

What Hinders Men from Coming to Christ

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: John 5:40

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“And you will not come to me that you might have life.”

Our Lord gives a full and free invitation to every guilty sinner. It is a full invitation. It is lacking nothing. The table is spread. Come and dine. You don't need to bring anything.

The fountain of living water flows full and free. It will meet any and every need. He says, “Though your sins be as scarlet none need delay because of the guilt of sin or the blackness of sin or the terrible load of sin or a past record of sin or future fears of sin. Let not conscience make you linger nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of him.”

It is a full and free invitation. When they had nothing to pay he freely, frankly and fully forgave them both.

Our Lord invites every weary sinner to come to him and find total and complete rest. He says, “Come unto me all ye—Jew, Gentile, male, female, old and young, bond and free, learned and ignorant—come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, heavy laden, weary of sin, tired of sin, tired of finding now answers, tired of finding no peace, tired of finding no rest. Come to me and I will give you rest. I will give you rest.”

And then to every lost sinner he said, “The Son of Man is here on a mission. The Son of Man has been commissioned, ordained, anointed and sent by the heavenly father on a mission, a mission that shall not fail. He has come into this world to seek, to seek them, to find them and to save them that are lost.” He is going to do just that. God almighty ordained it. God almighty anointed him. God almighty sent him. God almighty empowered him and God almighty raised him. And he is going to do just exactly what God almighty the heavenly Father sent his beloved Son to do. He is going to save the lost.

But, he says, “You will not come. I fully and frankly and freely invite every guilty man, woman, boy and girl to come to me, but you won't come. I fully and freely invite every weary, heavy laden sinner to come to me, but you will not come. I fully and freely invite every lost person, every wandering lost person, every fallen son of guilty Adam to come to me, but you will not come.”

Now, men will come to a system of religion. They will come to a system of religion, a program of religion. They will come to that. They will even come to a system of morals. You can lay down a system of morals and they will join you. Give them certain things they can do and they cannot do., they are permitted to do and not permitted to do and they will come to that. And they will come to a profession of faith. You tell them there is a hell to shun, there is a heaven to gain if they want that to raise their hands and they will raise them by the multitude. They will even walk down to the front of a church. They will take a preacher's hand. They will sign a card. They will agree anything you present. They will agree to anything that you promise. Men will come to a system of doctrine. You can systematize Arminianism or Pelagianism or Calvinism or any other kind of -ism and it is logical to a natural mind and they will come to it. Yes, lost men can understand Arminianism, freewillism. And lost men can also understand and accept Calvinism. They will agree with you that man is totally depraved. They will agree with you that God elected a people. They will agree with you that Jesus Christ is the only Savior. They will agree with you that the Holy Spirit is an effectual, invincible power to bring men to what God wants them to do. They will agree with you that there is security in this system. But they will not come to Christ.

And they will offer many excuses. One says to him, "I'll come to you, but suffer me first..." And any time a man says that to Christ his intentions are not to come. "I'll come to you but...I'll come to you but suffer me first to go and bury my father. I've got obligations to my family. I've got obligations to my father. I've got obligations here and obligations there."

A weary, guilty, lost sinner has one obligation, that is to come to Christ and no other obligation.

Our Lord turned to this man and said, "Let the dead bury the dead. Let the dead bury their dead. You come and take up your cross and follow me."

Another one says, "Well, I have married a wife. I have the responsibility of a wife and a home and I can't come."

Another said, "I have invested a lot in a piece of land. I've got a business, Lord. And that business requires my attention."

The only thing that requires your attention is an immortal, hell bound soul. And you better give it your attention. That's what Christ said.

"But I bought a field and I've got to go and look at it. I've bought some oxen. I've got to go and prove them."

Alibis, excuses, reasons, we continually give them. And the preacher may accept them and the congregation may accept them and you have already accepted them because they were concocted in your deceived heart. But God almighty never has accepted an excuse from any man for not taking up his cross and following Christ.

“You will not come to me.”

Look at verse 43 that Jay read a moment ago. Christ said, “I am come,” first in verse 40 he said, “You won’t come to me. You won’t come to me.”

Life is in Christ. In him are hid all the treasures of the godhead. That’s where it all is. You’ll miss them if you don’t get to Christ. You won’t find them in the Bible. You won’t find them in a church. You won’t find them in the ordinances. You won’t find them in the doctrines. They are hid in Christ. And you won’t participate or partake of or possess any part of God’s mercy or blessing if you don’t get to Christ.

“You will not come to me. You will come to every thing else, but you won’t come to me. You will offer every alibi and excuse known to man and you will find comfort in that false refuge, but you won’t come to me that you might have life.”

This is not life. This is existence. Anything that is dying is not life. This isn’t life. Life is eternal. Life is spiritual. Life is divine. This is not life. I’m not living in the flesh. I don’t have life till I have Christ. This is not riches. Your riches are nothing but rags. Riches is in Christ. You don’t find any riches in this world. There is no rich man in this world, but the man who has Christ. The man who has a tremendous home and all these lands and possessions, he’s not rich. The man is rich who has Christ, an unlimited source of grace, a joint heir with Jesus Christ, an heir of God, life eternal. He is rich. There is no man who has treasures on this earth who is rich. He is poor. They will be gone tomorrow. God said, “Then who shall these things be, you fool?”

The man who is rich has laid up treasures in heaven. He is wealthy. He is rich. His God supplies all his needs according to his riches in glory through Jesus Christ.

“You will not come to me that you might have life, that you might have true life, true riches.” No man has rest outside of Christ. It’s pleasure in sin for a season. There is a false peace and a false rest and a false comfort and a false confidence and a false assurance. In Christ is total rest. But life, there’s life. There is strength for my weakness, fullness for my emptiness, light for my darkness, life for my death, clothing for my nakedness, mercy for my sins in Christ. I’ve got to get to Christ and I’ve got to lay down everything else that is displeasing to him.

I can’t bring my traditions and come to Christ. I can’t bring my alibis and come to Christ. I can’t bring my family and come to Christ. I can’t do it. They will have to come by themselves.

“You will not come to me. I receive not honor from men. I know you. I know you. You don’t know yourself.”

I’ve heard people say, “If I know my heart...”

That's one thing you don't know.

"I know you. I know you. I'm the only one who does know you. Your friends don't know you. You don't know yourself. Your pastor doesn't know you. I know you. And I know you don't have the love of God in you. You have the love of self and you have the love of pleasure and you have the love of this world., but you don't have the love of God in you. I know you," he'll say. "You have got the knowledge of religion. You have got the knowledge of doctrine, but you don't have the love of God in you. I'm come in my Father's name, commissioned by him and sent by him. And you receive me not. Let another come in his own name with his own system, with his own denomination, with his own doctrine, with his own pleasing words, with his own enticing words. Let him come in his own name. Let him come with all the promises of the future and even the presence of this earthly life and him you will receive, him you will receive."

In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. It's all in him. And there is no other refuge. There is no other hiding place. God will deal with men on the basis of their relationship with Jesus Christ and on no other basis. God is not going to deal with me on the basis of my doctrine. He's not going to do it.

There are a lot of people who can't stomach an Arminian sermon, but the same people do not love Christ with all their hearts. They do not know Christ. As brother Johnson said one time, there is nothing hard to understand about Calvinism. The human mind can comprehend a system of doctrine of that nature. There is nothing hard to understand about Arminianism, one is works, one is a free gift. And what men can't understand and can't enter into by nature is the mysteries of grace, of vital, living union with Jesus Christ, a turning from my idols to the living God. A life of faith, a hear of faith, a mind of faith, a spirit of faith, a confidence in Christ, a union with Christ that cuts off all other relations, all other natural ties, all other responsibilities where Christ is involved. That's what our Lord is talking about when he said, "You come to me and hate your mother, father, brother, sister, husband, wife and your own life also. If you don't you can't be my disciple."

He's talking about the mysteries of a life of faith, a life of faith that offers no excuse and no alibi. Christ is king and the person is not ashamed of it.

Christ is Lord. If he has got time for anything else, all right. But Christ is first.

Barnard offended so many people in this area when he came preaching that message. Christ will be Lord of all or he won't be Lord at all, or he won't be Lord at all. I'm not preaching some strange doctrine. I'm not preaching something that is not in God's Word. I am declaring unto you that which Christ said. "Let a man put his hand to the plow and look back, he is not fit for the kingdom of God. He that cometh to me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

He turned to Peter and said, “You love me more than these?” He pointed to his boats. He pointed to his nets. He pointed to the sea. He pointed to the world. He pointed to everything else. “If you do, you feed my sheep. And if you don’t, you go your way.” That’s all that he says. Men will not come to Christ. They will not.

And let me tell these...let me tell you what I am saying and sum it up. God does not keep you from coming to Christ. Christ offers a full and free invitation to anyone who wants to come, anyone in this world. You come on. If you want to, come on. Come on. But let me tell you this: You come completely. You come unreservedly. You come lovingly. You come burning your bridges behind you. You come taking up your cross. You come surrendering unconditionally or you don’t come at all, or you don’t come at all.

Our Lord doesn’t have any halfway sons. They are completely committed. Our Lord doesn’t have any part time daughters. They are completely committed. Our Lord does not have a part time bride. They are totally committed, committed at the expense of everything and everybody.

Now, in him are hid all the treasures. That’s where they are. It’s amazing to me that men would leave home...home, hearth and comfort and go west to hunt gold. But that’s what our Lord said. They will do anything for this body, for the lust of the eyes, the mind and the heart. They leave the comforts of home. They will leave the cold plains of the west. They will brave the hot sun of the desert. They will brave the long hours of labor and toil to find a piece of gold, but not to find Christ.

Our Lord is the great pearl. He is worth all you've got. He is the treasure hid in the field and he is worth all you've got. And if he is not worth all you have and all you are and all you ever expect to be you haven’t seen the treasures in him yet. Oh, you want him as a sideline. Who doesn’t? You want him as a fire escape. Who doesn’t? You will make a contribution to have an insurance policy. Who won’t? You’ll hope that when the smoke clears away and the dust dies down you will on the right side. Who wouldn’t?

But God doesn’t save those kind of people. He saves sons. He saves bond slaves. He saves committed servants, totally committed, not a half way committal, but a total committal.

Now, what hinders men from coming to Christ? What hinders them from coming to Christ?

Somebody says, “They just don’t want to come.”

That’s true in a sense. But that’s not all of it. That’s not all of it.

You say, “They could come if they wanted to.”

You are dead right. But there is a lot more enters into it than that. There is a combination of things that keeps men from coming to Christ. There is a combination of

things that hinders sinners from coming to the Savior. And I'll give you five of them tonight.

First of all, our Lord said in verse 40, "And ye will not come." The will, that's the problem, the will, the will.

It's not of him that willeth. It is not of the will of the flesh. It is not of the will of man. Man will not come. If they would, they could.

Turn to Revelation 22. This Scripture is in the Word of God. This Scripture is true. Revelation 22, verse 17, "And the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the bride..." Some say that is the new Jerusalem, the holy city. Some say it is the Church, whatever. The say, "Come. Come on. Come to the fountain. Come to the living water. Come to the table. Come to the rest. Come to Christ. They same come. Come. Let him that heareth, let every believer. You are witnesses of Christ. Let him say, "Come on, come one, sinner. Come on to Christ. And let him that is athirst come."

Every thirsty soul. And listen. "Whosoever will, will? Will you? Will you? Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely, all he needs." Take it like the little robin Spurgeon fed who went out and got his buddy and he came and ate the crumbs provided for the robin, but he wanted him and he took them and they were his for the taking. And Christ is yours for the asking and yours for the taking. Will you? Will you?

No, not on the conditions you lay down, not on the conditions that you have read tonight, not on the conditions that you have read from that Bible.

"I won't come that way. I'll come on my terms and on my conditions and I will find a preacher that will satisfy my thoughts about it and I will come that way. But I won't come this way."

That's what Naaman said. The servant of God sent his servant out to see old Naaman. There is a man standing there with leprosy. There is a man standing there dying and knows he is dying. And the servant of God said to him, "Go and dip in the river Jordan."

He said, "I will not. I will not."

"This is the only way you will be made whole."

"Well, I will not. I just will not do it."

And that is the reason men don't come. They will not come. You will not come. That is the basis of the whole thing. You will not come.

Somebody offers you an easier way you'll take it. Somebody offers you another way, you'll take it. Somebody offers you even a way under suspicion, you'll still give that a try, but not to Christ.

“I will not.”

There is another reason why men don't come back two pages in John 3:19. What hinders men from coming to Christ? Their wills, their fallen natural wills, their depraved wills. A man can only do what he will do. And he will not do what his nature resents. His nature resents it. Our human nature resents lordship. Our human nature resents begging. Our human nature resents authority. Our human nature resents the sceptre, the rule of Christ. We will not come.

And then, secondly, we love our sins. “And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, but men love darkness. Men love darkness.”

Now, the Word of God says powerfully and plainly that where sin did abound...sin does not keep a man, no matter how dark and how deep and how wicked a man's sins are, his sins won't keep Christ from saving him. But his sins will keep him from coming to Christ.

Our Lord is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. He delights to show mercy where sin did abound. I don't care how sinful you are. I don't care how wicked you are. You come on to Christ. For where sin did abound grace did much more abound. But we have no right to claim a salvation that does not give us a deliverance from our sins and a love for sin and the determination to continue in having our will and our own way. That's what keeps men from Christ: a love for this world, a love for sin, a love for darkness, a love for our own way.

And then the third thing. What keeps a man from Christ? What hinders a man from coming to Christ in his total unconditional commitment and surrender? The traditions of religion. How strong they are, how binding they are, how blinding they are, how invisible they are.

The Pharisees of old were hindered from coming to Christ by the traditions of their religion. They didn't need a sabbath day. They had a sabbath day. They didn't need a righteousness. They had a righteousness. They didn't need a church. They had a church. They were married to these traditions. They said, “You can't pick corn on the sabbath day. You can't heal on the sabbath day. You can't carry your bed on the sabbath day. The uncircumcised cannot come into the church. We've got our discipline. We've got our doctrines. We've got our traditions. We've got to hold to these things and defend them at any cost. And even God can't interrupt them.”

I know men today who lose the joy of the table of the Lord by debating about who ought to take of it. I know men who lose the picture and the message of baptism by arguing about by whose authority it ought to be administered. The sprinkling of an infant. There are those that hold to that. It is not in the Word of God. It is not taught in the Word of God. It is not commanded in the Word of God. It is not illustrated in the Words of God. But we dare not do it lest our child perish.

I just must follow the custom. I must follow the tradition. I must follow the way that it has been done. I dare not give it up. It could be of importance. It could have some significance.

My dear friend, we cannot bring our traditions and come to Christ. We cannot hold to these idols and come to Christ.

The apostle Paul summed it up in Philippians chapter three. Listen to him, Philippians the third chapter. He talks about his traditions. He talks about his heritage. He talks about his religious customs. And he says here in Philippians, the third chapter, verse five, "I was circumcised—commanded—the eighth day of the stock of Israel. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. The promises to Israel. A Hebrew of Hebrews, touching the law, the law was commanded. I was a Pharisee. Concerning zeal I persecuted the church. Touching the righteousness which is in the law, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt do...I was blameless. Well what things at one time were gain to me I counted total loss." Can you lay them down?

For some people the name Baptist has a peculiar and a particular and powerful ring. There is some significance. But, brethren, Christ doesn't save Baptists. He saves sinners.

I would defend baptism by immersion as strongly as I could, but God doesn't save immersed people in water. He saves people who are immersed in Christ.

I would defend the elements of the table. I would stand for the wine and the unleavened bread. But you can eat all the unleavened bread this world ever produced and drink all the wine this world ever produced and go to hell.

It is Christ that saves. And men are hindered from coming to Christ because of their...of their traditions and their rituals and their customs. And they hold to them. They divide over them. They split over them. They argue over them. They debate them. They cling to them. And they become like the table of the Jew, a snare and a stumbling block that keeps them from Christ.

Oh, Paul said, "I count," verse eight, "I count all things but loss, all things religiously, earthly, materially, physically in every way I count them but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Huh? The loss of all things, everybody, everything. And I count these things but dung, rubbish, material for the garbage dump all that I may win Christ and be found in him."

Have you ever gotten serious about this? This man is serious. This man is serious. This man lived for those things. This man fought for those things. This man fought for those things. This man bled for those things. This man killed for those things. And this man had Scripture for them, Jay, Scripture for them. They were the traditional, dispensational way of Moses.

When Christ the light, the Son of heaven outshone the moon of ceremony Paul wouldn't turn loose of the moon. But one day he did, stars, moon, earth and all the planets. He let them go that I might reach out and have Christ.

If your right arm offends you, he says, cut it off. If your relatives keep you from Christ, cut them off. If your right eye offends you, pluck it out. If your job keeps you from Christ, quit it. It would be better to go through life having no job, having no eye than to have two to burn in hell. Isn't that what he said?

Do you think that is literally to cut off your right arm? You're dead wrong. Our Lord never taught mutilation of the body. But he says it is worth everything to get to Christ. Whatever keeps you from Christ. Christ is all.

When a man comes to Christ he will take a trip to Calvary where he will see the glory of Christ, the glory of his law, the glory of his justice, the glory of his love, the glory of his righteousness. He'll take a trip to Calvary and then he will take a trip to the cemetery and he will bury everything he has got and everybody he knows. And then he will follow his Lord. And then he will follow his Lord.

But that's what keeps men from Christ, the traditions of religion. His will, first of all. But when even the will is broken, when even the will is broken there rises up a love for the world, the love for its luxuries, the love for its comforts, the love for these things. And these things have got to be crucified. I am crucified with Christ. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ by which the world is crucified unto me. A love for sin, a love for the world keeps me from Christ.

And then, traditions, oh traditions, the traditions of religion. They wrap themselves around us before we know it. And the first thing we know we are barbed and bound down by these traditions. Traditions. Everybody has got a denominational preference because everybody has got a tradition. Even those who claim to be undenominational have the tradition of undenominationalism.

And then the fourth refuse, the fourth thing that hinders a man from coming to Christ is a false refuge. There is nothing that Satan had rather do than bring you to a place of contentment without Christ or security without Christ, a refuge, a refuge.

"I know I'm saved."

I wish I had \$100 for every time anybody said that to me. I wish I had \$100 for every time anybody said that to me that I doubted very seriously if they ever met the Lord.

But, "I know I'm saved. I know I am saved because I made a profession of faith. Brother, I'll tell you, it was in that old country church. And brother so and so was preaching and I was move din my heart and I walked down that aisle and I accepted Jesus and that happened 25 years ago and I have never doubted it since."

I'd be afraid of any kind of profession of faith I never doubted. I don't doubt Christ. I don't doubt his ability, his power, but I doubt any experience. I have a right to put a question mark on any experience.

"I know I am saved. I am saved because God has answered my prayer. I know I am saved. I have tithed for years. I have served the Lord all my life. I'm a member of the Church. I have been baptized. I've done this that and the other. I know I am saved. I wouldn't dare give it up. I wouldn't dare even question it."

I'll tell you this, any smart businessman takes an inventory every year. And any intelligent preacher will take an inventory of his message every day. And any smart individual that's been enlightened by the Holy Spirit will take an inventory of his relationship with Christ every day, too.

Old John Newton talked about it. Tis a point I long to know. I long to know. I'm not satisfied with an experience. I long to know. I'm not satisfied with a decision. I long to know. There is a point I long to know. Oft it gives me anxious thought, anxious thought. Do I love the Lord and know? Am I his or am I not?

"But, Lord, we prophesied in your name and cast out devils and did many wonderful works."

"I never knew you."

It's too late then to start taking inventory. Are you resting in your experience or Christ? Are you resting in your works or Christ? Are you resting in your church membership, your baptism or Christ?

There are men who have been saved, sanctified and called to preach who had never met the Savior according to their own testimony.

"I know I'm saved."

They can walk their way, live their life, go their direction, they are still saved. And Baptists are the world's greatest sinners in this respect. Churches can have 1200 members and 50 in prayer meeting, but they are all saved. Don't tell them they are not. You will have a fight on your hands.

I don't question a man's salvation.

"I'm saved. I'm saved."

Well, I'll tell you this. Men who are saved are being saved. And anybody who is not being saved ain't never been saved. And men who are being saved have a salvation that is nearer now than when they believed. And anybody that is not being saved, and

anybody that doesn't have the expectations and the prospects and the anticipation of a salvation to come has never been saved.

Salvation is life, not a decision, not a profession. It is not a dedication. It is not a sideline. It is life, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

But too many in this day do not come to Christ because they have already come to something else. They have already got it signed, sealed and delivered. They have already got it all fixed up and put the wax on it and the stamp on it and shoved it in the safe and shut the door and waiting to get it out in glory. But that's not salvation.

Salvation is a principle. It's a nature. It's a life. It's an artesian well springing up within you into everlasting life. It is a life that grows. It is a life that seeks. It is a life that yearns. It is a life that reaches out. It is a life that is motivated by supreme love for a supreme person. And it never gets old.

I worry about folks to whom the gospel gets old. Breathing never got old to me yet, Jay. Breathing never gets old. Eating never gets old. Folks prepare...you are already preparing for what you are going to eat tomorrow, where you are going to dine tomorrow. It never gets old. That's the flesh.

But I'll tell you this. A man who is come to know Christ, nothing about him ever gets old. It's new every day. It's a living, living experience. That's right. That's the truth. It never gets old.

And then the fifth thing that hinders a man from coming to Christ—and this is offensive. I know it is going to be offensive. I know it is offensive, but Paul said, "Our gospel is offensive."

I used to sit down there in Chattanooga 30 years ago and I pastored that little church before God was pleased to teach me something about his grace and gospel, religious like Paul. Separated from my mother's womb, yes. Called to be a preacher of the gospel, yes. Walking in the zeal and ignorance of religion. I used to sit down there in that little study and wonder and be concerned about two things. Number one, why all those folks walking the aisle for Jesus weren't living and panting after and loving and worshiping the Jesus they claimed to believe in. That used to bother me in no uncertain terms. I'd sit and look at the church role. We had 440 or 450 members. The whole auditorium wouldn't seat half that. It wasn't no use having an auditorium seating your membership if they ain't coming anyhow.

I'd sit and go over the roles. He made a profession. Where is he? Why doesn't he love Christ? Why doesn't he pray? Why doesn't he witness? Why doesn't he give? Why doesn't he have some participation? Why? Why?

Oh, they want the preacher to come around and visit them, but they don't visit the preacher.

Somebody said to me one time, “I haven’t seen you in six weeks.”

I said, “I’m up there every Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. You’re welcome to come.”

“But I want you to come to the house.”

“I ain’t coming to your house if you don’t come to God’s house.”

I’m not a social worker. I’m a pastor. I’m not a doctor. I can’t heal people. But I can sure preach to their souls if they will come listen to me. Your doctor is not going to do you any good if you don’t go see him or take his medicine. And pretty soon he’ll tell you to find you another one.

And that’s what I say with all the zeal of my soul. If you’re going to listen to me go find you somebody else. I will not pastor people who will not worship God.

Old Jonathan Edwards got kicked out of his church because he demanded a regenerated church membership. That is what it was all about. That is all he wanted. He just said, “Folks...the folks that have their name on the role ought to be regenerated.”

And they said, “That’s not fair. We’ll just do without you, now. You can leave.”

He said, “All right. Good bye. God bless you. But I demand a regenerated church membership.”

And I used to sit and wonder about the second thing. Number one, why...why people who claim to know Christ didn’t worship Christ, didn’t love Christ? I couldn’t understand it.

I couldn’t wait for the Lord’s Day. They couldn’t either because they was going fishing.

And the other thing that bothered me was this. Why wasn’t my message offensive? Doesn’t that trouble you?

Paul said his message was offensive. Everywhere he went somebody shouted at him. Nobody will shout at me. Everywhere he went people hated him. Nobody hated me. Everywhere he went the apostle Paul was either put in prison or put in the best room in the house, but there wasn’t no middle ground. They either loved him or despised him, but nobody cared whether I came or went. They wasn’t interested.

But I’ll tell you this. I got a hold of this gospel one day and I found out something about that. I found out the love of people who love Christ. I found out how close you can get to people who love Christ. You cut one of them and the other one bleeds. That’s right. You cut one of them and the other one bleeds. But I found out something about that other crowd, too. They hate you and they hate your God and they hate what you preach.

It's offensive. And I'm going to be offensive now and I'm going to tell you the truth, the truth. You know the truth and the truth will make you free. Nothing else can set you free, but Christ can if you can get to him, if you will come, if you will come.

Well, now, this perhaps the most humbling and offensive charge you can bring against this generation, but it's true. Our Lord bought it. First of all you can tell me and if they will not come and you won't offend them too much. You won't offend them too much.

Most of them will say, "Well, you are dead right. I could if I wanted to, but I won't."

And you can tell them they love the world.

And they will say, "Well, you are right. I do. I love the world. If I have to make my choice like old Dixie said, 'If I get well, preacher, I'm going right back to the kind of life I'm living. No use me lying to you or God or anybody else.'"

That won't offend them too much and you can tell them they are bound by tradition. And they might get mad for a while, but they will say, "You got your opinion."

And you might talk about their false refuges and they'll get mad for a little while, but they'll get over it.

But let me tell you this. You know why men don't come to Christ? They are ignorant. They are ignorant. That's right, ignorant. Now, that will offend. And they will stay mad at that. But that's what our Lord said. Paul said they have a...they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." They are ignorant of God's righteousness.

My friends, this generation does not know God. That's what Christ said. You need to know me or my Father." They don't come to Christ because they don't know Christ. They don't know him. You can't trust an unrevealed Christ. You cannot call upon him in whom you have not believed. You can't believe in him of whom you have not heard.

They have been hearing another Jesus. They have never heard the call of the crucified conquering one. They have never heard the demands of the enthroned king. They have never heard the lordship of him who is the living God. They have been hearing about, "He wants to save you and you won't let him. Jesus is sitting up there in heaven wringing his hands because men won't let him have his way." That's who they have heard about. But they don't know the living God.

"You don't know me," he said. "You don't know me."

There was a long time before the disciples came to know him. It sure was. It was a long time before they came to know him. And I'll tell you. Those who know him don't know him like they are going to know him. They don't know him like they want to know him and they don't know him like they intend to know him. They are still learning of Christ, learning of Christ.

They are still coming to Christ. To whom coming, to whom coming as a living sovereign Lord and stone, to whom coming...if you call him Father pass the time of your sojourning in fear. Fear of whom? Fear of him who is your Father.

They are still coming.

“You don’t know me.”

Christ said this. “You don’t me or my Father.”

Eternal life is to know God, to know him.

And I’ll tell you something else they don’t know. This generation doesn’t know sin.

Oh I hear the preachers preach and they talk about drinking. They talk about smoking. They talk about dancing. They talk about card playing. They talk about all these things. And, brethren, these are recent things. These are things of the last hundreds of years. Sin is a...sin is a thing that goes back to the garden. Sin is a principle, a nature, a spirit. Sin is a principle. These things that are outward are nothing but the consequences of sin. They are the results of sin. They are the products of sin. They are the outgrowth of sin. And you can cut them all off and be the world’s greatest sinner.

That’s what our Lord told these Pharisees. He said, “It’s not that which goes in your mouth that defiles you, it is that which comes out of your heart, out of the heart.” That’s where the...that’s the seat of sin. That’s the very source of sin. That’s the big spring from which it all comes. That’s the throne of sin. Sin has been enthroned by Adam’s fall. It’s a principle.

And Paul said, “I didn’t know sin.” The most educated, religious accomplished, experienced religious man of his day didn’t know sin. He didn’t know sin. Do you?

Do you know what sin is? I’ll tell you this. When you learn what sin is you’ll quit pruning branches and start cutting at roots. You’ll start praying differently. You’ll start praying differently. And you’ll grieve over different things. You will start grieving over principle and nature. You will start repenting not for what you have done, but for what you are. You will start crying for mercy not because of what you have done, but what you are. You will cease to be depressed over little outward things and become depressed over a nature. And you won’t be satisfied till you are delivered by the righteousness of Christ and cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Somebody says, “Confession is good for the soul.”

Confession never saved anybody. It’s blood that cleanseth from sin. Confession won’t reach to the depths of sin. The decisions won’t reach to the depths of sin. A little water

won't reach to the depths of sin. It takes the blood of Christ that is able to reach to the deepest, darkest corner and recess of my evil heart.

And that's when, brother, I tell you. When you come to know the blood maketh atonement, the blood cleanseth, the blood purifieth...whoa, it gives you a happy heart. It gives you a joyful spirit. But people don't know sin. Otherwise they wouldn't make such stupid statements as, "I've never touched a drop of liquor."

That is the most asinine thing I ever heard anybody say. You might have been better off if you had bathed in it. Then you would know you was lost.

Well, our gospel is hid. Men are ignorant. They are ignorant. They are ignorant of God. They are ignorant of sin and they are ignorant of the gospel.

I listened to two preachers before I came to church. Maybe that's what fired me up. But I have never been so depressed in my life. He talked about sending money to help us preach the gospel and he ain't preached any gospel yet, not one word of gospel.

I charge that 99% of the preachers in this nation never heard of the gospel. They have never been exposed to the gospel. The gospel is concerning a person and that person's office and that person's deity and that person's incarnation and that person's power and that person's work and that person's death and that person's blood and that person's righteousness and that person's resurrection and that person's intercession and that person's coming.

A young man came by our study...my study one day. He sat down and talked to me. He said he decided to preach. He wasn't a member of this congregation. He was a member somewhere else. He said God called him to preach, about 21 years old. And I just calmly said to him, well, I said, "Son, what's the gospel?"

He began talking and he talked and he talked and he talked. And he talked about 10 minutes. And I said, "Are you through?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "You haven't identified or defined the gospel yet." I said, "You haven't mentioned the suretyship of Christ. You haven't mentioned the imputed righteousness of the Son of God. You haven't mentioned the effectual work of Christ on that cross. You haven't mentioned his intercession, his mediatorial work at God's right hand. You haven't mentioned any of those things."

He said, "Oh, I believe that."

I said, "You didn't say anything about it."

And you will ask preachers. They will get up and preach and, boy, and all these things, Jake. And then you will come to them and say, “You didn’t preach this, that...”

“Oh, I believe that.”

Well, if that’s the gospel, preaching about the gospel is not preaching the gospel. You can talk about a lot of people are interested in the return of Christ who are not interested in the Christ who is coming. And a lot of people talk about Calvary and what happened at Calvary and they are not interested in who died at Calvary. There’s a lot of difference.

Oh, people preach the cross of the Christ who never yet one time preached the Christ of the cross. There is a thin line here. And it is the line between despair and glory. There is a thin line here and it is the line between heaven and hell. There is a thin line here and it is the line between being saved and lost, knowing the gospel.

Paul said it is the gospel concerning his Son. And old Philip walked alongside that chariot and that man was sitting there reading the Bible and Philip said, “Do you understand what you are reading? Do you?”

Oh, anybody can understand the Bible. This fellow was smarter than that. He said, “I can’t understand it. Somebody is going to have to show me.”

I wish I could find somebody somewhere who didn’t have all the answers. I wish I could find somebody somewhere who didn’t know everything, somebody somewhere who would look at this book and say, “I don’t understand it. I wish somebody would show me.”

And, boy, what a joy it would be to get up beside him and open the Word and say, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinner of whom I am the chief.”

That’s good news. But it is only good news to a hungry man. That’s the truth. It’s only good news to a weary man. It’s only good news to a captive. It’s only good news to a fellow that is going out of business with this world and seeing that everything here is fading. It’s fashion fadeth and it’s foolishness and it passeth away. Oh, that I might know Christ and the power of his resurrection and be found in him.

Well, it’s death, it’s crucifixion. It is not something a man can do alone. It is not something he can sustain alone. He has got to have the power of God.

Our Father in heaven for this grand and glorious good news we give thee thanks, for a revelation of thy mercy in Christ Jesus we give thee thanks. Lord, we know it in our heads. And we have to say this is true. There are no part time believers. A man can’t die part time. He’s either dead or he is alive. A man can’t go to the cross part time. He can’t go to the cross one day a week. He can’t go to the cross in his spare time. When a man goes to the cross he dies. And you said in your Word, “Except you take up your cross and follow me you cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Deliver us from the horrible deception of the devil and the deception of this religious world, deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect. But let us see that Christ is king and Lord and he is worthy...he is worthy...he is worthy. I'm not giving him anything. I am receiving everything from him. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. It's not a sacrifice on my part. It's a sacrifice on his part to make me his child.

God, open the blind eyes. We who call bitter sweet and sweet bitter, oh what fools. Men who walk in darkness and say, "We see. We see." Men who live in refuges of lies and saying, "We're saved, we're saved."

Don't leave us to ourselves. We'll perish. Do something for us in a very special way for Christ's sake we pray. Amen.