

(So Great a Salvation) Awakening

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of a deeper understanding of salvation, which includes God's great loving purpose, the cross work of Christ, and the process of salvation.

Duration: 47:45

Scripture: Proverbs 29:1, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 2:1-3

Topics: "Awakening"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a man named Victor who was desperate for money and decided to wait for his mother outside a church to take money from her purse. However, during the sermon, the preacher felt prompted by the Lord to quote a verse about the consequences of hardening one's heart. This prompted Victor to reflect on his actions and he realized that God was speaking to him. He repented, accepted Jesus into his heart, and shared the good news with his mother. Unfortunately, Victor later fell back into his old habits and died in a tragic accident. The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a Christ-centered life, interceding for sinners, and witnessing to others, while acknowledging that it is ultimately God's responsibility to awaken the hearts of sinners.

Transcript

While you're turning, I'd like to exercise the right that my last birthday gave me to reminisce just a little. As I think back in 1954, when Leonard Ravenhill called me and said, I can't go to Bethany Fellowship because of some reason. I do not recall now what it was.

Will you go? I had no idea what Bethany Fellowship was. I'd been reared in Minnesota, but when I left, there was no Bethany Fellowship. But I went, and I recall Dwayne Lovestrand and his two then young men, sons, meeting me at the airport and telling me about Bethany Fellowship.

We met in what I, last I knew was the lounge, and we didn't have the wall covering on it yet. We had insulation on the wall. But you know, we had the presence of the Lord.

And I recall it was a time of great spiritual blessing to me. Pastor Hegre took me downstairs to show me a room downstairs. He opened it.

It was a, what I'd call a large-sized closet. And with something of a little apology, he said, now this is our printing department. And there was a used multilith down there.

And I don't know whether it was a vision or a dream or just boldness, but I said, someday you're going to have five acres under roof and will be one of the nation's largest printers of Christian literature. And I was looking at a used multilith in the basement when I said it. How I do thank God for Bethany Fellowship, for the blessing that it's been to me and to my family, and to the privilege of sharing with you in these days together.

This vow and prayer. Father, we thank and praise thee that thou hast given to us this marvelous gift of life. We're grateful to have had that gift of life at any time, but to be alive now in this last decade or little more of this century, when we have so many tools with which to serve thee, so many privileges that have never been accorded to other generations.

We're asking, Father, that somehow because thou art here and we are here, that the tremendous investment that thou hast made in us through the poured out life of the Lord Jesus Christ will be brought in the fullest possible measure. Oh, might it be, our God, that somehow because of this conference this summer, that there are decisions made in hearts and lives that are going to mean that the lamb that was slain will receive fuller measure of the reward of his suffering than the other my wives might have done. And for this we'll give thee praise in the worthy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Some years ago in New York, God led me to bring a series of messages on what I then called So Great Salvation. And I was here for a Victorious Life conference, and Pastor Hedgrey asked me if I would give something to the message of the cross.

And all I could think of was this message, So Great Salvation. And so the notes were sent, my secretary's notes and the transcript. And it was published under that little booklet, which for many years was used.

Recently, the Spirit of God has been burdening me again, because I have found that so generally throughout the body of Christ, salvation is being reduced down to forgiveness for sin, for the new birth. And in so doing, if that is what we do with this marvelous provision of God's love in Christ, we rob ourselves of everything else that God intended to be ours, and we rob him of all that he intended to accomplish for us by his death. In fact, we could be accused of treading under the feet of our ignorance or our indifference, that which he purchased with his blood.

And so I bring you back to Hebrews, the second chapter and the third verse. But to get the significance of the third verse, I read verses one and two, and ask you to read on your own the first chapter. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? So great salvation. In the middle of the 19th century, a conflict arose in Europe. Professors in some of the seminaries that had been influenced by Charles Darwin and by Nietzsche and others, began to apply these principles of skepticism to the word of God.

They questioned the process of, or the fact of, inspiration, and sought to apply an evolutionary process by which we'd receive the scripture. They questioned the virgin birth of Christ, wasn't scientific, his sinless life, his atoning death, his bodily resurrection, his ascension. We call them modernists, we call them liberals, we call them skeptics.

It was at that time that many of our men who were going to be professors in our American seminaries had to go to Europe in order to be finished, and some of them that did go were certainly finished, and they came back and corrupted the American seminaries. There was conflict recognized as being an open warfare against the truth of God. When one of the parishioners came to Charles Haddon Spurgeon and said, Pastor Spurgeon, you've got to do something about this terrible heresy that's being preached.

You've got to defend the Bible. You've got to defend the gospel. And Pastor Spurgeon, with his characteristic insight, said, oh no, I don't.

The Bible is a lie, and the gospel is a lie, and just turn it loose. It'll take care of itself. Well, it didn't quite take care of itself, because that penetration of our seminaries continued.

But at the same time, among the people of God, we discovered that there were certain truths that we considered essential to the faith, and so these were called fundamental truths. The people that accepted this list of truths had been born of God, genuinely, wonderfully born of God, and they also had a list of truths that they considered essential to the faith. But it wasn't long until their children came along, and the children of these, many of them were born again, but it was beginning to be thought of that if you believed in the fundamentals, you could assume that you were saved.

Now, the third generation came on, and that's always a dangerous generation. The third generation came along, and they said, if you subscribe to this list of truths, if you believe them to be true, that means you're a Christian. And the fourth generation, and the fifth, then getting up around where we are, said that if you'll say uh-huh to five questions, if you can walk and write, you are thereby declared saved.

Until finally it got to the place that R. G. Lee, the pastor of the great Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, has stated to the South Carolina Southern Baptist Convention in Spartanburg, South Carolina in 1950, that in his opinion, based on 40 years close and careful observation, probably no more than one out of ten of the Southern Baptists knew anything experientially about the new birth. When a few years later, there was a book written that was edited by Andrew or by Carl F. H. Henry on contemporary evangelicalism, and there was a chapter in there by Andrew Blackwood, who declared that in his estimation, based on his observation, there were probably no more than one out of ten of the members of evangelical churches in America who knew anything experientially about the new birth. Many times when Dr. A. W. Tozer was with me at the tabernacle in New York City, I've heard him say that in his estimation, he considered that among the evangelical churches, and he would say, including the society of which I am a part, probably no more than one out of ten know anything experientially about the new birth.

Now, it's not my intention, if you've heard me say this before or now, to try to prove them right or to prove them wrong, but I am saying that we have been living through decades of what is known as easy believism, and the consequences is that the great many people in the churches of America, all line denominational and evangelical, and perhaps others in the more recent movements, have everything but light. They've got a beautiful plan, but it's built upon sand and not upon the rock. And our concern, therefore, if we're going to serve the Lord in these days that comprise the balance of this century and on into the next, and I'm intending to do it, recently I heard Willard Scott on the Today Show say that the fastest growing community in America are the people over a hundred years of age.

And so when I heard that, I immediately put in my application and have asked the Lord to renew my youth like the eagle. Somebody looked at the brochure that we have for Bible teaching ministry, and they claim it's my high school picture, but it wasn't, second year in college, actually. And they said, if we know the

Lord is going to renew your youth but isn't a little presumptuous to put that picture in? Well, what can you do? I was too tight to get another one taken.

Anyway, the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is that if we're going to serve the Lord today and in the days that lie ahead, we've got to recognize that the message that we give on the subject of salvation is not only one address to the world and those that are irreligious and not in attendance upon some church, but we've also got to address it to those that are members of churches. Because sometimes the greatest field for evangelism is in church membership. In the course of ministry through the years, remember once a man who'd been an elder in a lion's church for 11 years was born of God.

In another case, a woman who'd been the chairman of the Women's Mission Society of the Southern Baptist Convention was born of God. And a graduate student from DeCoe Falls Bible Institute who had finished school and was in his ministry, the music ministry, was born of God. And so I'm realizing that many times you're going to be dealing with people and you need to know what God does in this matter of bringing people out of death into life.

And so we're going to be talking to you about various phases of people being brought from death to life. But we're going to go on because everything in the Christian life that begins as a crisis is preceded by a process, is followed by a process, and in the Christian life that process issues into the crisis of the new birth, followed by a process that issues into the crisis of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it's followed by a process of living and walking in the Spirit. And we need to understand that all of this is salvation.

Salvation is a great word. In the scripture we have salvation used in this context. I have been saved.

I was saved. I am being saved. I shall be saved.

It reaches throughout into eternity past, anchored there in the loving purpose of God, swoops down through time into eternity to come, and it's all called salvation. It was all purchased and procured for us by the cross work of Christ. You see, God purposed that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ should procure for us everything we need to be everything that he purposed for us to be, and we call it salvation.

He said, so great salvation. If you want to put the amplifiers on, so and great, to bring it into meaning with what I'm saying, that's all right with me. I call it so great salvation too.

It begins with God's great loving purpose to bring people out of death into life. Now I've found that there are three things that God does when he wants to bring someone out of death into life. The first thing he does is to bring somebody up next to that person, dead in their trespasses and sin, to be a sample of his grace.

Did you know that there's someone you're the very best Christian that they know, and if they ever come to Christ, it's going to be because of you. You, to someone, you're a sample of God's grace. And that's what he does.

He puts someone up next to them as a sample of what he can do. The second thing he does is to get that person or someone to intercede for them. We'll talk more about that later, but to understand that intercession is necessary if God's going to start working in a sinner's heart.

You see, God gave sinners the right to go to hell. He said in the Old Testament, as I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will

you die? But he gives them the right to die.

He gives them the right to go to hell, and they've made a decision that they're going to walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince and the power of the air, and they're going to serve him and his government. The prince and the power of the air is that they can be anarchists and they can do what they want to do, and that's the decision sinners have made. Now God gives them a right to make the choice, and he respects the right, and he doesn't interfere until either the sinner asks them to interfere, or the sinner's representative asks them to interfere.

Revelation 1 and 5, we're told, unto him who loved us, washed us in his blood, and made us to be kings and priests unto God. He didn't say, by the way, if you ever run out of interesting things to do, would you kind of give a little thought and attention to the possibility of being a priest and interceding for a sinner now and then? I don't want to burden you, but you know that. He's made us to be priests.

He washed you in his blood, he made you to be a priest, and the priest has the responsibility to intercede, and an intercessor goes into the presence of God in behalf of the sinner, accepts the condemnation on the sinner, accepts the sinner's guilt, makes the confession the sinner ought to make, and then pleads with God to begin to work in the sinner's heart. You're the legally appointed, the court-appointed representative of the sinner. That's the second thing.

Then he gets somebody to witness to the sinner. That's the third thing we can do for the unsaved. That's the third thing God does with the one he wants to see and would love to see come out of death into life.

Some of the witness. Now, a witness is a person who tells what he has seen and heard and experienced and nothing more. If you go beyond that, you become a philosopher or a metaphysician.

And he didn't say, you shall be philosophers unto me or you shall be metaphysicians unto me. He said, you shall be witnesses unto me. And a witness can only tell what he has seen and heard and experienced.

If he goes beyond that, it's hearsay and it's inadmissible. Have you ever heard God speak through his word concerning his holiness and righteousness? Thou shalt not. Have you ever seen in your own heart, seen yourself to be as God declares you to be a traitor and a rebel and an anarchist and a transgressor and an enemy? Have you ever seen yourself? Have you ever heard him say, come unto me and rest? Have you come? Did you find cleansing? Did you find forgiveness? Did you experience the new birth? Have you heard the spirit of God and the witness of the spirit enabling you to call Almighty God Abba Father? You're a witness.

Tell him what you've seen and heard and experienced and that's all. You don't know the answers to all the questions. You don't need to know the answers to all the questions.

All you need to do is to tell him, did you know that you're the world's greatest expert on you? There isn't anybody in the world that knows more about you than you. And there isn't anybody in the world that can contradict you. And if you've had an experience, if you've really experienced something, you're an authority on you.

And you can speak it to anybody in the world. This is what I saw. This is what I heard.

This is what I experienced. That's witness. But when you've done that, you've done all you can do.

You can't do anymore. That's all you can do. Live Christ before sinners, intercede for sinners, a witness to.

From that moment on, it's something God must do. And that is to awaken the sinner. The sinner tells us a little bit about, the scripture tells us a little bit about the sinner.

We need to know, we can learn most of it by remembering our own attitude. I've already just mentioned to you the five things that we were. Traitors, and rebels, and anarchists, and transgressors, and enemies.

But the sinner, the scripture also tells us that the God of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not. Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. Have you ever seen people that try to take a nap in the middle of the day when they can't get the room dark, and they just put a blindfold on.

Well that's what the God of this world seems to have done to the lost, and has blinded their mind. And it's been done deliberately, has been done very, very effectively. And so we could say, well, and be exact, that the sinner is asleep.

Again, Ephesians the second chapter, he says, and you who were dead in trespasses and sin, dead in sin. So it's not only asleep, but it's dead in the sense that no interest in the things of God, no sensitivity to the work and word of God, and they have to therefore be awakened. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and 34, we are told, awake the righteousness.

And in Ephesians 5, 14, awake thou that sleepest. I said you have to be witnesses. You know, I talked with a surgeon this past weekend, and he was telling me that the most important person, other than the surgeon, in the operating room, is the surgical nurse.

The function of the surgical nurse is to know, not in the manner of doing everything, but know what is to be done, and what instrument is to be used for what needs to be done. The surgical nurse must be, so I'm told, I know nothing about it. Every time I've had anything done, they let me take a nap while they did it, so I haven't really any first-hand experience.

But I've talked with nurses, and I've talked to doctors, and they said that the surgical nurse has to know each instrument, and when it's needed, and how to pick it up and put it firmly in the hands of the surgeon, so there's no fumbling or dropping of it. In a sense, you are a surgical nurse to God the Holy Spirit. The witness has to be effective.

Now, if you find a sinner that is unawakened, do you know what of the scalpels of truth are needed in order to be effective in awakening that sinner? There's a class of scriptures that the Holy Ghost uses. I'll give you a few, but only as tithes. It's your responsibility to find others, and when you do, to memorize them, keep them handy, so that you can use them, because you're going to run into unawakened sinners.

And you ought to know how to use the word, and what word to use. I'll tell you one you don't want to use, and that's John 3 16. Well, why? Because, you see, if you tell a sinner how to be saved before they need to be saved, or know they need to be saved, what you have done is gospel hardened them.

I don't know what it was that Paul and Silas said in that Philippian jail during those hours that they were there. There's no record of it given, and I've never had anyone explain it to me. I do know what they didn't say.

They did not tell the people in that prison how to be saved. They waited until at least one of that number that was there when the angel opened the prison doors, and locked all the shackles that held them, and then bound the people so they wouldn't bolt and run. Paul and Silas waited until the Philippian jailer gave the invitation.

He was awakened, and he had some other things, and then when he said, what must I do to be saved? Paul told him, now if I had my way, then probably it's a good thing I don't. But if I did have my way, I would declare a moratorium on the public preaching of the plan of salvation in America for at least 12 months, and probably 24 months, and would call on everyone that has use of the airways and pulpits to preach the holiness of God, and the righteousness of God, and the law of God. Until such a time as sinners began to cry out, what must we do to be saved? And then I'd take them off in a corner where no one's here, and whisper the gospel to them.

Because what we have done is to gospel harden a generation of sinners by telling them how before they have any understanding why they need to be saved. Well, do you have a class of scriptures that you can give when you meet someone that's unawakened? Perhaps you'd like to just turn to Psalm 73 and 18. It's worth turning to, and it's worth underlining, and certainly worth memorizing.

Psalm 73, 18. I'd like to have you see it. I hope you believe it.

You're talking about the wicked. Surely thou did set them in slippery places. Thou castest them down into destruction.

Do you think the sinners actually believe that they're standing in slippery places? But you know, if you could use that verse for someone that's unawakened, and you could say, well, I know you said that you're going to get do something about God when when you get old, but you don't have much confidence about getting old anymore. You never did. Look here, did you realize that in Psalm 73 and 18, the psalmist says to God, thou did set them sinners in slippery places.

You're standing on a side hill with clay mud that's wet. You think you're walking on a flat sidewalk, but that's not what the scripture says. You're standing in slippery places.

Now, don't you think it would be useful to know that verse, and have it on your tray of scalpels to use with someone that's unawakened, doesn't know their needs? And then if you turn to Jeremiah, the 23rd chapter and the 12th verse, this is the prophet gives us something else about the same subject. I'd like to have you see that. Jeremiah 23, 12.

Wherefore, their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness. God has added to it, not only standing in slippery places, but the slippery ways in the darkness. They shall be driven on and fall therein, for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of visitation says the Lord.

Now that's the scripture verse that could have the effect of causing someone complacent in their sin and unawakened to have a little bit of thought, take a little bit of care. How about turning to Isaiah chapter 30? Isaiah, back to Isaiah chapter 30. And let the spirit of God speak through this to your heart.

Verses 12 and 13. Wherefore, thus saith the Holy One of Israel, because you despise this word and trust in oppression and perverseness and stay thereon, therefore shall this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall whose breaketh coming suddenly at an instant. You see, if we can't get the saints to be concerned about the lostness of the lost, it's going to be just a little bit hard to get the

lost concerned about their own state.

And so I'm suggesting that you ought to take these as very personally as being describing your friends, your loved ones, your neighbors, people you know that you ought to be concerned about. And this is their case. And in Isaiah 47 and verse 11, the Spirit of God has something more to say about.

And I'd like to have you see that. I think you ought to memorize these scriptures. You ought to have them before you, at least where you could turn to them quickly.

Isaiah 47, 11. Therefore shall evil come upon thee. Thou shalt not know from whence it arises, and mischief shall fall upon thee.

Thou shalt not be able to put it off, and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. Oh, you say these are all Old Testament scriptures. Yeah, you're right, they are.

I'll go into First Thessalonians 5.3. It might give us a little bit of insight to what the New Testament had to say. First Thessalonians 5.3. For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as prevail upon a woman, a child, and they shall not escape. Somehow I think we've been brainwashed in the last few decades into believing that God's righteousness, and God's justice, and God's holiness is a blotch on the divine, a sketch in the blemish of the divine character.

I don't believe that. I believe that the God of the Bible is perfectly God. He's the God of love as well as righteousness.

And when, when it is declared that he is angry with the wicked every day, if he turn not, he will wet his sword, he will destroy them. There is no conflict whatever with the fact that God loved the world and gave his Son. You see, sin is not a congenital disease.

Sin is a high, treasonous crime against the Godhead. The only one big enough, and wise enough, and just enough, righteous enough to rule and govern one made in the image of God is the God in whose image that one is made. And to turn to one's own way and say, I'm going to live as a moral anarchist in a moral universe is treason.

And it's not just an act of treason, it's a lifetime of rebellion. And not just a lifetime of rebellion, but it's the policy of anarchy. Now, these are the scriptures that God said, but you know, I find singularly little burden for the lost in the average church where I'm privileged to go minister.

I've been there for a whole week in some of our finalized churches in Bible conference and evangelistic meetings, and no one brought one sinner in or took me out to meet one lost person. And I then checked in and found that most of them didn't even have a lost man or woman or boy or girl that they were praying for. No burden, no concern for the lost.

Somehow or other, God's got to get to us and help us to understand what has to happen, what happened to us, what must happen to others. So to focus on that, perhaps to bring it to your heart, turn to Proverbs 29, verse 1. Proverbs chapter 29, verse 1. He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. This is the word of God.

This is what God is saying. These are scriptures that need to be used. Are the sinners around you, your family, your friends, the ones you meet and should be meeting if you're not, are they often reproved? Yes.

When? Well, every time they pick up a newspaper and see an obituary page, that's a reproof. Life is short, death is certain. And there's a reproof.

Every time a sinner passes a church with a steeple and a cross on top, that's a reproof. Every time he signs a check and puts on a date, he's doing it from the birth of Jesus Christ, from which we mark all our legal documents. That's a reproof.

Every time of memory, every time a gospel song is heard on the radio or heard through a window, every time he flicks the switch on his television set and sees a gospel program underway or searches through his radio and hears a gospel program, that's a reproof. It doesn't require an angel to stand there and warn them to flee from the wrath to come or a sinner to do it. All of these things have the effect of being reproved.

Every highway sign, every track that's left anywhere that's seen, all of these are reproved. He that being often reproved hardens his neck. You have given, we have given to the unsaved the idea that they are right.

They've got years and years and years before them in which they can decide whether or not they want to come to Christ. They don't. They don't have it.

When I was a young man, 21, I was called to the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Little Falls, Minnesota. I was there and ministered part of 1941 and 42 and most of 43. And I was followed by the Reverend Victor Ernest.

His wife was Alice, had been Alice Schmoltz from Anoka. We didn't have buses when I was there. We had to board in town.

And I stayed in the home of Schmoltz and Alice, older daughter, graduate from Bethel College, was home working. And she was engaged at that time to Victor. And they were married and went into ministry.

And then they came to Little Falls. And one occasion I heard Victor tell of his experience. He'd grown up in Bemidji, Minnesota, and was a rebellious young man, living for himself, enjoying all the things that his crowd did, doing them with gusto, and had a job, had sense enough when he got paid on Friday night to bring his money home and give it to his mother and take out a little bit as sort of the carousing of the weekend.

This particular time, Friday night, he'd gone through it all and he needed more. But his mother had gone to evangelistic meeting in the local church. And so Victor realized the only way he'd get money, or the fastest way or the best way, was to go and to the church and be there when his mother came out.

Then he could get some money because knew she carried it in her purse. Well, he was there sitting on the running board of his car in the yard of the church. The church door was open.

It was warm. And the preacher said, for some reason, I don't know why, I feel prompted of the Lord to stop the sermon I'm giving and to quote a verse of scripture. And he quoted, he that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed.

That was our remedy. And he, I must give it again. He gave it a second time.

He tried to turn to, I must give it a third time. I don't know why. At the giving of the third time, Victor Ernest slid in behind the wheel of the car, started it, and drove up to a lonely place outside the city.

And he sat there. He realized God had spoken to his heart. And he said, I went over on the other side of the car.

I opened the door. I got down, used the running board as an altar. And he said, I opened my heart to Jesus Christ.

And I went back to my mother, but not to take more money for booze, but to tell her that I'd been born into the family of God. Spirit of God used the verse. The sword is spirit.

I was reading recently that when Jonathan Edwards was pastor in Massachusetts, that one of the, the town drunkard came to his study at nine o'clock in the morning. He had a, he said he'd had a dream, a terrible dream. In his dream, he had dreamt that he'd gone to hell.

And he was in hell. And he was screaming that he could go back, that he could go back. Let me go back.

Let me go back. And so he was released to go back out of hell on the condition in the dream. Now mind you, it's a dream.

And then he could go back to earth, back again at the time on the condition that he would reform and that he would be trust in Christ. So he came to Jonathan Edwards early in the morning. And he told this perspiration still bursting on his brow and the awfulness of that moment.

And he said, I want to, I'm going to give up drinking. I'm going to, I'm going to, tell me what I need to do about God. And he made a profession of faith, gave up drinking, attended church for about four months.

And then somebody coaxed him to have one drink. And inside of two more months, he was right back being the town drunkard. One night he was in an upstairs room and had an outside stairway.

And in his drunkenness, he opened the door and he stumbled and he hit the railing and it broke. And he fell from that second floor down and broke his neck and was dead. And Jonathan Edwards went to his journal and found it was one year to the day from the time this man had come saying he'd had a dream.

He that being often reprov'd, hardness is said, do you care about the loss? Somebody cared about you. Somebody lived Christ before you. Someone interceded for you.

Someone witnessed to you. Are you equipped with those verses of scripture that you can use for the unawakened to cause them to realize the danger in which they stand? Or don't you believe they stand in danger? We've so twisted the love of God, we've almost made the God of the Bible turn into a senile old grandfather that was very angry with his kids, but he puts up with an awful lot of nonsense from his grandkids. Well, I'll tell you, the God of the Bible doesn't change.

And he is now as he's ever been. And the entreaty I press upon your heart today, first is the one that Paul made at the church, to the church of Florence in his second letter, when he said, examine yourself, whether you be in the faith, prove your own self, or you know you're not your own self, other Christ being you, except you be reprobate. You see, salvation is not a scheme.

It's not a plan. It's not a decision. Salvation is a person.

He that hath the son of life. And the second thing I want you to do is to ask God to forgive you if it's true that you've been unconcerned about the loss. There's no burden for them.

And if you are unequipped with those verses of scriptures that you could use, honed in prayer, oiled in love, to use as the sword of the Spirit to the unawakened sinner. We're going to go on from there in the next service, but right now, let's open our hearts to the Lord in a little time of prayer. And you who know me know that I do not give extended invitations, but I never want to close the service without giving those who've been stirred of God an opportunity to mind God.

And if today, or prior to today, or for any reason that you and God know God has spoken to your heart, then you have a need. This altar is open and we invite you to come. If you're prepared to confess everything that God has shown you and forsake all that you confess and believe that everything you confess he forgives and pardon, then we invite you to come.

So we're going to just continue in prayer. And if you're here and the Spirit of God has spoken, you might be. Now our Father, we're asking that our minds may be open to all that thou would say to us in these brief days we spend together.

We thank thee for what our brother Rocky has called to our hearts' attention concerning the sufficiency of Christ, our union with him. We thank you for that ministry. And now Lord, we meld these ministries together and we're talking now in this first phase of the divine operation, the awakening of sinners to their lostness.

Should there be one here, Lord, who does not know experientially him whom to know his life, this is the best time in all their lives to do something about it. And Father, for all that have been indifferent to the plight of the lost, the concern of the lost, O God of grace, forgive us and cleanse us from this and give to us hearts of compassion, hearts of burden for the lost, and a readiness and a willingness to witness to them as thou hast believed and as they have need. Teach us to be skilled in the use of the word, wise in applying truth to the word to the hearts of men as they are in their need, at the state of dealing with them.

So to that end, Father, seal the word as we sought together upon it. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/16/SID16693.mp3>

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