

# Faith Obeys (3 of 4)

by Paul Washer

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*Paul Washer's sermon emphasizes that true faith is demonstrated through obedience to God's commands, rooted in a belief in His character and promises.*

**Duration:** 1:06:34

**Scripture:** Genesis 6:13-14, Habakkuk 3:17-18, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Hebrews 11:1, Hebrews 11:8, James 1:22

**Topics:** "Obedience"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses a vivid example of a boy with sagging pants to illustrate the importance of not conforming to the ways of the world. He emphasizes that our outward appearance and behavior can reveal a lot about our inward realities. The preacher warns young people against being influenced by the sensual and degrading culture around them, urging them to live differently. He encourages them to align their lives with the teachings of the Bible and not be deceived by the traps of the world.

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## Transcript

It's a privilege for me to come here and speak Hebrews chapter 11. I'll just briefly go back through the last two nights. We started in verse 1, in the assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen, and that we decided that in the Word this is only possible if God has spoken.

To have assurance of something I hope for can be without reason unless God has spoken. To have a conviction of something I haven't seen can be nothing more than fantasy unless God has spoken. The wonderful thing about it is that He has spoken, and He has spoken more than what we even take into account.

He has given us great and mighty promises that we are called upon to believe. Not explain away, but believe. I always say that people who are more charismatic oftentimes live in presumption.

People who are more given to a Baptist way of life, they're given to unbelief. Charismatics are believing promises God never even gave. We're not believing the promises.

Or we say, God does everything that's His will. He'll answer every prayer according to His will, but in the foundation of that our foundational attitude is, but it's not His will to do anything. It's God's will to do so much more than what you and I could ever think or ask.

That's the one thing I wish you would really come to understand about the person of God. He is much more willing to do great things than you can believe. Than you can believe.

Men of old gained approval by faith. And we went through different texts, but we'll go back to verse 6. And without faith it is impossible to please Him. Those two things are very important.

Men of old gained approval by faith. And also verse 6, without faith it is impossible to please Him. Why? Because when you do not have faith, you are making a derogatory remark about the character of God.

You say, Paul, you've said this every time you've got up and preached, because it is so true. To not believe God is to call Him a liar or to call Him an imbecile. Either He knows what is right and is not telling us, or He's telling us what He thinks is right.

But it's not. To not believe God is to attack His character. And then, again, I want to say this is so very important.

That obedience and faith, although they can be seen as two separate entities, we can treat them theologically apart and we can discuss each one as a separate thing standing on its own. But at the same time, they do not stand on their own. We should not obey God simply because we desire to be a moral people.

Let me say that again. We should not obey God simply because we desire to do the right thing. We should obey God because we believe God.

We believe when He tells us, do this, that it has an end and a purpose. We believe God when He says, do not do that. We don't do it because we believe.

Because we believe that He has our best interest in mind. We believe God that He knows what is right. He knows what is right.

I do not have a problem. I know this can get carried on in a wrong fashion, but I do not have a problem with a person who thinks to themselves, I want the best end possible for my life. There's nothing wrong with that.

I want the best end possible for my life. And I believe that best end is achieved through obeying God. Through obeying God.

So many of you young people, you want certain things. And many of the things that you want are not bad at all. As a matter of fact, they might be godly desires.

You maybe want a husband or you want a wife. Those are godly desires. But are you going to believe God for a husband? Are you going to believe God for a wife? You say, oh yes, okay.

Then are you going to obey His precepts? Are you going to obey what He says? Are you going to heed His wisdom? Because to the degree that you do that, you believe God. And to the degree that you don't, you do not believe God. In Christianity, the end does not justify the means.

But the end and the means are in one accord in Christianity. If the end is bad, the means will be bad, no matter what you take. And if the end is good, it doesn't mean you can use any means.

The means must also be good. You want a husband? Fine, that is good. Now, you must go about it in the good way.

And that is believing God, obeying God with regard to what He says about husbands. In every aspect of our life, we must throw ourselves upon God. And if we can work out a deliverance with our own hands, then we set ourselves in a bad path, a dangerous.

Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, because if you do not believe Him, you are attacking His character. We went on and we were looking in verse 6 also. He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

One time my wife was in Peru, and before we had children, she was in Romania, and all the girls wanted her to teach and teach and teach. And so, about halfway through the week, finally some girl stood up and said, all you do is say the same thing. I mean, I want some teaching.

All you do is say the same thing. And the child was a little bit taken aback. She began to search her heart, thinking, what have I done wrong? And the girl says, every time we come to you with a problem, the only thing you say is, what does God's Word say, and are you going to obey? And the child said, well, that's really all it is.

What does God's Word say, and are you going to obey? And she said, and every time we feel like we're confused, and every time we feel like we have a need, and every time we feel like, you tell us to seek God. Yes. You know, we laugh at that, and rightly so, but the thing about it is, I haven't found myself obeying it to the extent it ought to be obeyed.

I mean, with every need, every problem, every confusion, everything that happens, seek God. I know that sounds redundant. I know I say it, iterate it, reiterate it, but it's true.

We always want a multitude of messages. Our ears want to hear so many things. And yet the simple things that lead to life, we seem to pass over.

It's like Noah. Can you imagine? He preached for 120 years. So after probably, you know, 50 years, someone came to him and said, Noah, what are you going to preach today? It's going to rain.

But Noah, you've been preaching that for 50 years. Preach something different. No, it's going to rain.

I mean, he gets up in the morning, does family devotions. Dad, what are we going to, what passage are you going to take today? It's going to rain. For 120 years, same message, it's going to rain.

And the same thing here this weekend, seek the Lord. He's the rewarder of those who seek Him. Seek Him, seek Him, seek Him.

Standing on my own, I am a very terrified person, a very insecure person. But I realized something. If I am on my knees, humbly seeking my God, all the armies of the world could come together and unite at my doorstep and they will not touch a hair of my head, lest it be ordained of God.

Seek God, it's the answer to absolutely everything, everything in your life is falling apart. Drop to your knees and stay there. Seek God.

You don't know what to do, drop to your knees and you say, well, I've done that. How long? That is one of the greatest questions. Everybody prays for five minutes.

Everybody can seek God for a day. Lord, I have no other place to go. If you do not move on my behalf, if you do not speak, where shall I go, Lord? Whom do I have in heaven? But you who on earth can be my helper? Lord, when Paul said that he was a prisoner.

Of Jesus Christ. I think I know that he meant that he a prisoner in chains, I know he was a literal prisoner, but I think every time he said that there was something much more behind that. Lord, I am a man cut off.

I see myself, Paul Washer, as a man cut off. God has purposely cut me off from all other help. All other solutions, all other powers, all other things.

I am a man cut off so that I have only one chance, one opportunity at help, and that help comes from God. And I am fearful to try to work out a deliverance by my own hand. Seek God.

He's the rewarder of those who seek him. He is the rewarder of those who seek him. He is the rewarder of those who seek him, seek him, seek him.

And in Luke 18, we were talking about it around the table the other night where Jesus gives this just fantastic, almost unbelievable, you know, parable about about praying and enduring in prayer and persevering in prayer and that the unjust judge will answer even though he doesn't care about anyone, he'll answer. And then he goes on to how much more will your father come to your aid, answer your prayers, call upon him, call upon him, call upon him. He will act.

He will act. He will never not act. If you call upon him, enduring in prayer, he will always move.

And then after saying that, it's almost like Jesus is saying with an attitude, listen, guys, just call on him in prayer, continue in prayer. He will always move on your behalf. And then Jesus looks and he goes, but then again.

When the Son of Man returns to this earth. Will anybody even be believing what I just said? I think it's one of the saddest verses in the entire Bible. For you young, some of you thinking about going in the ministry, let me tell you something, cut yourself off.

Cut yourself off from all other helpers and all other aid. Cut yourself off from trying to be around great teachers, cut yourself off from trying to rub shoulders with the big guys, cut yourself off from being able to work by your own power to sustain yourself in your own ministry, cut yourself off so that God is your only helper and God is your only teacher. I hear today for some of you, I feel like I need to say this.

Some of you may. This maybe means nothing. I know so many young ministers who are always running to and fro to get a glimpse of some guy that God's using.

And I tell people, you know, I have a great respect for John Piper, but if he were to walk down this hallway here, I would go out the other door and walk down that hallway. I would make it so that God literally had to force me into communion with him. Why would you do something like that? Because I am afraid if I am to move on up, if I am to progress, if I am to do anything in this world, I want it to be done not by association, not by manipulation, not by standing on someone else's shoulders.

I want God to be the one who either humbles me or exalts me. I want to seek him alone. That is all.

When you do that, it is so easy to understand God's will. We'll sit in the office sometimes and go. You know, I think it's maybe God's will that we do this and it requires this much money to do it.

Let's pray about it. There's a deadline. We pray about it.

Say it's twenty five thousand dollars. We pray about it. Deadline comes.

No money showed up. And you know what? You know, we're able to say, well, wasn't God's will. But if we were someone who raised support and prodded our brothers and sisters in Christ to get money, possibly we could have manipulated that money out of our brothers and sisters in Christ and done a work that was not God's will because that's happening all the time.

You see what I'm saying? When you make God alone your provider, God alone is the one who is your helper, then it is so much easier to discern his will. God is our patron. If he does not help us, we should not be helped.

So then we go on to Noah by faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen. I explained how that deals with every one of us here. Every one of us here that is truly Christian has been warned from God about things not yet seen.

And we need to live in the context of that warning. Jesus Christ, the son of God, when he came to earth, he warned. I always get such a big kick when I have to deal with liberal theologians who come out saying things like, well, we don't you know, we're not we're not we just want to teach the words of Jesus.

When you ask them, you know, you know, you're not teaching on wrath. You're not teaching a judgment. You're not teaching on society's sins.

You're not it's nothing. You're just teaching on love. And they go, well, we're not you know, we just we're not like you guys.

We're not putting the apostle Paul over Jesus. We just want to teach the teachings of Jesus. And that's why we just teach about love.

And I say, you know, just bear with me for a moment, guys. Do you realize that in the Old Testament? We almost from the Old Testament know nothing about hell. There is so little in the Old Testament about hell that if we just had the Old Testament, we'd know almost nothing about hell.

And then I go, now, let's take Paul and Peter and John, if we took all the apostles, James, everybody who wrote in the New Testament and we were to sit down and study their texts, study it just clearly, Pauline theology, we'd almost find nothing about hell. We would know almost nothing about hell from the apostle Paul, the almost the only one, the one who spoke about hell more than absolutely everybody else put together with Jesus. Almost everything we know about hell came from him.

See the contradiction there? And Jesus warned, Jesus, I live in a context of, in a sense, a healthy fear. I do. There's a warning been placed upon me, a warning about my own soul.

And the possibility of it being lost. There is a warning upon me about the soul of my wife. There is a warning upon me about those two little boys that I would die for.

But there's a warning upon them. When they were born, the pain of my wife's womb was screaming out depraved, depraved, fallen, fallen, fallen. Every act of disobedience, fallen, fallen, fallen, a warning constantly all around us.

You are a fallen race, a fallen people. Noah lived, warned by God, Noah lived concerned about the salvation of his household and he built an ark by faith and in doing so, he condemned the rest of the world. And I spoke to you about two things that could possibly mean that are so very important.

First of all, if you do any righteous act, even all alone by yourself, if the ungodly see it, they're going to be angry with you, even though you haven't even talked to them. If they see you do a righteous act, they're going to be angry with you because when they see that righteous act, it convicts them of their own wickedness and they hate you for it. But also condemning the world means, in a sense, despising the world.

There is a true sense in which we are to despise the world. We are to lift up our nose to the world. We are to consider it something disgraceful, something we have no part with at all.

And then. We go on to verse eight, by faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed. Now, here's something about a calling that's very, very important, personal agendas.

The only thing personal agendas accomplish is building a wall around a person and shutting out the voice of God. You should have no personal agenda. You should have no agenda to be secure, to be wealthy, to be comfortable, to obtain this or that or any other thing in the world.

You should have no personal agenda of I'm going to do this and then do this and then do this and then I'm going to arrive here. You should have no personal agenda with regard to ministry. You know, I want to be a minister.

I want to be a preacher. I want to do this and I'm going to do this and this and this to reach my goal. I know this contradicts our culture, but it's just fact.

You are to have one agenda. Thy will, O God. Thy will, O God.

When you call me, I will obey. When you move me, I will move. When you tell me to stay, I will stay.

I will be obedient to your voice. A wonderful illustration that I heard a while back, a missionary in Africa. He came out of the house where he was at, kind of came out on the porch and his little boy, about six years old or something, was playing under a tree.

He walked out on the porch. He saw his little boy and he went, Fall! And the little boy just fell. And he said, Crawl to daddy! The little boy started crawling like this.

He said, Stand up! The little boy stood up. He said, Run to daddy! And he ran. You look at that as an outsider and you go, What on earth? Thing about it was, the little boy was playing in a tree.

When the father came out, a pit viper had come down and was right here. And when that dad said, Fall! If that kid would have went, What? Why? Huh? I don't want to. He'd be dead.

Fact of the matter, the little boy fell. And he said, Crawl! Little boy crawled. He said, Stand up! He stood up.

Immediate obedience. That is a perfect illustration of the way we are to be with God. Fall! Yes, Lord! Stay here! Everyone else is telling you, Move on! Move on! Move on! You're going to miss your opportunity.

Move on! Stay! Stay! It was raised. We raised quarter horses and charlotte cattle. To be able to dismount, almost do a flying dismount on a horse.

And soon as the reins fell on each side of that horse, the horse stopped. Cattle moving all over the place. The horse doesn't move.

Team of horses moving a bunch of logs. So the team of horses is very, very dangerous. That horse gets skittish on you.

You better get out between the horse and those logs. You better get as far away as you can with a lunge line on that horse. Because when he jolts, he's going to be pulling a lot of logs with him.

Can crush a man. You want something that you say, Stay! It stays. Because it's dangerous.

It's dangerous to work with someone who cannot follow. Cannot follow. Darren Rotman, who works with me, I can walk in the office and say, He can be right in the middle of something.

Now, I'm not a cruel director or anything like that. But the fact of the matter is, he can be right in the middle of doing something in his work. And I can say, Darren, I need this, this and this done in 10 minutes.

He doesn't turn around and say, as soon as I get this done. He doesn't turn around and say, Well, you know, I'm really busy. He understands authority.

He drops everything right there and goes and does it. I'm trying to teach a disciple, a guy here recently. And I said, Do you realize you would be dead if we were in the army? He said, Why? I said, I tell you to do something and you question.

You're just full of questions. I tell you to do something and you say, Why? Or couldn't we do it better this way? I said, It doesn't work that way. I said, We are an organization that has to move.

We are an organization that has to do certain things. And we have to do them quickly. We don't have a lot of manpower.

And I said, I can't stand here for a half an hour every time I tell you to do something and have you explain to me why there's a better way to do it. I said, When God calls you to lead this organization, then I will submit to you. I said, But right now we've got to get things done.

They said, Well, what does that have to do with walking with God? Absolutely everything. Absolutely everything. Run, run.

Jump, jump. Stay, stay. And stay is the hardest.

But Lord, I'm walking out here in the wilderness. Lord, I'm you know, I hear ministers sometimes, guys that I'm dealing with, precious souls. And they'll say, I just, you know, I'm out here in the wilderness.

You know, I hear other people preach. Their theology is bad. There's a thousand people listening to him.

I know that their theology is bad. Their teaching is bad. They're not doing what's right.

I know the truth. I know all this stuff. But I'm out here in the desert and I just feel like I need to get out there and get in the war.

I said, No, you need to stay in the desert until God tells you to move. You don't do anything until God. See, our timing schedules, our everything, they're all off.

They're all off. The only agenda we should have is, God, what do you desire? Get up every morning, God. What do you desire? By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed.

Now, look at this. He didn't obey by the power of obedience. It's like pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps.

He obeyed by the power of faith. He wasn't just, OK, God's called me to go into a foreign land. I'll just go in there and die.

I'll go ahead and follow, even though I know that it's just going to lead to my demise. What is that? It's just like the disciples, why they were rebuked so severely by the Lord with regard to the storm in the sea. Jesus did not say, Let's get in the boat, go halfway across the lake and drown.

He said, Let's go to the other side. And when the storm came up, they said, We're going to drown. That's not what I said we were going to do.

I said we were going to get in a boat and go to the other side. I didn't say we were going to drown halfway there. That's why I'm sleeping.

You see that? All right, God called me. Let's go. It might lead to my death, but it's victory.

It'll be a sure death, a solid death and a death that will advance the kingdom. If he's called me, I will go no matter what the circumstance, no matter if it's apparent failure. I believe that it's not failure.

That's why a missionary ought to be able to go to the foreign field. If he's called of God by faith, work there for 20 years and never see a soul come to know the Lord and yet die with joy. Success is found in faith.

I have believed my God. I have come here and I have served for 20 years. I have not seen one fruit.

I have not seen any indication. I have not seen anything. But God called me here.

Man, it's not easy. It's not hard to minister before the Lord when you're preaching and preaching. It's not hard to carry out your calling when you're doing all kinds of stuff and there's all kinds of fruit and all kinds of evidences of the power of the Holy Spirit.

That's not hard. What's hard is go out there and minister when there is no fruit on the vine, no cattle in the stall, nothing but barren dirt. And then everyone, all the carnal Christians around you going, see, we told you so, we told you so, we told you so.

This way of yours to do things, it's wrong. See, by faith, we go out. By faith, we endure.

By faith, we hear him tell us to do something and we do it and we keep doing it until he tells us to do something else. By faith, by faith, by faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed. By going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance and he went out not knowing where he was going.

That is his greater definition of faith or illustration of faith as the definition we have in verse one. There's so many elements here that indicate what faith truly is. First of all, God called him.

Remember what I said? In order to have faith, there must be revelation. God must speak. God must speak and he has spoken through his word.

All right. He was called. What did he do? He obeyed.

Now, what did that obedience involve? Something that is always involved when we talk about faith, going out to a place, not staying in the same place. Faith always has to do with not staying in the same place. You say, well, you mean you have to move physically? Not necessarily.

But it is always moving out of your comfort zone. Always. Always moving out of your comfort zone, going into an area that is not comfortable to you.

Now, let me give you just a very strange example of this. God called me to go to Peru. It wasn't difficult, really.

I was young and zealous. I mean, he could have called me to walk through a fire, just practically wild. Most of it, pure emotion and nothing of it of the spirit, but it served its purpose anyway.

It wasn't difficult. It was difficult for God to call me to come back here. No longer a missionary.

I felt more spiritual as a missionary, but he called me, in my opinion, almost it seemed to take a step down, not up the spiritual ladder, but down the spiritual ladder in my own heart, my own wrong way of thinking, and to go live like more normal people. That was hard. Another thing that was hard, it's not working 14, 12, 14 hours a day in the ministry.

That's not hard. What's hard for me, what requires a greater act of faith on my part is when God told me, you know, you need to play with your son. And you know all those years you've missed making cabinets and building things? Go do that.

Go do that. I want you to take time off. I want you to do that.

Now, some of you don't understand what I'm saying. Some of you do. But Lord, I want to do this.

I don't want to do that. But Lord, if I worked harder, there'd be more advance. You know, if I didn't take this time out and I just, you know, the kingdom work, the kingdom work.

Don't worry about the kingdom, Paul. I'll take care of it. I'm the king, remember? And as for you, first of all, Paul, I don't need you.

I want you. I love you. I don't need you.

Secondly, you've got a real pride problem with being able to tell, well, people knowing that you're so dedicated to the ministry and you never take any time off for yourself. That's not bringing me any glory at all. And you need to be more well-rounded.

I mean, the world doesn't need to see how a monk lives. It needs to see how a man lives. So go to the shop.

Make something out of wood for your wife. My wife said, hallelujah, this is the will of God. So this is something that I'm really wanting you to understand.

So many times when people hear me preach, because I know, you know, I'm zealous, wild, and you have a wrong idea of what it means to be spiritual. It gets into something very important about the secular and the sacred. We have this idea.

It's a Catholic idea, actually. It's wrong. That the world is sort of divided up into secular and sacred.

There are sacred things and secular things. You know, there are sacred things that pertain to God and bring God glory. And then there are secular things that, well, you just have to do in order to eat, in order to live.

That is wrong. Now that we are in the kingdom, in Christ's kingdom, everything is sacred. Your vocation is sacred, done unto the glory of God.

Your walking through the woods is sacred. Your buying socks is sacred. The pots and the pans, everything.

That's why it's not, well, you know, I need to spend more time with God. What does that mean? Well, it means I need to pray more and I need to read my Bible more. Now, hold on.

You got God back in the closet again. It'd be better to say, I need to pray more and read my Bible more but not I need to spend more time with God, because you're not supposed to just be spending time with God in your Bible reading and your prayer. You're supposed to spend time with God when you're plowing.

See the difference? Tremendous. We can say things. I would love if I probably could go back and get another degree or something at the university.

It would probably be in language. The philosophy, actually, of language. You see how we can say certain things and really not know what we're saying and actually build a prison with our own words.

Well, I need to spend time with God. I need to get back in the word and prayer. Well, you probably need to get back in the word and prayer, but don't equate that with spending time with God because you're supposed to be spending time with God all the time.

And if you do equate it with that, then what you've done is you've put God in a closet to say this and you pull him out maybe an hour a day and then put him back in there when you go do other stuff. We have a little play that I saw in Peru the first time. It's an amazing sort of thing.

Some people might say it's a little irreverent, but man, the first time I saw a bunch of Peruvian kids do it, I just thought it's like this guy becomes a Christian in the play and he's reading the word and a guy is kind of behind him acting in the play as the presence of Jesus. While the kid's reading the word, Jesus is behind him showing him stuff in the word and everything like that. And then the kid's praying and Jesus is right beside him just listening and just encouraging him.

And the kid's doing all kinds of things. And then somebody comes by and goes, hey, can we go out and play baseball? You want to... or soccer down in South America. You want to play soccer? The kid goes, well, yeah, yeah.

And the kid starts out the door like this and Jesus is right behind him. And the kid goes, no, no, I'm going to play soccer. Jesus goes, no, you don't understand.

I'm going to play soccer. You stay here. This, your Bible, your prayer, you stay here.

I'll be back. I'm going to play soccer. You don't have anything to do with soccer.

You don't like soccer or anything else. So you stay here. And it gets into such a conflict that finally the kid goes, Jesus, stay! And takes his hand and goes, now stay! Walks away.

You do that. And so do I in sin. You don't want to have any... I'm going to get my hair done, Jesus.

You don't want to go there. Are you supposed to be going anywhere where he can't come? Are you supposed to be doing anything that he wouldn't rejoice in? You say, that's right. You know, we need to avoid sin.

We need to avoid going to places where Jesus... Yes, that's true. But I mean more than that. Your Jesus is far too... Remember what I talked about to the kids the other day? Yesterday, I talked about how we are influenced in our concept of Jesus by Catholic art.

And I told him, I said, you realize, I got them all to close their eyes. And I said, now I want you just to picture a mental image of Jesus. And then I said, now I know what most of you are thinking.

When they finished, I said, you know, you've got this tall, kind of thin, pale guy with kind of flowing robes and long hair that kind of flips out at the end and everything. And I said, do you know why you see that? It's not influenced from Scripture or from the Holy Spirit. It's the influence of 15th century, 14th century Catholic art.

And I said, now do you know why in those pictures Jesus always looks the way he does? Because basically and by and large, those paintings were painted by homosexuals. So, so many times we have these religious concepts of who Jesus is. And it's not the way Jesus is at all.

He didn't say, I've come to give you a church building. He didn't say, I've come to teach you religious things. He said, I have come to give you life.

And so with us, there is no secular or sacred at all. Everything is sacred. Everything, whether you eat, drink, the most minute thing unto the glory of God.

I was sharing with someone yesterday why I love the Celtic, Irish and such Christian hymns. If you listen to them, you'll see nature everywhere. And why is that? Prior to coming to Christianity, they were basically pantheists.

I mean, they worshiped stars and moons and creeks and forests and the beauty of it. They worshiped sunsets. They did all this stuff.

When they came to know the Lord, they began to worship the one who made it by speaking much of the things he made. We ought to be poets, all of us. We ought to be wild at heart.

We ought to be doing everything for the glory of God and the enjoyment, enjoyment, enjoyment. I mean, if you could watch me sometimes, you'd probably think I was crazy. I'll sit there in my shop at two in the morning and I'm trying to get a bow to bend just the right way so it'll shoot just right.

And I'm going like this. And sometimes I'll look in the light because it's very important to be able to see the grain and things and I'll go, Lord, what do you think? Which way should I go with this? You know, this is a really difficult piece of wood. What's wrong with that? Oh, I forgot.

He's only the religious stuff, right? When you can look at a leaf that's fallen from a tree and it causes you to fall down and worship God, you're getting to where you need to be. And you can feel that warm day in the night. The Lord changed something, didn't he? He brought in a breeze to bring some warm weather.

You can look at that and go, that was for me. You're getting to where you need to be. This is why I always flunk preaching in seminary, because I just go crazy and go all over the place.

Let's try to get back to the text. Now, he went out to a place. He came out of his comfort zone.

All right. He goes out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going.

You know, so many young people come to me today and they go, you know, I want to find out the will of God for my life. I go, you're asking the wrong question. That's not even something you should be concerned about.

What you should be concerned about is obeying the commands of God, being pleasing to God this day and seeking God's face. He will lead you. You never see in the Old Testament, you know, the patriarch sitting down there going, Lord, show me the will of God for my life.

You know, show me the path that I'm... No, every day they got up and they did not really discern specifically the will of God until at the end of their life when they looked back and they saw what he had done. And we're wanting a future. We're wanting to know the future instead of being able to look back and marvel at the past.

Now, why are we so concerned about that? First of all, because we're not trusting God. We feel like we need to know where he's going to take us. Why? Second of all, now this is very important.

I want you to listen to this. We glory in being able to think that we can hear, that we are sensitive enough to hear from God. When I talk to young people and I talk to them about God's will, I always say this.

I do not trust in your ability to hear God, but I do trust in God's ability to lead you. We have equated so much with us and our own ability. Well, I need to discern God's will in order to know how I should walk into the future.

No, he's going to lead you. Even though he doesn't even speak to you, he will lead you. And you will know it is his will when he takes you where he wants you to go.

Moses said, basically, God, how am I going to know all this is, you know, of you? He said, well, when you're in the promised land, you'll know it's of me. I am not concerned with the decretive will of God. I am concerned in my own life with the perceptive will of God.

What do I mean by that? God has decreed certain things for Paul Washer. Many of them are hidden from me. He has decreed things for me.

He has ordained good works that I am to walk in, and he's going to see to it that I do. Now, most people spend their entire life thinking that living by faith is trying to discern exactly where God wants them to go and who they're going to marry. And if they're going to go here or they're going to go here, they're going to be a missionary or they're going to be a carpenter or what.

And they're trying to figure this out. And they waste so much spiritual energy. And become so confused, their mind just ringing with confusion, trying to discern God's will that God's already decreed for them.

Instead of wasting all that spiritual energy trying to figure out the future, why don't you do what you're supposed to do? Spend all that spiritual energy obeying God's commands today. His written commands, his precepts, his wisdom, his precepts and his wisdom. And you will find the will of God in those.

It's very, very, very important. He did not know where he was going. I don't know where I'm going.

I don't know where I'm going. If you ask me where I'm going to preach next month, I don't even know. The thing is, people say, what's your vision or plans for HeartCry? We don't have any.

What do you mean you don't have any? We're going to all show up the office tomorrow and pray. So what's the future? HeartCry might not have a future. God might put it into the whole thing next month.

But that would be terrible. Why would it be terrible if it was God's will to put it into it? Why prop up something that's not God's will? Oh, you'd be so embarrassed. And who am I? Oh, well, I have to worry about that.

I'm an embarrassment to start off with. He doesn't say out in the woods. He says under the trees.

We go out under the trees. He never knows where he's going. So he doesn't have a problem with that.

He's walking. He's just happy to be in the woods. And where he's going is right with Dad.

Dad knows where he's going, but he doesn't need to know where he's going. It's the same way with the Lord. My Lord knows where he's taking me.

He has the power to take me there. He has the discipline and strength to lead me there and make sure I get there. In his providence, I'm going to get exactly where he wants me to go.

And I don't need to know it. So he did not know where he was going, but he went anyways. That is so very key.

He went anyways. And a place which he was to receive for an inheritance. Now in verse nine, we're going to see something that expounds on that.

By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise as in a foreign land. Now, this is you. This is not just Abraham.

More than Abraham, this is you. This describes you actually more than it does Abraham. By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise.

Now, first of all, there are too many Christians out there today, super spiritual, that are despising the land. What do I mean by that? We have such a Greek idea of the material world being evil and someday we're going to go to heaven in this spiritual realm where everything is pure. My friend, the Bible says that this,

not only our bodies are going to be resurrected, but he's going to create a new heaven and a new earth out of the seed, which is this one.

This is my land. The Bible says the meek shall inherit what? The earth. This is my earth.

It has been promised to me. It has been created for and promised to the people of God. Now, when that new heaven and new earth is created, albeit, it's going to be no division between heaven and earth.

God will dwell among them, but there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth, and it is going to come forth from this one. And we are not a bunch of Greeks. We're to be more like Hebrews.

We do not despise the physical. We do not despise the material. We just realize it's fallen into corruption.

But one day this world is going to resurrect in a sense and be ours. And it is ours now because it does belong to Christ and everything that belongs to Christ belongs to us because we are coheirs with Christ. Abraham Kuyper said this one time speaking to a group of liberal theologians.

I thought this was wonderful. They were all, you know, humanist about man's needs and man and everything all around man. And Abraham Kuyper gets up and he goes, I want to tell you the first thing that Jesus Christ is going to say when He comes back to this earth.

He's going to stretch forth His hand and He's going to go, Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine. Everything is mine. Everything is His.

And everything is ours. We are living in a place that is fallen, but that is going to be renewed. And this is our place.

But this is the key. We are to live now as aliens. You see, that land of promise belonged to Abraham.

But he was looking at it as a future promise and he was living in it as an alien. Now, what did that mean for Abraham? What it mean for Abraham is Abraham did not associate nor mix with the Canaanites. Do you live as an alien? Do you live as an alien? The true church of Jesus Christ, my favorite nomination, my favorite way of speaking of the church of Jesus Christ is a strange speckled bird.

Are you a strange speckled bird? In this fallen world, do you stand out as unusual, even strange? Do you stand out? Like a speckled guinea, do you stand out? Or when do you just fit right into the world? You look like a citizen of the world. You're just as involved in this world as anybody. You're a citizen of it.

You love it. You cherish it. You like it.

This fallen system, you're not set apart. You don't look different. You don't act differently.

You don't talk differently. You don't spend your money differently. You don't do anything differently except come to church on Sunday.

You know, you can recognize an alien really quick. I've lived in many countries where I was the only American for an unusual thing to see. And everywhere I went, people would look.

I remember one time walking through the Andes mountains, backpacking through there and preaching. And every time I would go through there, I wear size 13 shoes. Every time I would go through a village, little kids would come out and go big foot, big foot, big foot.

Some would say Yeti, Yeti, Yeti, Yeti, the abominable snowman. They'd see my feet because they'd never seen feet that big. They'd never seen hair on somebody's arm.

They looked at me, this unusual person. I remember sitting down there and just almost just wanting to slap kids because I'd be sitting there getting ready to preach. And I mean, they're going pulling my hairs on my arm.

I was an alien. I was something so different that when I arrived, man, the party was over or either that the party began. When I arrived, it was like, what is this? We've never seen skin like that.

We've never seen hair like that. Never heard anybody talk like that. It's an alien.

Do you look like an alien? Do you look like someone different than the citizens of this world? You say, oh, Brother Paul, you can't judge a book by its cover. Who told you that? Where'd you learn that? Did you get that out of the Bible? You didn't. Matter of fact, the Bible is just the opposite.

You can't judge a book by its cover. Let me just say something here, especially to young people. The way you talk, the way you dress, what you listen to and all these things, all those things summed up is not necessarily the full content of the Christian life.

But let me tell you something. I can look at the way you dress, the way you walk, the way you talk and everything, and I can learn a lot about you. About the inward realities in your life.

Young people, you live in a world that is sensual, filthy, degrading and everything else. Do not be like them. Do not be like them.

Because you're falling into a trap that you don't even know about. Let me just give you an example. It's a vulgar example, but it's good.

I was in church and this boy walked in. He had his pants hanging down here like they do nowadays. His pants was hanging down and he was just, well, I don't know if any of you know about it, but I mean, it looks like, you know, I want to take a nail gun and staple his pants on.

But he's got his pants hanging down like this and he's just walking around thinking he's the coolest guy in the world. And he starts talking to me and he was talking about the Lord and stuff. And I said, do your parents know? He said, know what? I said, well, you know.

Do your parents know? How do they feel about this? And he goes, what are you talking about, Brother Paul? I go, well, how long have you been a homosexual? And he goes, what? I said, no, really, how long have you been a homosexual? I mean, I personally, you know, the Bible teaches against it, but I'm not against you. I want to help you. Just let me talk to you for a while about the Lord, because I want to know how long have you been a homosexual.

He goes, I'm not a homosexual. Why are you saying this? I'm sitting here talking to you about the Lord. I'm not a homosexual.

I go, well, of course you are. Now you're with someone who really cares about you. So don't get upset.

I figured I'm really going to play this up. You know, I said, don't get upset. I want to help you.

He goes, why? Why do you say that? I said, well, of course, the way you're dressed. Your pants hanging down and part of your, you know, your shirt's hanging like that. And you're kind of see a little bit of your briefs there in the back, the way the kids are doing it today.

And I just, you know, I want to know. I want to help you. I want to get you back on the right path.

He goes, what are you talking about? I'm not a homo. I said, of course you are. I said, young man, do you know where that came from? He said, where? I said, in prison, when you're in prison and you're a homosexual and you have just broken up with your boyfriend in order to tell the other inmates that you want another boyfriend, you pull your pants down just a little bit and show your brief and let your shirt hang out like that.

That's where it came from. He said, I had no idea. And I said, yes, and most of what's called Christendom today has no discernment whatsoever.

The stuff the devil's putting on their plate. And you do things and you don't even know they're straight out of the pit of hell. It's true.

And I'm an expert. Why? It's just like when I tell you, when I told you when I began my sermon, and the reason why I told you that is so that you would see something later on. I myself, I think I have the Spirit of God.

There is fruit in my life that I'm a genuine Christian. But I live in a Christianity and preach in places that rub off on you. And then every once in a while, I come back and get kind of centered back in the world.

I realize what on earth I've been for the last six months, I've been preaching in six flags over Jesus. I've been preaching in circuses. I mean, what? Help me.

And if it can happen to me after 21 years of walking with the Lord, every time I go to Romania or Nigeria or somewhere, it's like a wake-up call. I'm like, what happened to me? It's so easy. It's so easy.

So easy. Are you living as an alien in the land of promise? And it is not a proud thing to embrace the promise. What do I mean by that? You know, listen, I just want a little house over on the side of the hill in heaven.

I don't want nothing big. You ever hear people say that? Just a little shack over in glory. You know what you're saying when you're saying that? First of all, you have a doctrine of works for salvation.

That whatever you get from God is what you work for. Now, you're saying you're real humble that you haven't worked for much and therefore you're not going to get very much, but that's all right with you because you're humble. Nevertheless, the whole system of theology you've built up is nothing but a system of works that brings no glory whatsoever to God.

Give me the bold believer who embraces the promise. This world is mine. Well, how did you get it? Well, this is where the Christian is different from every other religious system on the face of the earth.

I got it through the virtue and merit of my older brother, but nonetheless, I got it. He gave it to me. Because you're that good? No, because he's that good.

To receive the promises of God is to promote the glory of God. To put on a face of false humility and want just a little shack on some hillside in glory brings no glory to anyone but yourself. Fully embrace the promises of God.

Fully embrace the salvation that He's given you. Fully embrace the promises of a new heaven and earth. Fully embrace that all things are yours.

Fully embrace the fact that this world will be yours. Listen, talking to a brother about, you know, someone's done me wrong. Should I do a certain way and everything else? You know, should I respond? Should I look for justice? Should I grant mercy? What should I do? Very honest questions.

Very important questions. Sometimes mercy. Sometimes justice.

You know, every case has got to be judged differently. But the fact that you're going to inherit this whole earth will allow you to make those kind of judgments with a lot clearer perspective. And to know that you are going to inherit the whole earth can keep you from greed in this life.

It's not a question of whether or not I'm getting everything. It's just a question of when. Because I am.

And I can wait. I can wait. Someone does me wrong, I can let them do me wrong.

Unless I have to make a stand for justice. I can let them do me wrong on a personal level. Why? Because one day all wrongs will be righted.

And I don't need to go out and try to buy a bunch of stuff or live in a bunch of luxury or try to grasp things in this world. Because all of it's mine. It will soon be mine.

Have nothing to grapple with, nothing to fight for, nothing to desire with inordinate passion. Because all of it's mine. I live as an alien in a land that is mine.

And I wait for the return of the king. And he was an alien. It says here, By faith, he lived as an alien in a land of promise, as in a foreign land.

This is my land. This is your land. But right now I live in it as a foreign land.

But by faith, I do not get discouraged. I can dwell in tents. What does that mean? What does he do? How do we dwell in tents? We dwell in tents by not selling our homes and buying a bunch of canvas.

We dwell in tents by this world having no temporal hold on us. If God opens up the door, God gave me a house. I have a house.

I like my house. I like my house better than living in a tent. But if God says, sell your house tomorrow and give everything away to the poor, to missions, then that is to be done.

Why? I'm an alien. And God will take care of me and my family. I'm a tent dweller.

I'm not to have a grabbing hold on anything. And nothing is to have a grabbing hold on me. And you say, yes, that's right.

No, it's not because of humility. It's not because of devotion or piety. It's because of faith.

I don't need to grab it now. It's mine to start off with. And I just have to wait to inherit it.

You say, but you're running out of time. No, I'm not. Time is running out so that eternity will come.

And in eternity, there's no time. I don't need 70 years or 85 years. To enjoy this world.

I have eternity coming. I have eternity coming. And so many of you have such a mythological idea of heaven, of kind of just sitting on clouds and floating and playing harps.

New heaven and a new earth. There are certain things in me. You say, what is this? This has to do with everything.

Because I'm talking about Christianity as life, not as religion. There are passions I have in me that are good. There are so many things I desire to do.

And I believe that they were implanted in my heart by God. I want to create. I love beauty.

I want to make things. I want to see things. I want to investigate things.

My goodness, you could spend 40 years just looking in a mud hole at a tadpole. I mean, there's just so much there. I don't have time for that now.

I don't have time for that now. Whatever time I have, I use it for that. But I can't spend 24 hours a day investigating all the things I want to investigate, building all the things I want to build and exploring and inventing and do all the stuff I want to do.

I can't do it. But I'm not in despair because one day I will. One day I will.

Children like my heaven a lot more than they like yours. He went out. He lived as an alien in a foreign land.

Now, I want to say one other thing here. Dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob. This is extremely important.

Many of us can trust God with our own lives. But can we trust God with our children? I've heard people say about missionaries. Well, they were, you know, single missionaries and they're married missionaries.

That's OK. But now that they have children, they're going to have to really think about living differently now. OK, you can trust God for yourself, but you can't trust God for your children.

God can take care of your children in a tent. God can take care of your children. I was doing what I usually do.

Last week I was moping a bit and I said, Chad, I'm just, you know, you know, I'm just trying to make ends meet here. And I'm trying to, you know, I'm frustrated. I need to provide some things for my children.

I need to, you know, their future and everything. And Chad looked at me and goes, God can take care of your children. OK, I'm going to go out to the shop.

Now, God can take care of your children. He can. He can take care of your children.

They told a Romanian brother they were persecuting him. They were beating him and he would not break. And they said, OK, fine.

They brought in his children in front of him. And they said, if you don't break, we'll get your children and your family. And he stood up and he said, my God can take care of my family, my wife and my children.

And he sat back there. They let him go. They were afraid.

He can't. Let's pray.

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