

PLAN PREACHING TO MY GENERATION

JOHN 17:3 • TV205A

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John 17:3

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

I have what I believe to be a very special message for you today and I hope that you will just pull up a chair and sit and listen to this entire telecast.

I am speaking on this subject: **“PLAIN PREACHING TO MY GENERATION,”** a plain sermon to my generation.

I’m turning for a text today to **John 17: verse 3** in which our Lord Jesus Christ said; *“and this is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*

Now my friends; I have been preaching long enough to know that this is true, that one essential thing in preaching the Word of God is to preach to men where they are (not where they should be, not where they think they are nor where they ought to be), but to preach to men where they are and as they are.

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Now, our Lord in His infinite wisdom spoke to different people according to their needs. There was a man called Nicodemus who came to Christ. Nicodemus was a very moral, religious, Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews.

This man Nicodemus thought he knew God. He believed that He worshipped God and he believed that he had a sure entrance into the kingdom of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ talked to this religious Pharisee, this moral man, about a new birth. He said, *“Except that a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;”* he cannot understand the kingdom of God. He cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Our Lord spoke to Nicodemus, the religious, moral, Pharisee, about a heart work, not a work of theology, orthodoxy, rituals, legalism, or ceremony, but a heart work, that which Nicodemus knew nothing about.

Now, when our Lord spoke to the woman at the well, He didn't talk to her about a heart work. He didn't talk to her about the new birth; He talked to her about sin.

Here was a woman that had been married five or six times and was living with a man that was not her husband, whose life was all confused, messed up, and troubled.

He talked to her about the water of life. He talked to her about never thirsting again. He talked to her about His work as the Messiah. He talked to her about true worship. He talked to her about forgiveness of sin.

He didn't talk to this woman the same way that he talked to Nicodemus. He talked about the same subject, knowing God, and having a living relationship with God. He talked to them in a different way; He preached to these people where they were and as they were. Do you see what I am saying?

Then, there was a rich, young ruler, who came to Christ. He was a man who was very wealthy and who wanted to do something to earn eternal life. He said, *“What can I do that I might earn eternal life?”*

Well, our Lord knew him to be a very proud, pious, self-righteous man, who felt that he kept the law. So, our Lord gave him something to do to inherit eternal life. He said, *“keep the law; obey the commandments.”*

Well, no man obeys the commandments. No man has the ability or the power to obey the commandments. *“No man in the flesh can please God.”*

What our Lord was doing was flushing this man out of his refuge of lies. He knew what the man was thinking. The man said, *“I kept all these. I have kept the commandments; what lack I yet?”* Christ knew that is what he would say.

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Then, our Lord hit him at the delicate spot. He was a very wealthy man. He had people living all around him who were starving, who didn't have enough to wear, who needed the things of this world. He wouldn't share with them, so our Lord said; "*go and sell what you have and give it to the poor and you come and take up your cross and follow me.*"

Well, He didn't talk to Nicodemus about selling out. He didn't talk to the woman at the well about selling out but He met this man where he was. He was a covetous man; he was a man who loved his riches. He was a man who hated his neighbor. He was a man who was full of greed. He was a man full of selfishness and our Lord met him where he was.

Do you see what I am pointing out? You don't just give the same pill to everybody. You have to find out in this matter of preaching where men are and preach to them there, as they are.

Now, I know where my generation is. I have been around long enough and I have been preaching long enough to know where you are. I know where my audience is and I am going to preach where you are and as you are today.

This is perhaps the most difficult generation to preach to of all times and I will tell you why for several reasons:

First of all: Nearly everybody is religious.

That's right, we have more religion in America today than ever before. We have less Christianity; we have less righteousness; we have less knowledge of God than ever before. But, we have more religion today than ever in the history of this country and more than in the history of any country.

You can turn your radio or television on most anytime of day or night and pick up a preacher. That didn't use to be so. There are churches all over town.

There are hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds of churches. There is a church for about every two or three hundred people in the average town. Nearly everybody today is religious. This is a religious generation.

Secondly: They all claim to believe in God.

It is much like the conditions to which our Lord came. Everybody was religious. Everybody claimed to believe in God. Everybody claimed to be righteous and yet nobody knew God.

Our Lord looked at those people and said, "*You don't know me or my Father.*" They said, "*We are Abraham's seed.*" Today people say, "We are Baptists, we are Methodists, and we are Presbyterians. We are Catholics, we are Episcopal, or something else."

He said, "*If you were Abraham's seed you would love me; (Abraham loved the Lord). Abraham saw my day and was glad.*"

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Thirdly: Our generation believes in God and most of them have made a religious profession. Most of them, at some time, have walked down somebody's aisle and made a decision for Jesus, made a profession of faith, and joined the church.

They are still doing it every Sunday by the thousands all over this country. They are walking down an aisle making a religious profession. Churches have just rows crammed with people making decisions and yet empty pews throughout the church every Lord's Day.

A bonafied sinner is hard to find. One of the most difficult things to find is a sinner because men are justifying themselves before men and before God. That is what our Lord said to the people of His day, He said; *"you justify yourselves before men but God knows your heart: And that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God."*

There is much religion today, much preaching, and much entertainment in the name of God Almighty. My friends, today, God's character is not preached. We hear so little of the holiness of God, of the justice of God, of the righteousness of God, of the sovereignty of God, of the grace and mercy of God.

We do not hear of God's character and God's attributes proclaimed. Therefore, our generation does not know God. We have not heard who God is. We have not heard the character of God preached.

Sin is not defined. Sin is not defined as a principle. That is what sin is. People everywhere are preaching against sin but not defining sin. They are talking about sin but not clearly defining what sin is.

Sin is a nature. Sin is a principle. Sin is a spirit. A man is not a sinner because he steals; he steals because he is a sinner. He has the principle of theft in him. He has the principle of evil in him. Sin is a nature and it is not defined. Sin is not against my neighbor, it is against God.

True repentance is not defined and true faith is not preached. Does anybody know anything about God's righteousness in Christ? It is an unknown subject and yet Paul devoted so much time to the preaching of God's righteousness.

In **Romans 10**; that's the problem with Israel. Paul said *"they have a zeal for God but it is not according to knowledge; they are ignorant of the God (the God of the Bible) and they are going about to establish their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God which is Christ Jesus."*

In **Romans Chapter 5**, he says practically the same thing about the righteousness of God is in Christ. *"There is a righteousness manifested and witnessed by the law and the prophets and that is Christ."*

Preachers are not talking about God's righteousness or God's justice. Job asked two or three times in the **Book of Job**; "*how can God be just and justify the ungodly? How can man be just with God?*"

The justice of God and the cross of Christ are not defined. People don't even know the reason for the cross. Everybody knows that Christ died on the cross but they don't know why. They have not the faintest idea why the justice of God required His Son to die.

He didn't die as an example; He didn't die as a martyr. He didn't die as a reformer; He didn't die to show us how to die. He died specifically to satisfy the righteousness, holiness, and justice of God.

The Lordship of Christ is compromised. Preachers are asking everybody to "accept Jesus as their personal Saviour," a term which is not found anywhere in the Word of God.

There is plenty of Scripture which says, "Bow to Christ; kiss the Son lest He be angry. Receive Christ; eat His flesh and drink His blood. Embrace the Son of God. Bow to the crown rights of Jesus Christ."

I am saying this; modern religion in America is a satanic conspiracy against God, against men, and against truth!

That is exactly what I am saying and I thought this sentence over quite a bit; modern religion, going under the name of fundamentalism and all other kind of religions in America, is a satanic conspiracy against God, against men, and against people everywhere. We are being swept up in it by the millions.

"We do not like God as He is so we will change Him. We do not like God as He is revealed in His Word, so we change Him to suit ourselves." The Lord said in **Psalms 50**; "*thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself.*"

The God of creation, the God of the Bible, the God of the universe, is not declared in His true character. We have a God that we have cut out with our own little scissors, and made Him just like what we want Him to be; He does what we let Him do.

I hear people say all the time, "God's done all He can do; now it is up to you." When did God ever do all that He can do for a man and that man not be saved?

I will tell you something else; we do not like God's definition of sin, so we form our own definition; "sin is not what I am; sin is what I do." That is what they are saying but that is not true. Sin is what we are and what we do is the results of what we are.

What we are has to be changed, not just what we do, and that is what the Pharisees did. Christ said, "*They cleanse the outside of the cup.*" They changed their habits but they did not change their hearts.

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Our Lord said, *“Cleanse first, that which is within, and then the outside will be changed.”* Modern religion starts on the outside and tries to work in. Salvation starts on the inside and works out. The heart is made clean. God says, *“I will take the stony heart out and will give you a heart of flesh.”*

No, we change men’s habits and leave their hearts bitter, hard, dead, cold, and evil, murderess hearts, divided hearts, double hearts, hearts that hate God and men, though they are religious. They are clean as a hounds tooth, straight as a gun barrel and just as empty.

We don’t like free grace. We don’t like sovereign grace. We don’t like substitution, so we invent our own ways of salvation by works and deeds. Original sin offends man’s dignity so preachers don’t preach it.

The Gospel of revelation offends man’s wisdom so preachers won’t preach it. The Lordship and authority of Jesus Christ offends their love of self. Substitution offends man’s pride.

So, modern religionists, using the Bible, (oh yes, they use the Bible), the modern religionists make up a God of their own. They make up a religion of their own and a heaven populated by Pharisees and do-gooders.

But, the Scripture still declares; *“salvation is of the Lord; salvation is of the Lord.”* God said to Moses; *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

God’s Word still says, *“It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”* The Word of God still declares; *“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation; Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”*

He said, *“I didn’t come to call the righteous.”* He didn’t come to call the religious. He didn’t come to call the Pharisee. He didn’t come to call the do-gooder. *“The well do not need a physician. I came to seek and to save that which is lost.”*

I will tell you something else; I want you to pull your chair up real close now; I have got something to say to this whole generation of religious people.” Our Lord said, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”*

Now, what preachers are trying to do today is to make America and Christianity synonymous and it is not. What the average preacher is trying to do is to make patriotism and religion synonymous and it is not.

Now, I am telling you something and you listen to me; America is not the kingdom of God. America is not the Promised Land, whatever you think.

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Democracy is not Christianity; no sir, it is not. Our way of equal rights and individual liberty is not the way of life and it is not eternal life. Now; that is just so! We are sinners before God; (now listen to me, don't leave me, listen to me); we are sinners before God just as much as the Communists are sinners.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Just because I am an American doesn't mean that I am without sin, and just because a man is a Communist doesn't mean he is a sinner. We are sinners in the sight of God just as much as the Communist, the Socialist, or anybody else.

A conservative is just as lost as a liberal, even though he may be in a church. We need the grace of God and the mercy of God individually, as much as they did in Rome, as much as they did in Japan, as much as they did in Germany, as much as they do in Poland or Russia today.

We need the mercy and grace of God as much as anyone. *"God is no respecter of persons."* We are sinners just like they are. Sin and salvation and knowledge of God in Christ are a personal matter, not a national matter, it is an individual matter.

The kingdom of God is in the hearts of believers. It is not in nations; God doesn't save nations; He saves individuals. Christ didn't die for nations; He died for individuals. *"He has a people out of every tribe, and kindred, and nation, and tongue, under heaven."*

I will tell you this; this relationship with God, this living, vital, personal, relationship with God, is through true individual repentance and true individual faith. The Scripture says; *"If thou shall confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead; thy shalt be saved."*

I will tell you; this true repentance and true faith which leads to a true knowledge of Christ will make a person a new creature in Christ Jesus, bent on doing the will of God, and serving His cause of righteousness.

Holiness cannot be legislated but Almighty God can give it when He gives a new nature. You can't legislate godliness, you can't legislate morality, and you can't legislate obedience; it is the work of God in the heart.

And God can perform overnight a miracle that no man can perform with all of his works, religions, and deeds under heaven.

Let me tell you this, and I am for some of these things, but I want to tell you this; we don't want to get this thing on the wrong track; America is not the kingdom of God. We may clean up our streets and our hearts still will be far from God.

I will tell you this; you can ban pornography and you can fight the Communists and you can make abortion illegal. You can elect conservatives and you can balance the budget. You can put prayer in the schools and you can make everybody a church member but every one of us still has the

greatest problem of all, sin which lives in the human heart. That's the problem; that's the great problem, sin against God.

How can I be just before God? It's not how can I be justified before men, not how can I make my reputation right before men. But how can I be just with God? *How can he be clean that is born of a woman; how can God be just and justifier?"*

**“Depth of mercy
Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?**

**Can my God
His wrath forbear
And me the chief of sinners spare?”**

If Satan can, he will get us sidetracked and lose sight of the fact of four vital things men must face as an individual. I have to live with or without God. I have to die with or without God. I have to face judgment with or without God. I have to spend eternity with or without God.

Now then, when you go out this way and try your best to make everything just as moral and righteous and religious as you can; you remember that God Almighty's issue is a heart problem and a personal problem.

We are going to stand; every man is going to give an account of himself unto God. *“It is appointed unto men once to die and after that the judgment.”*

We have invented all kinds of religious clichés and we are hiding behind them. Those religious clichés which give us a false refuge of which one of them is this; (listen to this and you think about this); boldly and brazenly men say; “I have made my peace with God.”

Have you now? You, make peace with God? My friend, that is an impossibility. Peace with God can only be made with the Prince of Peace. The Word of God clearly says in **Ephesians 2:14**; *“He is our peace.”*

Our Lord clearly told His disciples; *“My peace I give unto you.”* **Colossians 1:20** plainly says; *“And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, to reconcile all things unto himself.”* Christ is our peace. He is the peace for the individual because He meets all that God requires.

Let me give you five or six things before I leave:

No man, I am talking about individuals, and this is an individual matter. I know that we need to unite together and do all we can to have a good government and a good community, and a good city, good schools, and all of these things.

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You can do that and not know God. You can do that and not know Christ. You can do that and perish in your sins. I have to personally, individually, know God. What I am saying is do these things. Clean up your community; clean up your city; clean up your government and do all of these things.

Don't try to make it synonymous with salvation. Don't try to make it synonymous with knowing God. Don't call everything "Christian" because it is clean. Christianity is Christ and it is having a right heart with God, not only a right walk.

I am saying this; our peace is Christ. No man can speak peace to his heart that has not faced the matter of his sins, s-i-n-s. John said, *"If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His Word is not in us."*

Paul said, *"There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* David said; *"I acknowledge my transgressions; my sin is ever before me."*

God will forgive sin. I don't care what you have done, how deep you fall, how long you have been in the gutter, or what you have been through; God will forgive sin, but only through the blood of Christ. God forgives sin through a sacrifice, through a substitute, through a sin-offering. *"Jesus Christ bare our sins in His body on the tree and by His stripes we are healed."*

When I am convinced of my sins and my sins are before me and I'm aware of them and look to Christ to cleanse them, God will have mercy on me.

You are not going to speak peace to your heart until you face your individual sins. Watch this; No man can speak peace to his heart that has not faced the matter of sin.

You might say that I just said that. No I didn't; I said sins. Now I am saying sin. Sins are what we do and sin is what we are. Sins are the result of sin.

We commit sins against God because we have a sinful nature. A man steals because he is a thief by nature. A man lies because he is a liar by nature. A man hates because he is a murderer by nature.

We need a new nature. This is what I am saying, we have to face this fact of s-i-n, what we are, what makes us do what we do and say what we do and act like we act. It is because we are motivated by a fallen nature and a fallen will. *"By one man sin entered the world, (s-i-n, the nature, the principle), so death passed upon all men because all sinned."*

Thirdly: Man cannot speak peace to his heart until he has faced the sinfulness of his best deeds. That's right, his best deeds.

Do you know what the Scripture says? *"Man at his best state is altogether vanity."* Old Isaiah wrote, *"We all do fade as the leaf. We are an unclean thing. Even our righteousnesses are filthy rags."*

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Some people take great delight and satisfaction in their prayers but every prayer you have ever prayed is full of sin.

Some people take great delight in their gifts, their good deeds, their preaching, their religious works and all these things. But, without Christ every act of religion is an abomination to God.

God requires perfection. Man may love God but not perfectly. A man may serve God but not perfectly. A man may give, worship, and do good things, but not perfectly. I will tell you this; if it is not perfect, God can't have it.

You say, "Well; how is my righteousness and work accepted?" It is accepted in Christ. Christ makes it acceptable. *"We are accepted in the beloved."*

Without Christ we are cast-offs. We are out-casts. We are deserted; we are left like the infant in the field. Christ is our righteousness.

Fourthly: A man cannot speak peace to his heart until he has dealt with the matter of unbelief.

Do you know why Israel couldn't enter into the Canaan Land? It was because of unbelief. That's the reason.

The Centurion came to our Lord and he said, *"Lord; I believe; help thou thine unbelief."*

The Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, righteousness and what? It convinces them of unbelief. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."*

We better pray like the disciples of old; *"Lord, increase my faith."* I have enough unbelief; I need belief and I need faith.

God Almighty is pleased with faith. We must have faith. We must believe not only in God but we must believe God.

We must believe not only in Christ but we must believe Christ. *"All things are possible to them that believe."*

Last of all: A man cannot speak peace to his heart until he has faced the matter of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

"If thou shall confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord," He will not only be your personal Saviour, your Lord and your Master; He will be the one who reigns over you, the one who controls you.

Somebody said, "Christ is the most important part of my life." When He is your Lord, He is your life. We bow to, acknowledge, and proclaim, the Lordship of the Son of God!