

The Gospel of Jesus Christ (s.n.e. Reformation Conference)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon explores the true nature of the Gospel, emphasizing God's holiness and the necessity of understanding sin and redemption through Christ.

Duration: 1:42:32

Scripture: Exodus 34:5, Deuteronomy 32:35, Psalm 32:1, Psalm 64:10, Proverbs 17:15, John 5:39, Romans 3:25

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker presents a thought-provoking scenario to illustrate the concept of justice and forgiveness. He describes a situation where a person's family has been brutally murdered by an assassin, and the person catches the assassin in the act. Instead of seeking revenge, the person calls the police and the assassin is brought to trial. However, to everyone's surprise, the judge pronounces the assassin not guilty, claiming to be a gracious and forgiving judge. The speaker then raises the question of how justice and forgiveness can coexist, and emphasizes the importance of understanding this concept in relation to the Gospel.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to the Book of Exodus, Chapter 34, and please stand as I read this text. Exodus, Chapter 34, verse 5. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord. Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness and truth, who keeps loving kindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, yet will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. Let's pray. Father, I come before you in the name of your Son.

Lord, it is my greatest desire that your Son be glorified through the preaching of the Gospel, and that, Lord, your people be edified through understanding, through comprehending the Gospel, and that through the Gospel they would be motivated to greater devotion and greater godliness. Father, it is my desire that if there's someone here tonight who does not know you, that the Gospel would do its work in their heart,

that they would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, that they would come to repent and believe unto salvation, and, Lord, to have the greatest assurance of that salvation. Father, everything I desire for this night is absolutely impossible for the flesh.

Lord, nothing is impossible for you. And so it is only with that confidence, it is only with that confidence that we preach. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tonight, I want to talk to you about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We live in an age and we live in a place. We live in a culture.

We live in an evangelicalism that has taken the Gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to a few tiny spiritual laws or principles. We have taken the glorious Gospel of our blessed God and reduced it down to something far less than an intellectual creed. We've made it into a cliché.

There are countless individuals throughout the West, throughout the United States of America and Canada, and now in many parts of the world that have been infected by our teaching. There are countless individuals who believe themselves born again and they are not because of the type of Gospel that we preach in this land and that we have exported to other lands. Many people today say that the West is hardened to the Gospel.

What you need to understand is the West is not so much hardened to the Gospel any more than any nation has ever been hardened to the Gospel. The problem here in the West is not Gospel hardness, but Gospel ignorance. Most people in the West are ignorant of what the Gospel truly is.

Most people sitting in the pew are ignorant with regard to what the Gospel truly is. And the reason for that is most of the men standing behind the pulpit are ignorant of what the Gospel truly, truly is. Tonight we're going to take a look at the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And you may be wondering now, why did I choose to begin in the book of Exodus? Well, there's a very important reason because there is something found here and then in another text to which I'm going to take you before I go to our main text that explains the reason for the Gospel. Why do we need the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Well, let's look at our text. To give you a little bit of background on this, you understand that Moses has been used of God as a servant to bring his people out of Egypt.

You also realize that Moses is asking God for something. He wants to see God's glory. He wants to draw closer to the flame.

He wants to know this great God. And so in verse 5, God answers his prayer. The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord.

Now, I want you to understand that what the Bible says is true. No man has seen God. And anytime you see a prophet or the lawgiver like Moses seeming to indicate that he has seen something of God, you need to understand it is but a glimpse.

It is not even the fringe of his glory. The power, the holiness, the very beauty of God is so great that if you could catch only a small, the tiniest glimpse of His glory and of His beauty and of His power and of His holiness, it would drive you mad in an instance. That is why in order to dwell in heaven, the believer is going to have to be supernaturally changed, transformed, lest the very beauty of God kill you.

We are not talking about someone like us, just bigger. We are talking about someone wholly other than us in a completely distinct category. That is the reason why when Moses said, Who are you? God said, I am that I am or I am who I am.

You see, if someone were to come to me from another country or let's even go a little bit, let's be a little bit more dramatic. Let's say that there were some space creatures out there and one of them were to land in a field by my house and come to me being the first human they had seen. And they would say to me, Who are you? I could say easily, I am like her.

And I am like him. And I am like these. As a matter of fact, if you want to know all about me, there's over six billion of us on this planet.

But when someone asks God, Who are you? There's no one to which He can compare Himself. He says, I am who I am. There's no metaphor.

There's no comparison. There's nothing that can be used to describe God except God. That is why R.C. Sproul asked the question, Which creature is more like God? The archangel in heaven or the worm crawling on the ground? Which one is more like God? The answer is neither.

At this very moment, because I'm standing on a platform, I am closer to the sun, S-U-N, than everyone in this room. But it would be absolutely absurd for me to boast of being closer to the sun. Because the distance is so great that the small amount of distance between you and I makes me into nothing great.

You see, you cannot understand the Gospel unless you have a right view of God. Because people need to understand this. When I ask them, why is the Gospel necessary? And they say it's because of who we are.

And I say, absolutely not. It's because of who He is. The Gospel is necessary because of the character of God.

The Gospel begins with God. If God was like us, we wouldn't need a Gospel. If God was fallen like us, we wouldn't need to be saved from our fallenness.

If God was like us, a fallen being like us, there would be no need for redemption, because sinners get along quite well, whether they're a creature or Creator. And the reason why we need a Gospel, the reason why we need a Savior, is because God is not like us. We are fallen.

We are morally corrupt. We are radically depraved. We are sinners.

Now, when I say that we are sinners, that doesn't bother you very much. Because that type of language is used all the time, isn't it? Let me put it this way. We are evil.

And the problem is, God is not. So he goes on and he says, in verse 6, Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed. Now, this is God's self-revelation.

This is God's self-proclamation. God is now telling us who He is. And if you ever want to know something about God, I recommend you go to God as the source.

Don't take secondary sources on this, especially in this day and age in the West and in the state of evangelicalism. Don't walk around asking a bunch of evangelical pastors what God is like, because they're liable to mislead you. You should go directly to the source.

The Bible, which is both a New and an Old Testament. Go to the whole thing. Discover who God truly is.

And he says this, Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious. What a wonderful thing to know. Slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness.

This is absolutely wonderful. Do you have any idea what it would be like if God were evil? Do you have any idea the terror of our reality if God was like us? We have the political maxim that absolute power corrupts absolutely. And that all of us are subject to the greatest corruption depending on the amount of authority we are given.

The Caesars and the tyrants and the dictators have proved that. They kill millions of their own. What would it be like if the Creator of the universe was like you? It would be absolutely terrifying.

But He's not. He's compassionate and gracious. Slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and truth.

Verse 7, Who keeps loving kindness for thousands. It's not a wavering loving kindness. It's a covenantal loving kindness.

He makes a promise and He keeps it. Who keeps loving kindness for thousands. Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.

That's a wonderful thing to know. That means that there's hope for us, regardless of how holy and how righteous this God truly is. There's hope for us because He Himself tells us that He forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.

But now comes the problem. In verse 7, it says, Who keeps loving kindness for thousands. Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin.

Yes, He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Now we have a problem. Everything that I have just read about God now seems to be annulled.

There are a great deal of theological and philosophical contradictions now that we must deal with. He says He forgives iniquity and sins and transgressions. All those terms are heaped together in a Hebrew style to let you know He forgives all types, manners and kinds of sins.

But if He does that, how does He also say that He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished? So does that mean that He's going to give the guilty the full measure of punishment due them and then pronounce forgiveness over them? Will He send the world to hell, but at the same time declare forgiveness to a world that's been lost to its own iniquity? I mean, how do you put these two things together? How can God be a forgiving God and yet punishes absolutely every sin with perfect justice? That's the great problem of the Bible and that's what the Gospel is all about. And if you don't understand that, you don't understand the Gospel. Now, let me put it in another way before we go to another text.

I was preaching a few years ago in Europe and I was asked to speak at this university and it by no means was Christian. And the students were kind of loaded for bear, as we might say. They were waiting to hear this social dinosaur, this evangelical, this Reformed preacher who was going to come to talk to them about a holy God.

I mean, it was laughable. The place was filled with everyone who believed nothing of what I was going to teach. And so I was back in the back and I was saying, Lord, I don't mind going out there.

I don't mind their mockeries. I don't mind their questions and their objections and their arguments. But Lord, I don't want to go out there just to be a martyr.

I want Your Gospel to progress. I want something good to come of this. And I was praying, Lord, what do I do? And as I walked out on the platform, it just dawned on me what I should do.

And I looked at them and I said, You know something of who I am. You know something of what I believe. You know I believe that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God.

That it is totally trustworthy in every word. Now, just to set things off at a right pace. Since you know that I talk a great deal about the wrath of God and judgment and the sin of man, I want to share with you up front what is the most terrifying truth in all the Bible.

Now, I warn you, those of you who are faint of heart, you may want to leave now through an exit. Because I am going to share with you something that is absolutely terrifying to the thinking man. And so they were all ears.

And I said, Are you ready? Brace yourself. This is the most terrifying truth of all the Scripture. Then I leaned in and I said this, God is good.

And when I said that, every one of the student bodies, some of the professors, you could just tell they went, Well, that wasn't so bad. And I said, No, you're not hearing me. God is good.

And finally a student said out loud, And what's the problem with that? And my answer was, You're not. Good. Now, what does a good God do with people like you? Full of iniquity, full of self-love, full of murder, full of hatred.

Those who will break every good moral law apart from the restraining grace of God. If God is good, what does He do with you? Now, think about that. Think.

Everyone wants to go to heaven. Really? And what will that heaven become like very quickly? It's unbelievable people's views of heaven. Like they have these utopian views that heaven is a place where you go and everybody gets along.

Well, then some things are going to have to seriously change. Why don't we get along here? Because of our own private lusts and desires and greed and selfishness. So we're all going to go to heaven and be the same.

Heaven will quickly turn into Dante's Inferno. Another thing that's very, very common about our culture today. Everyone wants to go to heaven.

They just don't want God to be there when they get there. I mean, take this for a moment. Really think about what's being said here.

God is good. Now, He's not just mostly good. He's not good in a grandpa sort of way.

He is the Lord of glory. He's the King of righteousness. Every one of His decrees and judgments are perfect.

He, in His pristine holiness and righteousness, cannot tolerate a single moral failure. Because we can see, can't we? What a single moral failure can do to an entire universe. My dear friend, all the evil in the world isn't product of society.

It doesn't somehow jump over the head of the individual. The blame does not land upon the world by itself. People say, no, children are born in such a way.

Men are basically good, but society corrupts them. Do you not understand? Society is not alien. It's a product of our own hearts.

So there's really two problems whenever you deal with the idea of heaven, reconciliation with God. And these two problems are this. If God is good, can He simply look over all the iniquity of our hearts, of our thoughts, of our words, of our actions? And like a foolish old grandfather, sweep them under the rug and invite us in? Then the other problem is this.

If He did invite us in, is it not true that heaven would soon turn into hell? For what is going to restrain our evil? I mean, we did this with this world. What would we do with the next one? And if we are raised to some heightened existence so that we no longer suffer from the pains of death and we live forever, exponentially our evil would grow. Do you see these problems? See, the greatest problem in the world is God is good.

Let me explain it this way. Criminals, drug cartels, mafias, corrupt corporations, do they fear evil judges? No, they don't. They can buy off evil judges.

Evil judges are just like they are. They like evil judges. They go to dinner with evil judges.

But all such immoral people and immoral organizations, they fear good men. They fear righteous authority. And rightly so, because the right authority will stand against them.

Let me give you another example that I use quite often and it's this. Let's say that you were to dismiss from here tonight and you were to go to your home and find out that the family that you left there had been slaughtered by an assassin, brutally murdered by an assassin. And as you walk through the door, that assassin is standing over your last child, wringing the life out of its body.

And in a fit of rage, you fly across the room, you grab the assassin with blood on his hands, you throw him to the floor and you tie him up. And your rage is stilled and justice takes over. Instead of killing him and getting revenge, you call the police.

And the police come and take him to the jail. You live in a small town and so everyone in the city knows about it. And so the time of the court, the time of the trial comes, and this man who slaughtered your entire family, who was caught blood handed, red handed, doing the deed, stands before the judge.

And the judge looks down at him and says, I am a gracious judge, abounding in loving kindness and slow to anger, who forgives iniquities, transgressions and sins. Therefore, I pronounce you not guilty. You're free to go.

What would be your response? Would you say justice had been done? Would the people in your town applaud the compassion of the judge? Isn't it our greatest complaint that our country is falling apart because our judges are corrupt? Because they don't do the righteousness they're commanded to do? Isn't it true that if someone did that, if there was a judge that type of judge on the bench, that you would be writing all the politicians, even the president? You'd be going to the newspapers. You'd be going to the news media saying there's a judge on the bench far more corrupt than the criminals he sets free. You would be crying out.

Is it not the job of a judge to do justice? Do you see how hypocritical we are? If it is the job of a judge in a minor province to do justice, is it not the responsibility of the judge of the universe to also carry out justice? And the problem is, though, my friend, if he carries out justice on you or me, there is no hope. You say, no, wait a minute, Brother Paul, I'm not that bad. In your eyes, that's possibly true.

And in the eyes of a society that no longer understands even the most basic politic of moral law, that may be true. But in the eyes of a holy God, it is not true. My dear friend, do you realize right now, if I could take out your heart, if I could take every thought you've ever thought from the moment you first were conscious of being alive, I could take every thought you've ever thought, every deed you've ever done in secret, and somehow I could take it all and put it on a DVD and I could show that film here tonight, you would run out of this room and you would never show your face again to the people here.

Because you have thought things even tonight, even while I was preaching, you have thought things so vile that you could not share them with your closest friend. Now, you know that we are just like you. You know if that kind of malady exists in your heart, it also exists in mine and in everyone else's.

And yet, you're still ashamed that your sin be exposed even before like sinners like us. So what will it be like one day when your life is exposed before a perfectly righteous God? Will you stand on that day? I tell you, you will not. Now, let's go on to another passage.

Let's go to Romans 3, speaking of Jesus Christ in verse 25, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness because in the forbearance of God, He passed over the sins previously committed. For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The passage that I have just read, many theologians down through history have said it's the most important passage in the entire Bible. They call it the Acropolis of the Christian faith. The fortified city.

The central city of the Christian faith. In it, we find the reason for the cross. And yet, how many pastors today even expound this text with any importance whatsoever? Or feel the need to even define the terms that are being used here? Now, I want you to look back at that text and you're going to find a phrase that's very important.

That God might be both just and the justifier. There's the key to understanding the Gospel. You missed this.

You cannot understand the Gospel. Here's the problem. If God is just, He cannot forgive you.

That's the problem. If God is just, He cannot forgive you. Any more than that judge can set that assassin free who murdered your entire home.

There's a passage in Proverbs kind of obscure, but it is a great illustration of this. It's in Proverbs 17 and 15. And this is what it basically says.

Anyone, particularly referring to any authority in Israel, any judge, anyone who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God. Now, if you're a Christian, what is the one thing that you most sing about? That you were a sinner and God justified you. Do you see the problem? The Christian faith and Christians boast in the fact that though we were sinners, God justified us.

He declared us to be right with Him. But the problem is the Bible says any authority that justifies wicked men is an abomination to God. So how can God justify wicked men without becoming an abomination? How can God be just and yet pardon the wicked? Do you see the problem? Many of you have never heard this in your life.

And yet you've been in church for so many years. What are all these teachers teaching now? The things that some of you are saying right now, man, I've never heard that before. This was the common speech among Christians 150 years ago.

So let's settle it right here. Here's the great problem. God is good.

God is righteous. God is the judge of all the earth and He will do right. You have broken every law God has ever given.

From birth, you went astray. Radically depraved, morally corrupt, evil. Do you have to teach a child to lie? No.

No one has ever had to teach a child to lie. Do you have to teach a child to be self-centered and selfish? No. From where do wars spring up? The heart of a child that grows into an adult and unless that adult is restrained by the grace of Almighty God, he will make Hitler look like a choir boy.

You take a child. Put him in a room. I challenge you.

Little child, put him in a room. Give him all the toys his heart could desire. Just spread them out around him.

And let him play until you can determine the toys that he really loves and the toys that he wants nothing to do with. He wants nothing to do with those toys. Mark those toys that he does not want to play with.

You put that toy in his hand. He throws it away. He doesn't want it.

Then, take another child and bring that child in the same room. And then hand that toy that the other child has thrown away and put that toy in the hands of that other child. And what's going to happen? World War III.

But don't you see? That's why the old preachers would use language like this. Monsters of iniquity. I'm not saying this to try to hurt you, but realize I've got Scripture on my side.

And realize this, for those of you who are secular and believe the Bible is just an old book of crudely formed ideas, I've got every newspaper in the world on my side. I've got every history book in the world on my side. And if I could pry through that outer casing of your heart and reveal what is inside there, I would have the testimony of your own wicked thoughts to defend me.

Everything I'm saying about us is true. It's true. Now the question is, how does God forgive us and still be just? How can God pardon our iniquities and still be a righteous God? Let's look at another passage just for a second before we go on to the answer.

Look in Romans 4. Here we have another problem. Look what David says. Now this is David who committed adultery with Bathsheba, who had her husband basically killed.

Look at verse 7. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered. Now even though it's not mentioned here, do you realize who's covering these sins? It's God. God is covering these sins.

God is forgiving these lawless deeds. Verse 8. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. To be honest with you, if that text was left by itself, it would say a lot of terrible things about God.

What do you think about a judge who covers evil deeds? Pretends they didn't happen. Looks the other way. Is that the kind of God you want ruling the universe? But David says that's the kind of God he had.

If you just look at that verse by itself, that doesn't look like a very holy God. That doesn't look like a very righteous creator and judge. So how can we have the part of the Scriptures testifying to the fact that God is righteous and He will punish every sin? And then over here, blessed is the man whose sins are covered by God.

That it is an abomination to justify the wicked. And then in another part of the Bible, the wicked rejoice because they've been justified by God. This is the context of the Gospel.

This is the divine dilemma. And how is the problem solved? How can we bring these two things together and prove that there is unity within the person of God Himself, that there is unity within the Scriptures? I mean, what brings this all together? The Gospel of Jesus Christ. And there's one word.

Let's look at it. It's in Romans 3 verse 25. Romans 3 verse 25.

Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation. Now, what is a propitiation? It's a sacrifice. What does that sacrifice do? It satisfies the demands of justice.

And in satisfying the demands of justice, appeases the wrath of God. And makes it possible for a righteous God to forgive the iniquities of men. In His righteousness, in His justice, God condemns the world.

God sends the law. And the law aggravates the matter, even on purpose. It displays our sin in living color.

It shows us that we are condemned. Those of you who would seek to save yourselves by keeping the law, all of creation testifies against you. That's an impossibility.

You have broken the law at every point. The law just makes you that much more guilty. And in His righteousness, God condemns the world.

And in His grace, He designs a plan of salvation. And what is that plan? God becomes man. God becomes a man.

The Son of God incarnate. And He walks on this earth as a man. He is fully God.

He is fully man. The two natures are not confused or mixed. One is not diminished for the sake of the other.

He is truly God and He is truly man. But He walks on this earth as a man. And then as a man, as your brother, He lives an absolutely perfect life.

He is the only one of whom God could say, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Behold, He doeth all things well. And then according to the foreknowledge, the sovereign plan of God, He is lifted up by the hands of us and nailed to a cross.

Now herein lies the problem. How does a man dying on a tree save us from our sin? How does a man dying on a tree pay for our sin? Let me put it in a more crude vernacular. How does the fact that the Romans beat up Jesus pay for our sins? Because you see, here is the problem.

When I hear most preachers preaching about the cross of Calvary, what they talk about is the cat of nine tails with which Christ was beaten. They tell me about the crown of thorns. They talk about the mockeries of men, how He was beaten, how He was slapped, how He was a bloody picture of a man going to a tree.

They tell me how He was cast down upon the beam. They tell me how He was nailed to a tree and lifted up. They tell you that every Easter.

But the question still remains, okay, the Romans crucified Jesus. How does that pay for our sins? Listen to me. If you are saved here this evening, it is not merely because Jesus was beaten up by the Romans.

It's not merely because they nailed Him to a tree. If you are saved here this evening, it is because when Christ was on that tree, your sins were imputed to Him. They were placed upon Him.

The guilt for every wicked thing you've done was heaped upon His head. And then Almighty God crushed His only begotten Son under the full force of His holy hatred against your evil. Have you never read Isaiah 53? And it pleased the Lord Yahweh there in Hebrew.

It pleased the Lord to crush Him, to grind Him to powder. You see, what you need to understand is this. By breaking the law of God, you made yourself an enemy.

I sometimes ask people. They say, Brother Paul, I've been saved. I say, saved from what? They say, saved from sin.

I say, sin wasn't after you. If you've been saved, do you know what you've been saved from? You've been saved from God. As a matter of fact, I like to put it this way.

You have been saved from God, for God, and by God. You see, He is righteous. You and I, because of our law-breaking, are evil.

Every one of us. You go down into some shady part of the city and find the prostitute and find the drug addict and find the worst of the worst and pick them up. Look them square in the face.

They're just a mirror of what you are. Apart from the grace of God, they are a mirror of you. You think Hitler is an anomaly? The only reason why you do not surpass Hitler in your evil is because God has restrained your evil by His common grace.

Hitler's not an anomaly. He's one of us. And God in His justice and in His righteous anger burned against the whole lot of us.

You say, well, I just don't believe. You know, God is love and I just don't think God gets angry. And I don't think.

You don't think. What you think really doesn't matter. What the Bible says is what matters.

And let me show you again your hypocrisy. Let's say you pick up a newspaper tomorrow and you find out that a man kidnapped a little girl 15 years ago and has held her in his basement for 15 years and done nothing but torture her every day of her life. You tell me you can pick up that paper and read it and be neutral about it? If you're neutral about it, you're immoral.

You're just as immoral as the man who did that. Can you hear about the Holocaust and say, well, you know, it's not that big a deal? Can you hear about slavery in America and not burn? Well, then you're immoral. You and I even reserve the right of righteous indignation when we hear about evil.

We, even though we're fallen, even though we're sinful, when we hear about crimes that even go beyond our imagination, do we not burn within us? Anger. We can't stand what's being done. How much more a holy God when He looks square at every sin and every wicked intention of your heart.

But on the cross of Calvary, the sins of God's people, the guilt for that was heaped upon the Son. And God crushed His only begotten Son under the full force of His righteous indignation against our sin. And before Christ died, He cried out, It is finished, which means He paid for it in full.

Your crimes have been paid for by the very One who condemned you. And now God can be just and the justifier of the wicked because He Himself paid for their crimes. Do you see that? Now, let's look at this with a bit more depth.

I want us to go to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21.

He, that is God, made him, that is the Christ, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Now, let's look at this for a moment. He knew no sin.

He wasn't acquainted with sin. He was perfect. Although He came into this world and took upon Himself the flesh, the body, like our body.

So many people think that when Jesus came to the earth, He came in this super, almost Superman type of body. No, He didn't. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh.

He Himself was absolutely incorruptible and pure, but He took upon Himself a body that suffered all the effects of our sin. That's why He was tired and thirsty and weak. But the thing that really captures me here is that He knew no sin.

Not just that He didn't do any sin. He knew no sin. He wasn't acquainted with it.

Someone asked me one time, what is the greatest sin? And I said, well, I suppose the greatest sin would be breaking the greatest commandment. The greatest commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's why the idea of sinless perfection for the believers is

absolutely preposterous.

Because if you say that you have loved the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, you've also blasphemed. Here's what I want you to see. There has never been one moment in your life, not one fraction of one moment in your life or mine, that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

There's never been one fraction of a moment that you and I have loved God as God ought to be loved. Do you understand that? Now think about this. There was never one moment in the life of Jesus of Nazareth that he did not love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We're talking about something so far beyond just keeping a few commandments, my friend. We are talking about something we cannot even fathom. Not all of humanity, not one fraction of one moment of our existence have we loved God as God ought to be loved, and yet Christ did it every moment and every day of His life.

You talk about something spectacular. And then imagine this eternal Son of God, thrice holy, holy, holy, holy. He comes down into our world.

Now for you that might not be such a bad thing, but for Him... Let me give you an idea of what it means. In the book of Ephesians chapter 2, we are told that we are dead in our trespasses and sins. Now it's very, very difficult to interpret this passage.

It really is. Because you've got the problem of what does it mean in our trespasses and sins? Is it dative of sphere? What are we talking about in the Greek? I believe that it is. We were dead in the sphere of our trespasses and sins.

It uses the words trespasses, plural, and sins, plural, to say we were dead in the sphere of all kinds of sin. Every kind of sin. Now, to give you a picture of what that looks like, and this is not going to be pretty, but to give you a picture of what that looks like, it would be this.

Imagine a putrid, rotting corpse floating at the bottom of a cesspool of excrement that was created by the very things coming forth out of that body. That's you. Dead.

A rotting corpse at the bottom of a cesspool that is created by your own body fluid and your own excrement. And you lay there. Now imagine the holy, holy Son of God takes upon Himself human flesh in the likeness of sinful flesh.

And He wades this filthy cesspool to one who cannot tolerate a single blemish upon a blemish upon a blemish of sin. He comes into a world inundated with sin. And He walks among us.

And on Calvary, it is as though wading that cesspool, He takes a deep breath and plunges His head long into your cesspool and drags you out. People always say to me, why do you talk so brutal against men? Because I want you to love God. I always ask this question, where did all the stars go this afternoon? Did some cosmic giant come by in a very large straw basket and throw them all in and take them to the other side of the world? Where did all the stars go this afternoon? They're still there.

We just can't see them. Why can we not see them? There's just too much light. But you can see them when the backdrop, when the sky is pitch black, you can see them, can't you? I want to tell you, you can

only see the diamonds of God's grace against the pitch black darkness of our filth.

It is then you see the grace of God shining with such glory. And that's what I want for you. I want you to be mesmerized by this.

Well, what God has done for you in Christ, He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf. Now, what does that mean? I mean, some of the greatest commentators in the world have been very cautious with regard to the meaning of this. Calvin said, wow, let us be careful not to say too much.

Let us be careful not to say too little. This is... what does it mean? I mean, you've read this text a million times, haven't you? But what does it actually mean that the Son of God was made sin? Became sin? What does that mean? Well, let us ask ourselves this question. Does it mean that when He was on that tree, He somehow devolved and became corrupt in His nature? Absolutely not.

Even upon that tree, even at the most dark hour, He was still the holy, sinless Lamb of God. Well, then what does it mean? Well, we have the answer right here. So let's go to the text and look at it.

He says, He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. You want to know what it means for Him to be made sin? Ask yourself what it means for you to become the righteousness of God. The moment a person believes in Christ, do they become a righteous being? No, they don't.

Because if you became a righteous being after you came to know Christ, you'd never sin again. Or what happens? I'll tell you what happens. The moment a sinner believes in Christ, something happens.

It's called a legal or forensic declaration. The moment you trusted in Christ, God legally or forensically declared you to be right with Him. Okay, but now here's the thing that most of the time is left out.

This is a big word and you need to remember it. The moment you believe in Jesus Christ, God declares you to be right with Him. And He treats you as though you're right with Him.

Oh, what a truth there is for a saint in that word. He treats you. Or as the old English would say, He treats with you as though you were right with Him.

Now remember that. That's good news. He declares you legally right and treats you as though you're right.

So on the cross, what happened? On the cross, the sins of God's people were imputed to His Son. He bore the guilt of their transgressions. Before the bar of God, before the judgment throne of God, the Christ was declared guilty.

Bearing your sin and He was treated by God as guilty. And in that, He was crushed under the judgment of God. Do you understand? Now I want us to go on.

Look in the book of Galatians chapter 3 verse 10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to perform them. Anyone outside of Christ, anyone who is seeking to gain a right standing before God through obedience to the law, the Bible says is under a curse.

Why? Because those who will live by the law must do the law. The law basically says do this and live. And those who do not do this in its entirety are under a curse.

Now, for us, the idea of curse carries all kinds of wayward meaning. You know, it can mean, well, you know, some witch put a spell on you or someone hexed you so that you would not prosper in this life. What does it mean to be under a curse? And this is not under the curse of a jurisdiction of a man.

This is under the curse of God. Under the curse of God's law. What does it mean? The best way I can describe it is this.

To be under the curse of God's law is that you, because of your rebellion against Him, you are so vile and so loathsome not only before a holy God, but for any inhabitants of heaven that is holy. Any aspect of creation that is not subject to the fall, you have become so loathsome in your sin that the last thing you will hear when you take your first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because God has rid the earth of you. Away with Him.

There was no place found for them. Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness. Now, when someone says, even a country expels you and says, depart from Me, you cannot suppose go into another country.

But when the fountain of all life, apart from whom there is no life, says, depart from Me, where do you go? This curse is a serious thing that you and I were under because of all of our many transgressions against God. But then look what it says in verse 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree.

My dear friend, do you have any idea what this just means? With regard to what Christ suffered, are you beginning to understand maybe why He cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Because He had become a curse in our place. Now, in order for us to understand this, I want to explain some things to you from the Old Testament. In the book of Deuteronomy, we find something very, very important.

We find that the people of God are divided into two groups and there are two mountains. There is Mount Gerasim and there is Mount Ebal. Part of the nation of Israel is placed upon Mount Gerasim and they are to pronounce all the covenant blessings that are to fall upon the head of the covenant keeper.

They are to pronounce with a loud voice all the blessings that are to fall upon the obedient man. And then in Mount Ebal, another group of Israelites are to scream forth all the curses that are to fall upon the lawbreaker, the rebel, the one who does not obey his God, the one who does not keep all the terms of the covenant. They are to cry out all the curses.

I'm going to read that to you, but in the context of Calvary. That when Jesus Christ was on the cross, the sins of His people were imputed to Him. And all the divine curses that should have fallen upon His people fell upon Him on that tree.

Getting this one thought from R.C. Sproul, let me put it this way. It will be shocking to you. When Jesus is hanging on the cross, He cries out, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? And God from heaven answers back, The Lord, the Lord your God, damns you.

The Lord send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly. The Lord smites you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart. And you will grope at noon as the blind man gropes in darkness with none to save you.

The Lord delights over you to make you perish and destroy you. And you will be torn from the land. Curse shall you be in the city and curse shall you be in the field.

Curse shall you be when you come in and curse shall you be when you go out. The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze and the earth which is beneath you, iron. You shall be a horror.

You shall be a proverb and a taunt among all the people. Let all these curses come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed because you would not obey the Lord your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded. This is what you should hear.

This should be your greeting on the day of judgment. This is the only voice you should hear from God. But that voice fell upon His Son.

I have written here, as Christ bore our sins upon Calvary, He was cursed as a man who makes an idol and sets it up in secret. He was cursed as one who dishonors his father or mother, who moves his neighbor's boundary mark or misleads a blind person on the road. He was cursed as one who distorts the justice due an alien orphan and widow.

He was cursed as one who is guilty of every manner of immorality and perversion, who wounds his neighbor in secret or accepts a bribe to strike down the innocent. He was cursed as one who does not confirm all the words of the law. The writer of Proverbs says this, Like a sparrow in its splitting and like a swallow in its flying, so a curse without cause does not alight.

So here's the question. How did these curses alight upon the branch? It is because when He was on that tree, He bore your sin. And the judgment of Almighty God fell upon Him.

David cried out this. I'm going to read it to you. How blessed is he whose transgressions is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity and whose spirit there is no deceit. Yet on the cross, sin was imputed to Christ. The sin imputed to Christ was exposed before God and the hosts of heaven.

Christ was placarded before men and made a spectacle to angels and devils alike. The transgressions he bore were not forgiven him and the sins he carried were not covered. If a man is counted blessed because iniquity is not imputed to him, then Christ was cursed beyond measure because the iniquity of us all was imputed to him.

There's an interesting statement in the renewal of the covenant in Moab. Now, before I go to it, I want to tell you something. I believe that every word, page, paragraph, chapter, verse of the Bible has something to do with Jesus.

If not, then the Old Testament is nothing more than a collection of moral stories. I believe it all has to do with Him. Yes, I understand that sometimes the Puritans were probably too extravagant in their interpretations and too precise looking for Christ.

But I can appreciate a heart like that. Samson picking up the gates of the city and carrying them up on top of the hill, throwing them down. Do you honestly think that's all that that portion of Scripture has to do with? Just the strength of Samson? No, it's speaking of one greater than Samson who would rip up the gates of hell and death, carry them up on a hill and smash them to pieces for his people.

Every word of this thing is about Jesus. Every word of it. So when we study certain things in the Old Testament, there are just faint winds that blow through them that turn our attention towards Christ.

In the renewal of the covenant in Moab, God talks about the judgment that would fall upon the head of the covenant breaker. And I want you to listen to the language and hear within this the law itself pointing beyond itself to someone greater. To someone greater.

He said, Moses testified of me. Every word of Moses, it all points to Christ. But it says this about the one who breaks God's law.

The anger of the Lord and his jealousy will burn against that man. Pilate said, behold the man and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him and the Lord will blot out his name. From under heaven, then the Lord will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in the book of the law.

Every one of us are covenant breakers. I love to hear about covenants and things like that. But every time I hear the word, it's also a reminder that I have been nothing all my life, even to this day, but a covenant breaker.

That's all I've ever been. The word covenant would be a curse to me. But there was one, an elder brother born 2,000 years ago.

Yahweh has only ever had one servant and it was his son. Jehovah has always and only had one witness. It is his son.

There has only, only been one covenant keeper and his name is Jesus. And yet on that tree, he was treated as the covenant breaker. So that I could be treated as though I were a covenant keeper.

All hail the power of Jesus' name. Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him, Lord of all.

Crown him with many crowns. From where the zeal come forth. What creek or stream or spring can you find it in? This one.

It comes forth from Him. All you need to move you to godliness, all you need to move you to service, it's found in Him. Look no further than Him.

Look for a moment to Numbers chapter 6. In verse 24, we have the priestly or Aaronic blessing. And here I want you to note the contradiction. Verse 24, the Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. And here's the problem.

How can a holy God bless a sinful, wicked, idolatrous people like this? How can a perfectly righteous God pronounce such a blessing upon the head of a people that has broken His covenant? Well, let's take this blessing, turn it around, and apply it to Christ on the cross. The Lord curse you and give you over to destruction. The Lord take the light of His presence from you and condemn you.

The Lord turn His face from you and fill you with misery. I will hear people say, how are you doing, brother? Oh, I'm blessed. And it's a beautiful thing to say.

But the Puritans, some of them said that there are certain words that you should speak only with a trembling lip. And after speaking them, maybe there should be a moment of silence. And I believe this is one of those words.

Why? Ask me how I am. Brother Paul, how are you? I'm blessed because He was not. I'm blessed because He was cursed.

There shall be showers of blessing. And every one of those brought a shower of curse to Him. This is both terrible and beautiful.

Magnificent and horrible. Every good thing comes down from the Father upon the head of His children because every horrid thing came down upon the head of His Son. It starts putting it in perspective, doesn't it? What a debt we owe to Him.

What a debt that we owe to Christ. What a debt. I want to talk for a moment about Jesus is on the cross and He cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The liberal theologian says at this point that Jesus recognizes He's not the Messiah.

Some say at this point He goes mad. All of that is blasphemy. Blasphemy, rot, poison coming out of unregenerate souls.

Men that could say things like that do not fear God. But evangelicals get it wrong also. I have heard preachers say the Father looked down from heaven and couldn't bear to see the suffering of His Son and so He turned away.

The Father turned away because He lacked the moral fortitude to see the suffering of His Son. No, my dear friend, the Father turned away so that He would not turn away from us. You see, all those tracts out there that say God is holy and man is a sinner and there is this great gulf between them, a great separation.

How do you suppose that separation is supposed to be closed? Unless someone suffers separation in our place. As the old Baptist theologian John Gill was fond of saying, someone had to stand in our law place and bear the burden of separation from the holy God. We go to the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus is there and He cries out three times, take this cup from me, take this cup from me, take this cup from me.

I have heard preachers again say, what was in the cup? I have heard preachers say it was Satan. It was the pain of the Roman cross. It was nails.

It was Jesus in His foreknowledge could look forward and see the cat of nine tails coming down on His back and ripping Him to shreds. Really, I can prove that wrong. After Christ died and resurrected on the third day and ascended up into heaven for the next several centuries, or at least for the next few centuries, countless Christians died on crosses.

Many of them crucified in the same physical manner as Christ. Some of them, we suppose, were even covered with a form, crude form of kerosene and set on fire to provide lights for the streets of Rome. History tells us, the history of martyrdom, that many of those saints went to those crosses singing, counting it all joy to suffer for Christ.

Now, please tell me this. Will the followers of Jesus Christ bravely embrace the cross, joyfully take the cross to their breasts, die upon it, even set on fire, singing hymns while the captain of their salvation cowers in a garden? Self-reposterous, that is. Why was it that Christ is crying out, My God, my God, take this cup from me.

Take this cup from me. I want you to listen to two passages. The first is in the book of Psalms.

For a cup is in the hand of the Lord and the wine foams. It is well mixed and He pours out its dregs. Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Another from Jeremiah. For thus says the Lord God of Israel. He says to me, take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it.

They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them. What was in the cup? The wrath of Almighty God was in the cup. And all those saints that followed Christ crucified, they only died under the hands of men.

They were only crushed by an empire. Their Savior was crushed by God. Now, you know in the book of Luke it says that Jesus, a mysterious word is given to us about Him, but it is a true word.

That although He was God, He was born a man, the God-man, and yet He grew in stature. It also says He grew in wisdom. Then we go to the book of Hebrews and what do we find out? That He learned obedience through the things He suffered.

Now, let's take that and match it with the Garden of Gethsemane. This is what I want you to see. Here we have Christ as a young man, I suppose.

I don't know at what age this would have happened. But here we have the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. And it is revealed to Him something of what it would mean for Him to be the Messiah.

The cost. A small view of the cost was given to Him of what it would take to redeem His people. It's revealed to Him.

It hits Him in the chest like a truck. It backs Him up. And then He goes, not My will, but Yours.

He steps across. Time goes by. A greater revelation.

Of what it would mean to obey His God. The cost that would be required for Him to redeem His people. What it would mean.

And it hits Him in the chest like a truck. And He says, not My will, but Yours. And He steps across in greater obedience.

And this goes on until we come to the night of Gethsemane. And for the first time in all His earthly pilgrimage, the full force of what it would mean for Him to redeem a people. To be separated from His God.

To be crushed under the full force of everything against us. And it so grips Him. He is sweating drops of blood.

And then all of a sudden He stands up and He says, Enough! Not My will, but Yours. A broad-shouldered Savior we have. You see, my dear friends, let me take a side note here for those of you who are Christian.

And you know that the Scriptures say that He's been tempted in all things like us. Oh, but you don't understand the magnitude of this. Let me help you.

Let's say that I'm standing here, a 50-year-old man, not much of an athlete. And I've got an Olympic bar on my back. A 45-pound Olympic bar that they use in the Olympics.

Weightlifting competitions. And then there is another brute of a man. A giant, muscular athlete.

A powerlifter. An Olympic champion. He has the same bar.

Another bar, just like it, placed across him. And then the first thing, they bring a 45-pound plate on this side and put it on my weight. And they bring one and put it on the other side.

And I'm holding up 135 pounds. And then they do the same thing for him. And he's holding up 135 pounds.

Then they bring two more 45-pound plates and they put it on me. And my legs begin to tremble. And they put two more plates on him and he stands there like a solid rock.

And then they come and they put two more plates on my side. I'm up to 315. My legs are trembling.

I'm about to fall. They put two more plates on him and he's not even sweating. Then they come over and they place two more plates upon me.

I have something like 405 upon me. My legs begin to tremble and I collapse under the weight. They put two more plates on him and he's standing there.

They put two more plates on him and he's standing there. They put two more plates on him. They put the whole world upon him and he's still standing.

Do you see what that means? We fall with a featherweight of temptation. Temptation. The weight of the cosmos are thrown upon him and his legs tremble not.

Well, what a Savior! What a Savior! And he takes on Gethsemane to see him do that when he stood. Oh, if there was a day that hell trembled, it was when he stood. What a champion.

And you're going to tell me in your feeble evangelical preaching that he was trembling over a Roman whip? No wonder your gospel is so weak. No gospel at all. I want you to imagine for a moment a huge dam.

A thousand miles high and a thousand miles wide filled to the brim. Filled to the absolute brim. And your little village and my little village are at the bottom of that dam.

About a sixteenth of a mile away. And one morning we wake up to the sound of a massive crack. It sounds like the world has split in two.

We have just enough time to look out the window and here's this wall of water. There's no one fast enough to escape this. No one's strong enough to swim against this current.

Not only are we going to die, no one will even know that we existed. Our entire village will be gone. And right before the crushing blow comes upon us, the ground itself opens up and swallows the entire deluge so that not one drop of water touches our pant leg.

And that's what Christ did on that tree for you. The wrath of Almighty God aimed at you. Don't you know when it talks about the wrath of God, it dries up the seas.

The mountains melt like wax and they run down the hill like water. And yet Christ on that tree suffered that wrath. Imagine a millstone, 10,000 pounds and another millstone on top of it.

One turning clockwise, the other turning counterclockwise. And you take a small grain of wheat and you put it in between the two. It is a fraction of a second.

The pressure comes down upon the whole. It explodes and it is ground into nothing. Unless a grain of wheat or corn fall to the ground and die, it abideth alone.

But if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit. But that death he was talking about was not the death of a mere seed. It was a violent, horrid thing.

I want to turn to one of my most beloved Puritans right now and share with you something. I call it the Father's Bargain. It was written by John Flavel.

And it is a dialogue between the Father and the Son before the very foundation of the world. Before the cross. Certainly before the cross.

Before His incarnation. Now, I know they are the words of a man, but if ever I loved the writings of a man, it is John Flavel in his first volume, *The Meditorial Glories of Christ*. He makes as much of Jesus as is humanly possible, apart from being apostolic.

And he says this. John Flavel writes, Here you may suppose the Father to say when driving his bargain with Christ for you. The Father speaks, My son, here is a company of poor, miserable souls.

If you do not see yourself in that way, you cannot be saved. Here is a company of poor, miserable souls that have utterly undone themselves. And now they lie open to my justice.

Justice demands satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. That's gospel preaching. Son, what shall be done for these souls? Now Christ replies, Oh, my Father, such is my love to and pity for them that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their guarantee.

Now listen to this part. Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee. I sometimes meet a young man that is so in love that he wants to be married.

And then he marries and comes back to my office six weeks later and says, What have I done? If only I knew the cost of this. Christ wasn't that way in going after his bride. He said, bring in all their bills.

Let me see what they owe thee. And then listen to this. This is one of my favorite things ever written by a man outside of Scripture.

Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee. Now listen, Lord, bring them all in that there may be no after reckonings with them. Do you understand what he's saying? Bring in every bill because I'm going to pay everyone so that afterwards there will be nothing left to reckon with them.

You will no longer have to deal with them about their crimes. It's over once and for all. At my hand thou shalt require it.

I will rather choose to suffer the wrath due them than they should suffer it upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt. And then the Father replies, but my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last might. Expect no abatements.

He says, Son, if you take their place, do not expect that I will lessen their punishment. And this is what Flavel writes. The Father looks to the Son and says, Son, if I spare them, I will not spare you.

If I spare them, I will not spare you. And the Son replies, content, Father, let it be so. Charge it all upon me.

I am able to discharge it. Now, there's a claim to deity. Christ throws back his shoulders and he says, lay it all upon me.

I'm able to discharge it. No angel in heaven, no myriad, no army of angels in heaven can say that. But Christ, the Son of God says, lay it upon me.

I am able to discharge it. And though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, yet I am content to undertake it. Now, we're going to finish with this.

One of the most epic narratives in all of the Old Testament. The patriarch Abraham is commanded to carry his son Isaac to Mount Moriah and there to offer him as a sacrifice. Now, I want you to listen to the language.

Remember what I said. It all points to Christ. Listen to this language.

Now, listen to this. God speaks to Abraham. Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will tell you.

So the old man gives his will in to the will of God, takes his son Isaac up to the mountain. We see no record of a struggle. Isaac seems to lay down willingly.

And the old man bends his will to God's and draws back a flint knife. And as he's ready to thrust it into the breast of his own son and to slaughter him upon that mountain, his hand is stayed. And Abraham hears a voice.

Abraham, Abraham, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son. For me. Now, at the sound of the voice and the staying of his hand, Abraham turns around, finds a ram in the thicket caught by its horns.

And everyone who reads the narrative breathes a sigh of relief. What a beautiful ending to that story. No, it wasn't the ending.

It was the intermission. Century after century rolls by. The curtain was closed.

It remains closed and the years go on. And then 2,000 years ago, the play resumes. The intermission is over.

The curtains are drawn back. And there at center stage is God's son, God's only son, whom he loves. Bearing the sins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, David, the prophets, all of the Old Testament saints, the Old Testament church, our sins, the sins of those who will come after us.

And God lays his hand upon the brow of his son, his only son, whom he loves. And with the other hand, takes the knife from Abraham. And on that tree called Calvary, God slaughters his only begotten son to pay for you.

There's an old song years ago, an old poem that said, Offer up the sacrifice. Creation sends forth the call. Offer up the sacrifice.

One life to pay for them all. Offer up the sacrifice. The innocent one must be slain.

Offer up the sacrifice and bring man back to God again. If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, tis now. And they put him in a tomb and they sealed it.

But up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph for his foes. He arose a victor from the dark domain. God has given public proof that Jesus of Nazareth was his son and is his son by raising him from the dead.

Romans 1. God has given proof that the death of Christ satisfied divine justice, appeased divine wrath against his people. Book of Acts tells us that the resurrection proves that this world has a governor, has a king, and has a judge. And that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord.

Joseph, rejected by his brothers, is thrown in a cistern and then thrown in a prison. And when it looked its darkest, Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, called him forth from that dungeon. He was quickly brought out and presented before Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh said in all of Egypt, not one hand, not one foot will move except by your word. God raised this Jesus whom we crucified from the dead. And he ascended up and sat down with the right hand of majesty upon high.

Can you imagine that? Can you imagine that? Can you imagine the mighty Christ coming to the doors of heaven? The man Christ Jesus? As Spurgeon said, as he approached the doors where no man had ever walked, the angels peer over the walls and he cries out as the psalmist says, Lift up your heads, old ancient gates, that the King of Glory may come in. And the angels respond back with shocked voices. Who is this King of Glory? And I would say that they said, Who is this man who yells at these doors? Who dare lay his hand to the latch of these gates? And the mighty Christ yells back, It is I, the King of Glory.

Open up, ye ancient gates. And he opens up, standing before the Father, walks up to the throne and takes his seat. He doesn't even have to ask for it.

It's rightfully his. And the Father looks over at the Son and says, It is finished. And the Son looks at the Father.

It is finished indeed. And the Father, according to the book of Daniel, Christ is presented, the mighty Messiah is presented before the ancient of days and basically the same thing is told to Him. Except it's Your Word, Son.

Not one finger will be lifted or put down in all the universe except it's Your Word. This is our Savior. And He's coming again in glory and power to reign and to save and to judge.

Is it well with you to know Him? And you know what I fear for you right now? If your heart is only afraid of hell, I fear for you. If you're sitting there right now, such a powerful Savior, such a mighty King, and He's coming to earth, I fear for hell. It shows me your heart must still be unregenerate.

Why? Because if your heart was made anew, you wouldn't be thinking about hell. You would be thinking, What a mighty God! What a beautiful Savior! Do you love Him? I will not ask you that silly evangelical question, Do you want to go to heaven? Everyone wants to go to heaven. My question to you is this, Do you want this Christ? Are you willing to forsake everything for this Jesus? Because if you are, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

Seek Him and He will be found by you. Call on the name of the Lord. You will not be ashamed or disappointed.

Seek Him. Preaching is a horrible thing. And this is why you can study, you can labor in the night watch.

You can pour out your heart to explain to people who Jesus is. And all the while, you know you don't even comprehend anything of it. I remember one time walking out in a field and saying, God, just one time when I pass over, give me a box.

Give me a box to stand on. And in a glorified body, let me preach Him as He ought to be preached. And the word in my heart was, Paul, even then you will not be able to preach Him.

Do you know what heaven is? It is simply this, an eternity after eternity, tracking down the glories of God in the face of Christ. Within a few millennia, I'm unsure that streets of gold and gates of pearl will become rather mundane, rather boring. I mean, there's only so many things you can do with a gate.

Why will heaven not become a hell of boredom? Because only one reason, you're tracking down the infinite, unending glories of God in the man Christ Jesus. Father, we come before You, Lord. Lord Jesus, You deserve so much more than we could ever give if it was said of Solomon, the half was not told.

Lord, we have not even reached the foothills of this Everest called the gospel. But Lord, thank You for the earnest. Thank You for the down payment.

Thank You for the knowledge that we do have. Thank You for the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Thank You for the Holy Spirit that constantly reminds us, each day, we're one day closer.

Lord, Your wisdom cannot be sounded. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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