a spirit living in a body.

Or your body, soul, and spirit, that we understand. But the part of you that thinks and feels and wills is not your body, but it's your spirit. The part of a man that knows the things of a man is the spirit of man that's in him.

Now we know that you remember by means of your brain, but one day you're going to leave your body and your brain will be just so much tissues rapidly decaying. And the mortician will come into the home and will say to the friends, where are the remains? Because if they have any insight at all, they know that you have gone and it's just a body of clay, a tenement that's been left. You're somewhere.

Now we understand and confidently affirm that for a child of God to leave the body is to be with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Just as tonight you think and feel and will.

If you were to die, that part of you that thinks and feels and wills would be somewhere. If you're his, you'd be in his presence. If you aren't, you'd be in hell.

The rich man died and in hell lifted up his eyes. There's no intermediate state. Now would you remember then that you're a spirit living in a body? One of the saddest things that you find is the awful deception that was brought on the human race by Satan back in the garden when he seduced Eve and caused Adam to transgress in the fall.

The proposition was this. It was presented to Eve. Now God really doesn't love you.

You think he does. If he loved you, he'd let you eat the fruit of that tree because he knows that when you eat the fruit of that tree, you're going to be like him and he doesn't want you to be like him. You think he loves you? Oh no, he doesn't love you.

If you want to be happy, you're going to have to make your happiness the end of your being. You can't trust God. You'll have to decide how to be happy.

Well look, there's that fruit and you have an appetite for fruit. Now the only way to be happy is to decide what to eat. And you want pleasure and the only way to be happy is to get your pleasure where you can according to your own rules.

In other words, you're going to have to be God if you'll ever be happy. Oh, what a lie. What a lie.

When God made Eve and Adam, he gave them appetites. Appetite for food, for knowledge, for sex, for status, for pleasure, for security, other urges you might add. And with these appetites, he gave the full and adequate and proper means of supply.

But man wasn't to be happy by gratifying his appetites. Man was made not just to absorb food from the source, security from possessions. That wasn't what man was made for.

Man was made in the image of God. Oh, it was a beautiful circle. From eternity past, God his father wanted children.

God his son wanted brethren. The eternal bridegroom wanted a bride. Oh, God had longed for someone like himself to whom he could reveal himself.

So in the fullness of time, he made the only creature, man. He made man for himself. He made you a microcosm of God.

He gave you on a finite level the attributes that he possesses on an infinite level. And he made you so that nothing in the universe can satisfy you but God. Do you believe that? Do you understand that? One of the most revealing portions of scripture is the Book of Ecclesiastes, seldom read and seldom understood.

God allowed one man, Solomon, to have the opportunity that all of us at some time wished had been ours. He gave to this young prince the privilege of exploring, pursuing those avenues that are said to satisfy to the very extreme. Four areas are set forth in Ecclesiastes.

First, you find that Solomon says, look, I'm the prince, but there are enemies that my father hasn't conquered. These I will subdue. I will succeed in bringing all men under my control so that the world as I know it will.

And when he can look out across the map as he knew it and the world as he was acquainted with it, he could say, every nation under the sun pays tribute to me. And then he said, now power, power over your fellows. Does this satisfy your heart? And the answer that came back from the desolate inner chamber of his spirit was, vanity of vanity, all is emptiness.

All is vanity. The best definition of the word vanity is soap bubbles. And Solomon said, it looks good, but there's nothing to it.

Then he tried money. He gathered money until he had gold-like bricks and pearls like snow and jewels till they sparkled in the heat. And he went down and looked at it.

And he petted the gold bricks and he sifted the white pearls and he played with the sparkling jewels. And he said to his heart, are you satisfied? And the answer that came back was, it's soap bubbles. It's vanity.

Then he said he'd try wisdom. Surely wisdom would satisfy. Knowledge would complete him and make him happy.

And we find that he brought to him the greatest of the teachers of his day and learned all they could teach. God then gave him the gift of wisdom until he was wiser than all his teachers. And when the philosophers and sages and teachers sat at his feet to catch the pearls of wisdom that came from his lips, he said, now that you're the wisest of men, O soul, I am satisfied.

And the answer that came back was that same cry of desolation, vanity of vanity. All is vanity. And then he said he'd try pleasure.

He said there wasn't a thing that men did that he didn't try. He kept back nothing that could in any wise promise to satisfy him. A thousand wives, every entertainment, everything that the flesh could ever experience, he carried to the ultimate in order that he could test and see whether there was anything in this to satisfy the human heart.

And the answer that came back when he was too jaded and exhausted and satiated to be aroused by anything, the answer was this, vanity of vanity. All is vanity. And then he concluded, what's the sum of the matter? What are we going to do with our lives? What's the answer? And in the twelfth chapter he says, don't waste your life the way I have.

Don't squander your strength the way I have. Don't seek the way I sought. The answer is here.

Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth. No use to wait because nothing satisfied. When God made you, he carved into your heart an empty place so vast, so immense, that only he can fill it.

You were made for God, not for heaven. Listen, if God were to send you to heaven, and give you the biggest mansion on the street, and then give you a franchise to take up the paving, blocks of gold, and sell them to the other customers, and he didn't come, heaven would be just another name for hell. No mansion, however vast, can satisfy the human.

You're made for God. You're made for God. Where Jesus is, is heaven to me.

Now if you understand this, then you'll understand that God's purpose in salvation wasn't just to take you to heaven. If he takes you there and doesn't go himself, he's just put you in another kind of hell, that's all. God's purpose in salvation was to save you from sin, remake you in his image and likeness, bring you into vital, living, warm, glorious union with him now, and then take you on to enjoy that same union forever.

Do you hear the text? The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. And purify unto himself a peculiar pecuniary, a purchased people, zealous of good works. Now this is his purpose.

How far did he have to come to bring this salvation? That's the question. Well, you've lived in his presence all your life. Do you understand how God brings salvation? The first thing he did when he wanted to save you was to bring up next to you a sample of his grace.

Someone, a Sunday school teacher, mother, father, neighbor, friend, someone who had partaken of his nature and of his life and had been born into his family, and you saw something different in that person. Because you saw the difference, you gradually became aware of your need. He put someone up next to you as a sample of his grace.

Then he put someone there beside you to pray for you. You may not know who it was. I happen to.

But you do may not. But someone probably prayed for you. Then he put someone there beside you to witness to you.

Now these are the three primary things that you can do for others. Live Christ before the sinner, intercede for the sinner, and witness to him. But when you've done that, that's about all you can do.

God has to work. What's the first thing he does? He broods, for in his presence the sinner lives. When he can get someone to live Christ before him and intercede for him and witness to him, he broods over that sinner.

Oh, read Genesis 1. The earth was without form and void, and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters. In every human breast there is a world of iniquity, desolation, and death.

And just as he brooded over that world that was without form and void, he broods over the sinner's heart. What's the first thing he did back there in Genesis? He said, write me. The first thing God does in grace is

to say, awake.

He's the Spirit of bondage again to fear. The sinner becomes awake, alert, what's the matter, something's wrong, I'm not right. And then as the witness continues, and the law is properly applied to the conscience, for by the law is the knowledge of sin, what thingsoever the law saith that saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.

Ah, there is the proper use of the law, dear heart. One of the great crimes committed against the Holy Ghost was when fifty or seventy-five years ago, our teachers took away from the proper preaching of the gospel the proper use of the law, and disarmed the Holy Ghost of the only instrument with which he had ever armed himself to prepare men for grace. The law is just and holy and good, it's the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

I've heard it said that in the Old Testament people were saved by keeping the law, not so, not so. When on the Mount Sinai, God inscribed the tables of stone there that same time he gave to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle and the law of the offerings. And the purpose of the law was then as it is now, to strike through the sophistication and casualness of the sinner and cause him to see that he stood to condemn before God.

In Israel, he would take a lamb to the door of the tabernacle, put his hands upon the head of the lamb, confess it, and see the smoke consume the blood and flesh, a testimony of grace. And so today, the Spirit of God uses the law to pierce through the heart, to cut through and to bring conviction. I went to Africa thinking that all I had to do was to tell men how to be saved and I told them about heaven and told them about hell and said, would you like to go to heaven? Yes, we'll have you sinned and then they'd tell me their sins.

And I explained the gospel, will you receive Jesus? And they would. But you know what happened? They went right on being cannibals and savages because I had made the mistake of thinking that because they could recall their sins, they had been convicted of sin. Recollection is a natural process.

Conviction is a supernatural work. It is that work of the Holy Advocate, God the Holy Spirit, bringing you up against his law and convincing you that God is right in condemning you because of your high crimes against him, for sin is treason, sin is rebellion, sin is anarchy, sin is transgression. Sin is enmity.

And it's the Spirit of God who uses the word of God to slay the sinner. It was D.L. Moody up at Mount Hermon in Northfield who said to a group of preachers, he said, when I began to preach in 1857, all I had to do was to exhort men to act upon the truth they knew, but there has risen up in the interim a generation of people that do not know the truth. And if you just exhort them, they'll respond, but not having any root of truth in them, their response will be ephemeral and passing.

He said, you preachers that are going out now have a double task. You must first teach the truth concerning God and his law and his holiness in order that there may be that foundation upon which your exhortation can be built. And I know that all of our hearts are grieved when we hear wise, good, earnest evangelists tell us that in their mature opinion, it's probably only one half of one percent of those who make first-time professions of faith that give Bible evidence of regeneration a year later.

Why? Can it be that we've not allowed the Holy Ghost to do that work? Now this is being recorded, so no one will need misconstrue it. If I could do what I want to do, I would like to declare a moratorium on the

public preaching of how to be saved in America for two years. I would like to have us preach the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, the justice of God, the anger and the wrath of God against sinners, and the love of God, until men cried out as they did in the Acts, what must we do to be saved? And then I'd like to take them aside and whisper the gospel into their ears.

We've told people how before they know why, and they've responded, but their response has been a light and passing and ephemeral. What does the grace of God do when it brings salvation? It teaches men not only the enormity of their crime, but it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lust. What is sin? Sin in its essence is selfishness, self-love.

It's making one's own gratification the end of his being. What is to deny ungodliness? It is to renounce one's right to go into the God business for himself and to play God. No, the grace of God that brings salvation teaches everyone to whom he brings salvation to deny this no-God government, no God but my will, no God but I wish, to deny ungodliness and worldly lust.

Has that happened to you? Can you say tonight, I have been saved from the pleasure of sin? I have been saved from the purpose of sinning? I have denied my right to choose the way and manner in which I'll please myself. That's what the grace of God teaches us when God brings salvation. That's the past perfect tense, I have been saved from the pleasure of sin and the purpose of sinning.

Then there's that past tense, I was saved from the penalty of sin. Have you come to the cross condemned by the revelation of your guilt, standing as Pilate stood, viewing the one who died for you? I am convinced that everyone that has ever been truly made partaker of his nature and of his life in his regenerating grace has seen the cross not as a historical event but as a revelation given by the Spirit of God that Christ died for Christ. Christ was as though just you and he were in the world as it were.

And he was there under the load of your guilt and condemnation. Has there been that revelation? Has there? Has he revealed his Son in you and poured into you his sweet assurance of forgiveness? Can you say I was saved from the penalty of sin? And now look what the grace of God teaches us when it brings salvation. It teaches us that I have been saved from the pleasure of sin and the purpose of sinning.

I was saved from the penalty of sin. But then there's another aspect. I am being saved from the power of sin.

For the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world. Has that happened? If I meet you tonight a partaker of his grace, then I know this, that in your heart is a deep abhorrence and loathing of sin. This is when he brings salvation.

Is that right? You remember how sensitive you were when first you were saved? You wouldn't listen to anything. You wouldn't look at anything. You wouldn't go anywhere.

What about tonight? It teaches us that we should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present. And then there's that future tense. I shall be saved from the presence of sin.

Looking for that blessed hope. For the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity. I close with this.

It's the grace of God that brings salvation. Have you realized that? We sing amazing grace, but as I look at the faces of congregations when they sing it, I'm just afraid they've lost all sense of amazement. An old Methodist preacher down in John Brown University, man that had served the Lord as a circuit rider through the hills of Arkansas, was there in the chapel, and a student friend of mine that was on the platform that day saw that dear, white-haired, godly old man, and they sang amazing grace.

Oh, you know how students sing it, one way, light, flippanant. Not this man. The stage was back.

His eyes were closed and down the seams that years of care and love and labor had worn rolled tears of joy. Amazing grace. How sweet.

How about you? I close with this. You may have heard me relate this, but it's precious to my heart. I trust yours.

I was down in South Carolina ministering, rather just over the border at Hendersonville, North Carolina, actually. My song leader was Nate Pendlin. He's now the pastor in Asheville, North Carolina in the Alliance Church, and he was standing with me throughout all those conference days.

I spoke for a week on the grace of God. Last service, Friday morning, Saturday morning, he said, would you mind if I have a word of testimony before I sing? Oh, I said, Nate, anything. Then he told the people how he'd been born in the Scotch Presbyterian home there west of Asheville.

Grown up in the church at 12 or 13, he'd become a member of the church. Been taken into its fold. Everything had happened to him that was expected to happen except one thing.

The grace of God hadn't brought salvation. Oh, he knew the plan, the words, what to say. He had everything but God.

When he was 15, he took his first drink. When he was 16, he drank regularly. When he was 19, he was almost an alcoholic.

He told his father, he said, when the crops are in this fall, Dad, I'm leaving the farm. I'm going to go to the city. He wanted to get away from restraint.

One day at noon, his mother said, Nate, you're leaving us fall. Yes, Mom, I'm leaving. He said, William, promise me something.

I want you to make a promise, and I'm not going to tell you what it is. Will you promise? He said, well, I can't promise anything until I know. He said, you can promise what your mother asked you.

I'll never ask you again, Nate, and if you refuse this, I still will never ask but for you. He said, yes, Mother, whatever it is you want me to do, if it's physically possible, I'll do it. She said, Son, you've just promised to attend every meeting in the church for the next two weeks, beginning Sunday morning.

Oh, he said, it's a good thing you didn't tell me, but I'll go if it kills me, and it probably will. So he went, and it was hard, because he felt that from the second or third day, the preacher was just talking about him, no one else. That's when the Lord is beginning to get close, you know.

Thursday of the second week, the phone rang, the old farm line, and his friend said, Nate, listen, I've got Dad's car, two quarts of North Carolina's finest, and a double date in Asheville. How about it, boy? He

said, oh, nothing sounds so good before. I'd love to go, but I promised my mother that I'm going to go to church every service, and it's just Sunday night, and I'm going to do it if it'll kill me.

He said, I'm about to think it will. Well, he said, I'm going to do it. No, you'll have to wait until next week, but count me in then.

So he went to church Thursday night, and he went to church Friday night, on the night of the date. And Friday night, when the meeting was over, the invitation was given, and he didn't respond, but he couldn't go somehow. The lights were on in the grove where they parked their cars.

He went out, he tried to get in his car. His folks went home, and theirs, and he tried to get in his, and he just didn't want to. So he went around in the dark side, away from the light, and opened the door, and he started to get in.

He couldn't get in. And so he just threw himself down the ground, and he used the running board as the car as an altar, and that big mountain boy wept his way to a saving knowledge of Christ. When he got home, he told his folks that he'd given in to the Lord.

All rejoiced. It wasn't until midnight they went to bed. By one o'clock, the phone rang.

The father answered. He said, is Nate there, Mr. Pendle? Yes, he's here, and he was saved tonight. He'd given his heart to the Lord.

Christ just made him over. Oh, said the father with a sob, I wish I could say that of my boy. I just had a call from the state police.

They say he's been in an accident, and I tried to start the truck. He took my car, but the battery's dead. Would you and Nate come over in one of your cars and take me? They knew where to stop on the highway.

Torrid lights of the state police cars were there. They got off and hurried down to where the tow truck had backed to the side of the road. The cable had gone down to the mountainside where the car lay crushed and bent.

Nate went down alongside the cable, and they put the power on the winch and began to roll the car. And he was on the lower side, and the broken, bleeding body of his close friend and buddy slipped out from behind the wheel and into his arms. He could smell the alcohol.

He could see the glass that had broken. And when the car was righted and he still held his buddy in his arms, he looked over to the other seat, and he realized that just that day, he'd wanted more than anything else in the world to be in that car. But for the grace of God.

And now he was in Christ, and his buddy was in hell. Then Nate put his head back and sang as I've never heard it sung before since. Amazing grace, how sweet to save a wretch like me.

It was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed. Listen, do you know God? Has sin been removed and your heart been brought into fellowship with him? That's the purpose of salvation, to know him.

This is life eternal that they might know thee. And that one that's been so near to you, awakening you, convicting you, bringing you to repentance and faith, when you submit to his son and totally capitulate to him, then he joins himself to you and begins what is to be a lifetime of fellowship. And he tells you, you are his own.

Let me ask you, has the grace of God brought salvation? I know it has. He's taught you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, godly, looking for that blessed hope. But if he hasn't, he's here tonight, extending hands of infinite love and patience and mercy, calling you, O sinner, come home.

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