

# The Gift Nobody Wants

*True Disciple 2008*

By Paul Washer

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Matthew 7:13-27; Mark 1:14-15

**Preached on:** Thursday, December 4, 2008

## Grace Community Church

P.O. Box 10608

San Antonio, TX 78210

**Website:** [www.gccsatx.com](http://www.gccsatx.com)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/gcc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/gcc)

This sermon was uploaded by Grace Community Church in San Antonio, Texas and our website is [www dot gccsatx dot com](http://www.gccsatx.com) or you can find us on SermonAudio by going to [www dot sermonaudio dot com slash gcc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/gcc).

---

Please open your Bibles to Matthew seven and also to Mark chapter one.

Matthew chapter seven verse 13.

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.<sup>1</sup>

Mark chapter one verse 14.

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."<sup>2</sup>

Now, beginning here with Mark I think it is quite telling what is going on here and it is quite a rebuke to our modern evangelistic methodology. If we were to re write this based upon what we see in the modern evangelical community it would be something like this, Jesus saying, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Now who would like to ask me into their heart?"

Do you see the problem? The language that we use today is not used in the New Testament in any place.

"Who would like to repeat this prayer after me? Oh, I see that hand. Come forward."

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7:13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 1:14-15.

We see none of that. But in the message of our Lord we see, “Repent and believe.”

In the apostolic invitation we see, “Repent and believe.”

In the great confession of the Church we see, “Repent and believe.”

It is only until we come into this modern time that we hear nothing of repentance and faith unless it is redefined in the context of receiving Jesus which means pray this prayer and ask him into your heart and if you have done that sincerely you can stand on the fact that you have been born again.

Now that is serious, folks. This is serious.

I preach in many churches where they are absolutely appalled that I do not lead people in prayers, that I simply command with the authority of Scripture that men repent of their sins and believe the gospel and then sit down with them at time for hours explaining to them repentance and faith and praying with them hoping that Christ be formed in them. They would rather have me get people to raise their hands, come forward, pray a prayer and then go eat somewhere.

This is the reason for all the noise about personal one on one discipleship.

Back in the late 70s and early 80s there was this just birth of personal discipleship and if you talk to many people about the reasons for discipleship, personal discipleship they would say this.

“There is just as many people walking out the back door of our church as walking in the front door of our church. They are coming in. They are not staying. And the reason is they are not being discipled personally.”

Well, first of all, I believe that personal discipleship can be of great benefit. But here is something that I want you to know. The history of the Church knows very little about that sort of thing. Most men were discipled through the preaching of the Word of God. So maybe we need all this discipleship because the pulpit is so weak.

But I think that they entirely miss the point. Our brother talked about men seeing the problem, but giving the wrong answer. The reason there were just as many people and still are just as many people going out of the church as coming into the church is because the gospel that we are preaching is not the gospel. It is a truncated version of the gospel and the invitation we give cannot even be found in the New Testament.

Now does anyone have a problem with that. The reason why they are leaving, well, they went out from us because they were not of us. They were not truly converted.

And sometimes the Lord will send unique individuals to our church as a rebuke. For example, you will try to win someone and you will try to manipulate someone. You will

try to get someone to make a decision and then you will work very hard at discipleship, calling them on Saturday night to make sure they are ready for Sunday, going by and picking them up and following them around like a little puppy trying to make sure that they walk the Christian life and then one day some drunk that you don't even want in your church walks in, gets saved and you can't chase him out.

Why?

Because God saved him.

Am I against personal discipleship? Absolutely not. But that is not the reason why people after they are converted continue on in their ungodliness. They continue on in their ungodliness because they are still ungodly because they weren't converted. They were not.

Now here Jesus Christ comes to Israel, the Messiah arrives in Israel and he says, "The time is fulfilled. Everything the Scriptures ever talked about, I am its answer. Now this is your response. Repent and believe the gospel."

And so this was Christ. We are to follow his example and his teaching. And this is not unique to him. We go over to the day of Pentecost. We find the same authoritative invitation. If you notice in the New Testament the invitation comes in the form of a command, an authoritative command, "Repent and believe."

Today's invitation does not come in an authoritative command. It comes in a request.

"Will you please pray with me?"

The Scriptures come not only in authoritative command, but a demanding command to, as our brother said, "Take up your cross and follow me."

Today we assure the convert this will only take five minutes of your time. And then we wonder why the church is in such a state when it doesn't even have the gospel right.

And I am going to tell you this. On Judgment Day I would rather be standing in the group of liberal politicians waiting to receive my judgment than I would be wanting to stand in the conservative pastors in the United States of America. And I mean that.

You can thump this Bible all day long. You can talk all sorts of things, but when you stand up and you can't even give a biblical invitation do not talk to me about the inspiration of Scripture. When you deal with men's hearts with trivial little creedal prayers and superstitious nonsense, don't talk to me about the infallibility of Scripture unless you are going to also say it is sufficient to teach me how to invite men to Christ.

We just have to look at this one text and realize something is terribly wrong.

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

Now both of these commands are in present tense imperative and I believe there is an issue here. I believe there is something going on that will cure the malady that is so frequent today in America. It is almost as if Christ is saying, “The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Now spend the rest of your life repenting and believing.”

Now, if you talk to the average convert on the street, what will you discover? You will discover this.

Sir, may I talk to you about Christ?

Don't worry about me.

What do you mean?

I have already done that.

You have done what?

Well, I did that already.

Well, what did you do already?

Well, I accepted him as my Savior.

When?

Well, about 10 years ago.

Well, what do you mean by that?

Well, I prayed and asked him into my heart.

Well, could you be a little bit more specific?

Well, I have already repented and believed.

They don't realize that the evidence, the raw bone biblical evidence that there was one time in your life that you repented unto salvation is that you continue repenting until today and growing in repentance. They do not realize that if at one time in your life you believed unto salvation, the evidence of that will be you continue believing unto salvation and growing in faith.

---

<sup>3</sup> Mark 1:15.

So the evidence you have truly repented and believed is that God through his work, continuing work of sanctification deepens that repentance in your life and deepens that faith in your life.

Christianity is not a once and for all flu shot. There is a sense in which our salvation is past tense. The moment we believed we were justified before a holy and just God.

But what else? Salvation is not just past tense. It is also present tense. He saved me in the past from the condemnation of sin. The moment I believed he justified me. But he continues saving me in the present tense from the power of sin. And he will one day in the future completely and totally save me from the power, presence and condemnation of sin. And the evidence that he has justified me is that he is now sanctifying me. A person who can show no mark of the sanctifying work of God in their life has no assurance that they have been justified.

Now that is biblical teaching.

Now let's go back to Matthew.

Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.<sup>4</sup>

Now I am kind of tethered down to this thing here, microphone so I can't do a drama for you now. But I would like to just kind of act out for you the best I can how we put these two things together.

A man is lost. He is dead in his trespasses and sins, but he is walking around nonchalantly. His mind, according to Ephesians chapter 4:17 and on is full of vanity and futility. It is darkened. It is wicked. It is given over to the things of the world. Everything he thinks about any spiritual reality is wrong. His mind is an incubator for heresy. That is all it is.

It is like my dear friend Conrad Mbewe from Africa. He is preaching on John chapter three and he said that basically Jesus is sitting there and after Nicodemus got through saying everything he said, Jesus just looked at him and basically said, "Nicodemus, you know nothing."

And that is this man, this lost man, given over, the futility of his mind, his darkened and hardened and calloused heart.

Then what happens? Though the preaching of the gospel, maybe in the form of actual preaching or through a tract or the testimony of a friend, he is confronted with the gospel. But it is more than just a physical opportunity, more than just a physical manifestation,

---

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 7:13-14.

more than just someone handing him something or handing something to him or saying a word to his ear. No. The Spirit of God is working. And the Spirit of God through the preaching of the gospel makes his heart alive, illuminates his mind. And for the first time he begins to see something. What is it? Reality.

[?] [off mic voice]

....about repentance because at its most basic root it means a change of the mind, but a change of mind with regard to what? With regard to reality itself.

You see, the lost man is walking in this world and he is wrong about everything. He may get some scientific facts right, but when he goes to apply them to how they function in the universe and build a philosophy out of it, he goes awry. Everything is wrong. He may know something about mathematics. He may know something about history. But when he goes to apply it to the human context, it is always wrong. He is wrong about everything because he is wrong about God.

That just shows us the futility of university training.

How can you give knowledge when you are wrong about the very author of it, the source of it, the one who creates and defines reality?

But the moment he hears the gospel through the [?]

[off mic voice]

...being holy, as being righteous, as being sovereign, as being supreme, as deserving all glory and honor because prior to this although he knew God, he did not honor him as God or gave thanks. But now his mind is changing. He is seeing who God really is.

But in that same light he is also seeing who he really is. And he is struck down in his heart. Reality confronts him and he realizes one great truth. He is wrong. Not just a little wrong, not just wrong about some things, not just wrong about his ideas. He is wrong about everything he is. The very foundation of reality he is wrong. And then he begins to see himself, his sin, his filth, his depravity, the arrogance that he would consider himself to be the center of all things. And his heart is broken.

It is like the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. Now think about this. Think about what happened to this man.

Now there is a good reason why after this confrontation with Christ he would not eat or drink. He sat there, I would imagine, almost like a stone statue.

Why? He just didn't have little Jesus come into his life. Jesus showed up and his reality disintegrated. He realized everything he believed about everything was totally and completely wrong. His whole life was a lie.

That is repentance, at least the beginning of it.

So this man, he is confronted with the truth and he is seeing God as he has never seen God before, God as he is. And that, for those of us who are pastors, we need to realize something. The greatest injustice done by pastors to congregations in America is they do not spend any time teaching about God.

When was the last time you did a series, I mean invested time in teaching your people who God is. Most ministers running around have never even studied the attributes of God or how they apply to the human context.

Look at us. Why are we running around all over the place looking from nation to nation, this side of the country, other side of the country, buying all these silly books, methodology, church growth, everything else and we don't even teach our people about God or who is man, or the gospel of Jesus Christ or how is a man truly saved. It is absolutely preposterous. And we wonder why the whole thing is in such a shamble.

Absolutely pathetic.

But when God comes in the heart of a man, what happens? He sees God. And in the light of that he sees himself and he is broken, but it is not a repentance unto death, although it may feel like it. And it is not a repentance unto desperation, although it will create a desperation in him because what happens? In that revelation of God and in that revelation of sinfulness comes a revelation of the salvation of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The grace of God.

And so he is not left to despair. He is not left to death, but that very brokenness breaks forth in joy. But that joy represents something very important. There is now a transference. His joy no longer comes from his own righteousness, his own deeds or what he thinks about himself. His joy comes from who God is and what God has done for him. So the idolatry is smashed.

And then what happens? Well, he has had a pretty full day so I guess he goes to bed. He gets up in the morning and what does he do? He has got a Bible. And what happens?

This is the Christian life. He begins to study Scripture. He begins to fellowship with the saints. He begins to listen to preaching. And he starts a journey in which little by little he sees a greater revelation of God and, therefore, a greater revelation of his own need. And so his repentance is deepening and deepening and deepening. And then he sees a greater revelation of the grace of God in the face of Christ. And his faith deepens and strengthens.

And then his joy bursts out of that until the end of his life he is more broken in repentance than when he began 60 years prior. And yet at the same time he is more

confident of his salvation and full of joy unspeakable. God has so worked in his life to, in a sense, increase his capacity.

His capacity for what? Oh, these silly prosperity preachers, capacity for blessing and all this stuff they don't even know what they are talking about. Increase his capacity to know God. Increase his capacity to break before him and to be humble, a spirit to experience poverty of spirit. Increases his capacity to believe because he shows him more and more of this rock solid foundation we have in the person of Christ. And increases his capacity for joy because he is no longer the source of it.

You see, here is what will happen to some of you young street preachers if you are really of God. You go out street preaching. You are radical. You are reading the Bible. You are memorizing Scripture. And you are just so full of zeal and you are full of joy over the things that you are doing.

Little by little God is going to destroy the things you are doing because the things you are doing and the things that you think you are, they are your joy.

“Man, I am walking. I am preaching. I am a disciple. I am this. I am that.”

And little by little, he is going to take it away. He is going to crush your zeal. He is going to crush your strength. He is going to crush your wisdom. He is going to tear you to shreds until you are left with nothing but him. And then he is going to rebuild you, but there is going to be such a difference. Your joy is no longer going to be your performance. Your joy is going to be the finished work of God in Jesus Christ.

So no more idolatry. It is just him. It is just him. It is just him.

Now I want to go to verse 15 of chapter seven and then I want to jump back to this subject that we are talking about. But I must touch on verse 15.

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”<sup>5</sup>

Now, who are these people? Well, they are sandwiched between 13 and 14 and then the teaching that begins on fruit in verse 16 on down.

Now we know as we read further there are people who seem to have rather dynamic and powerful ministries. After all, they are prophesying, doing signs, miracles, casting out demons. So they seem to be rather dramatic fellows, very powerful in their giftings.

But if we take seriously verses 13 and 14 and then the preceding verses, 16 to 19, it seems that they are sandwiched in here because there is two things missing about these men. One of them is fruit.

---

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 7:15.

And what does that automatically tell us? Supposed giftings and supposing signs and power in ministry are not necessarily the same thing as fruit.

I would prefer to look back. If I were to determine what does Jesus mean here by fruit, I think I would probably wander on back to Matthew chapter five verse three.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

“Blessed are those who mourn.”<sup>7</sup>

“Blessed are the gentle.”<sup>8</sup>

Let me say something about this verse five just for a minute. If you want to know what he really means by “Blessed are the gentle,”<sup>9</sup> then you just need to go to Psalms 37:11.

Most people come up with all these different things. Well, you know, gentle or meek doesn’t mean weak and all these different things.

Let me tell you what he means by this because it has become so precious to me. Just run over there for a minute to Psalms 37. Look what it says.

“But the humble will inherit the land.”<sup>10</sup>

The meek will inherit the land is what it says in Matthew.

“But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”<sup>11</sup>

When he says, “Blessed are the meek,” or “Blessed are the gentle” or “Blessed are the...” What is he talking about?

Well, verse one of 37.

“Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers.”<sup>12</sup>

There are men who are confident in their God so that they are not fretful or envious of wrongdoers. They don’t fret about them. Why? Because they know that God has set his king on his holy hill. They are not envious of them because they realize in their wisdom that they are fools.

---

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:3.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:4.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 37:11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Psalm 37:1.

It goes on.

He knows. “For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, who is the gentle person? One who realizes this. And what does he do in response?

Verse three.

He trusts in the Lord and does good.

Verse four.

He delights himself in the Lord.

Verse five.

He commits his way to the Lord. He trusts in the Lord, knowing that the Lord will do it, that he will bring forth the gentle man’s righteousness as light.

Verse seven.

He rests in the Lord and waits patiently for him and does not fret because of him who prospers in his way.

Do you see? It is the man who meekly submits, a man who submits because of the confidence he has in his Lord. He is tame. He is domesticated. He has been trained by the hand of God to walk when God says walk, to talk when God says talk, to be quiet when God says be quiet, to move in certain directions, to go in certain ways according to what the Lord desires. And this training comes by the hand of God.

Now, so when we talk about the fruit of these prophets, they have no real fruit. That is the first thing that we should notice about them. They have no fruit of Christ like character.

Now, young men, especially those of you going into ministry, please realize this. You are struggling to do. You need to struggle to be. You are working on giftings and honing giftings. You need to work on honing character because I can assure you that is what God is about in your life. He has the character of a man. Everything else will fall in place.

Also I want you to notice something. In verse 13, “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless how can it be made salty again?”<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Psalm 37:2.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 7:13.

Salt has certain characteristics or properties. If those characteristics or properties are lost you can replace them with other things. But you don't have salt anymore. Do you see that?

In the same way there are certain characteristics to true discipleship. If you lose those characteristics you may replace them with other things, but it is not true discipleship. Now what are the characteristics of true disciples? What does a real disciple of Jesus Christ look like?

He is poor in spirit. He mourns over sin. He is gentle. He hungers and thirsts for righteousness. He is merciful. He is pure in heart in the sense of he has no undivided loyalties. He is a peacemaker and he is marked by persecution.

Do you want to talk about discipleship? Then grow in that. Do you want to talk about true discipleship? Grow in that. You want to know what the real core of discipleship is? It is this and you can't fake this. You can fake a lot of things. You can't fake this. This is where you need to be headed. You want to be a radical disciple of Jesus Christ, then you head right here. It all starts here. This is one of the most beautiful pictures of the character of our Lord.

The false prophet has none of this, but he does have giftings. He is quite a speaker and he is dynamic and he seems to have some sort of power about him. But know this, his character is the key. Does he bear fruit?

The false prophet is known by two things, the fruit that they bear and the gospel they preach, Galatians chapter five.

And you can just line up many of these TV preachers and just look at the fruit of their life, the way that they live and then look at the gospel that they supposedly preach. And you can mark them off as false prophets immediately.

Now he says something unusual about them. He says that they are like wolves. Their god is their belly. Their god is their belly. But they look like sheep.

Now how is that? How is it that they look like sheep? By their flattering, smooth speech that in the age of tolerance makes you think that they are the men most full of love. They will never contract. They will never be. They will never create a scandal. They will never be a [?]. They will never speak for things to anger men, but they have the smooth tongue of a serpent and they flatter men and they give carnal men exactly what they want.

Now let me tell you something about false teachers. You think so many times that people fall prey to false teachers and that, in a sense, can be true at times. But I think the dominant theme in Scripture is just the opposite. False teachers are God's judgment on people who don't want God, but in the name of religion plan on getting everything their carnal heart desires. That is why a Joel Olsteen is raised up. Those people who sit under

him are not victims of him, he is the judgment of God upon them because they want exactly what he wants and it is not God.

And you can line them all up along with him. That is where it is. Because let's go over. Let's just look for a minute at 2 Timothy just quickly chapter four verse one.

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word.”<sup>15</sup>

Now when he says preach the word what is he saying? He follows it up with, “be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort.”<sup>16</sup>

Notice that that is not what these preachers do. As a matter of fact they boast in the fact that they do not reprove. They do not rebuke. It is not their ministry. And why do they say it is not their ministry? They have a ministry of love they say.

Well, then are you saying that Christ didn't have a ministry of love because he reprovved and rebuked and exhorted and so did Paul?

But now look, verse three.

“For time will come...”<sup>17</sup>

And this shows you that men are not so much victims of false prophets as false prophets are the judgment of God upon men who don't want God.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.”<sup>18</sup>

Who won't? The people, the religious people identified with Christianity, they will not endure sound doctrine. They can't endure it. They hate it. Or to bores them to tears. And so what do they do?

“But wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers.”<sup>19</sup>

Everybody in this world—I hope you know this—Everyone in the world that is involved in Christianity knows that America is the birthplace of every heretical teaching on the face of the earth almost.

You know what my greatest fear is? My greatest fear is that the wall around Cuba is going to fall.

---

<sup>15</sup> 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Timothy 4:2.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

You say, "Why would you fear that?"

Because all of the heresy in the evangelical church will find its way into Cuba.

I go into countries and some of the times they will tell me this. "Go back to your country and tell them please don't send any more missionaries."

Now look. We accumulate for ourselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. So could have Benny Hinn in there who all he wants to do is tell you you are going to have a Mercedes Benz. Those people are victims. He is God's judgment upon them. They want what he wants and so they accumulate him to themselves along with all those other teachers because they teach exactly what they want.

Do you see that?

And why is that? Because a great many people that sit in Christian churches hate God.

You say, "What do you mean I hate God?"

It is like when a preacher many times have asked me, "Would you just please come and teach on that [?] of God. You have written a manual on it. We really like it. Would you come and teach it?"

I go, "Look, fellow, you probably don't want that."

And they go, "What do you mean?"

I go, "I just don't want to divide your church."

They go, "We are Christian. You are teaching about God. What do you mean divide your church?"

I say, "Listen to me, sir. When I start teaching the attributes of God and not Paul Washer's version. I will just bring some historical systematic theologies and teach out of them. They are all written by Presbyterians. Baptists just don't hardly write anything. But I will ring them and I will just read out of them so you know I am not inventing this stuff or it is just my idea.

"And if I preached the classical, Christian view of who God is in your church," I said, "It won't take long for some of your finest members, especially among the elderly and especially among the women will walk out of that church with their teeth clenched together and say, 'My God is not that way. I could never love a god like that.'"

Because the god they have been worshiping is not the god of the Bible. It is a figment of their own imagination, a god they have made with their mind and then they worship what they made and he looks more like Santa Claus than he does Yahweh.

That is what is going on.

The real God... Oh, C S Lewis was too tame when he said he is not tamed lion. He is God. And I would not doubt that there are people here and you don't like him and you wouldn't like him if you knew him.

Now these false prophets, this is what they do. But know this. They are judgment of God upon a wicked, defiled people who although they have a knowledge of God they do not want him. And so God sends them the teachers that they themselves desire.

Now, let's go back, verse 16.

“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?”<sup>20</sup>

Now, I want you to look at this. He is giving us... it is almost an absurdity that he is putting before us. It is a thing that is like, as I said, almost absurd. It is like he is looking at them and saying, “Now, let's just get this straight. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, are they?”

Can't you just see the crowd?

“Well, Jesus, we know you are not a farmer and everything. You are a carpenter, but you are right on the money here. You are saying the correct things.”

I mean, if someone comes to you with a thorn bush and says it is a grape tree, a grape vine, don't believe it.

And he goes on, “Now figs don't come from thistles, do they?”

“You are on the mark now, Jesus. You are right on the money.”

If someone comes to you and says, “That's a fig tree,” don't believe this has got thistles on it, because that is just not going to happen. It is against nature.

And then he says, “In the same way you call yourself my disciple and yet you do not bear the fruit of a disciple. That, too, is against nature, the new nature that I create in all my disciples.”

It is absurd. It is absolutely absurd to say you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and not bear the fruit of Jesus Christ.

Now let's just step back for a moment because we want to run as far away as we can get from perfectionism.

---

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 7:16.

Does the true believer struggle with sin? Absolutely. As a matter of fact, the mark of the true believer is that he is confessional. Not just that he confesses the name of Christ, but his life is marked by the confession of sin. A believer is sensitive to the sin in his life. He will be far more confessional than the unconverted sinner.

So what do we mean by fruit? We are talking about style of life. I mean it doesn't... like David Miller says. This isn't rocket surgery. It is just the style of their life.

I mean, I know Christians and I look at their lives. They are godly men or godly women. And I see sin at times and I see, I think, where probably they are not understanding something correctly or they are blind in certain areas of their life. But over the whole of their life what do you see? You see someone that God is working in, someone that God has transformed and continues transforming. There is evidence there that something has happened to this person. Something.

I have somewhat of a bone problem and this morning I was in the pastor's study and I got out and my bones decided they didn't... my joints just didn't want to bend. And so I kind of came out office looking like this. The dear sister saw me and she goes, "What's wrong?"

How did she know something was wrong? Because of just looking at me. That is sad, but just she looked at me. She knew something was wrong by the way I moved.

Now give me 10 minutes in Alabama heat and I will be just as spry as a young buck. But boy those first few minutes of getting up hurts.

She noticed something was wrong by the way I moved, the way I functioned, the way I lived.

Why is it that something so simple, so common sense is thrown out the window when we come to Christianity, that we actually believe someone can be Christian and yet live a life of continuous rebellion against God, without remorse, without conviction, without anything, running wild, yet they are Christian?

Don't you say they are not.

Judge not lest ye be judged.

Yeah, twist not Scripture lest ye be like the devil, because that is not what that verse means.

So, you see, he is saying, "Look, there is a reality here."

Again, to deny this reality is to deny the very work of God in his intent in the entire purpose of salvation.

You go back to Ezekiel 36 you understand why he saves people.

“I am doing this for my name’s sake,” he says.

Jeremiah tells us, “I am making an internal monument to me, to the saving work I do in this people.”

And for preachers to say that a man can live in a continuous state of carnality all the days of his life and then he is somehow miraculously transported into heaven is an absolute denial of everything the New Testament teaches and the Old Testament teaches on the saving work of God, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and the work of sanctification in the life of a believer.

Let me just give you an example from the Old Testament that I just dearly love when God tested Moses.

Israel had fallen into idolatry and heinous sin and God tests Moses and says, basically, “Moses, get out of the way. I am going to kill them all and I will make a people out of you.”

And Moses pleads with God and basically his argument is this. You can’t do that because your enemies will say that although you were able to bring them out of Egypt, you were not able to bring them into their own land. They will blaspheme you because they will say that you are not able to complete the work that you began.

And that is why men blaspheme God today, because of the preaching of conservative preachers allowing for the fact that men can live in continuous state of carnality and still affirm their salvation. And so the wicked, the unbeliever looks at that and they go, “Well, God was able, I guess, to begin the work. He saved him from hell. He can’t change their life.”

Well, what kind of salvation is that? What kind of salvation is that? And, thus, the prophesy is fulfilled not so much a prophesy, but a teaching that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

He says, “You will know them by their fruits.”<sup>21</sup>

An illustration I haven’t given in a long time, but I just love to give is just so simple. Say I show up late here today and the pastor is all made at me because I show up late and so, pastor, don’t be mad at me. I walk in. I am like this and it is about as good as I get.

And he says, “What happened?”

---

<sup>21</sup> Matthew 7:16.

I said, "Well, I was changing the tire on my car and the lug nut went out in the middle of the road and I wasn't thinking and I walked out there and I picked it up and when I picked it up there was a logging trip weight 30 tons going 120 miles an hour and it is like five feet in front of me and I couldn't move and it ran me over so that is why I am late."

He is going to go, "There are only two possibilities, logically." I am sure he studied classical logic. There is only two possibilities. One is I am absolutely insane or I am a liar.

And when he says, "You are either insane or a liar, now I am going to sit here and debate on which it is," I am going to say, "Why are you saying I am either insane or a liar. Why don't you believe me?"

And he says, "Because it is absolutely against nature. It is an impossibility to have an encounter with a logging truck going 120 miles an hour that weighs 30 tons and not somehow be changed by that encounter.

Now how can you say you have had an encounter with God and not been changed along with millions of other Americans? They have had an encounter with God, but they have not been changed.

So God now has less power than a logging truck.

You say, "Brother Paul, can a Christian sin?"

A Christian does sin.

"Brother Paul, can a Christian backslide?"

Yes, they can.

Can they fall into a grievous sin?

Yes.

Can they stay there?

No.

Let me just... you know Romans 12, don't you? You know Romans 12. Not Romans 12, Hebrews 12 that the Father disciplines those whom he loves, that if you are without discipline you are an illegitimate child.

Now I want you to think about something. Let's say I am your pastor and I come home from preaching in another place one night really late. It is like 11:30 and I come around

this corner near your house and your 14 year old daughter is out there with a bunch of hoodlums, I mean, just doing all sorts of things.

And I am going to be angry as your pastor. I am going to burn with indignation. For my testimony I am not going to pull up and tell her to get in the car. I am going to drive to your house as fast as I can get there and I am going to pound on that door until you answer and I am going to say, "What on earth is wrong with you? If you keep this up, I am going to bring it before the rest of the elders. You repent right now. You are a derelict father. You are a derelict. You allow your 14 year old daughter to run wild in the streets?"

We would all say that, I think. The man is a derelict. What does he do it with?

Yet you make the same claim about God even boasting it. You boast in the fact that God has children running around all over this country full of carnality, steeped in sin, doing whatever they want and God does nothing according to your preaching. But they are saved, blessed God. When you preach their funeral, you will preach them straight into heaven. I have seen it 1000 times.

I remember just a while back a man in my own town in Illinois who was a known drug addict, drug dealer, fornicator, absolutely everything and he is there. He passes away and the pastor of one of the largest Baptist churches in the area standing there at the funeral. The place is loaded with every person that has hardly ever been in church, drug addicts and everything you can imagine are all there in church to honor their dead friend and that pastor gets up and he says, "I praise God. I know this young man. He sowed a lot of wild oats, but when he was nine years old I was there when he prayed to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior and he is in heaven today."

And all those lost sinners went straight out into the street justified in their sin because of conservative, evangelical Baptist preaching. That is typical in almost every church in this country.

It is true. It is true and it is pathetic. It is pathetic.

You say, "Well, that is mean spirited."

Let me ask you a question. My mother passed away last year and I remember three years ago when I went to the doctor's office with her because she had thought, "Something is not right."

And that doctor very gentle and very noble looked at my mother and he said, "Mrs. Washer," he goes, "You have got cancer." And he goes, "It is radical. It is bad and we have got to move right now if we are going to have any chance of saving your life."

I want you to know. That man made my mother cry. He hurt my mom. He ruined her day. We were going to go out to get something to eat. He ruined her week. He tore my

mother to pieces, but he tried to save my mother's life and if he hadn't done that, if he hadn't been so truthful, she would have had no hope of salvation whatsoever. We would have had no recourse at all and he could have been kicked out of his own practice for being immoral.

They ought to kick most pastors out of their practice because out of cowardice or self preservation they will not preach the gospel. That is all there is to it.

This job is not for cowards. It may be for wild men and fools, but it is not for cowards. I am telling you there is too much at stake, too much at stake to allow this to happen anymore.

And it would be different if it was happening in churches that deny the deity of Christ or substitutionary atonement. But this stuff goes on every day in men's churches who hold to these truths. But when they get to the gospel, they just seem to lose their minds.

This country is not gospel hardened. This country is gospel ignorant because most of the preachers are gospel ignorant. It is just the truth.

“You will know them by their fruits.”<sup>22</sup>

Now look at this in verse 17.

So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.<sup>23</sup>

Do you see what he is saying? This is what I want you to understand. I want to use the word ontology. I want you to see what we are talking about here, that salvation is not merely the change of practice. It doesn't even begin it. It is not turning over a new leaf. It is not New Year's resolutions. It is not this strong conviction to want to be a different person. None of that.

Salvation is a supernatural work of God whereby someone really does become a new creation, really. That is not poetry. It is not poetry.

So two of the greatest problems and three of the greatest problems in Scripture is one, trying to find a key to prophecy and overlooking the way Jesus and the apostles interpreted prophecy. The other one is taking realities for promises. And then this one, this one.

I want you to look at this. Salvation... look. It is not just I made a decision, I chose the right way. I am going in the right direction.

---

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 7:16.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 7:17-18.

No. Ontologically the Christian is a new creature. That is not just spiritual poetry. That is a reality. It is true. I have become a new creature, so have you. So has anyone who is in Christ Jesus.

Ezekiel puts it this way. My heart of stone that cannot respond to divine stimuli because it hates God is taken out and a heart of flesh which can respond to stimuli is put in its place. Been given a new heart, a recreation, a work of God.

And what he is simply saying here is nature and will, the two things are directly related. And like our dear friend Martin Luther, you can say that the will is in bondage. To what? The nature. The will follows the nature.

You make decisions according to what you are. Men are... what it means is that men are radically depraved and by nature they are enemies of God. Therefore, their will is in bondage to what they are and their will does wicked things.

People ask me, "Is there free will?"

I say, "Let's not even answer that question. Let's just go a little bit farther."

The question is not: Is there free will. The question is: Is there good will?

You are free to will, but will only according to your nature and your nature is evil so what you are going to do is evil unless God comes in and gives you a new heart, unless God regenerates you.

And that is what Jesus is teaching here. Look at what he is saying.

"So every good tree bears good fruit."<sup>24</sup>

Ok?

We look at the physical world and we go, "Yeah."

Why is it we go into the spiritual world and throw it right out the door?

Well, you can't judge a book by its cover.

Jesus didn't say that. As a matter of fact, he said just the opposite. He did. He said, "Well, in fact, you can judge a book by its cover in the same way that you know a tree by its fruit."

A good tree bears good fruit. He doesn't say he hopes it will bear good fruit. He doesn't say that sometimes it bears good fruit. He says a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. That is all there is to it. You go out. You look at an apple tree and all the

---

<sup>24</sup> Matthew 7:17.

apples are bad. You don't have to look any farther. You know there is something fundamentally wrong with the nature of that tree. What that tree is wrong because its fruit is wrong.

Same way you go out and I don't know exactly what the bark of an apple tree looks like and I am not really sure what the leaves of an apple tree look like, but if I look at a tree that has apples on it, what do I say? It is an apple tree.

Well, Paul, are you really well versed in the type of leaf that an apple tree has?

No, I don't even need to know that.

What about apple tree bark? Can you identify apple tree bark?

No, I am not very good at that.

Well, how do you know it is an apple tree?

Because it has apples.

Now, unless somebody glued all those things on, it is an apple tree.

Now you are sitting there thinking, "Oh, that is funny. That is so absurd to say anything else."

But then when you move into the spiritual realm you throw it all away, don't you? Well, you can't say that.

I remember one time they actually had to call a doctor. I was preaching in a church in Kentucky and I was sitting there and my wife was sitting there beside me and we went to Sunday school prior to me going.

I said, "Well, I have got time, pastor. Let me just go to Sunday school."

And so I am sitting there and this guy is directing the Sunday school and he said, "Pray for so and so."

And then this new believer said, "Oh, I know that guy. We need to pray for him. Man, he is lost."

And then this other guy goes, "You can't say that."

And the young believer goes, "What?"

He goes, "Who are you to judge? You can't say."

And then everybody chimes in. Who are you to say that he is lost?

And he goes, the young believer goes, “But the last time that the preacher went out to visit him he almost whipped him and he kicked him off the porch and he said all kinds of cuss words to him and he said anybody who comes to talk to him about the gospel and all these different things he is going to beat him up.”

Yeah, but you can't say he is lost.

And I am getting there. I am going... and my wife reached over and grabbed my leg that was going like 600 miles an hour and I started sweating and all of the sudden I started seeing blotches and everything. They had to call. Honestly, this is not an evangelist story. They had to call a doctor. They took me because I went nuts in there.

I said, “What is wrong with you people? Are you out of your minds? He beat the pastor up. He said anyone who comes here talking about Jesus I am going to feed him to my pit bull. That doesn't look like fruit to me.”

And it is more than just a bad day. And he has done this for 20 years now.

But judge not.

Do you know what? People don't want you to judge other people because they don't want you to turn around and judge them because they know if you did it they have no fruit.

But Jesus, now, I want you to look at something.

Verse 18.

“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.”<sup>25</sup>

Now this is where they are going to get you.

You are witnessing to somebody out on the street and they go, “Well, you know, we are just trying to do good. I am just trying to do the best I can to go to heaven.”

And you go, “Look. I mean, I have heard this and it is true. Evangelism in America they will go look. Man, you just can't produce good fruit to save yourself. You can't do works to save yourself because there is an internal problem. You have a sin nature and with that sin nature you can't do works that are going to please God.”

Now is that true? Yes.

But you have got to put the other part in there. It not only says a bad tree cannot produce

---

<sup>25</sup> Matthew 7:18.

good fruit, look what else it says. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit. How come no one ever teaches that?

“A good tree cannot...”<sup>26</sup>

It is a spiritual impossibility that a good tree... it is a physical impossibility that a good tree will bear bad fruit. It is also a spiritual impossibility that a true Christian bear bad fruit.

You say, “Now hold on, brother Paul. You have already said that Christians sin and Christians can fall into sin.”

Yes, absolutely. But there is a difference, my friend, between a Christian struggling with sin, repentant and broken with the reality of God working in his life and God renews him, restores him and puts him on the path. And you look at the full course of his life, not just a day, not just a month, but you look at the full course of his Christian life and although you will see sin, you are going to see, by and large, a healthy tree with healthy fruit.

The abundance of his life will be Christian fruit.

You go into the finest orchard in the land with the finest tree and you will find some bad apples on it. But when you look at it, you go, “This is a good tree.”

I mean, because it has literally thousands of healthy fruit.

In the same way, it is talking about a style of life.

You see, this salvation thing is a work of God to demonstrate his glory. That is why he is not going to let it fade. He who begins a good work can finish it. We go to 19.

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”<sup>27</sup>

Look at that. Look at that.

Now let’s just take this verse and compare it to this.

I know Johnny was a fornicator and a drug addict and didn’t to church for 20 years, but I am sure he went to heaven because I remember when he was nine he asked Jesus to come into his heart.

But this says every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Do you see? Look what we have done.

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 7:19.

Johnny should have been warned.

Johnny, you are not in danger of losing rewards. You are in danger of losing your soul in hell, Johnny.

“So then, you will know them by their fruits.”<sup>28</sup>

Now look at the parenthesis that is placed here. He begins this dialog with, “You will know them by their fruits.”<sup>29</sup>

He ends it with, “You will know them by their fruits.”<sup>30</sup>

Do you think Jesus is trying to tell us something? Not only that, but I see the wisdom of the Holy Spirit here. You just have to read a few texts to realize this book is amazing and how well it judges human nature.

Look what it is saying. I will tell you what it is saying. It seems to me to be anticipating something, anticipating even what men will do to Scripture, that men will somehow evolve into a form of Christianity where someone because they say yes and jump through all the right evangelical hoops, they are affirmed that they are Christian even though they have no fruit whatsoever.

And Jesus is going at the start, “Look, you will know them by their fruits,” and at the finish, “Look, you will know them by their fruits.”

So then, listen to me. You will know them by their fruits. He is warning us and we don’t listen, do we?

Because the only thing that we can read in Matthew seven is, “Do not judge, lest you be judged.”

Isn’t it amazing also that the Holy Spirit would put that text, “Judge not lest ye be judged,” in the same chapter with this where it says you will know them by their fruit?

Oh, dear friends, this is so serious. Let me give you just an example of my little seven year old, Iain.

When he was about, I guess, five and a half I caught him crying in his bed. And I said, “Son, why are you crying?”

He said, “Daddy, I don’t want to die.”

---

<sup>28</sup> Matthew 7:19.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 7:16

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 7:20.

I said, “Well,” I said, “Death is always a possibility to all of us. You are a healthy young man. You are young. We shouldn’t give ourselves over to undue fear. Now, no one knows what the future holds and we trust in God.”

He said, “Oh, daddy. I want God.”

I said, “You do?”

Yes, I want God.

I said, “Well, you have heard the gospel from your daddy many times. You know that you are to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Oh, daddy, I believe. I believe in Jesus.

Now, what do I do with him? Do I sit there and go, “Iain, you don’t believe. You just don’t believe. You are not fully understanding what is going on here”?

But do I say, “Oh, Iain, you believe and you are saved. Let’s go tell your mother”?

That is what most people would do. But, you see, a discerning heart would recognize after talking to the boy. He was not weeping over sin. He was not weeping over an offense against God. He was weeping over self preservation. He didn’t want to die.

And so what did I do?

I said, “Iain,” I redirected him. I said, “Iain, I want you to know something. If you truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who can take away your sins, any man who truly believes and trusts in him, recognizes the depth, something of the depth of his sin, turns from it and believes in Jesus is saved. And if you are doing that, if you are really doing that, that has really happened to you, you are saved.

“But now let me tell you something. The evidence of your salvation is going to be God beginning to work in your life, directing you towards Scripture, pointing out sin in your life, making you contrite and things such as that over disobedience to your parents. And we are just going to watch you, son. And we are going to use the Scripture and just help you as you go through these next months and years to discern whether you have truly come to know him.”

You see, what would most parents have done? They had him baptized the next week. I will not... I would not let my child go to 98 percent of the Sunday schools, children’s Sunday schools, children’s churches and vacation Bible schools in this country. I will let you know that right now. And I may wouldn’t let him go to yours.

Why? Because I am sick and tired of watching some well meaning lady stand up there and say, “How many of you little children love Jesus and want to go to heaven? Raise your hand.” Because that is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Countless thousands or millions of children are led into false decisions every year.

And you say, “You are loveless.”

No, I love them. That is why I am going to fight this. I am sick and tired of little children being misled by well meaning people who don’t read their Bibles.

Because the fruit, the proof is in the pudding.

It is statistically true that the great majority if not almost all of them go astray in their teenage years and depart from the things of God.

Why? Because they never were his.

Why? Because they never really heard the gospel.

Why? Because it is not really taught in our churches. That is why.

Let me just... we are at the end of our time and I will take this up maybe again this evening. When we get on to the heart of the gospel, but there is very important parts here.

Please, I know... look, I am not a fool, at least not in whole. I know what I must sound like. And I know what I must look like. But ask yourself: What do I have to gain for teaching like this? I am eloquent at times. I could use my gift and make you love me. I could tell you all sorts of things about how God wants you to have your best life now. I could have you eating out of my hand. Then, again, if I did that I wouldn’t be a man of God. I would be a false prophet and a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

I am not going to gain anything from you by telling you this. I am telling you this because I fear God, because it is true and because I love you. This is what is happening whether you want to recognize it or not. And, again, it is not good enough just to have good theology in your study. You have got to have it out on the floor. And when you do, it is going to raise a ruckus. It is going to raise a ruckus.

Now, also, let me just say this. I admire, greatly admire great expository preachers and I admire Dr. MacArthur and others, great expositors. And they don’t do what I am about to say, but I want to tell you something that I have been getting to see. Men taking great glory in their exposition, but it is Christless exposition. It is a perfect work of the text, but not much is made of Christ, number one.

Number two, you can do line by line exegesis, have a perfect hermeneutic and take the blade off the whole thing in your preaching and turn it into nothing. Truth is meant to wound, reprove, rebuke. Not always.

When I pastored, I didn't preach like this every day, but I did preach like this at times.

Now for you young men, let me tell you something. There are some men, probably in this audience. I know there is one sitting over here that has learned to be a surgeon in the Scriptures. And he can take the truths of the Scriptures as well as some of these other men and can cut a heart to hell. You can take these Scriptures to cut malignant hearts out of men and bring healing. But a scalpel in the hand of a fool will kill people. It will kill people. A critical spirit, a prophet messianic mentality, a wanting to be radical for radical's sake, wanting to preach to people to show them that they are wrong without being up at night praying for their salvation, if you are a young man, you probably shouldn't preach like this at least for a while and until your knees are really ugly.

Because when I speak like this I am talking to God's people, some of them. I am talking to some people who are not God's people, but they will be God's people.

It would be a terrible thing to be rude and hard to them for no reason and outside of the will of God because when he comes back none of us want to be mistreating his servants.

But these are truths that must be told and sometimes they must be told in terrible ways, offensive, terrible ways. But realize we are living in a country where the gospel is all but lost. But I believe God is recovering it. I believe he is.

Let's pray.

*Father, I come before you and pray that you would use what has been said here. Oh God, with great fear and, Lord, you speak through rocks and donkeys. Bless your name, Jesus' name. Amen.*

Pastor...