

The Gospel to Young People
2021 Fellowship Conference
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The following is session number 3 from the 2021 Fellowship Conference. Paul Washer asked for the young people to sit up front so that he could address them directly on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Young people, I'm here tonight for you. For you. I want you to listen to me, please. Please, more than anything if you don't listen for a long time to something else, please listen to me tonight. Okay, this is specifically for you. I want to talk to you about the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is nothing more important. Then the gospel of Jesus Christ. Absolutely nothing. And you need to understand, I'm not going to talk to you like a bunch of children. I'm going to talk to you like people who can understand me. So pay attention. Please, pay attention. I know that there's been so many hours in your life when you didn't pay attention to anything so give me an hour, I beg you, young people. I want to tell you the greatest news that's ever been given and if you will listen, you will be one of those young people, one of those, privileged people, that have actually heard a message that great kings in the past would have longed to have heard. They would have considered it the greatest privilege. They waited for it and waited for it, and it didn't come. So you've been given a message, if you're a child, you're not a child to me tonight, you're a person who can understand. If you're a teenager, then let's act like teenagers should act, realize that what's being put before you tonight is of extraordinary importance.

Now, we're gonna open up our Bibles and we're going to go to the book of Romans and yes, young person, you can understand these things as well as anyone by the power of the Holy Spirit, by the word of God. So please pay attention. Now I'm going to give you an overview of part of the book of Romans, okay?

Now. I want you to look at chapter 1, verse 18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." Now you say, "Brother Paul, what does that mean?" And I really, really want you to understand this: God is love, he is love unlike anything you could ever imagine. I mean, you get the greatest illustration of love you could ever find, and it will not compare with even the smallest part of how much God loves you. You see, God just doesn't make a decision to love. Are you listening? God doesn't just make a decision to

love. He just doesn't feel like loving. God actually is love. He is love. He can never stop being love. Do you understand that?

But the passage I read talks about God's wrath, God's anger and so you say to yourself, "How can God love and be love and yet the same time it says God is angry." In God's love, it's not just any kind of love, it's a good love. It's a love that always does the right thing. It's a love that delights in life. It's a love that delights in laughter. It's a love that delights in everything that is good. But you see, a love that rejoices in everything that is good is also a love that hates everything that's evil. He's so pure, he's so loving that everything that is hateful and harmful and dangerous and ugly and twisted, everything that kills and destroys, God hates it.

Do you see that? Let me give you an example. If I truly love Jewish people, I must hate the Holocaust. I must hate it. I can't be neutral about it. If I'm neutral about it, I don't love Jewish people. If I love African people of African descent, I must hate slavery. I must hate it with every fiber of my being. And if I don't hate that evil, it shows I don't love that good. Do you see that? That's how God is. God loves so much, all that is good, all that is beautiful, all that is life, that he also hates comes against judges, everything that is wicked, everything that is evil, and that's what God's talking about in this passage. So when you hear that God is sometimes angry, it's because he loves. It's because he's good. It's because he hates all that's evil and destructive and brings death. Do you see that?

Well, that's good news. Isn't it important? I mean, God is omnipotent. That means it's a big word that means he's all-powerful. There's nothing he cannot do. Aren't you very, very glad that the God who is can do anything he wants only wants to do good? You wouldn't want him to be some other way. It would be a nightmare. But he's good and that's good news, that's really good news, but you know what else? It's bad news. You say, "How can it be good news and bad news?" Well, it's good news that God is good. But the bad news is we're not. Have you disobeyed your parents? Have you lied? Have you thought more about yourself than you think about other people? Have you been selfish? You see, all those things that you've done, you say, "Well, that's not really bad." Yeah, but that's why adults have wars. That's why people kill each other. Have you ever received something that was absolutely wonderful or beautiful and then turn around and you don't even think about God? Do you see? It's good news that God is good but we're not. So what does a good God do with people like us who are selfish and sinful, who look in the mirror more than we look at Scripture? Who love ourselves more than we love others? Who lie and deceive, who make fun of other kids? We just go on and on and do all kinds of things. You see, there's the problem. God is good and God loves, but God's love is just and we're not just.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." That is you. That's me. You see now, many of you may think, "Oh, I've seen that guy on YouTube or I've, you know, my parents talk about him or this or that." But here's what you need to understand: you and I are just alike. I'm not more advanced. I'm not anything. I am a sinner. I have sinned against God's law. I have broken God's law, and because God is good, I deserve God's judgment. I deserve God to

condemn me and cast me away. That's exactly what I deserve. But here's what I want you to understand: it's also exactly what you deserve, whether you like it or not. It's what we really deserve.

Now I want us to go back in Scripture and I want us to see a big picture and you're going to be able to understand this if you will just keep looking at me and paying attention. You're going to understand some things tonight that even the adults, many adults in many churches don't understand. So please, this is so important. You know what this is? This is a matter of life and death. This is how serious it is and I want you to know that.

Now here's something, and we're not going to be able to read through all these chapters, but I want you to see something in Romans 1:18 through 32. Do you know what many really good students of the Bible believe Paul is doing? He says some really hard things about the world. Many people think that Paul, Paul was a Jew, do you remember that? He was from the nation of Israel. Paul was a Jew, and it seems like right there that what Paul is doing is he looking at the world outside of Israel, and not just the world but the most gross Barbarians, the wild men, the people who were even outside of Rome, what we call pagans, and in this section of Scripture, what he's doing is he's exposing them all as sinners. Look what he says in verse 19, "because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."

Now what is he saying? Crawling creatures, I mean, what's going on? It's like Paul is saying, okay, all that world out there, the pagan Barbarian world, even though they can see in the leaves and the trees and the beautiful designs of the mountains and the flowers and the animals, even though all of that is saying someone had to make this, they loved themselves more than God. They wanted to rule their own life, even though they were made by God. They rebelled against God. They deny his existence. All his goodness, everything. Not only do they say he's not good, not only do they say that he doesn't even exist for them, and instead of worshiping the one true God who gives us breath and makes our heart beat, who made us, who blesses us, who gives us so many good things, instead of worshiping him, you know what they did? They traded him. "We don't want this God, we want to worship men. We want to worship ourselves." But you know what? They were so twisted and so evil that they didn't stop there. Then they said, "No, we're going to worship lower animals and lower animals and lower animals." So men, because God is good and men want to sin, what do they do? Instead of worshiping the one true God, they make up their own gods. Out of their own wicked heart, gods that look like beetles and jackals, and and an eight-legged people, eight-armed people and all kinds of horrible, twisted, nightmarish stuff. And when they make their God that way, you know what they're showing? They're showing their own heart. Their heart is actually evil. They don't want the light of God. They want to walk in darkness.

Now, Paul said this about the whole pagan world and do you know what happened? Do you know what a philosopher is? Philosopher is someone who claims to study all that is good and beautiful and logical and reasonable. So when Paul looked at the pagan world and said that whole world is full of darkness, irrationality, craziness, stupidity, the philosophers heard Paul and they went, [clapping] "That's true, Paul. All those Barbarians out there, all those pagan wild men and all those tribes in Europe and all the places that are running wild and like animals, you're right, Paul, they are all sinners. They're not like us because we're educated and refined." And then Paul goes and points his finger at them, the educated ones, the refined ones, the philosophers, and he says, "Woe is you because you're just as sinful as everybody else."

And we look over here and we get to, we get there to chapter 2. He says in verse 3, "But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?" Now here's what I want you to see. You see someone doing something really bad like committing murder or hurting somebody, or kidnapping somebody, or somebody starting a war, or somebody stealing and you go, "That's a bad person. That's a bad person." But Paul would say to you, "Yes, that's a bad person but in your own heart, you do the very same thing. You lie. You think about yourself. You make fun of your little brother and sister. Everything you see those evil people doing out there, you do the same. It's just you're little and you don't have that much power but you do the same."

So when Paul is talking about all those wild tribal people in northern Europe and all these different places where my family comes from, and the philosopher's go, "Yes, we study. We're virtuous. We write beautiful poetry," Paul turns around, looks at them, and he goes, "And you're just as sinful as they are." You see, here's what you're going to find out, young people: outside of Jesus, men can write all kinds of beautiful things, songs about love and songs about all that is good, the problem is they don't do any of it. It's all hypocrisy. It's all a lie. It's a dream. So when Paul goes after the wild men, the philosopher goes, "That's right. They're wicked," and Paul turns to them and says, "And you're just as wicked."

But now let's throw in another group. When Paul says those wild men in Europe, those Barbarians, are wicked, the philosophers and the teachers applaud, but then Paul says, "No, you're just as wicked." And when he says that, then what happens? The religious people, the Jews stand up and they go, "Paul, you're right. Those wicked Barbarians, they're evil and the judgment of God should fall upon them. And those pagan philosophers that do not know God, those pagan philosophers, they're wicked too. You're right, Paul." And then Paul turns and looks at the religious people, he looks at his own people, the Jews, and he goes, "And guess what? You're just as wicked."

So let's say that you're a kid and you go to church all the time, and you're in church every day, and you're with your parents, and you're home schooled, and you do all kinds of devotions and everything else, and you see a kid maybe on TV, who's living on the street, and he's a criminal and everything else, and you go, "That man, that little boy is a sinner."

He's not like me, is he, dad?" Your dad should say, "No, he's just like you." And you're just like him. And that's what Paul did when the religious people stood up his own people, the Jews, and said, [clapping] "Paul, you're exactly right. All those people you were talking about are sinful and under the judgment of God," and Paul goes, "And so are you because even though you talk about God, even though you know God's commands, you don't do what God says. And your heart is full of anger at times, and hatred at times, and selfishness at times, and wrong desires about the wrong things."

And so Paul gets here and look at what he says in verse 17 of chapter 2. "But if you bear the name 'Jew' and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law," you who boast in the Law, "through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"

So let's say, let's apply that not just to Paul's time or Paul's people, listen, children and young people, let's apply it to you. Been raised in a Christian family. You study the Bible. You're only allowed to read good books. You watch DVD's about Christian martyrs and all kinds of things. You're in church. And you look at other people, other children and you go, "I'm not like them because I know what God's Bible says." What you need to understand is, yeah, you do but you break it, you disobey it, you disobey. It says honor your father and mother, first commandment with a promise, and many times you don't honor your father and mother and you don't obey them. Many times you're asked to do something, you disobey. Many of the times you get angry. Many time you hit your little sister and brother. Some of you teenagers, even worse, you know that although you're sitting there in church, over every other weekend, every week, every time, every prayer meeting, that your heart is actually so far from God. So far away. Yeah, you can quote even Scripture, you learned that in homeschooling, but your heart just wanders, cares to know nothing about God. Or maybe you really do want to be right and you want to do the right thing, but you find this principle in you that when you try to do good you're still not doing it.

Do you see young people, what Paul is doing here and what I want to do is something that most people say is, well, kind of strange. Do you know what I want to do? The very same thing Paul is doing. I want to condemn you all. I want all of you to see something that will make you very, very sad. I want all of you to see that you have sinned, you have broken God's law, just like me, just like your mom, just like your dad, just like all these preachers. You're guilty and because you're guilty and you're sinful and you're selfish, and you're consumed with yourself, because of all these things that you are, you're under the judgment of God.

Now you say, "Well, that's not very loving. It's not very kind of you." Let me show you a story. You know what a doctor is, right? What is a doctor supposed to do? Supposed to heal people, right? Well, you know what? One day my mom asked me to go with her to the doctor. She says, "I've got to go the doctor. He says he has news for me." My mom and I, we laughed, we had a good morning together and we were all happy. My mom was happy and we went into the doctors office and you know what the doctor did? He ruined my mother's day. He made my mom so sad, she cried. Would you think he was an evil doctor because he did that? He did do that but you know why he did it? In order to save her life. This is what he did, he said, "Mrs Washer, you have cancer and it's very, very serious." Now, what he knew was my mom was real hard-headed so I come by it naturally. My mom was real hard-headed, and my doctor knew it, and so do you know what he did? He had a stack of evidence. He knew this woman would not accept it, wouldn't like it. And so when she said, "Oh, that can't be true," he goes, "Here's the first X ray. Look, here's the evidence. Here's the next piece of evidence. Here's the next piece." And what he kept doing was putting before my mother the evidence that was ruining her day. It was making her sad. It was making her cry. He was proving to her, "You're going to die if you don't do something. If you don't listen to me, you have no chance."

Now I'm her son, I love my mother. My mother was unbelievable. I mean, when my father died, she took over, sent us all to college. She did all these things. You'd think you know. if I was a good son, I'd want to punch that doctor because he made my mom cry. But when we left and my mom walked out, I went back to the doctor and I said, "Thank you that you loved my mom enough that even though she got mad at you for telling you, you loved her enough to tell her so that she could now make a decision of whether or not she wanted to live longer."

And see, that's what Paul is doing. Paul isn't trying to hurt the pagans up there in northern Europe, he's not trying to make just the philosophers feel bad, and he's not just trying to anger his own people, the Jews. He's saying this because he loves them. He's saying, "Look, you're not what you think you are. God is good but being good, He's going to judge evil people and we are evil people. You tribal peoples up in the north of Europe, you are under the judgment of God because you have sinned. You philosophers and teachers and poets and artists, and you think you're so good, but the fact of the matter is you don't obey your own writings. You're wicked, you're evil." And then he comes to the religious people and says, "Yes, you have God's law. It's true. You've memorized it. You've read all the Bible stories about Noah and David and Adam, but you're lost. You're sinful and there's nowhere to go."

Now I want to show you something else Paul does. Let's run over to Romans 3. He knows that when he says this, people are going to get mad at him. He also knows that some of them aren't gonna believe him. They're going to go like this, "I'm not that bad. I'm not that bad. I'm a good guy. I mean, I'm just not like that, Paul. You don't know me or you can't judge me. You don't know what's in my heart." So what does Paul do? Even though he's an apostle and he speaks with the authority of Christ, Paul said, "Okay." When the Jews go, "Paul, you're wrong. I'm pretty good. God's going to accept me." Paul

goes, "Okay, let's go to the Old Testament Scriptures. Let's see what the Scriptures say." So you may be saying here right now, teenager, young person, "You know what? This is old fashioned. I don't agree with it. I'm not that bad. I'm not that sinful and I don't believe that God has any right to judge me." Okay, look at verse 10 of chapter 3, "as it is written in the Scriptures, There is none righteous, not even one." Now do you know what righteousness means? It means straight. So what does that mean? Okay, imagine that there's a standard and it's perfectly straight. To be righteous, you've got to be perfectly conformed to that standard, okay? You've got to be just like it. Who's the standard? God and God's law, God's nature and God's law is the standard. Are you perfectly conformed to God's nature and law? No, you've broken every command he's ever given in one way or another. You're not righteous.

Now look what he says, "There is none righteous, but then he adds, "no, not one," because you know what I think is going on here? If Paul goes, there's none righteous, immediately the response is going to be, "Yeah, of course, Paul. I mean, there are none righteous except me." And Paul goes, "No, there's none righteous. No, not one." Not one, young person, not one person who has obeyed the law of God. Not one, not one. You know what? You know, we're all related, did you know that? We are. We all have a common ancestor, Adam, and do you know what? He's sinned. And do you know what? We have followed him. Not only were we impacted by his sin, transformed by his sin, but we followed him willingly. All of us are family. So I'm talking to family and I want you to know, all of us have sinned. There is none righteous. No, not one. No, not one.

Young person, listen to me. Listen to me. Don't look at your sister. Don't look at your brother. Don't talk. Look at me. The Bible says that you're not right with God. You're not. You say, "Well, I've memorized Scripture." I don't care. You say, "Well, I go to church with my parents." I don't care. "I'm homeschooled." Really don't care. I don't care because you have broken God's law. And you say, "Well, don't talk to me that way." I've broken God's law. We've all broken God's law. Please see this, young person, please. You're smarter than this. Listen to me. You have all disobeyed God. He says there's none righteous, not even one. There's none who understands. There's none who seek for God.

I mean, how young person, answer me this question. Now look at me. Look at me. How many hours a day do you spend seeking God, thinking about God? I mean, putting a ball through a hoop has more importance than God to some of you, playing a video game, right? Anything. Dad comes in, says, "We're gonna have family devotions." "Aw, dad." You may not say it, but it's in your heart. Do you see? How much time, look at me, answer the question: how much time do you spend talking to God, reading God's word, praying to God, talking to your friends? When was the last time, young person, you got in an in-depth two hour long conversation about God? But you say, "Well, that's a little bit much, isn't it?" You have to get that long a conversation about, oh, one of these games. Or football. Or soccer. Or hunting. Or whatever thing you do. How much time, young person, have you actually sought God?

And he goes, "They've all turned aside. Together they have become useless." Let me ask you a question, young person: if I gave each one of you a piece of paper right now and a

pencil and I said, "Write down on a list how God is using you. How are you surrendering your life right now to do God's will?" You would go, "What? I don't even know what you're talking about. I mean, I'm just a kid." Well, you want everyone to treat you like an adult, I'm going to treat you like an adult. Are you are you useless to God? Do you serve God? Do you?

And so then look what he says, "There is none who does good. There is not even one." And he goes further and he says some some terrible things. "Their throat is an open grave. With their tongues they keep deceiving." Every time you lie, it's like there's a dead person in your mouth. "The poison of asps under their lips." Let's put that in Texas vernacular: the poison of a diamondback rattlesnake is under their lips. "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." You say, "Well, I don't curse." No, but you've been so mad sometimes that if someone wrote it all out of paper you'd sign it. "Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their path. The path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes." You know, ever since I've been a child, which long time ago, there have been wars. If there is one day without shooting, it's only because everybody is loading their gun. We're a warring people. We're a bloody people. As you grow up, you're going to see that. I don't want you to see all the violence that's out there, but this is humanity. This is humanity.

And look what he says, "There is none good." When I'm out on the street and I'm telling people about Jesus, you know what's one of the first things they all tell me? I mean, it's one of the first things that comes out of peoples mouth. "I'm good." If you died right now, sir, where would you go? "I'd go to heaven." Why? "I'm good." Okay, you may be good in the eyes of some men, I mean, maybe you're better than Hitler, but in the eyes of God, there's none good. There is none good. I don't care if you're 13 years old, homeschooled, never watched a television program, have pink bows in your hair, and just read "Little House on the Prairie" books, you are not good. Your heart is not.

If I could take out, okay, teenagers, listen to me, if I could take out your heart, teenager, and I could put your heart on a DVD and give it to the media people back there, and you knew that the flick of a switch, I was going show everybody in this room every thought you've ever thought, and every deed you've ever done in perfect, you would jump out of your seat and run towards me and do anything to keep me from pressing that button because you have thought things and done things so shameful you couldn't share it with your best friend. And you know I'm telling you the truth, teenager. Don't kid yourself. You know, there's evil there. You would do anything to stop me. How do I know? Because I'm a prophet? No, because of the Bible, and because it's the same thing for all of us.

So if you would be ashamed for all of your thoughts to be revealed before people who are just like you, how ashamed will you be one day when you stand before a holy God and all your thoughts and deeds and words and attitudes and everything are put there before him and before all that is holy in heaven? You see, young people, listen to me. This is real. This is serious. That's why I'm not using big words or anything else. I want you to see this is real. God is love and God is good and because of that you should rejoice, but

again, because of that, you should be afraid because we're not good. One of the greatest problems in all the Bible is the goodness of God, because then we have to answer the question: what does a good God do with people like you who are not good, and people like me who are not good? What does he do? And there is the greatest problem.

But before we get there, I want you to look at something. Look at verse 19 of chapter 3. "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God." Do you know the 10 Commandments? Young person, don't make me come down there. Do you know, have you, like, looked at the 10 Commandments? A lot of people think, "Okay, I know the 10 Commandments and I try to keep them, and because of that, I think I'm going to get to heaven." The 10 Commandments were never given by God that we would make it to heaven through keeping them. Not because they're not good, they're good, they're holy. The problem is not the 10 Commandments, the problem is none of us have kept them. Some way or another, every one of us in this room have literally disobeyed every one of the commands. Every one of them.

So Paul says, what does the law do? You cannot save yourself. You cannot make yourself right with God by trying to keep some rules, by being homeschooled, by going to church all the time, by even praying prayers. You can't because you have already broken God's law. You've broken God's law. It's not like they broke the law of some little mayor of a small town in Texas, you have broken the law of the Lord of the universe who deserves all obedience. He deserves your obedience. He deserves your worship. He deserves your thanksgiving. He is so good. He has been so kind to you. But you and I, we have broken his law.

Do you know why sin is so bad? It's not just because, well, we hurt other people or we hurt ourselves. Sin is so bad because God is so good. You're sinning against a God who never gave you a reason to sin against him because he's done nothing but good for you. Do you see that? Oh, young people, pray that the Holy Spirit will show, parents, pray that the Holy Spirit will show teenagers and young people this truth.

And so, Paul says everything he's done has one purpose, to condemn you. Do you know what condemn means because if I use that word and you don't understand it, it really doesn't matter? Alright, let me give you an idea of what condemn means. You stand before a judge and he points out absolutely every crime you've committed, every sin you have broken, every word that was evil, every disposition or thought in your heart, every time you, you know, threw a John Deere tractor at your sister, everything that you did. And he goes because of that, and they take you, they open up the jail cell and they throw you in. You're condemned. You are guilty. You can't say anything. You can't defend yourself. You're guilty. You actually did it. You did exactly what the judge said you did. And you have to admit, "Not only did I do it, but I deserve this punishment." That's condemned. Shut away from God throughout all of eternity, shut away from life throughout all of eternity. Shut away from all the joys of life and God throughout eternity.

Now why has Paul done all this? For the same reason, the doctor did what he did with my mom. You see, my doctor loved my mom, and so the doctor said, "I'm gonna show her that she's in danger so that she will realize she's in danger, so that she will take the only medicine that can save her." Why does Paul sit there and go, "You're a sinner, you're a sinner, you're a sinner, you're a sinner, you're condemned, you're condemned, you've broken God's law, you've broken God's law, you disobeyed"? It's not because he wants you just to feel horrible, sit in a corner and await judgment. He's telling you that so that you'll run to the Savior, so that you'll run to the God who loves you Jesus Christ.

It's like this. Let me give you an illustration. See, I've got two different groups here, so let me, this looks a little wider over here. So this is what Paul is doing. Young people, now watch this. Here's you, okay? And you hear that you're a sinner and you're like, "Okay, yeah, I'm sort of a sinner, but I'm pretty good." And so you go, "I can escape this condemnation. I'll just go this way." And soon as you take a step, Paul goes, boom, and puts iron bars here and goes, "No, you're not good." And then you go, "Well, yeah, I'm good." So you turn this way. Boom. Another set of bars. And then you go, "But I'm not that bad." Boom. Another set of bars. Now you go, "Well, I'll escape out the back." Boom. Another set of bars. And now you're encaged because every one of these walls is telling you, "Yes, you have sinned," and you go, "Well, I'll go under." You start digging, but you find out you can't get out that way because the bars go deep. You're condemned. You can't go this way. You can't go this way. You can't go back. You can't go forward. What way can you go? Where is the one place where there's no bars? Up. Up to do what? "O God, I am a sinner. I can't save myself through these good works. I can't save myself through this. I can't save myself through this. I'm entrapped in my sin. I can't go around, I can't go under, but O God, now finally I'm looking up. I'm looking up, O God. Please have mercy on me. Please save me. O God. I have read in the Bible that You are a loving God, a merciful God, a compassionate God, a God who is willing to forgive, that takes no joy in the death of sinners like me. So now I look up to You, God. Save me."

Do you see? I have been in the ministry for 3 1/2 decades, I have been in jungles, I have been in deserts, I have practically frozen to death, there are so many things, guns to my head, you name it, done so many things, young people. I'm so tired. And you say, "Why are you going to heaven, Brother Paul?" One reason and it has nothing to do with jungles or deserts or good works or orphanages or anything else, if I die right now, I'm going to heaven for one reason: Jesus Christ died for this sinner. That's it. I have no other boast, young person. You see, young person, what I want you to see is I want you to see that you can't save yourself this way or this way or this way or backwards. You cannot do it but this way. "God, I'm a sinner. I cannot save myself. Save me."

And you say, "Oh, wonderful." No, we've got another problem. We've got another problem. Now if you'll listen to me on this one, you're going to understand some things, okay? If you'll just listen to me and grasp it, I'm going to teach you something that even most of the evangelicals don't understand. Now listen to me. Here's the really big problem. I've talked a lot about a lot of problems, haven't I, young people? Here's the really big problem. Are you ready? Let's say that a man breaks into my house and kills

my family, kills my family, or let's say a man breaks into your house and kills your family, and he's got blood on his hands. I mean, you caught him red-handed. He's guilty. He's guilty. Just like you're guilty, I'm guilty, he's guilty. And you capture him and you tie him up and you call the police, and the police come and they put him in a jail. But then he has to stand before the judge, right? Now, there's no doubt this man has destroyed your family. All the evidence points to that. So one day you're in the courtroom with the people from your town and your friends, and they're all there to see justice being done. This man killed somebody. And the judge comes out and this is what he does. He looks at the man who killed your family and he says this, "I am compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness." And he looks at the man who killed your family and says, "You're free to go." What are you going to say? Are you going to say, "Oh, that was beautiful"? Are you going to say, "Oh, what a demonstration of mercy"? No, that's not what you're going to say. You know what you're going to say? "That judge is more corrupt than the man who killed my family. That judge is wicked. That judge should do righteousness. That man has committed a crime. He has killed my entire family. A judge is supposed to make just decisions. That man should be condemned." And you're going to look at that judge not as a wonderful, forgiving man, you're going to look at him as a corrupt politician maybe, a corrupt judge, a wicked man, because he didn't do justice. Justice demands that this man be punished for his crimes.

Well, that presents a problem, doesn't it, young people? You've committed crimes against God. If God just forgives you, you're forgiven, then God's not just. He's not good. And do you want to know something? That's what the Bible is all about. From the very beginning that's what the whole Bible is about. Did you know that? Some of the older people didn't even know that. There is a great problem in the Bible that seems incapable of being solved until we get to Jesus,, and that is since God is just, he cannot forgive wicked men. He must punish them. God is a righteous judge and he's going to punish the wicked. So how can he just let, how can he give Adam a promise of salvation? How can he save Noah? You paint all those pictures of Noah in his ark but Noah was a sinner. He should have died in the flood with everyone else. Abraham is called a friend of God but Abraham sinned against his wife and God and put his own wife in jeopardy and lied to the king. Abraham deserved to die. Israel deserved to die in the desert when it came out of Egypt. Do you see that? David should have died. If God is just, why did God allow all these sinful people to just go on? You see, here's the problem: God does love you but if he forgives you, just okay, it's gone, do you know what he's like? Have you ever heard this statement? The corrupt judge swept the crime under the rug. You see. He didn't do justice. So how can God forgive you? You have sinned, how can he forgive you because God's own justice demands that you die, but God's love is saying, "I want to save." How can the problem be solved? The answer is in Christ and the gospel. Listen to me, young person, just listen so carefully here. Jesus Christ is everything. You see all these preachers up here? Failures. Including myself, failure. Everybody is a failure. There's only one who didn't fail. Our father, Adam, failed. We failed. Everyone failed. There's only one hero in this story, and it's not the preacher. It's not the speaker. There's only one hero in this story and it's Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Here's what God did, God in his judgment. So let's go back to the judge. Remember the judge? So think about this. Let's say the judge is just. The criminal comes in the courtroom and the judge goes, "You have committed murder and you must die. Justice demands you die. Life for a life, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. You must die." But then the judge comes down from the bench, takes off his robe, trades places with the sinner and dies in the sinner's place. Now that doesn't work out too well in the illustration with men, but with God it does. Here's what God has done. God doesn't play, okay? God looks at you and says, "You have violated every law I have ever given. You have broken every command. You have disdained Me, disobeyed Me, given My worship to others, even to yourself. You are guilty. Guilty. Guilty." And God's own justice demands that you die, but then God himself, in his love, becomes a man. He lives the perfect life that you did not live and then on the cross all your sin is placed upon him, and then all the punishment, all the wrath of God, all the holy anger of God against evil that should fall on you falls on the substitute. The one standing in your place. Jesus Christ. He lived the life you couldn't live. He bore your sin. And then all the judgment that God's justice demanded be poured out on you, he absorbed it. He took it in.

Do you remember when Jesus was on the cross? What was the last thing he said? "It is finished." Right before, "It is finished. It is finished." What did he mean? "I've paid in full. I've paid it all." You and I have committed crimes against God and we're in debt to God, and that debt is death. Jesus went to the cross, he bore our sin, he was crushed under the fierce judgment of God because God is love and hates evil, he was crushed under all the judgment that should fall upon you and me, and when it was finished, Jesus goes, "It's finished. I've paid in full." Do you know why I'm going to heaven? Because I believe in Jesus. But you know how it works. Jesus lived the perfect life I couldn't live, and he lived it as my substitute. He lived it for me. Isn't that amazing? He not only died for me, he lived for me. So he lived this perfect life as a man for me, and then he went to a tree for me, and he took, like taking off of me, all my sin and it was placed on him, and then all the judgment of God that should have fallen on me now falls on him. And when he suffered, everything that needed to be suffered, he cried out, "It is it is finished. I've paid in full for Paul." And for every one of his people he paid in full. And here's the amazing thing, the most amazing thing is that I am forgiven of all my sin because Jesus died under the penalties of my sin. But not only that, the moment I believe, I'm pardoned of all my sin. But not only that, the moment I believe, that perfect life that Jesus lived, I'm clothed in it. I had two problems. Do you know what those problems were? 1. I couldn't live a life that was acceptable to God, but the other problem is because I couldn't live a life that was acceptable to God, I was under the penalties of the law which demanded my death. Jesus took care of both problems. He died under the penalties of the law for me but he also lived for me. So now I'm free from the penalty because he paid the price but now I'm also clothed in his perfect life so I'm righteous before God.

Do you see what I have? Do you know what is so remarkably sad about tonight? Some of you one day may be preachers and only then will you understand why I'm sad. I've sat here, I've prayed about it and I've tried to share the gospel with you but I've failed. You see, this Jesus is so wonderful, God's love is so wonderful, what Jesus did is so wonderful that any time a preacher tries to explain it, he just walks off the platform with his head

down because he knows he failed. Young people, there's no way I can show you how wonderful God is, the price that he paid for you, how much he loves you, what Christ did.

I'll never forget. I knew a guy many years ago. He was a very wicked young man. One day someone told him about Jesus and he just seemed to be swallowed up in the love of God. His heart was so hard, but he couldn't get over one thing, knowing how bad he was, how wicked, so wicked, to know that God loved him so much that he sent his Son to die for him. He couldn't get it out of his head. It was almost like being a prisoner to the love of God. And one day he went out on campus and started handing out tracts. So happy. And everyone made fun of him. And then friends came and they got him and they pulled him aside and said, "People think you're an idiot. What are you doing?" Do you know what the young man said over and over? "He died for me." He said, "You know me. You know what I am. You know how sinful, how evil I've been. He died for me."

You see, young person, here's what I want. I don't want your life to be controlled by just trying to be good or respectable or religious. I want you to see what Jesus Christ did for you on Calvary and that your heart would literally be filled with the love of Christ, and that it would control you. You would say, "I believe in Him. I want to serve Him. But because I love Him and I love Him because He loved me first when I didn't love Him." You see, young person, that's what it's about. Everything God has ever done making the world, everything is about his Son. Think about it. Then on the end of your life, you realize you wasted everything. The one reason to be alive was to know Christ and his salvation and to spend eternity knowing him and loving him, being transformed by him. If I died right now, I would go to heaven. If tonight one of you trust in Christ as your Savior, do you know what we have in common? I mean, you're young. You haven't preached. You haven't been followed through the jungle by terrorists. You haven't done all these things. You haven't started an orphanage. You haven't started a church. But if you trusted in Christ tonight, you know what you and I would have in common? We're going to heaven for the exact same reason.

An old hymn writer said one time, "Nothing in my hands do I bring, simply to the cross I cling." I have no goodness, no righteousness of my own. You have no goodness, no righteousness of your own. I cannot save myself. You cannot save yourself. You cannot save yourself but Christ did it all, young person. Christ did it all. And when we trust in him, we are forgiven of all our sins, past, present and future and then we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ so that when God looks at us, all he sees is perfection. Legally. Perfect position before him. We will never even not one drop of his anger, even if God has to discipline us as he's disciplined me at times, it's not because of anger, it's because of love. To be swallowed up in the love of God when you should be swallowed up in the judgment of God is an amazing thing. And then to serve him. Oh, young people, let me tell you something: he can do things with your life that you could never even imagine. He is so wonderful that I just want to fall down and apologize and apologize and apologize for all my dull, stupid words. I can't explain to you, and that's why the preacher's heart breaks. He's so wonderful and I want you to see it. Please, that God would allow you to see how beautiful Christ is and to love him and to rejoice in him and to be safe in him.

If any of you young people with your parents would like to talk or anything afterwards, I have no place to go until tomorrow sometime. But please, young people, please, to me you're so beautiful, you're so precious, but you need to understand, you must be saved. And teenager, some of you teenagers who know Christ, really, did he save you so that you could just spend all your time on things that are so frivolous? There's nothing wrong with diversion, with some entertainment, with doing different things. I love all kinds of crazy things. But teenager, if you confess Christ as your Savior and you're sure you know him, how are you living your life? And look, don't do this, don't look up here, don't think there's nothing special here. Nothing. If you lived with me for awhile, you'd be praying for me. There's no great men, there's no... all that is silly and people pretending, okay? Somebody needs to stick some preacher sometime and let all the air out of him. We're just people who've been saved. When I go to heaven, what will be my title? Saved. Just saved. "What are you?" I'm saved. "How did you get here?" I'm saved. "Where are you going?" I don't know, but I'm saved.

And then here's the thing: one day he's going to change the whole world, one day we'll see him as he is. And no, it will not be for 24 hours 7 day a week church service when he does that, you teenagers, I want you to know that. That's not what's going to happen, okay? It's going to be life. It's going to be life and it's going to be wild. That's the part I like. You know why it can be wild? Because it will also be holy. Some people, they say, "I can't wait to go to heaven. I'm just going to sit there in church or wherever, you know, in the chapel or wherever in heaven and I'm just going to sit there." And I'll go, "You don't do that now, why are you talking that way? You just trying to sound spiritual?" No, you're going to live. You're going to become everything you were meant to be. I want to run. I want to laugh. I want to desire more than I've ever desired but holy. I want to see beauty. I want to jump and run and swim. I want to do everything. I want to live. That's what it's about and every thought, every step, every breath unto his glory and there will be no competition whatsoever. So the runner will run and not have to worry, "Do I love running more than Christ? No, I love Christ and that's why I run."

Don't think that just some enclosed, I don't know, heaven is some Sunday morning service. No, heaven, there is so much beauty there and joy that if you were not supernaturally strengthened and you caught one glimpse of the glory and joy and beauty and life that was there, it would explode your mind and leave you insane. Have you ever heard someone say, "I saw a sunset this morning and it took my breath away"? Have you ever heard that? What do they say? "My heart almost stopped." Why? "It was so beautiful." You will have to be transformed to enter into glory because the beauty would break you into a million pieces, the joy would drown you.

Now that's something worth living for and dying for and you say, "Why is it that way? Is it because gates of pearl and streets of gold? Come on, like, you can only walk on streets of gold so long and it gets boring. What are you going to do, swing on gates of pearl for, like, eternity?" No, it's just that the beauty of Christ, the power of Christ, the life of Christ is so eternal, so infinite, so ongoing that you will go through eternity after eternity trying to chase down the glory of God and you'll never get to the end of it. And with each step

you become more and more full, more and more able to experience joy, not static but dynamically being changed and changed from glory to glory to glory, chasing after him. You say, "Well, what happens when we catch Him?" You won't catch him. He's infinite. He's infinite. Infinite. Oh, young person, young person, please, please, please listen. Christ is everything and he always should be.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You. O God, I am so sorry, so much said, so inadequate, every word, every thought, every emotion so pale and useless in comparison to your beauty, O God. Please bless these children. Please bless these children. Please, Lord God, these children, these teenagers, these young adults, please, dear God, convert their hearts. Save them. Regenerate them. Show them Christ. Show them Christ's beauty. O God, why do we preach? We do we preach words, words, so many words? O God, please, please get glory for Yourself by answering so many prayers of parents. Save people, O God. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Believe on Christ. Believe on Christ, young person. Believe. Rest upon him. Throw yourself upon him. Trust in him. He is a wonderful Savior. A wonderful Savior.