

Counterfeit Conversion (2 of 6)

by Winkie Pratney

The sermon emphasizes the importance of genuine conversion and the dangers of counterfeit conversion, which is characterized by religious deception and a lack of true character.

Duration: 54:34

Scripture: Psalm 19:7, John 8:31

Topics: "Gospel Message", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the simplicity of the gospel message. He states that the essence of the gospel is a plain and simple message that does not require a complicated understanding. The preacher highlights the importance of giving up selfishness and stupidity, which he equates to sin, in order to be saved. He also discusses the fear of disgrace and the fear of letting down others as motivations for people to stay in their sinful ways. The preacher concludes by emphasizing the importance of generosity and giving in the Christian life.

Transcript

Father, thank you again for this opportunity to study your Word. And we ask again for your help. Your Word says, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God.

We come asking of you to give us wisdom and direction, by the Holy Spirit, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Continuing the study in the second of a series on the subject of counterfeit conversion.

And the Lord Jesus told us, in the book of Matthew 24, what the sign of the last days would be. And before he gave all the stuff about wars, and rumors of wars, and famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in diverse places, and all of these things. The very first thing he said, when the disciples said, What shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world, or the end of the age? Jesus said, Take heed that no man, what? Deceive you.

So we could write this down. The chief sign of the last days will be religious deception. That is the major sign of the last days.

It's significant also, that Jesus gave a parable of the fig tree, as the sign of his, when you see the fig tree, beginning to put forth the leaves, know that summer is near. So, when you see these things come to pass, know that the end is near, even at the door. So, what is also interesting, is that in the scriptures, the fig,

and the vine, and the olive, have symbolism to do with Israel in three different ways.

The vine is a symbol of a national history of a country, the secular history of a nation, we could say. A vine's territorial plant, it grows by reaching out this way, and it needs pruning, constant pruning, which is a function of government. And then the olive is a symbol of the spiritual history of a nation.

But the third tree, the fig, is the religious history of a nation, which often parallels the spiritual, but is not the same thing. The religious history of a nation is what the secular world most notices when they study a nation's history. But the spiritual history of a nation is usually either not given publicity, or hidden.

This is the real spiritual life of a country. This is the religious trappings. And it's significant that the fig, out of all of the trees that I know of, has a fruit that appears before the leaves.

And God is trying to say, I think, is this, there should be character before you get your religious trappings, or I'll cut you down. And it is the fig tree that is given as the sign of Jesus' second coming. When you see religious awakening, when you see a widespread interest in religious things, not necessarily in spiritual things, but in religious things, now the end is near.

And we could go right through the Gospels, and we could say this, that it is possible to be religious, to be deeply religious, we could say to be evangelically religious, to be charismatically religious, or Pentecostally religious, or fundamentally religious, or any other way religious you like, and still not be a Christian. Because I have ministered in all kinds of different places in these last 20 odd years of missionary evangelism, and I've seen people get saved out of all of them. I don't care what kind of religious you are.

The fig is all right. But it's interesting, that can be laid waste. See, this can be cut down.

But the olive never does, never in Scripture. It has branches broken off and other branches grafted in. The olive remains.

All right, you olives. Olive is not a popular name, except olive oil, and no wonder I like Popeye. The Gospels are full of warnings about counterfeit conversion, the epistles continually exhort us in words like this, to examine ourselves, to see whether you be in the faith.

Remember this, Timothy was told, study these things and preach them, and in so doing you'll both convert yourself and them that hear thee. Strange word. And Revelation warns us, that only those who overcome will inherit the promises of God.

So the whole New Testament is loaded up with this thing. And now, we are studying at the moment, the parable of the hard ground. And we've mentioned two things.

First, that this ground has heard, but there is a lack of understanding. Now you all remember the, in the 60s, now some of you were not Christians in the 60s. Some of you just got saved, sort of young punks.

You only came in the last 10 years or so. You know, I was on the streets in the 1960s, and this is how a lot of Christians used to witness. This is our famous fried egg on the head, Paul Little illustration.

Paul Little used to use this, that great IVF guy. Guy comes up to you and he's got a fried egg on his head, see. This is how they used to witness in the 60s.

And he goes, oh wow, something really heavy happened to me. You look at him and you go, what? He says, you know I used to be lonely, and I used to use drugs and stuff. You go, hmm.

Somebody told me if I put a fried egg on my head, I would have happiness, peace, joy, and love. You go, really? Because I know you're skeptical, but you don't want to knock it until you've tried it, man. Listen.

I used to be an eggtheist myself, but I did. So I went, I got this egg. Any egg will do.

There's many paths to this truth. And I took a frying pan, and I put a little bit of margarine in the bottom. You can use Crisco.

And I broke this egg in the pan, and as I put it on my head, this lovely, warm feeling began to... You got an experience? That's fine. Is the Christ you've had an experience with the Christ of Scripture, the Christ of history, the real one? Because in the 60s, people were having experiences with Christs all over the place. Janice Ian talked about the new Christ cardiac hero.

She said, I'm not talking about God, because some of my best friends are gods. She said, it's about a new Christ cardiac hero that is the latest leader and the latest hero of the younger generation. That was the 1960s.

And we had, remember Jesus Christ Superstar? The East came in with, you know, Hare Krishna and Hallelujah at the same time. There was a whole bunch of new Christs that were introduced in the 1980s. So not enough for people to say they haven't had an experience with Christ.

Which Christ? The real one? The Bible one? 1970s, everybody started making sure that their experience matched this. That's where all the Bible studies came. That's where all the, you know, the videotapes and the Christian books began.

All of these people with experiences got hungry for some content in those experiences. So we have, in effect, a neat opportunity to correct the imbalances of the 60s only experience thing. Don't lose that though.

Don't come up with, here are 800 facts and you go away, no he's smart, he's not saved, but at least he knows why he isn't. In the scriptures there is content in 2 Peter 1, 3 to 4, according as his, 2 Peter 1, 3 to 4, just scribble it down, according as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him. See? Through the knowledge of him.

That's content. That has called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. How do you become a partaker of the divine nature? By taking the promises of God into your own life.

That's content. That's facts. Another one, 1 Timothy 2, 4, who will have all men to be saved and to come, what? Into the knowledge of the truth.

So God puts that fact right in there with the experience. Now, 1 Peter 1, 22 to 25, seeing you have purified yourselves in obeying the truth through the Spirit. See? How do you purify yourselves? By obeying the truth through the Spirit.

The Spirit of God gives you the truth, God's word, you obey it unto unfeigned love of the brethren. See that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which lives and abides forever. The grass withers and the flower, the flower fades away, but the word of God endures forever.

And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. God always has to give that content in there and people get saved. And we're going to look in a second now at the difference between, let's just call it a legal experience and a gospel experience.

All right? We're looking at counterfeit conversion, we're looking at people who are religious without being Christian. And there are three kinds of false experiences in these three kinds of soil we've looked at. So I want to look at a little detail at the first kind, this hard ground.

A couple more quick scriptures. Psalm 19, 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

See the two facets of truth? The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, changing it around, altering it. Psalm 19, 7, that was. John 8, 31 to 32, an often misquoted scripture.

John 8, 31 to 32. Here's the way it is usually quoted. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

That is not what it says. It says, and you shall know the truth. And the and refers to the verse before, and the verse before says, if you continue in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.

So the receiving of the truth that sets you free comes from continuing in the word of God and being indeed a disciple of Jesus. Not being anybody's disciple. And then 1 Timothy 4, 16.

Take heed to yourself and unto the doctrine. Continue in them, 1 Timothy 4, 16, for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear thee. That is a good little verse for those of you who are going to be missionaries.

John Wesley probably read that verse in his early days and didn't know what it meant. All right. Now, let's just say this.

What is the essence of the gospel? It is a plain message. It is a simple message. It's not complicated.

It's not eight million things you have to know in order to be saved. Can you lead somebody to the Lord and you've got 30 seconds left, and he really wants to be saved, God's dealing with him. Could you do it? You have to go through your 29,000 laws of how to... Well first, God loves you, and the guy's gone.

See, can you lead him? Can you lead him to the Lord? It's a plain message. It's simple. Paul might have said some heavy things, explaining stuff.

You don't need to know all of that. It's more important that you know when you say to somebody something, what is needed, then they know. Do you see what I mean? In order to teach a dog tricks, you have to be smarter than the dog.

Right? So, you don't have to put it complicated to people. They can get the end simple product. The study and the background on it can be as sophisticated as you like, because it comes from God's heart, and He is pretty smart.

See, but on this end, it's really simple. It asks us to do two things. Give up our selfishness, and give up our stupidity.

That's it. God is out to do two things. Save you from selfishness, which the Bible calls sin.

And all the 9 and 13 words, all the New Testament words for sin, could be reduced down to that independent heart and spirit that comes out in a self-centered life. We'll call it death style, shall we? I won't call it a lifestyle, because it's hardly a lifestyle. Stand before God.

What was your lifestyle? Wasn't it death style? God wants to save us from selfishness. He's the only one who can do that. Karl Marx came along.

He said, the problem with man is that they are selfish. So, what we have to do is get rid of selfishness. So, if we can only get rid of the self, that would be it.

You want to bring people into profound unity? They don't agree? Shoot them! Boil them down, dehydrate them like Folgers coffee crystals, shake them together in a centrifuge, and you have profound unity on a molecular level. You lost the self, that's the only problem. Now, there's got to be a better way of dealing with selfishness than losing the individual.

That's why Marxism gives meaning for society and for history, but none for the individual. And Buddha came along and others and said, the problem with the world is selfishness. So, let's get rid of the self.

We'll only have selfishness. Get rid of that ego, that response. See, so let's... Problem is, we respond to desire.

And unfortunately, the desire to be free of desire is desire. And that really gets you after a while. I desire to be free of desire.

Paul ran into that in a religious situation in Romans 7. Wretched man. You know, he said, I wouldn't have known that I was wrong except the Lord said, don't covet. And I covet to be spiritual.

How do you get out of that? I want to be! No way out of that thing, see? It's an endless cycle. Get on the wheel, boy, you'll never get off that thing. So, he said, take what that individual... Drop into the ocean of nothingness.

Be swallowed up in the allness. And you lost the person again. That is not wise.

So, great thinkers from the East and the West have recognized the problem. Selfishness. But you go to most countries today, there are statues of Buddha.

How embarrassing! Buddha would turn up in his grave if he found people making statues of him. Worshipping them! He tried to get rid of the individual. People make a statue of him with a big belly and everything.

And poor old Marxists put a movie out called Reds. There's one person in the world that can take selfishness out of the heart of man. And he's the one who is not.

His name is Christ. You shall call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people.

Not in, but from, their sins. That's what he can do. No other leader in the world can do.

He can take selfishness out of a person's life. He can forgive and cleanse from sin. Second thing is he can give you wisdom.

A lot of people make mistakes. They're not only bad, they do dumb things too. It's one thing to be bad, it's something else to be dumb and bad.

I've met kids, junior high school kids, they're so dumb, it's hard for them to get saved. You know, they're standing, it's like they're putting a gun in their mouth, going, hey, this is fun, boom, boom, you know, and pulling. One of these has got an empty chamber, pew, like that.

And you think, you can't do that, you'll kill yourself. Oh, it's fun, see. I've learned something, and that is this, sometimes really smart people who have honest hearts get saved quicker, because they realize the consequences of what they're doing faster.

A guy comes up with a crazy philosophy, he goes crazy immediately because he's brilliant. See, he goes, hey, if I follow this through, I should be crazy, and he is. So he kills himself immediately.

Now others read his books, hey, this is really heavy, they don't understand it. So they only kill themselves 40 years later. Do you understand? The quicker you see consequences, the quicker you go to judgment, or the quicker you go to the realization you're really lost.

And one of the things God does is enlighten. He brings wisdom in in people's lives, and that's one of the reasons why we preach the gospel. A lot of people know they're lost, they don't know how to get saved.

They don't know how lost lost is. They think you're only lost if you're crawling around vomiting with VD and you're a hooker for 40 years and you've run out of veins and now you're shooting in your eardrums. They don't know how lost you can be.

Tell me, what kind of ground was this again? Hard ground. The hardest people in the world to win are religious people, I believe. No thank you, I've got my own religion, I don't need that.

It's nice for you, whatever turns you on. If you're into that, that's beautiful. I'm personally into bananas.

What does God have to do? He's bring holiness and happiness back into his universe. Happiness is a byproduct of holiness. Holiness comes when people become wise and good again.

We use this often. Many years ago in a second university on the west coast, I was speaking and a guy stood up, he said, Why Jesus? Why not? I said, Well, who else? He said, Well, why not somebody else? Why should we follow Jesus? I said, Who did you have in mind as an alternative? He said, Well, why doesn't everybody follow me, for instance? Being modest and proud and humble and unassuming. Why doesn't everybody follow me? I said, That's easy, you're not smart enough and you're not good enough.

Sit down. He's the only one wise enough to run your life. He's the only one with enough power to give you genuine virtue.

Now it's simple, it's not complicated. Now, Ah! 27 minutes and 50 seconds. All right.

I want to now give you quickly some little outline. It's very brief and later on we'll try and make available for you some study sheets on this so you can look in detail. Over a hundred and something years ago, there were, in the time of the second great awakening, there were up to 10,000 people giving their lives to the Lord a week.

And they were really getting saved. I mean, they weren't just signing rolls or being bussed in, you know, because they were promised a living Bible in denim and a lollipop if they attended church that Sunday. They were really getting saved.

They were, bars were closing down with big signs on it, closed forever, hallelujah, you know, and stuff like this. So it was a wild time in those days. During that time, one of my favorite guys, of course, out of all the revivalists is the guy who's been called America's greatest revivalist, the one we mentioned earlier, a religious guy that went to church and got saved, and that was Phinney.

And what we've done is reprinted three of Phinney's messages on counterfeit conversion. He called them true and false conversion. And we'll try and get copies of all of these for you.

Also try and get some printed up. But he listed three different kinds of counterfeit conversion. Now, I'll tell you how radical this is.

I've taken this at different times and preached it. We won't do it here. I'll just outline it for you.

But to take this and preach it is like throwing in 40 grenades into the middle of a youth group. It has the most interesting results. In the mid-sixties, when the Jesus movement was peaking and there was all kinds of people experiencing things, I dug out these old messages and preached these things.

And it was the wildest deal. I had youth ministers get saved and pastors get saved and all kinds of wild things happened. And the last time I preached this set, I was kicked out of one of the largest churches in Texas.

So here we go again. I preached a message on carnal Christianity. This large church and the secretary, who was a lesbian in this church, got so mad she resigned.

And that didn't make the pastor happy at all. Do you want to know why, in Wesley's day, they wouldn't let him preach in his father's church? Do you want to know why, in Finney's day, 500 ministers met him and said, if he comes into our city, we'll meet him at the gates of the city with cannon? It wasn't because they didn't like their suits. I preached a gospel of holy living.

Both of them did. You can go back to Jonathan Edward. You pick them up, boy.

You will not see the gospel we preach today as a whole in the Western world in church history. It is a new gospel. It's one we've put together with our own genius.

And that is why God will not release His power to disseminate this gospel through the world and hurt what He's doing there. We clean our act up and we get back to what they did in the scriptures and what they did

in history and we'll start seeing the same kind of results. And I promise you this, it is not that that thing has changed.

My friend Tony Salerno once met a pastor and he said, Tony said, I want to preach just like Jesus. And the pastor said to him, I don't want to preach like Jesus. He wasn't very successful.

And he had 12 disciples and he lost one of those. No, he was a liberal. No, he wasn't.

He was an evangelical. Fundamentalist. Pastor.

That's inverted commas. No fun, too much damn and not enough mental. Here, would you scribble these down? These are some signs of what we could call legal experience.

I want to give you first the big picture of it. All right? There are two fundamental ways of ruling people. One is legal.

There's nothing wrong with it. It's quite legal. These are, we'll call these moral ways.

There's another way of ruling people. That's short by physical violence. You want to make somebody do something, you just pick them up and beat them over the head.

Hold his hand and make him do it. I mean that's, we're not talking about that. We're talking about moral means.

There are two methods, legal, gospel. One is the way you deal with selfish people. If people are selfish, then who is at the center of their lives? Themselves.

So what do you do? You either make it difficult for them to do bad things or make it pleasant for them to do nice things or the things you want them to do. Reward and punishment. Okay? So you design an environment or you give them rules that hopefully tie in with true rights and true wrongs.

Fortunately nowadays, these methodologies are separated from the content of true right and true wrong so that now you just make things unpleasant for people if they don't do what you want them to do and what you want them to do may be arbitrary. See? Or determined by statistics. If 51% of the population vote that such and such a thing is true, it becomes true statistically.

No connection to true absolutes. See that? Now what? We could take this out and make it into two extremes. This is called threat.

If you don't do it, I'll bash you so hard on the head you have to unlace your shoelaces to blow your nose. That's called threat. And bribe.

Would you like a big fat duplex in heaven? I call this Frankenstein and Santa Claus evangelism. And this one, it helps if you're skinny, have a black suit, foot and a half long bony finger, and burning laser beam eyes. You say, some of you are going to die.

I saw a movie once advertised. They had some pretty scary movies. You know, they have Jaws 2, Alien, some of these basically scary movies.

You know, like on a scale of 1 to 10, Jaws is 3 and Alien is 14. Now they have some basic scary movies, but I don't know anyone scarier than this thing was called The Burning Hell, was the name of this movie.

And it had as advertising, see the flames, hear the shrieks.

That is called threat. Now is there a hell? You bet your booty there is. You don't believe in one, you'd change your theology when you die.

And are there rewards for following Christ? Yes, there are. But that is not the gospel. That is the bare minimum morality requirements and any old religious person can be like that.

In other words, I will do what is right, so I won't get punished, and I'll do what is right, so I'll get some rewards. Now we have that as the gospel today. Isn't that gospel? The gospel proposes a radically different method of change.

It starts with the heart. It alters the heart. It has a man die to himself and lay down his life like a seed that falls into the ground.

It says, nothing in my hands I bring. Where the person gives up their life to Christ and begins, and we have to put it in this negative way, though it's not really a negative word, well, unselfishness. Virtue would be another.

True virtue. A person gives up their life to God and God changes their life supernaturally by the Spirit of God. A work is wrought to give up their selfishness.

Paul said, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me.

I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Me to live is Christ and die is... Again, what are these guys talking about? Giving up their self-centered lifestyle. They changed heads from headship of their own lives to Christ being their head and their boss and their Lord.

A simple, but a profoundly different change. And the base then is no longer this, but this. How does love come out? It comes out in a glad, happy obedience to God.

Jesus said, If you love me, finish it. If you love me, keep my commandments. If you love me, you'll do what I say, in other words.

Not this. Not, if you want to be loved, then do this. Not that.

The other one. If you love me, you'll do that. See the difference? This thing here can just simply be a religion of works.

It can have no place at all. I know people, I think they're Christians. They're working hard so that God will bless them doing this and that.

See? They're avoiding this and that, but their base is wrong. Their base is not that. Their base isn't faith and love.

Their base instead is threat and drive. And they're working their fingers to the bone and what do you get? Bony fingers. What do you think the strength of the Reformation was? What is the one great thing that guys like Martin Luther, for all of the weaknesses that early Reformation had, what is the one great thing they brought in? They came from a world that was filled with this, of indulgences and this and that and when the coin in the copper rings, the soul from hell springs.

You know, they came from that kind of world where you earn brownie points for God. And that wasn't it. It was not the gospel.

So was John Wesley. What do you think he did all that stuff? What do you think he got up in the morning and studied all these great... Because he wanted God to work with him. Now, nothing wrong with discipline.

Is there anything wrong with this? No, it's legal. It's not... It's legal. It's not illegal.

It's not the gospel. Gospel is like a marriage. Remember the story, apparently a true story of a lady, she married a pig of a man.

A man who was a pig. Beat her up and he did all this stuff. He was such a hard dude.

He used to give her a list every morning of what he wanted and expected accomplished and completed by the time he came back that night. And if it wasn't finished, he'd beat her up again. Well, God doesn't like people like that.

Killed him. He died. Heart attack or something.

I don't know. Anyway, the lady was so hurt of marrying this guy. She just didn't want to get married again.

She was so freaked out about old men in general after marrying this guy. She didn't want to marry anybody at all. She eventually met a really nice guy.

He loved her and he spent a year and a half gradually winning her affection and her trust again. And finally she took the big plunge and she got married to him. And what a difference, man.

I mean, he still went out to work. She got into the job she had and it was a joy. It wasn't a drag.

It was a joy. And one day she was cleaning up and she thought, it was real spring clean now, no little, she was getting really behind things. She stuck her vacuum cleaner down the back of the sofa and pulled out a piece of paper.

And the piece of paper was one of the old lists her husband had given her. And she read through the list and she began to weep because she was doing everything he had on the list and more. And she was happy.

See the difference? There are hundreds of thousands of people in this nation who believe they are Christians who are not Christians at all, who are only legal, who are religious, but not Christian. If you ask them, they've got the books, they've read the things, they pray, they give, they do this, that and the other thing, but it's all over there. They don't trust God.

They don't love Him. They have not that affection that longs to do. This is what you have to do.

This is what you want to do. You talk about poor pastors that have to preach on giving to this legal bunch. You have to threaten them.

If you don't give demission, the communists will come and take over the nation. Oh, we're not going to give demission. How many of you want blessings? Then put your money in.

Or you won't have a blessing. I have a friend, he's got one of these things that he talks about. He said, if you give God a thousand dollars, He will give you back ten thousand dollars.

And then it said, we need ten million dollars. So this secular professor wrote and said, then you give me one million dollars. What is the problem here? Is the problem that there is no hell? Or is the problem is that there are no blessings? No, that's not the problem.

The problem is we've got religious people who are not Christian trying to access divine blessing. Or trying instead to threaten people. And that's not going to cut it.

That's not the gospel. That's not what God wants to send through the world. There is judgment.

There is real hell. And there are real heaven. But Jesus never said, look, anybody want to come after me? I got this dynamite chariot with prancing horses and if you jump on with me, we're going to have a great time as we boogie on down the road.

He wants some signs. Now, can you scribble these down? Got eleven minutes and fifty-one seconds. Let's call this the religion of fear or the religion of hope or fear or legal faith or anything you like.

But the point is somebody who's been run like this. Not like that. First, they serve God like taking medicine.

Now you have a nasty medicine. I mean some horrible tasting stuff. And they have that.

In America they kind of put it in some pink stuff so it doesn't taste as bad. In New Zealand we can't afford the pink stuff so they just give it to you straight. They say, here, eat this.

It's horrible. Why do they? It will do you good. Eat it.

And stick it down. The counterfeit obeys God not because he loves Him but because he expects to get something good out of it for himself. The child of God who is a real child of God delights in doing God's will.

When Christ in the gospel is loved for His sake or for their own sake there is no weariness or struggle in serving. If you make yourself do things you enjoy doing them. I'll just let you in the secret.

I like serving God. I enjoy it. People say, don't you have a holiday? It's like, how boring it must be doing all this.

I'm like a little kid loose in a toy store. When I take my little boy to a toy store I don't have to say, now I want you to enjoy yourself. He goes crazy.

I've got to drag him. Whoa, come away from me. Like this.

The person in the religion of fear reads the Bible and prays because he knows he should. It would not do to say you're a Christian and not do those things. They don't enjoy it.

If they do, go to prayer meetings or other Christian things. Now, I'm not talking about, some prayer meetings are boring. I don't go there because I just bore the cheese out of me.

I believe, I believe in hanging around people that love God. That enjoy loving Him. That enjoy serving Him.

And I don't like hanging around people that don't. Only for the purposes of seeing them saved, all right? So their chief enjoyment in the Christian life here is of anticipation. It's filled with things like, one day, one day, or, never failed me yet.

Never failed me yet. Maybe one day, he will, but the moment. Two, they do what they have to, not what they really want to.

Count of a convert is moved by convictions. And I want to use convictions just in a good sense. I just say, it's sort of the, I have to do that.

Something I've got to do. Look, do you get this picture of the disciples from some of the movies you see of Jesus, right? It's Jesus and the disciples. Here's Jesus in front.

Here's the disciples after Him. You know, it's like, grit your teeth, man. That, I don't get that picture.

They lived on the edge of death, but they were a joyful band. Little kids don't come up to people looking like this. Mothers, you know, little kids flocked around Jesus.

The disciples, every now and then, they'd go in there, stay away, little kids, don't. No. Jesus said, don't, don't do that.

That's like the kingdom of heaven. You watch a little kid, that's what the kingdom of heaven is like. They don't, there was a playground, go, and they're out.

Three, oh, can you put two, two more other words. Put purposes under this, under the has to, not want to. Put purposes and put prefers.

See? Giving you a rather. Purposes. He put, I should do that.

I really need to do that. Shouldn't get around to doing that. This is prefers.

See, you shouldn't have to tell a real Christian that he ought to do something. You just need to tell him what there is to do and how he can do it. That's why one of the first questions a real young Christian asks is, what does God want me to do? Because he wants to do it.

He just needs to know, is it God? How do I know what he wants me to do? Look, why should I do it? When you see people asking that question, why should I do it? Then you've got a person, basically, who's a purposer, not a preferrer. A counterfeit convert has a basic motivation of fear, not love. He's not only afraid of hell, but he's afraid of punishment, he's afraid of judgment, and he's afraid of disgrace in people's eyes.

He still lives for himself, thinks of himself, and seeks his own happiness and safety supremely. These fears keep him outwardly moral. You see? This person might be very moral.

Think of the Pharisees. How moral can you get? They grow a sprig of mint in their garden. It has ten leaves.

They pull a leaf off and drop it in the collection plate. One must tithe. One knows.

Did they pray? Yes! Wouldn't be, wouldn't, wouldn't do to be known as a Pharisee and not pray. So they went out to the markets. Oh God, I thank you I am not as other men.

You know what Jesus said? He said, You are like whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones and unclean on the inside. Now that really turns you on if you're a Pharisee. You're supposed to be the most religious people in the whole nation.

And when people grabbed hold of you and said, Hey, I might not make it but perhaps you will. And then somebody comes along and tells you you're a bag of bones. Why did they stay moral? Because it was fear.

See? Fear of what people would think of them if they let down. Fear, fear of disgrace. Fear of not just judgment or punishment but fear of letting down from their contemporaries.

You take a legal person out of his legal environment and put him in an environment where nobody knows him, where nobody will report him, where nobody will do anything that will threaten that which kept him in and he will fall apart very quickly. I see kids, they come out from their home church or whatever, you know, they got drafted maybe in the army or something, right? And I'm flying on a plane and I see this guy and I can tell it's obviously the first time he's ever been out. He's dressed up in his, you know, new army uniform.

Wish I had enough. Oh, yes I do. Here it is.

He's sitting there at his first cigarette. I get jammed in beside him and Stuart says, any drinks? He says, what is this? He doesn't know the names yet, see. He's a thousand miles away from his church youth group and his mummy and daddy kissed him goodbye and now he's going up the army and we know he's going to see him for four years and he's going to be a man.

And he's sitting there and she says, well we have this, that and bloody Mary takes the ugliest hand and went, I said, I see you going to the army. He goes, yeah, what do you do? I go, I'm a preacher. I see a guy try to swallow a cigarette and kick a bloody Mary under the seat at the same time and he goes, oh, well actually I got a youth group too.

I go, oh really? Why is he doing that? You take him out of his environment and he falls apart. His Christianity is not real. It's one of outward profession.

It's not internal. As long as he's in a nice group he'll be nice. Now there's a spacious form of that and we'll look at that later.

But anyway, do you know, this might sound radical to you, you want to say it anyway, I don't care because I've been kicked out of better churches than you guys have. Do you know that a Christian would be even happy in hell if God sent him there? That might sound radical to you. Well, are you saying that Christians go to hell? No.

I don't think they do. At least it doesn't seem like they do. But, in the scriptures, you see, doing God's will is what makes this person happy, not the place where they are.

You can shift their environment and it doesn't care. As long as they can serve God, as long as they can please Him, that's it. Now let me ask you a question.

First of all, how many of you deserve to go to hell? Put your hands up. Okay, do you really believe that? And if God gave you a whole life of joy with Him and then said, okay, that's it, you've had a good time, now

that's Him, would you deserve it? Yes, you would. It's a life of grace, it's a life of mercy.

He doesn't have to save you. He wants to. Isn't that neat? God isn't legal.

He's a gospel God. He wants to. That's why He does it.

You can't point anything, all the nice things you've done, to earn you a brownie point for heaven. Can you name me any person in the Bible that was willing to put his own life on the line and go to hell for others? Paul did. Moses did.

Of course, Jesus did. It's good enough for Jesus. Both of those guys, both Paul and Moses, at times in their life, do you remember Moses? You can scribble these down.

You can look them up after. There's about 150 scriptures here and I can't give them to all because by the time we read them all out, it'll be the end of the tape. But could you write this down? Exodus 32, verses 30 to 32.

And you can look at Romans 9-3. In Exodus 32, Moses stands in the gap. God is going to destroy Israel.

He says, stand out of the way, Moses. I'm going to destroy you. I'm going to raise you up and make of you a new nation.

And Moses steps in the gap and he says, it's a wild thing. It's the only unfinished sentence in the Old Testament. There'll usually be a dash in the back.

But if you can't forgive this people, and sort of implied, if not, he says, then blot my name out of the book you have written. I'll go to hell for them. I will stand in their place.

And God says in his beautiful words, him that has sinned against me, Moses, his name will I blot out of my book. Do you remember Paul in that other passage I gave you? This is what he says, I would, if I could be accused for my brethren's sake, the Jews. You know what he's saying? He's saying, I want, if necessary, if I could, I'd go to hell in their place.

And that's, that's a true Gospel experience. Here's Moses, the greatest lawgiver, understood the Gospel. It's that.

You want, you prefer. Don't you dare attempt, don't you dare believe that all Christians go to hell. I heard him say it.

Anyway. Does it mean that true Christians enjoy serving God? Of course they enjoy. If I have to tell you how fun it is serving God, then I shouldn't be talking.

It really is, it's neat. I have to, I heard a guy say, it's so much fun serving God, I have to back slide sometimes to get to sleep. They asked John Wesley, how is it with your soul, brother? He said, I forgot I had one.

He wasn't thinking about himself. He was thinking about others. The last three, just scribble them down really, really fast.

They are more afraid of punishment than sin. They are more afraid of punishment than sin. The real, the candidate keeps on sinning because he really doesn't hate sin, he only hates punishment.

He's more, the child of God is more afraid of sin than of punishment. Like Joseph, he'd say, how can I do this thing and sin against God? Sin is his implacable enemy. He doesn't think, if I do this what will happen to me, but if I do this, what will happen to my relationship with God and God's relationship with me? Five, they have a spirit of get instead of a spirit of give.

Get instead of give, it is a characteristic of deception that it is filled with get. It is covetous at its heart, whether it's religious covetous or politically covetous or economically covetous or sexually covetous or power covetous. It's covetous.

True Christians enjoy giving and helping. What does the Bible say? It is more blessed to give than we say. We flip that and say, you want a blessing, give.

It is more blessed, not you will be more blessed. Christians enjoy giving. They look for ways that they can help people and it's a pleasure to them.

But a man who is building his own kingdom is threatened by anything that takes away from that thing. Do you understand? If you are saving up for \$10,000 to buy a car, every cent you could scratch off to put towards that gives you pleasure, even though you haven't got the car yet. But if somebody comes along and asks to borrow \$5,000, it's going to bother you no end, because that isn't your end, it's something else.

Now if we are saving up to put into Christ's kingdom, everything we can do that's an investment in that is a joy. But if we are building our own kingdom, anything that takes away from those resources is a bother. And that's why it's hard to get people to give.

Poor pastors, they have to preach to unconverted congregations. It's embarrassing to preach to a congregation like this. If you say give, they do.

They go and sell everything and there's nothing left. You have to say, don't give today, please don't, just keep it. George Borla, head of Operation Mobilization, he's a book freak like me, he loves books.

If you say to George, that's a dynamite typewriter, here he says, take it. He can go on, he keeps giving away all the time. I like that desk, you do here, carry it out.

It's embarrassing. Last, their prayers and cares for others are chiefly born out of fear for themselves. They will pray for others, they will even care for others.

But it's basically for them, it's born out of fear for their own lives. He's afraid of all himself, and when he becomes strongly convicted, he's afraid that others might go there too. And being afraid that they'll go there too, and his thing tied in with that, he'll threaten and scare the cheese out of them too.

Now, out of these two forms of legal, this is the one that everybody recognizes as legal, right? The punishment one? Everybody recognizes that. If you see a guy, you go into the church all wearing jackboots and go, Hail! Hallelujah! Or something like that. And you got to sit in those certain places and you're scared to breathe in case they kill you.

Now, everybody goes, Hey, that's a pretty legal church. They know that, right? What we don't recognize is the Santa Claus one is legal too. And that's what the rest is infected with, Santa Claus.

Not Frankenstein. We've got a few Frankensteins around. We've got a lot more Santa Clauses.

It is legal, legal, legal, and it's not going to save you. It can't take you into the promised land. Anyway, time is gone.

We're shot down in flames. So, we will stop here and we'll pick this up tomorrow.

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