

True Gospel - Pt1 - Man Apart From God

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon explores the necessity of understanding human depravity to fully appreciate God's mercy and grace through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 1:09:46

Scripture: Romans 3:23, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 1:1

Topics: "God's Grace", "Human Depravity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving and caring for our children. He warns against neglecting them in favor of worldly pursuits such as material possessions and career success. The preacher also highlights the need to understand who God is and what we are apart from His grace. He emphasizes the transformative power of God's love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ, urging listeners to seek a deeper understanding of what God has done for them. The sermon encourages humility, repentance, and a greater appreciation for the grace of God.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to Romans chapter 3. Before I read the text, I'd like to thank you for the great privilege that is mine to be here and to be with you this week and to seek the Lord and to pray that He will water and grow all of us. That our greatest desire is to be conformed to the image of His Son and that in that thing that God Almighty might be glorified in us, His children. Before I read my text in Romans 3, I want to read a text to you that will be the basis of much of what is done here this week.

And it's found in Romans 12 and Paul says this, Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present to your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Paul is speaking here not necessarily as an apostle as much as a pastor. And he is urging the brethren to grow on into holiness, to grow on into greater devotion, to grow on into greater dedication, greater love for God.

And the motivation that he puts before them is the mercy of God. He said, Based upon the mercies of God revealed to you in Jesus Christ, I urge you to offer your lives as living sacrifices. The great motivation in the Christian life is what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

I tell young preachers that their motivation should be found in two great days. The day that Jesus Christ hung before men and the day that all men will stand before the risen Christ and be judged. I have found in

my own life, knowing my own weakness and my own need, that the only thing that keeps me pointed in the right direction is remembrance of God's great mercies in my life.

I'm a rough sort of man, bull in a china shop, many times self-centered, many times selfish, often proud and often difficult to rein in. But there is one thing that has trapped me and one thing that I cannot get over, one thing that has imprisoned me, one thing that will stop me in my sinful tracks and turn me back to the path of righteousness, is the mercies of God revealed in Jesus Christ. And the only thing that I can imagine is that the only way you're ever going to go on to greater growth, the only way you're going to go on to greater love, is to discover in a greater way what God has done for you in Jesus Christ.

It will humble you, it will hurt you, it will lift you, it will bless you. The transforming power of what God the Father has done for his children through our elder brother, his son, Jesus Christ. And that's what I want you to see.

And so in order to do that, we need to know certain things. We need to understand who God is. We need to understand what we are apart, apart from the grace of God.

And we need to understand what God has done for us. And we're going to begin the journey this morning by looking at man apart from the grace of God. Now today, when we dismiss, I don't want anyone saying, preacher, you stepped on my toes or this or that, because that's not my intention.

I have found that a carnal man, when he hears about his sin, it will debase him and make him think of toes being stepped on. When a spiritual man hears about the sin of men apart from the grace of Christ, the only thing a spiritual man can think of is the joy of knowing Jesus. Of the pleasure of what God has done for him.

Of the great hope that is ours in Christ. When I hear about my sin, it causes me to fall in deeper love with God in Christ. A greater appreciation and a greater desire to go on.

And a greater hope knowing that if he loved me then when I was an enemy, how much does he love me now as his child? Reconciled, paid for, pardoned, declared righteous. And so I want you to look at what's being said today. Not as debasing, not as demeaning, although it may be to some who do not have the spirit.

But as a journey that is necessary in order to see the grace of God in Christ. The stars. When I got up this morning, there were stars.

Started driving at three this morning to come here. There were stars. Where have all the stars gone? They're not there now.

Or are they? They're there, aren't they? Why can't you see them? There's no darkness for them to be set upon. There is nothing to highlight their glory. Some of you young men one day get married.

When you go to buy the ring, that jeweler, crafty fellow that he is, he'll lay that tiny little speck of a diamond out on a black velvet. And when he does, it will sparkle like it could never sparkle anyplace else. That's the purpose of what we're going to do this morning.

It is to see the glory of God in the face of Christ. With the darkness of our own radical depravity. Causing the grace of God to be exalted all the more.

Another thing that you need to see, the reason why we study sin, is the lovelessness. So the reason why I study sin, the lovelessness of my own heart. It is so hard for me to even be in a song service and cry out, oh how I love Jesus.

I'm ashamed at how I love Jesus. It hurts me when I think of my love for Jesus. Now is it biblical to sing, oh how I love Jesus? Of course it is.

But I just want you to see the point. My lovelessness and the coldness of my heart needs something to move it. A lady came to Jesus one time and Jesus pointed to her and said, She loves much because she's been forgiven much.

I'm afraid that we don't love much today because we don't realize how much we've been forgiven. Because we don't realize how wicked we are apart from the grace of Christ. And that's the fault of preachers.

The only way to come to the glorious gospel is to pass through the offensive depravity of your own nature. The only way to truly love Jesus Christ and to appreciate what he's done for you is only in light of what you are. And what you are is almost unspeakable.

So that's where we will begin. Let's go into the Lord in prayer. Father, Lord, you know me and you know what I am and you know what I need.

Father, I know that apart from your son I would have no part with you. Father, you know these people and you know that all of us together do not have a handle on you. There is nothing in us or about us that would cause you to move in favor on our behalf.

So I pray, dear God, that you would do so for your own glory. And for the love that you have for your own name. And that your son might be exalted on this earth.

That people might know that you are God. Lord, help me to be something other than a seething demonstration of flesh. Help me, dear Lord.

Anoint me. Give me wisdom. Grace to be humble so that you do not have to humble me.

Open up the minds of your people. Open up their hearts. That we might all leave here with a fuller appreciation of you.

In Jesus name. Romans chapter 3. I heard a sermon on Ephesians chapter 1. I know that Romans chapter 3 verse 23 is one of the first verses you probably memorized. And yet if you were to do a historical study of every commentary that's ever been written on this text.

You would find out you could spend your entire life studying this text. As is the case with even the smallest jot and tittle in the Bible. But in Romans 3.23 we find something that the world hates.

And that is this. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Now we need to take this text.

We need to look at it. We need to look at it in a great way. And we'll do our best to do that this morning.

But before we come to that you must realize one thing. Whenever you are before preaching. There are two options.

One, the preaching is false. And if the preaching is false it's to be rejected. Two, the preaching is in accordance with God's word.

And if it is in accordance with God's word then it is no longer men speaking but God. And that you will be held accountable on the day of judgment for the things you hear today. If the things you hear today are in accordance with God's word.

So preaching is a very frightful thing. If I'm wrong I come under greater condemnation. But listening to preaching is a very frightful thing.

Because if I'm right. You'll be held accountable on the day of judgment for every word you hear here this morning. So for some of you it might be better to leave now.

Honestly. Honestly. For those of you who are brave.

Let's start. Romans 3.23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I automatically know that you don't understand this text.

And neither do I. Because if we truly understood who God is. And we truly understood the meaning of sin. We would all fall on the floor right now and tremble.

If we're outside of Christ we would tremble because of fear. We would tremble because of shame. If we were inside of Christ we would tremble in love and appreciation for what He's done for us.

You see we can't understand sin. Many of the great concepts in the Bible today. It's so hard for this wicked and perverse generation to understand.

We don't understand things like sin. We don't understand things like justice. We don't understand things like holiness.

And so when those words are put before us in scripture. We just have blank stares. There's no emotion.

There's no pounding of the heart. There's nothing. Just deadness.

Because we don't understand how radical and how powerful. And how dangerous these words really are. For all have sinned.

The greatest archangel in glory did this. And he's condemned to an everlasting hell without ever a hope of salvation. And God never even sent him a savior.

Sin is that devastating. Adam and Eve took the bite of a fruit. And were cast out of the presence of God.

And yet you have sinned so many times you could not count them in the world's greatest super computer. You could not count your sins. You could not number them.

If you stood all day looking in the mirror. With pen and paper in hand you would never be able to calculate. The measure of your sin.

The number of your sins. Or the way your sins are an offense against God. All have sinned.

Now. The word sin of course as you know means miss the mark. I love.

I enjoy archery. Making my own bows. Shooting arrows.

Things like that. And in archery there's a target. The target has a bullseye.

Now if you hit anywhere within that bullseye. That's usually two or three inches across. That's considered bullseye.

But that's not the case with God. To be righteous before him is to hit a bullseye within a bullseye within a bullseye within a bullseye. It is absolute perfection.

Every time you open your mouth. Absolute perfection. Every time you do a deed.

You move your hand. You wink your eye. Absolute conformity to God's law and God's nature.

Every thought of your heart in absolute conformity to God. And you haven't done that. You have done the very opposite.

And so have I. What you need to understand is that prior coming to Christ. It's not that you were basically a good person who at times sinned. What you need to understand is that prior to coming to Christ.

The only thing you ever did was sin. Even your most righteous deeds before God. Sin.

All sin. Every thought. Every movement.

Every word. Sin and rebellion against God. As scripture says.

And I've quoted and will quote many times this morning. All your good deeds. Your most righteous acts.

Nothing but filthy putrid rags before God. Now we need to look at this for just a moment. Many people think that they can be called sinners because they sin.

And that's not true. You are not a sinner because you sin. But you sin.

You commit acts of sin because you are a sinner. And you are a sinner by nature. Unless you have been born again.

The popular terminology. Regenerated by nature. You are sinful.

And a sinner. Now I want us to look at a few things in scripture really quick. We're going to go back to Genesis.

Just for a moment. In Genesis 6 verse 5. Then the Lord saw the wickedness of man. That it was great on the earth.

And that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Now this is man prior to the flood. But I want you to know something.

Man after the flood didn't change. And this is a text that is not only condemning our actions. But it is a text condemning our thoughts.

I once preached on this in no small place. And I had a man come up to me. Just angry.

Furious. A reporter of some sort. And he said.

That's not true. What you said is not true. What you were telling us is not true.

And I said. Well first of all. What was it that I said that's not true? That every intent of the thoughts of our heart is evil.

I don't believe what you think. I said. First of all sir.

What you need to understand. Is not what I think that matters. It's what I read.

You see. I'm plagiarizing. This is what God said about the people of that time.

But it is also what God says about you sir. And he said. I disagree.

That's not true. I said. Sir.

I told him the same thing I tell you now. If I could take out your heart. Or whatever you consider to be that mechanism of thinking and feeling that you have.

If I could take out your mind. If I could take every thought you have ever thought. From your first moment until this very moment in this church.

If I could take every thought you've ever had. And I could put that on a video clip. And I could show that video here.

This morning. You would run out of this building in shame. And you would never show your face here again.

Because you have thought things so perverse. So vile. So wicked.

You could not even begin to share them with your closest friend. And you know that what I'm saying is true. You know it's true.

Now. Let's think for a moment. Jesus called us evil once.

He said. If you being evil. Know how to give good gifts to your children.

Now think about this. You would be ashamed to be in our presence. Even though you know that we're just like you.

You would be ashamed to be in our presence. Because of what we knew about you. Even though you know.

That we've done the same thing. You'd still be ashamed. So imagine what it would be like.

To stand before a holy God. Who knows. Every thought of your heart.

And we're not speaking about deeds yet. We're just talking about thoughts. Are enough to condemn.

And yet we know from scripture. That they will be judged based on their thoughts. On their words.

On their deeds. What they have done. And have not done.

Now imagine that for a moment. How fearful. How terrifying that is.

We're not even talking yet. About the presence of God. The holiness of God.

The righteousness of God. Just the mere fact. That your sins.

In their totality. Would be exposed. Even before us.

Would be enough to drive you mad. And yet it won't be before us. Alone.

But it will be. Before a holy God. When Adam took the bite of a fruit.

The bite of a fruit. In the presence of a holy God. Was enough to drive him to hide himself.

And you. Countless fruit you have passed through. And of the vilest sort.

How will you stand in the presence of God. You will not stand before the presence of God. You'd be like a tiny wax figurine.

Only a yard away from a blast furnace. In a fraction of a moment. You'd melt to nothing.

In his sheer holiness. Now we go on to Genesis. Chapter 8. 21.

The Lord smelled the soothing aroma. And the Lord said to himself. I will never again curse the ground.

On account of man. For the evil. For the intent of man's heart.

Is evil from his youth. This is a good word. It's a strong word.

It's not just youth. And go back as far as infancy. From his childhood.

I have a little boy that I dearly, dearly, dearly love. A gift from God. I'll not have to teach that little boy how to lie.

I won't have to teach him how to be self-centered. I won't have to teach him how to be mean spirited. And selfish.

I won't have to teach him all that. He knows that already. I'll have to teach him just the opposite.

In there itself. Every child that is ever born. No matter how precious to the parent.

Is living proof of what God teaches in his word. Radical depravity. That every aspect of our being.

Is permeated with a fallen nature. Given to evil. You see, we loved it.

We don't mind using words like. Oh yes, I'm sinful. Because everybody's sinful.

But when we use words like evil. Well, I'm not like Hitler. Yes, you are.

Yes, you are. Well, I'm not that bad. Yes, you are.

Have you ever wondered why Hitler was as bad as he was? Have you ever wondered why he wasn't worse? He loved his mom. Have you ever wondered why you. Have not manifested the things that Hitler

manifested? Do you want to know why? There is only one reason why.

The grace of God has hindered you. Has stopped you. Has restrained your evil.

God even restrained Hitler. Did you know that? If God would have pulled back even farther from Hitler. And given him more freedom.

He would have shown himself much more wicked than he was. And if God were to pull back from you. Completely, you'd make Hitler look like a choir boy.

That's what we mean when we say all have sinned. That's what we mean when we teach the doctrine of depravity. That men are born with fallen natures.

You see, this is so hard for us to understand. If someone wants to talk about sin. Sure, we can do that.

Why? Because our culture laughs about sin. Tells jokes about sin. Snickers about sin.

Sin's not that big a deal. But when a preacher stands up and starts saying you're evil. That's fighting.

That's worth fighting. But even Jesus, the kindest of all. The loving Savior said, if you being evil.

And that's what you need to understand. Yes, the Bible uses metaphors like lost sheep. Lost coins.

And all the such. Yes, the Savior manifests love towards the sinner. But what you need to understand.

It's not because of some worth or value in you. The cross is not a sign of your great worth. The cross is a sign of your great depravity.

That you were so evil. The only way you could be saved. Is by God's Son being crushed.

Under the full force of the wrath that was due you. And you see, we don't like that. Because it doesn't fit into country clubs.

It doesn't fit into all these different little social types that we have. And stereotypes and organizations and everything else. It doesn't fit into being good people.

But it's true. And the only way you can ever understand the love of God manifested towards you. Is if you understand what you were.

Before Christ came into your life. You have to understand. Have you ever wondered why so many prostitutes and thieves and drug addicts.

And others of the sort. When they get saved. Seem to be so radically passionate for God.

Have you ever wondered why? They know what they are. And because they know what they are. They know what they have received.

They know what they have been given. It's fine upstanding people that are difficult to deal with. It's difficult to build a fire in such a heart.

But when we fully grasp what we were. Apart from Christ. And if we are not in Christ.

What we are. It will lead us to follow Him. It will lead us to adore Him.

And most of all. Above other things. It will lead us to appreciate.

Now. I want us to go. We're going to put one final nail in the coffin.

I want us to go to Isaiah. Sixty four. Six.

For all of us have become like one who is unclean. And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment. Like one who is unclean.

This could mean many, many things. Actually in. The Hebrew here.

It could go a lot of different ways. And all of them are horrible. As a matter of fact.

This could be referring to some things. That I don't even feel comfortable mentioning. In mixed company.

That's how filthy it is. But it says. First of all.

All of us. Have become like one who is unclean. The reference could be to leprosy.

Have you ever been with lepers? I have. There's three types of leprosy. They tell me.

And the third is the worst. Imagine I had a leper here standing with me. The most.

The worst of cases. You would have smelled him. Before you would have entered in those doors.

When you see him. Nothing but rotten flesh. Blood, pus and body fluid.

That's all. Well that's you. Spiritually before God.

Apart from Jesus Christ. Don't care who you are. Who you think you are.

That's you. And that's me. Now let's say that we all.

Find upstanding people. We want to go out and do something. To make this person presentable.

This leper that's before us. And so we go to St. Louis. And buy the finest of silk.

White silk. We bring it back. And we wrap him in that silk.

And we make him presentable for a time. But only a time. Because what's going to happen? The corruption of his flesh.

Is going to bleed through. Onto the silk. And that silk is going to become.

As filthy as the man. That's why you cannot. Save yourself by good works.

Because your good works. Are just as filthy as your nature. It is impossible to be saved.

Because why? Look what it says. All our righteous deeds. Are like a filthy garment.

Like a filthy garment. Hopeless. Helpless.

Now there are some university students here. So I'll say something. Because whenever someone talks like this.

Some skeptic will always stand up. And say well. What about the good atheist? What about the guy who's an atheist? That's good.

I mean he mows people's yards. And you know. Takes care of old ladies.

And all that stuff. What about the good atheist? You know my response to that is. Oh he's going to heaven.

He's going to heaven. I don't have a problem with that. They say what do you mean he's going to heaven? He's going to heaven.

If he's a good atheist. He's going to heaven. Now where is he? Everyone's always pointing out.

In debates and everything else. This good atheist. But they never present him.

In the debate hall. Where is he? The good atheist. That everyone talks about.

Where is he? Bring him on. Let me see him. I'd like to meet the man.

He doesn't exist. He does not exist. But let's say.

That there was some fellow sort of like that. Let's say for example. That there's an atheist.

That lives in St. Louis. And he has an enemy here in Hannibal. And one cold January night.

He discovers that his enemy in Hannibal. Is dying. And needs a certain porridge.

And only that porridge can save him. And only that atheist knows how to make that porridge. So that atheist sells everything he has.

Buys all the ingredients. Mixes it all up. And then walks through a snow storm.

All the way from St. Louis to Hannibal. On his knees. Almost dies.

Just to bring his enemy the porridge. His enemy drinks the porridge. And his enemy is saved.

Now Brother Paul. Is that a good deed or a bad deed? It's sin. It's sin.

What he did. Was sin. He said well he did.

A wonderful deed to his fellow man. What about his God? Whatever you do. Whether you eat or drink.

Or any other thing. You do it all unto the glory of God. And if you don't do it to the glory of God.

It's sin. You see what we need to understand. Is the universe does not rotate around men.

It rotates around God. You can be good to men. But are you good to God? Because if you're not good to God.

Nothing counts. You see that's the problem. We are so humanistic.

Even in churches. That it's absolutely pathetic. This is not about men.

This is about God. Men do not give you breath. Men do not cause your heart to beat.

God does. And to deny his existence. Turns everything into corruption.

You are a vile enemy. And not only that. But let me tell you something.

If you happen to be that good atheist. It's like in the south one time. This union soldier came after the war.

And helped this little old southern lady. Cross the street. And when they got across the street.

She goes young man. I hope you find a. A not so hot place in hell. When you die.

Where's the good atheist going to go? I'll tell you where the good atheist is going to go. He is going to go into the deepest part of hell. A deeper part of hell.

Than Hitler could even imagine. Why is that? Because he has committed the worst of all crimes. Do you know that.

Even the man who claims to be an atheist. If he does any good deed. And is restrained from any amount of evil.

It is the common grace of God restraining him. Did you know that? And so what he is doing. When he does a good deed.

If he does a good deed. He does it by the grace of God. The God of whom he denies.

And so he is taking credit. For a work that God is doing. Even through an unbeliever.

Which is the worst sort of thing you can do. You see men are really sinful. They really are.

They really are. Now. Let's go back to the book of Romans.

Chapter 3. Now I need to say something here. Very, very important. For all who are here.

Non-Christians, Christians, those in the ministry. Feel a special calling to preach. Or something like that.

I want you to look at something the apostle Paul does. That's not being done anymore. And it's this.

The book of Romans is the closest thing to a systematic theology. We have in the whole Bible. And Paul labors.

Now he is inspired by the Holy Spirit. We know that. But he is laboring with every force of mind.

Of every strength of intellect. To do one thing. Condemn everybody.

From the get go. The first three chapters of the book of Romans. Is dedicated to one thing.

Proving the radical depravity. Sinfulness and need. Of mankind.

Do you see that? And he will bring all this to a close. Like a man. Gathering together a noose.

Around an animal's neck. He is seeking to do one thing. Corral all men in the same hopeless corral. To shut them up in the same coffin. That's what Paul is doing. We don't do that anymore in preaching. And that's where our flaw is found. Paul labored to expose. The sin in the heart of man. And if you look through. The text. All three chapters. You'll find. That he sought to expose specific sin. You see I can. I can say you're a sinner. And it won't make you mad. I can say you're a liar. And it will make you quite mad. One of the things that I appreciate so about the Puritans. Is they preached about sin. Specifically. Because only then is it exposed. Only then. Give an example. I was preaching in a church in Kentucky. Very large. Couples class. The couples class probably was 200. 250 people. And I said I'm going to tell you two different. It was an upward mobile. Very wealthy church. I said I'm going to share with you a truth. And I'm going to do it two different ways. And then I'm going to ask you. Which way had the most impact on your life. And the first way I'm going to share this truth. Number one. We ought to love our children. We ought to care about our children. We ought to teach our children. We ought to spend time with our children. Children are a gift from God. And we need to be careful. Not to get involved in other things in this world. To the neglect of our children. And everyone said amen. Praise the Lord. That's true. That's what we need to do. I said now I'm going to share the same truth. A different way. And you tell me. If it has a greater impact on your life. Most of you live in gigantic homes. And have horrendous mortgages. You drive brand new cars. And dress up in designer clothing. And because of it. The man and the woman. Both must work twelve hours a day. And your children are totally neglected. Will go to hell. And the prophecy has been fulfilled in you. That you've sold your children for a bowl of wine. Well needless to say. The second one had the greatest impact. On the group. You see you can even teach about sin. And they're teaching you to do this. In seminary and Bible colleges now. Teach about sin in a way. That is not offensive. And that is wrong.

It's like teaching. It's like a doctor. Sharing with his patient.

That he has cancer. But in such a way. That the patient will not act upon the news.

We need to teach sin. As sinfully sinful. And we need to expose it.

Now you young men be careful. Because you can become mean spirited and vile. In your preaching.

If you try to do that. Without the spirit of God. Now.

Paul labors. He gets in verse nine. He says.

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have already charged. That both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

The world was divided up into two groups. Jews and Greeks. And every one of them is under sin.

It doesn't matter how much external blessing. How much of preaching you've been exposed to. It doesn't matter the godliness of your parents.

It doesn't matter whether your parents were pagans or evangelists. It doesn't matter. The Bible says that everyone is under sin.

And that's a good ground for starting. That's a good ground for starting. To witness to someone.

Even though they teach you otherwise. It is a good ground. Why? Because even though someone might put on a bold face.

When you begin to talk about sin. They will know in their heart of hearts. It is true.

As it is written. There is none righteous, not even one. The word righteous literally.

The word means straight. And it became to mean a standard. To which other things were compared and judged.

God's nature and God's will is that standard. Any deviation from God's nature. Any deviation from God's will is sin.

And you and I have done nothing but deviate from that. All our lives. Since there is none righteous, not even one.

There is none who understands. There is none who seeks for God. Even Christians that have truly been born again.

Will often times stand up. And God's done something to them. They just don't know what it is.

Because they will give their testimony. And they will start saying. I was seeking for God, seeking for God, seeking for God.

And one day I found it. They don't realize that that wasn't the case at all. They were seeking for God.

In about the same way a criminal seeks for a policeman. They weren't seeking for God. They were running from God.

God sought them. God captured them. God wasn't lost.

You were. And lost not as a victim. But lost as a rebel running.

People say today that we ought to have seeker friendly churches. I agree wholeheartedly with that statement. We ought to have seeker friendly churches.

The only thing we need to realize is the only seeker is God. And if you want to be friendly to someone. You better be friendly to him.

And you better do church the way he wants it done. Not the way a bunch of carnal seekers want it done. Because if they're coming for that.

They're not coming for God. They're coming from what they can get out of it. That's why you no longer have studies on the book of John.

You have studies on how to balance your checkbook. Because the book of John is not relevant today. Except to those who have been genuinely called by the spirit.

There's none who seeks for God. They have all turned aside. Together they have become useless.

Now your pastor didn't pay me to say this. A frightening thing for most church members. That they ought to realize something.

One of the chief characteristics of being reprobate. And unregenerated and lost. Is that you're useless.

In the service to God. I just described. How many people.

How many professors. How many. Useless.

To God. They don't do anything. Their Christianity has been reduced down to simply this.

Attending church on Sunday. But we ought to be useful to God. In the presence of God.

And then verse 12. There is none who does good. There is not even one.

Most people think that they're good. If we were to dismiss church right now. And go out into this countryside.

A great majority of people would say I'm going to heaven. Why? Because I'm good. You know if you were to ask me.

Several years ago. If you sat down on a plane with me. Paul are you a good basketball player? I would have said.

Well yeah. I'm a good basketball player. But it's one thing for Paul Washer to say.

I'm a good basketball player. And I was a pretty good basketball player. But it's another thing to sit down beside Michael Jordan.

And go are you a good basketball player? He says yes. We both told the truth in a way. But we're talking about two totally different things.

Aren't we? You say you're good. As compared to what? As compared to Hitler. As compared to us.

And we're the standard. The standard is. Are you good compared to God? And the Bible says there is none good.

No not one. That's why when the fellow came up. The Jehovah Witnesses used this.

They twisted. It's unbelievable what they do. You know why do you call me good Jesus said.

And they're saying look right there. Jesus is saying he's not God. Well if Jesus is saying he's not God.

He's also saying he's not good. And if he's not good. Then his death on the cross was worthless.

What he was saying was this. Look if you think you're just coming to another. Preacher or snake oil salesman.

You've got another thought coming. I'm not a good teacher. I'm God or I'm nobody.

But there is none good. Most people think that God has this scale up in heaven. And if we've got more good works than bad works.

We get in. Well if that were the case. We still wouldn't get in.

Because Isaiah has already told us. None of us have any good works. And Paul goes on to affirm the same thing.

It's written in the book of Psalms. We simply there are none good. And some people think well I haven't sinned much.

How many times did Adam and Eve sin before they were cast out of the garden. There you go. And so there truly.

Is no one. Who is good. Now verse 19 we'll skip down to there.

Now we know that whatever the law says. It speaks to those who are under the law. I believe this is referring to the Jew.

So that every mouth may be closed. And all the world may become accountable to God. And what's the idea here.

I believe it's this. The Jews were God's chosen people. And they.

They saw him on the mountain. They saw the sea split wide open. And they walked through it.

They saw revelation. They saw miracles. They saw absolutely everything.

They had the law. They had this. They had that.

They had the testimonies. And they still couldn't keep any of it. So what does that leave for us the pagans.

If the best of humanity. Couldn't even begin. To be conformed.

To the will and nature of God. What's left for us. I'll tell you what's left for us.

Nothing but a mouth closed. He says so that every mouth may be closed. And all the world may become accountable to God.

So many people today believe that the law is a means of salvation. Or that the Old Testament. It was a means of salvation.

And some don't even go that far. You ask me going to heaven. Yes, why? Because I'm trying to keep the law.

You don't have to keep the law anymore. You just have to try. And if you get just one of them down.

It seems it's okay. Like I've never killed anybody. Therefore I'm going to heaven.

But the purpose of the law. Has never been to save. The purpose of the law.

Is to expose sin. So that we'll turn away. From hoping in ourselves.

And hope only in the mercy of God. The old preachers. When they talked about repentance.

They often times talked about repentance. From good works. And I wish we talked more about that today.

In our preaching. What does it mean? You can understand what repentance from sin is. Can't you? It's loathing your sin.

Loathing your disobedience. And your rebellion and coming to God. But loathing your good works.

What does that mean? What it's saying is this. That when you finally see the holiness of God. As revealed through His law.

And especially revealed through the perfect man. Jesus Christ. Then anything you were holding on to good works.

You see as nothing more than filthy rags. And you repent. Of hoping and trusting in them.

And it throws you on the ground. So that you're no longer hoping in anything. That comes out of you.

Absolutely nothing. That comes out of you. He says in verse 20.

Because by the works of the law. No flesh will be justified in His sight. For through the law.

Comes the knowledge of sin. No flesh justified. What does that mean? It doesn't mean just as if I never sinned.

Like they say. It's a really cute thing to say. But it doesn't work.

Justified means to be declared right before God. To be declared right before God. Not necessarily made right.

As some people have started teaching recently. If you're a Christian here. You are not righteous.

In the sense that. God has made you righteous. You're a righteous man and you never sin.

That's not what happened. The moment you believed in Jesus Christ though. You were declared to be righteous.

Based upon the merit and the virtue of another. Jesus Christ our Lord. Now.

Because by the works of the law. No flesh. Justified.

In His sight. Verse 23. For all have sinned.

Now that's horrible. You and I have no idea. How horrible.

Sin really is. In light of a holy God. How horrible sin really is.

Let me. Give you an example. Of how you and I. Cannot understand.

The sinfulness. Of sin. This is extremely important.

I don't want to pick on anybody. But I'm going to use this illustration. Because it's the most revealing one I know.

Many professors in Christ. Today. Go to the beach.

And I'm not saying if you go to the beach. You're lost. I just want to say this.

And they dress a certain way. Now some of you who are over 60. If there's anybody here.

That's true. If 50 years ago. A man or a woman.

Had gone out. Dressed publicly. Like Christians.

Do today. They would have either been thrown in jail. Or would have been taken to a mental ward.

Now is that an exaggeration? It's not. If only 50 years ago. Let's say in light of 6,000 years of human history.

If. 50 years ago. Someone would have wore publicly.

What Christians wear publicly today. Unbelievers would have either had them thrown in jail. Or committed to an asylum.

Now in 50 years. What was once either criminal. Or insane.

Is now heartily accepted. By Christians. Over a span of 50 years.

Look how much we've changed. Now how much have we changed since the fall of Adam? You see that's why you can't understand sin. You're children of your culture.

So am I. Children of your culture. Well it's alright. Christian freedom.

This and that. But if you were. To go back just 50 years.

Even the unbelievers thought. It was either criminal. Or insane.

Now I'm not speaking against swimming. I'm not speaking against clothes. All I'm trying to point out to you.

Is look just over 50 years. What used to be called. A criminal and insane sin.

Is now referred to as. Christian liberty. So what does that mean? Think about that.

Have we fallen so far. That we are deluded. And cannot even begin to understand.

What sin is. Now he says here. For all have sinned.

And now we're going to get. To the most devastating part. For all have sinned.

And fall short. Of the glory of God. This is the worst.

Of this text. This is the worst part. You see.

I know the way this is taught nowadays. We fall in sort of the glory of God. Means that God had this wonderful plan.

For our life. And we were created in his image. And he wanted to do a lot of.

Wonderful things through us. And we have failed to meet up. With all the wonderful things.

That God wanted to do to our life. That's not what this text is teaching. To fall short of the glory of God.

Must be interpreted. In light of these three chapters. And what follows them.

Although they knew God. They did not honor him as God. Nor give thanks.

That's what this means. To fall short of the glory of God. Means this my dear friend.

You and I. Were not created for ourselves. We were created for God. And we were created for his glory.

We were created to appreciate. In understanding who he is. And to honor him as God.

And none of us. Have ever done that. And none of us have even done it.

Until this day. Even if we're born again. No one has fully grasped.

The glory of God. No one has fully appreciated it. As it ought to be appreciated.

And no one has honored him. As he ought to be honored. And that should break our hearts.

It's one thing. To break the rules. It's another thing.

To dishonor the person. With a direct affront. A direct attack.

And that's what we have done. Against God. You see now.

Here's something that I want you to understand. It's very important. Prior to coming to Christ.

Before God regenerated your heart. I want you to know what you were. The same thing I was.

You hated God. And that was your number one problem. Now we're all quick to say.

Yes, I was a sinner. But a God hater. I hated God.

What do you mean? I hated God. It's exactly what the Bible teaches in Romans chapter one. You hated God.

As a matter of fact. Let me share with you something. Sunday morning.

Is the greatest hour of idolatry. In America. Did you know that? Now.

People always come to me when I say. You hated God. And they'll say.

No, I didn't. I'll say. Yes, you did.

No, I didn't. I loved God. No, you didn't.

What do you mean? I didn't love God. I loved God. No, you didn't love God.

You loved a figment of your own imagination. You know, pastor. Sometime will ask me to come and teach on the attributes of God.

And I'll always say. You probably don't want me to do that. Why? Because if I split your church.

Teaching on the attributes of God will split my church. Yes, it will. Because if I start teaching on the love of God.

Fine. But if I start teaching on the justice of God. The holiness of God.

The sovereignty of God. I'll make it about three days in most churches. If that long.

And then you know what will happen. People will start standing up and go. That's not my God.

I could never love a God. That's why people all over America today are sitting in churches. And they are committing idolatry.

Because they are not singing to the God of the Bible. They are singing to a God. They made with their own minds.

That looks more like Santa Claus than he does Yahweh. Well, that's my God. Well, good luck.

I'll never forget. Richard Owen Roberts is preaching in a conference. That I preached in the following year.

And they were telling me all kinds of stories about him and everything. I personally never met the man. But I hope this is not an urban legend.

But they said he was preaching somewhere. And he mentioned that AIDS was the judgment of God. And some lady got so angry.

She couldn't see straight. She stood up and she said. AIDS is not the judgment of God.

And he said. Ma'am, what is your proof? And she said. Because little babies die of AIDS.

And therefore AIDS is not the judgment of God. And Richard Owen Roberts said this. How many little babies do you think God killed when he flooded the earth? In the time of Noah? You don't love a God like that, do you? He's not politically correct.

You think about it. We're talking about God. We're talking about a God that is wonderful.

And as terrible as he is wonderful. As C.S. Lewis always said. And I'm fond to repeat.

He's not a tame lion. And let me tell you something, young people. There's this idea today in your music and everything else.

That in order to be relevant. You got to look like the world. Sound like the world.

Well, I got news for you. In order to be relevant. The only way to be relevant is to be totally different from the world.

And totally different from most contemporary Christian musicians. And totally different from all these Christian idols that are springing up. I would prefer that we put all of them in a boat.

Send them to an island somewhere. And sing the doxology as we cut them loose and let them float. Because it does more harm than it does good.

You want to be relevant? Then don't be politically correct. Be biblically correct. Oh, you're probably going to get stoned or burned at the stake.

But you'll go out with the glory of God upon you. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Men hate God.

Before they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Men hate God. That's what you have to understand.

Men really do hate God. And before God regenerated your heart. You hated him too.

And so did I. Now, I want you to look at Romans chapter 1. Verse 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

Of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Now, look at this. Ungodliness and unrighteousness.

What does unrighteousness refer to? Nonconformity to the will of God. They deviate from God's will. They do not obey God's will.

But what does ungodliness mean? They hate God. They don't want God. Sometimes I think it would be wise when witnessing to a person.

If you tell them in the state that you're in right now. It appears as though you would go to hell if you died. And if they get angry.

Just look at them and say. Well, why on earth are you angry? I mean, why would you be angry with me for telling you that? I thought that would make you happy. What do you mean you thought that would make me happy? Yes, I thought it would make you happy.

Well, why? Well, why on earth would you want to go to heaven? I mean. You don't seek God in his presence here. You don't worship God here.

You don't study his will. You don't want to know his ways. And just go through a whole list of things and say.

You really wouldn't want to go to heaven. It's a little bit different thing. About a while back.

I think it was what dreams may come or something about Robin Williams dying and going to heaven. And. I watched it.

Someone recommended it to me and it was amazing. I'm so glad that I watched it. Do you want to know why? Because when he got to heaven.

He asked the angel that was there. You know, where is God? And the angel went. Oh, he's up there.

What did they do? What had Hollywood done? They removed God from heaven and put him somewhere just a little bit farther up. So that he would really never be involved. He wasn't even involved in heaven.

And see, everybody wants to go to heaven. It's just they don't want God there. And the reason why they don't want God there is because they hate him.

As a matter of fact, people in hell in the torment of hell. If you were to open the doors of hell and say, come out, you're free to go. The only thing you have to do is bow your knee to the sovereignty of God.

They would say, shut the door. And that's what C.S. Lewis meant when he said that the door to hell is locked from the inside. And you say, well, why is why is hell eternal? People always ask when we talk about the wrath of God.

Well, first of all, you've got to look at something. When you sin, you're sinning against the infinite holy God of infinite value. It takes on a whole new perspective.

But another thing you need to understand is this. People in hell are not repentant. They keep hating God.

As time goes on, they hate him more and more and more and more and more. Because men hate God. And it says here, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness.

Men who do not want God and we do not want God. That is why postmodernism is so important to us. That's why if you look at the politicians, do they say that God does not exist? Of course not.

That would be political suicide. They say God. But they make it clear you can't know who he is.

And if you can't know who he is. Then you don't include him in politics. Or social sciences or anything else.

You don't know who he is. So you can't go get him. Oh, yes, God, there's a there's a right and wrong, but no one knows what it is.

So we can't abide by that either. You see, they're not going to deny that there is a God. They're just going to deny that he can be known.

And they don't want him to be known, because the moment he is known, you have to submit to him. They will say there's a right and wrong, but they'll also be very clear to say. And no one can find it, because if someone does find it, then you have to submit to it.

And no one wants to do that. No one. So, see, it really comes down to we want to be autonomous.

We want to be gods. We want to rule. We don't want anyone telling us what to do.

And that thing is carried over from unregenerated people and has even entered into the church. We don't want anyone telling us what to do. We don't want anyone telling us how to talk.

We don't want anyone telling us how to walk. We don't want anyone telling us how to dress. We don't want anyone telling us what we ought to listen to and shouldn't listen to.

We're not going to submit to anything. Why? It's a democracy. Well, if you've come into the kingdom of God, you've come into a place that is not a democracy.

God is called a tyrant and he is called a despot in the Bible. It doesn't mean that he is cruel or wicked. Those words are used to refer to his absolute sovereignty over all.

And we've got a big problem with that. A big problem. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

They suppress it. It's like I was sharing with the Sunday school class this morning. When someone says they're an atheist, don't believe them.

It's not true. They're not an atheist. Atheists don't exist.

They really don't. All men know there's a God. When I meet a man who says he's an atheist, I look at him and I go, no, you're not.

He said, yes, I am. No, you're not. You are not an atheist.

And you know that you're not an atheist. And you know that I know you're not an atheist. You're just suppressing the truth.

And you know why you're doing that? Because you want to be God. You want to debate me on atheism? No, I don't debate liars. Or they get so angry, I hate God.

And I go, now you're insane because you're showing emotions towards something that doesn't even exist. They suppress the truth. And why do they suppress the truth? Because they hate it.

Why do sometimes even we, if we're regenerated and the people of God, we want to suppress certain parts of Scripture? Because that Lordship thing is very, very difficult. It is extremely difficult. I might only be speaking for myself, but in my own life, it is very, very difficult.

It's not very difficult to give up all the external trappings of sin, the inward working of the heart. The deviant thought, the pride, the arrogance, the self-centeredness and everything that goes along with it. Oh, my friend, that's a monster that is yet to be slain.

But here is the issue. And throughout this week, we must build upon this thing. That we are a twisted people, a dislocated people.

And this is where I want to conclude. An empty people. If you go into the so-called Christian bookstores today, you know what you will find? Usually half the books are dedicated to how empty Christians are.

We in America have more freedom than any Christians in the history of Christianity. We in America have more material wealth, more freedom to use that wealth. We have more spiritual props.

Props. We have television. We have preachers.

Some of them are good. Three or four percent at least. We have preachers on television.

We have tape ministries. We have books. We have.

It's just unbelievable what you can get. The average Christian has 20 Bibles. I mean, you talk about we are the most prosperous group of Christians that ever walked on the face of the earth.

And we're also the most empty. And why are we the most empty? Because we're not like Jesus. They went off to get some food.

And Jesus said, I have food to eat that you know not of. And what is that? To do the will of my father. Jesus was poor.

Jesus was persecuted. Jesus was chased. Jesus was maligned.

Jesus was about everything you could possibly be in the context of suffering. But Jesus was never empty. Because he was always setting about doing the will of the father.

And we are empty bunch of Christians. Why? Because we have not learned. We were created and saved for the glory of God.

Not to live for our own petty pleasures. But to give ourselves wholeheartedly to God in his service and in service to others. And when we do that, we are full.

We are full. You have bought many things for your life that as soon as you bought them, they left you empty. Never once have you obeyed God and been empty.

Never. You see, we were created for his glory. Do you understand that? For him.

Now you say, well, Brother Paul, but that sounds awful selfish. Well, it would be if he weren't God. But he is God.

You see, something that I always, I use this as an illustration. If at the end of the church, I were to stand back in the back doors. And when you came through, I gave you a piece of Wrigley Spearmint gum.

And you went. And you held it to your chest. And you ran around the parking lot.

And you showed everybody. Look, Brother Paul gave me a piece of Wrigley Spearmint gum. And you ran to the university.

And you went to the TV channels and radio stations. Thirty years down the road, your grandchildren are sitting on your knee. And they look up over the mantle.

And there is a picture of me. And they say, who is that man? And I say, one time in my life, that man gave me a piece of Wrigley Spearmint gum. If you would do something like that, you are in serious need of counseling.

But. If you are dying. And I gave you my heart.

Then all of that would be appropriate, wouldn't it? Even 30 years down the road, when your children, grandchildren said, who is that man in that picture? It would be appropriate to say, I wouldn't be here. And you wouldn't even be here if it weren't for that man. So the measure of love is sometimes manifested in the gift that is given.

People say when God seeks his own glory, he's being selfish. No, when God seeks his own glory, he's being loving. How? What is the greatest thing God can give you? Himself.

A revelation of his beauty, his glory. You see, heaven is not heaven because the streets of gold and gates of pearls. Not at all.

Heaven is heaven because of the revelation of God. As a matter of fact, since God is an infinite being. Then he will infinitely be revealing himself to us.

That's why heaven never gets boring. But here's what I want you to look at. The most loving thing God could ever do for his creatures.

Is to take center stage on this world and do everything he does to show how spectacular he is. And we get to look at that. The greatest gift God could give us would be to glorify himself.

To do everything to demonstrate his glory so that we might see him. And then be filled in the fullness of who he is. And so when God says that we were created for his glory, that is a wonderful thing.

That is such a wonderful thing. As a matter of fact, all throughout heaven we will be chasing down God in so many words. And eternity has been placed in your heart, my friend.

Eternity being an infinite thing. You could put the whole world and condense it down to a black hole. Make it as small as the head of a pen.

Stick it in your heart and your heart would still not be full. Take all the riches, the wealth, the fame, the beauty, the glory and everything else in this world. Stick it in your heart and you'd still be empty.

Because that heart of yours is bigger than all that. You have an infinite hole in your heart that can only be filled by an infinite being. And there's only one of those and that's God.

So if you want to be full, you will be full only to the degree that God has revealed himself in your life. Tozer said one time, I can tell how much God you have by how much entertainment you need. Because when God comes, there's no need of other things.

And we are so vile at times not recognizing that. As I said, I'll give you a testimony from my own life. I love being out in the woods, love archery, love.

And I'll make a bow and I'll think about, put a lot of thought into that bow. The type of wood I want to use, the bamboo, how I'm going to temper it, everything. And then sometimes I'll sit out there and I'll be in a tree stand or something and I'll be looking at that bow.

And it's almost as if I have replaced the infinite God with a stick. Now, God taught me a long time ago. He doesn't want me to live in a hole with no clothes on, totally shut off from temptation.

That he has given me a world that he wants me to enjoy, but he wants me to learn how to do it. To learn how to do it, to do everything for his glory, because everything else is just empty. If you don't know God here today, there's a good possibility you'll leave here not knowing God.

But there is a Savior and you can know him. You say, Brother Paul, can I be saved? Maybe, maybe not. What do I mean by that? If the whole time I've been preaching, your mind's just been wandering around.

The only thing you can think of is how quickly you can get out because I preach too long. And nothing has been stirred in your heart whatsoever. You cannot be saved, at least not right now.

Because there's no repentance, there's no working of God. Now, if that makes you afraid, then there's a little bit of hope. I would suggest you fall down on your face and cry out to God as though hell were opening up its jaws to swallow you down.

And ask him to break that hard heart of yours. But if you're sitting here today and you came in for no reason, just nonchalant, no big deal, not caring about Christianity at all. And while I was speaking, God began to talk to your heart.

A stirring, a life, a spark. You begin to see your own sin and think about yourself. I'm the vilest of men.

I've got news for you. There's hope for you. You can be saved.

That's repentance. You lack one thing. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved.

If you want to talk to me after this service or anything about the condition of your soul or your need, I, the pastor, and other men and women here would be willing to stay the whole day if necessary to guide you in the Word of God to the feet of the Savior. Let's pray. Father, I come before you and just pray that you who do great things through imperfect means would get glory for yourself out of what has been done here today.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

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