

Let Go of Your Sin or Perish

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Mark's gospel. I am going to bring you part two of a message I started last week on repentance and faith. Mark chapter one verse 14 and 15. What I want to talk about this morning is real, how to convince men this is real. That is the issue. It is real, but to convince men of such. May God convince men that this is real.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."¹

On Thursday mornings I meet together with James. As a church we have kind of tried to separate him from what I might call secular labor if there is such a thing so that he can give himself more entirely to ministry. And so I meet with him on Thursday mornings to talk about what is happening in his life and what is going on in his ministry.

We meet over at the Tripoint building, an old—what is it—old Albertson's something there? It is the Saint Mary's exit. The YMCA is in there right now.

Anyway, he and I meet there this last Thursday. We sat down. Well, that building is owned by Trinity Baptist Church. And so it is not surprising that they call their little coffee shop church there Grace something.

They have a sitting room there. We go in there. We sit down and they have a stack of papers on the coffee table there in front of us, kind of like this. You know, probably as many pages as my notes stapled together. There is a stack of these things sitting there.

And so, I mean, I have curiosity. What are they trying to advertise here? So I pick it up and it is a lesson put together by a pastor on studying the Bible.

So I thought, "Well, this is interesting. Let's see what this is all about."

And so it is like the first paragraph, if I remember right. And I looked through it all, but that first paragraph was on why you want to study the Bible. And guess what the

¹ Mark 1:14-15.

conclusion of the whole matter was? Basically this pastor was saying that the reason you want to study the Bible is because when you study the Bible [?].

I thought, “Well, that is interesting.”

And I thought, “I wonder. It wouldn’t surprise me at all since this guy is talking success right off.” I thought, “I wonder if I am going to find the word ‘sin’ anywhere in this.” And, no. I went through all the pages and there was no sin. But what was interesting is I came across that theme of success more than once. And basically you want to study your Bible, in this pastor’s opinion, so that you might figure out how to be successful.

Isn’t it interesting? Isn’t it interesting when Christ comes on the scene and he begins preaching in Galilee, he isn’t interested in success. His message is about a kingdom.

Now do you see that there? You know, I don’t think we often realize how often that term kingdom is used in the four gospels. It is used a lot. Jesus Christ came proclaiming a kingdom. His message is about a kingdom, the kingdom of God. And the thing about this kingdom that Jesus wants us to know is that it is at hand.

About 15 times in the gospels do you know what we find? There is a kingdom. This is the kingdom of God. This kingdom is at hand. And you need to enter it.

Listen to just a few verses.

“Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”²

Matthew 7:21. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”³

Mark 9:47. “If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.”⁴

And if there is any confusion here, folks, kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God are used interchangeably. Kingdom of heaven is used solely in Matthew’s gospel because Matthew’s gospel was definitely written with a target audience of the Jews. They didn’t like to use the name heaven. They substituted heaven. It is the same kingdom, folks. You have got to enter it.

Mark 10:15. “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”⁵

² Matthew 5:20.

³ Matthew 7:21.

⁴ Mark 9:47.

⁵ Mark 10:15.

“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”⁶

John 3:5. “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”⁷

Make no mistake about it.

Look. Jesus Christ came saying there is a kingdom. The kingdom is at hand. And you must enter. The way you enter... look. Make no mistake about this. Jesus Christ didn't come on the scene, say, after John was arrested Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. Here is the good news, folks. He is saying the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel. The gospel. Repent gospel.

What is he saying to us? He is saying, “Look, here is the kingdom. It is at hand. It has come.”

Why is he calling us to repent and believe? Because, folks, it is a kingdom that must be entered and it is by repentance and faith that you enter. That is why he is telling us that. That is why that is given to us.

And if you didn't notice, let me emphasize once again Mark 9:47. Listen to this.

“If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell.”⁸

Do you know what Jesus is saying? There is a kingdom. The kingdom is at hand. The kingdom must be entered. And it is in your greatest interest to get rid of, to give up, no matter what it costs you, no matter what must be cut off, it is better to enter the kingdom of God losing whatever you have to lose to get in, rather than keeping what you ought to lose and going to hell for it.

This is graphic, tearing out an eye. Look, have you never heard this verse? Matthew 11:12.

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.”⁹

You have got a kingdom. It is the kingdom of God. It is in your midst. It must be entered. You enter it by repentance and faith. It is the violent who enter it.

Now I will tell you this. You put those two realities together and you begin to realize something. If the way you enter is by repentance and faith and if it takes violence to get

⁶ Mark 10:23.

⁷ John 3:5.

⁸ Mark 9:47.

⁹ Matthew 11:12.

it, it might lead us to believe that repentance and faith is a violent thing. Right? That is the way in. And you go in by violence.

Listen to these verses.

“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”¹⁰

Folks, there is a holy violence.

Luke 16:16. “The good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces [or presses] his way into it.”¹¹

Here is the thing. We have got to keep stacking these things up. There is a kingdom. The kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is in your midst. The kingdom of God must be entered. The kingdom of God is entered by force. It is entered by violence. It is entered by repentance and faith. And the doorway is narrow to this kingdom and those who go through it press in and many who strive to enter in thereat will not be able.

Folks, that ought to scare some of you. If some who seek to enter in will not be able, where does that put some of you who aren't even seeking to enter in?

But the fact is.... Now, you need to catch this. The fact is there is a way in. Now, listen to me. The kingdom of God is here in our midst. You must enter it. The only way to enter it, repentance and faith in the gospel. Gospel means good news. The good news is that after all the wicked things I have done and all the wicked things you have done, God has provided a way for us to get into his kingdom, graciously provided a way for sinners to get into his kingdom.

But after what I have said so far, maybe you are thinking, “With all that force, with all that violence, with all that tearing out of eyes, it doesn't sound like good news.”

But let's ask the question. Here is the question that I want to ask right now. Why is repentance and faith so hard? Why is there so much violence involved? Why are there so many people seeking to enter in who won't be able to? Why?

Now listen very carefully. I am going to tell you another verse. This verse comes from the very end of the Bible and listen very closely. As the Bible is finished up and the last book of the New Testament is coming to completion and the last thing the Lord Jesus Christ wants to leave with this world is this.

“Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”¹²

¹⁰ Luke 13:24.

¹¹ Luke 16:16.

¹² Revelation 22:17.

Let me tell you something. Is the door into heaven, the kingdom of God, is it narrow? Yes, it is narrow. It is very narrow. But I will tell you this. It is wide enough and broad enough and open enough for every single person who desires to go through it to go through it, guaranteed, folks. Every one, if you are thirsty, go through and drink. God hasn't shut the door to you being saved. Just the opposite. He throws it wide open for all who are thirsty.

He says, "If you have a desire to come in, come in."

Well, here is the thing. Does he say that? He says come in. If it is so easy don't you wonder about this? If it is so easy why does it sound so hard? Right? If it is so easy, here is a door. We are beckoned to go through. Kingdom of God, in our midst. All who desire can go right through. So easy. And yet it sounds so hard.

Here is the thing. The door of the kingdom of God is like a monkey trap.

Now I know some of you have heard about this. Listen to me. This monkey trap deal that I am going to tell you about, it is no urban legend. This thing is real. This thing is real and monkeys are really like this.

Now listen. Trappers, you know, obviously if you want to kill a monkey if you want to eat the monkey you don't have to be concerned about preserving the monkey. You just stick and arrow through it and put it on your plate. But for those who want to capture monkeys for zoos and that type of thing where they want the monkey unharmed, they have a way of trapping them.

Well, how?

Well, basically they take a gourd or a coconut or a bottle. Let's use the bottle in the illustration. It is a good one. They basically get a bottle that has an opening in it that a monkey can get his hand in. And they put nuts inside, delicious nuts, just the kind the monkeys love to eat.

Well, what happens?

The monkey puts his hand through the neck of the bottle where he can fit and he reaches in there and he grabs hold of one of the nuts.

Well, there is a problem now. Now that the nut is in the hand, his closed fist, it is too big to come out of the neck of the bottle.

Now you would think, "Ok, monkey drops the nut, monkey goes free."

That is exactly right. But guess what they have found? The monkey will never drop the nut. And so even when the trapper comes, the monkey sees him and he is just going crazy trying to get away. He still won't drop the nut.

Trapper has got him. In the bag he goes.

Now, you know what? I tell you again. This is no urban legend. This is how they trap... I read about it on the internet. I have never seen it done, but I take it on good account that this actually happens.

The door way to the kingdom of God is just the same. It is big enough for you to get through if you tear out those eyes and drop those nuts of repentance that Christ calls you to drop. That is the whole point. If you don't tear out the eye, you don't fit through. If you don't drop the nut, you don't go through.

“So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”¹³ Luke 14:33.

It is big enough for you to get through if you dump the stuff. But if there is even one thing in your life that you are not willing to get rid of, one idol in your life you won't give up, you can't go through.

Idols and sin are too big to go through that door. You are willing or you are called to go. You are asked to go. You are bid to go. You are pleaded with to go. You are commanded to go. You are commanded to repent and believe. You are commanded to go through that door. In some places God pleads with the sinner to go through that door. In some places God pleads through his servant to you to go through that door. He bids you. He does it in commandment. He does it in some of the most affectionate terminology imaginable.

He says he actually comes down to the level of the sinner and he says, “Come, let us reason together.” I mean he is... he will even reason with sinners. He bids us come. He has provided a way in.

The problem is, look, folks. God hasn't shut the door on anybody. The thing is there is a nut that most people have.

And do you know what the thing is? The thing is most people will give up many things to have heaven. But they won't give up everything. They have that one or two special nuts. And they won't give it up. They will not let go. And even if they hear that there is danger. Even if they hear that there is such a thing as hell. Just like the monkeys when they see the trappers coming. I mean there is the danger right in their face. This guy is going to take me away. He is going to throw me in a place that I don't want to be.

And even when the sinner sees God is going to come for me and he is going to throw me

¹³ Luke 14:33.

in a place I don't want to be, even when they see the danger they won't let go. Why won't they let go? That is the thing. Why will the sinner not let go?

Because as we find in Hebrews—what is it?—Hebrews 3:13, “the deceitfulness of sin.”¹⁴

Do you know what, folks? When you really boil it down do you know why people won't repent? Because they don't believe. That is the issue. They don't really believe.

You see, to believe a lie is to be an unbeliever. Sin is deceitful. Basically every sinner that will not enter, why do you have all these crowd of people that are seeking to get in and they can't get in? I will tell you why, because they have got the nut in hand.

They will come around and they will say, “I am trying to be saved. I am calling upon God to be saved.”

Let me see your hand. Yup, that is what I thought. You can't get your hand out because they have got the nut in there. And they will come around and they will be in tears and now, you know, I am calling upon the Lord and he won't save me and I am doing this and I am doing this and I am doing that and I am coming to Church and he won't save me.

Do you know why? That is a nut in the hand. Monkey lets go of the nut, he is out right now.

Do you know what? Nineteen years ago I had certain sins in my life I did not want to get rid of and I knew God showed me you are going to hell for those sins. And I knew I deserved it and I sought and the danger stared me in the face. But there were certain sins I did not want to get rid of.

And I will tell you this, that very night on the Fourth of July in 1990 when I opened my hand, bang, like that. I was saved, that fast. But that is the way it is. That is the case. That is how it is.

Most men are like monkeys. They have sin clutched in their hearts and they would readily fit through that entrance into the kingdom of God if they would but let go.

That is the truth.

Folks, let me tell you this again. Jesus Christ says this. The way is open. If you desire, walk through. And I will tell you this. Those who will walk out of here today not saved, they are not saved because although they may desire to be saved from hell... nobody likes the idea of the lake of fire. Folks, I realize nobody in this room wants that. That is not the issue. The issue comes down. Do you desire to go through that door?

We can weigh your desire if you are willing to let it all go. Sin is deceitful. It lies to us.

¹⁴ Hebrews 3:13.

Do you know what it tells us? Because this is where I was. This is where I was 19 years ago. What the sin tells you, you can't live without me. You won't be happy without me. Your life won't be complete without me. You won't have fun anymore without me. You won't know pleasure anymore without me.

I mean, it sounds absolutely insane that a man would hold on to his sin like that stupid monkey and allow himself to be cast away even after so many seek. They are looking for a way in. They come face to face with the doorway and they try to get through, but they can't because they are holding on. And as much as they try to get through, the hand is stuck in there. They let go. But they are deceived. And some of you in this place right now you are in that place. There is that sin. There is that idol. There is that thing that you know Christ demands you to give up and you don't want to give it up.

Until now you have been frustrated. You have been confused. You have been looking here, looking there.

And I will tell you what. There are many churches out there that you can go to and they will tell you you can go to heaven and you can take all that baggage and all that sin and all the idols with you. And I will tell you what. It attracts the multitudes and they can seek to get in and they can try to get it, but what is the story?

“Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord.’”¹⁵

They are very religious and they went to the churches and everything, but they didn't do the will of the Father. And what is the will of the Father? The will of the Father is you let go of it all. But they didn't do it. They tried to hold on. And he calls them workers of lawlessness.

What is the case? These are people who are trying to get in, but they couldn't get in because they were workers of lawlessness and they would not give their lawlessness up for the sake of the will of the Father. They wouldn't do it. And they held on and the... they lost it.

God is bidding men, “Come.” He welcomes them to come. But men are deceived by the sin., persuaded, not letting...

You know, that is really the issue. They have got the nut in the hand, whatever it is, sexual lust, it is their pride. It is their boyfriend, their girlfriend, their whatever. You can...

What goes on in the mind is that is too great a sacrifice. I can't give it up. I am not ready to give it. Maybe tomorrow I will, but it is too great a sacrifice.

God bids us go through.

¹⁵ Matthew 7:22.

Let me tell you this. Jesus told this parable. The kingdom of heaven is like the treasure hidden in a field which a man found, covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Do you have it? The kingdom of heaven, that is what we have been talking about this whole time. It is like this. Men only sell all and let go of all the nuts and all the sins. They only quit being like stupid monkeys when they actually look through that narrow way and they see on the other side something a whole lot more desirable than what they are holding in their hand. I tell you this. If you could convince that monkey that something else was to be had more than that nut he is holding, he will let go of it.

And, you see, that is really what has to happen to the sinner. When a man will joyfully... see, there is the catch. You have a lot of people who really, they try to gird it up. Ok, I will get rid of that.

But when it is a joy to get rid of it because of you have seen something in this kingdom, something in the king of that kingdom that lures your heart and draws you, when you can joyfully let that thing go, folks, being convinced of such a thing, that kind of faith is the saving faith. You see that. It takes that kind of saving faith, that kind of convincing for men to let go, for men to repent, for men to drop it all off.

Listen to me. Do you know what most people believe when they say, "Well, I believe in the Lord"? Do you know what most people mean by that? Do you know what most people mean when they say, "I believe in God"? They mean that they believe God is real. When they say, "I believe in Jesus," they mean, "I believe that there was a true historical figure that lived 2000 years ago. He was a real man."

Yeah, but the demons believe that and everybody in hell believes that.

Look, no matter what kind of Atheist you are, you get thrown into hell, you know why you are there. You suddenly come face to face with the reality of Jesus Christ and who he is. The damned in hell know that. That is not a saving faith. I will tell you what a saving faith is. A saving faith is that faith that convinces you that what is to be had in Christ outweighs all the sin and all the nuts. A man will let go of the nuts when for the joy of having Christ and having his kingdom it is not a burden to let them go

And that is what you find in this thing. That is what you find in this parable. In his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Now, listen to me. Peter says this. This is the New King James rendering of 1 Peter 2:7.

"To you who believe, He is precious."¹⁶

Now think about that.

¹⁶ 1 Peter 2:7.

“To you who believe...”¹⁷ Do you see that word there?

The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe.

What do I need to believe?

Well, certainly need to believe true historical facts about Jesus Christ, but more than that, to those who believe, he is precious. What they believe is, yes, he died on a cross, yes, he was the God man, yes, they believe that his atonement sufficient to save them from their sin, but more than that. They believe he is precious. They believe what he did is precious for them. They believe that he is precious in and of himself. They believe that he is worthy.

To those who believe, he is precious.

I will tell you what. You can go around to people. They can tell you, “I believe, I believe.”

The thing I really want to get to: Is Christ the most precious thing to you more than anything else?

You have got these people who are nearer the kingdom of heaven. They are trying to press through, but they can't get through. I tell you why they don't get readily through. It is because they don't really believe that Jesus Christ is the most precious object in this world. That is the bottom line. Those who believe, he is precious. True belief, saving belief is the belief that Jesus Christ is all beautiful, all worthy, all glorious.

1 Peter 1:8. Listen to this.

“Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.”¹⁸

Do you see that, again?

Your belief in him is a thing surrounded by inexpressible joy and glory. When a person comes to the faith, I mean, true faith where they look at Christ and they are filled with inexpressible joy and glory, look, every one of you in this room, you make decisions in your life based on what you desire. Your desires are driven by what you believe is going to make you happy. Every one of you in this room wants to be happy. There is none of you that wants to be sad. None of you want to be filled with sorrow. None of you want to be filled with grieving. None of you want to be filled with pain and suffering, not a one of you.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 1 Peter 1:8.

You all want joy. You all want happiness.

Do you know what Peter tells us? You believe in him. You haven't seen him. See, when a person comes to the place where they believe in an unseen Christ, they don't see him, but they become convinced on the inside with the joy that is inexpressible and full of glory, I will tell you this. When your joy is piqued more for Christ than anything else in this life, when it is inexpressible joy in glory to have Christ more than anything else in this life, you won't hold on to the nuts, folks. You won't do it.

Bottom line. That is the faith that saves because that is the faith that brings about repentance, because it is only when we see Christ as all precious that all the baggage will fall away and fall off.

Isn't this exactly what the apostles said?

“Whatever gain I had I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”¹⁹

He is saying, “Do you know what? Everything I trusted in, everything I used to put my hope in, everything I used to take happiness in, everything I used to put confidence in, everything else that used to mean things to me in this life,” he says, “They are loss to me for the sake of Christ.

“I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish.”²⁰

Do you know what? You don't hold on to nuts when you see Christ as all excellent, all worthy, surpassing worth of knowing Christ. Do you know what you do? You don't see that nut as something to hold on to. You see it as refuse. You see it as dung. You see it as loss. You see it as nothing. You see it as something to be cast away from you.

But do you know what? Only people that see Christ... Here is what the Old Testament prophet Isaiah said.

“In that day the LORD of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people.”²¹

When Christ is a crown of glory to you, how does that happen? How is it going to happen? Some of you are right there right now. Christ is not a glory to you. The reason you are on the outside of the kingdom, you have no love for Christ. That Christ, that unseen Christ is not the most excellent thing in your estimation. You love family more. That is why Christ said, “Look, if you love father, mother, brother, sister, child, son, daughter, you are not worthy of me if you love him more.”

¹⁹ Philippians 3:7.

²⁰ Philippians 3:8.

²¹ Isaiah 28:5.

You see, the whole point there is, “Look, this doesn’t come down...”

I want everybody to understand this. This doesn’t come down to the fact we have to try to measure this thing out in a way that is artificial. This isn’t the fact that we are being called to something that really isn’t true and we kind of have to force it in our imagination.

Can I tell you something? Christ is so glorious that if you ever get a true glimpse of him, you will want him more than anything else.

Do you know how I know that is true? Do you know what 2 Corinthians chapter four tells me? It tells me that the devil is earnest. What is it? 2 Corinthians 4:4. The devil is in all [?] to keep your eyes covered.

Do you want to hear it?

“In their case...” Who is this? Who is “in their case”? I will tell you who it is. Kingdom of God, it is here. It has got to be entered. The way is open. Those who desire it can come in. In their case, their case, they are the ones on the outside still. They are the ones headed for perdition. They are the ones that are going to be damned if they don’t repent and believe. They are on the outside still. They haven’t come in.

“In their case...”

Do you know what is true about them? Listen to this.

“The god of this world has blinded the minds of...”²² Here it is. “Unbelievers.”

To believers he is precious. To those who believe, joy inexpressible and full of glory. But unbelievers, the god of this world he has blinded their minds to keep them from seeing what?

“To keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”²³

Let me tell you this. Do you know what the devil’s main purpose in this world, one of those main purposes? We see it in the parable of the soils. He plucks up the seed. How does he do it? Folks, he is trying to cover the eyes. He wants you to stay blind. He knows this. He knows that the glory of Christ is not a fake thing. It is not an artificial thing. It is real.

I will tell you this, folks. The devil was once in an exalted place. He has seen something of that glory. He knows it. And do you know what he knows about man? And do you

²² 2 Corinthians 4:4.

²³ Ibid.

know what history has proven out to him over and over? If men get but a glimpse of this Christ, it is all over. He has lost them. They will let everything go.

You have got a man like the apostle Paul. He is steeped head over heels in false religion. If ever there was an outwardly godly man, an outwardly righteous man, a keeper of the law, certainly it is the apostle Paul. But do you know what? He gets a glimpse of Christ and it is all rubbish and he knows that will happen to any man or woman or child on the face of this earth.

The devil is intent in this place even today to cover your eyes. He doesn't want you to see Christ. He knows if you do, battle over. He has lost.

And the thing about it is Christ really is that beautiful. He really is that magnificent. He really is that full of glory. This isn't a fake thing. You see him, it is a done deal, folks. Your sin is going to fall off because you are going to be ravished by something that is incomparable to anything in this world. This is why Christians don't turn back.

Is it like Peter?

“You guys are going to go, too?”

“Where are we going to go, Lord? We have seen something in you that we can't find anywhere else. You have got the words of eternal life.”

Not only he is the beauty of eternal life. He is eternal life. He is all glorious.

Now, here is the thing. We come to think about this. You only enter this kingdom by repentance and faith. Folks don't repent unless they really believe that Christ is the most beautiful and desirable thing that they can have and for joy let go of everything else.

So what about faith? I mean, that is the second part in this thing.

I tell you one of the biggest things about faith is that so often people have this idea, “Well, if you desire to come in, if you have thirst to come in or if I believe I will be saved...”

And they get thinking, “Well, do I thirst enough? Do I believe enough?”

Let me tell you something. That really isn't the issue. It is all garbage, in fact. Faith, do you know what faith is? Faith is basically the hand that cleaves to Christ. It is not looking at your faith that saves you. Don't make a Christ out of your faith. It is looking unto Jesus, that's it, not looking at our faith. Faith looks away from self. Faith looks out to Christ. Faith beholds the lamb of God. It looks upon him whom our sins have crucified. Faith sees Jesus. It is simple faith in Jesus crucified, in Jesus my all sufficiency, in Christ alone. I look away from self.

Get away from your faith. You know what? That is not the issue. Yes, you must believe, but all that word believe or faith or trust is it is simply seeing Christ for what he is. And if you are not seeing Christ... You know the problem is people constantly want to walk in front of a mirror and they want to start looking at themselves.

Well, have I repented enough? Have I believed enough?

That is not what we are called to do in the Scriptures. Jesus Christ is... or rather let me back up. Satan is not trying to cover your eyes and keep you from seeing your faith. He is covering your eyes to keep you from seeing the glory of Christ.

Why? Because you look at your faith all day long and it won't save you. It is when you look at Christ that he is terrified he is going to lose you.

So right here at the end, let's just consider Christ, because this is the real issue. The object that needs to engage our thoughts is not faith. It is Christ. And I just have... I am going to end right now with just four simple observations. Christ has so much glory. How can we, you know, we can't even tap this in a lifetime, folks. In an eternity we won't tap into all this. But just some things especially for those who want to be saved. And I just want you to think about, one, first, the glory of Christ's pity.

Just think about this verse. Mark one verse 40.

“A leper came to him [to Christ], imploring him.”²⁴

The leper kneeled. He said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.”²⁵

Now listen to this. Listen to these words because here is the glory that I want to jump... This is what the devil doesn't want you to see. But there is a glory in it if God will give you eyes to see it.

A leper... it says of Jesus, verse 41, “Moved with pity.”²⁶

The word literally means moved in the inner parts. Christ, you know what? When sinners came face to face with Christ he was moved. He was moved in the inner parts.

Now think about that.

See, I am afraid that some of you have this notion. You have heard about election. You have heard about sovereignty. You basically see Christ as cold, as hard, as calculated, almost as mathematical. Well, he has got his certain elect people and so when a sinner comes to him if you don't fall exactly in that category, well.... and then you begin to

²⁴ Mark 1:40.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mark 1:341.

assume, “Well, I am not there and he is just going to deal with me coldly and hardly and turn the shoulder on me.”

See, you misunderstand.

Let me tell you what. When Jesus Christ came face to face with sinners it wasn't just this, “Well, let me think here. Is this really one of the elect? Because if it is not, I am going to be mean to him and if it is, well, I will just put the check mark off and I will just in a cold way, you know, I will do whatever I need to do.”

But I want to understand. Christ was moved in the inner part. Christ was gripped with compassion, with pity. Think about that. He was moved with pity. He was moved with compassion. It means something inside him was twisting him around. It means he felt deeply. He felt inwardly. When a sinner came in need....

And you think about who came. This man isn't even given a name. He is just called “leper.” And I won't go into all the horrors just described in that word “leper.” They were unclean.

Look. You didn't have lepers over and sit down at your table and eat. Why? Because you weren't moved with pity. Most people were moved with disgust. You don't want those guys sitting... this isn't the kind of guy you invited home for dinner. This isn't the kind of guy, “Hey, honey, look who I brought home for dinner.”

Sit down at the table and you are at the edge of vomiting because of this guy.

That is not the guy you want sleeping on your sheets.

This is a guy that society shunned. They wanted nothing to do with him. He was grotesque. He was about... and I will tell you this. He was twice diseased because he was a sinner. And I will tell you this. I believe God gave leprosy to mankind to be a picture of how nasty and disgusting and grotesque and loathsome men are on the inside. This man is two fold diseased. He has got it on the outside. He has got it on the inside. If somebody comes to you like that, you know, you might feel like, “Oh, and I can't even hardly look at this guy.”

Do you know what Jesus is? He is moved. He is moved with pity. This man, this leper, just a wasted individual. He is ugly. He is ugly inside. He is ugly outside. Nobody wants him around. He is foul. What good is he? What good is a guy like this?

Brethren, there is glory here in the pity of the Son of God. You think about him. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, of purer eyes than to look upon sin. He created man. He is the creator. He created man good. He created man upright. He created man beautiful.

Can you imagine Adam and Eve? They would have been specimens of beauty of humanity. And here he has got an individual that is the very specimen of everything foul and ugly that has come upon man as a result of their sin, twice wretched, twice loathsome.

And you might think one of such pure eyes just kick him away, be gone. Incinerate him and off the face of the earth.

But he doesn't do that. He is moved with pity.

Now there is a glory there. If you are a sinner and you are looking for a Savior, you want one like that who is moved with pity upon a leper.

And I will tell you this.

You say, "Well, maybe he was like that. Now he is lifted up there in heaven. He probably doesn't have time to think about..."

Do you know why the Scripture tells us Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever? To convince you of things just like this, that what he was then, he is now. And the same pity he had then, he has now.

Is this not the kind of Savior you want? We are not talking just simply about a Savior who was. We are talking about a Savior who is right now. What glory that we should have a Savior like that.

Jesus Christ, when he said to sinners, "Whoever comes to me I won't cast out," brethren, that was not a cold, dry statement. You can be certain he said it with heart. He said it with desire.

You know, the thing that struck me in just thinking about this is Jesus Christ saves sinners with his whole heart, with all of it.

Let me mention a second thing that is really tied in close to this. I want you to see another glory about Christ.

Do you know what? I can watch a news clip about a bomb that went off in Iraq. And I can see some mother bent over a dead figure on a road and I can see the tears coming down her eyes. And guess what? I don't need an interpreter, do I? I don't need anybody to interpret that. Do you know why? Because tears of grief speak a common language upon all mankind.

When you... tears... you see a little child. Sometimes they will show you those pictures, little African kids and they are suffering and starving and you see a tear running down the eye, the tear of want. You don't have to have that explained. There is a universal language.

And I will tell you this. Jesus Christ is looking out over a city of Jerusalem, a city of people who rejected him and you look at Christ and he has got tears running down his eyes. They have rejected him.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often...”²⁷

I mean he is wrenched.

What is it that wrings tears from the Son of God? Do you know what? You don't need an interpreter. This is the Savior that God the Father has sent to this earth to save sinners, one who can look out over those who in just a little while would crucify him, reject him. And do you know what? He didn't say, “To hell with all you.” He had every right to say that.

You have... you take this Savior and you put him face to face with sinners, even those who reject him and you start to ring that up. You don't get words like, “Damn you all.” You get tears. That is the kind of Savior that God gave to this world.

Wring it and it is not anger and wrath. It is tears.

You have this idea that Christ is somehow preventing you from entering this kingdom? He is somehow coldly resisting? And he is the same today as he was yesterday. He is moved upon when sinners reject him.

There is glory in those tears. And Satan will come right along by you and tell you he has no tears. He is a far away God. He sits up in heaven. He has got his elect. He is cold and calculated. Only those and those alone and he will tell you and you are not one.

That is not what the Bible tells us. The Bible tells us if you desire to come in, come in. And there is a Savior who by his tears showed you with what earnestness he wants sinners to come in.

And you can argue me on that over your ideas of the sovereignty of God, but I will tell you what. That is the kind of Savior we have.

Do I believe in a sovereign God? You had better believe I do. But I believe that this sovereign God is determined to show himself to mankind this way. And that ought to be a glory. That ought to be an encouragement.

And let me tell you something. Let me hit on a third glory here. The glory of Christ's presence. You know what Scripture says.

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”²⁸

²⁷ Matthew 23:37, Luke 13:34.

²⁸ Matthew 18:20.

Well, glory do we take in that? Just this glory. If two or three can gather over in that building and he will be there and two or three can gather in this building and he will be here. Do you know what glory there is in that? The glory that he is God and the glory that he is omnipresent and the glory that he is in all places and all present at all times. And what glory is in that? It is because if you find yourself under conviction of sin right now I want you to know this. This Christ who is moved with pity over a stinking leper, this Christ who shed tears over his enemies is not far away and far removed.

Do you know where he is? Paul says he is near. He is not far from any of us.

You see the comfort and the glory? He is right there where you sit.

Do you know that night, 19 years ago I lay in a little ball in the middle of that living room floor in that apartment and I don't even know if it was verbal. I don't know if you could have even heard me say it, but Christ is so close that even when it is just a groan in the inner most soul, "Lord, help me," he is close enough to hear and come to the aid.

Now there is a glory in that. And I will give you one last glory, folks, the glory of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Let me tell you about that glory. Here he is the Christ. He is driven through with spikes onto that cruel cross. His own blood spills from his body.

I tell you what. The clouds of a storm are on the horizons. God is about to smite his own Son. The thunders of wrath are quickly moving across that plain. There is Christ in all of his agonies. He is ready to be forsaken by his Father.

Let me tell you another glory about him. In the midst of all that. In the midst of bearing the load of sin. In the midst of being cursed, becoming a curse, becoming sin. He who knew no sin, the greatest imaginable trial. He has time. He has a heart. He has compassion in the midst of it to turn to the their at his side and say, "This day you will be with me in paradise."

He said, "Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Just like the leper, not even given a name. Just, he is a thief. Just like the other guy was just a leper.

Maybe that is what you are. You are just a leper. You are just a thief. You are just one who is unclean. You think, "I am a nobody. I am insignificant."

I will tell you this. Jesus Christ spilled tears and he gave time, even in the midst of his greatest agonies to those who are nobodies, nobody sinners, just the lost wandering souls of this world.

“Lord, help me. Lord, remember me.”

He said, “I will remember you. I will remember you so well your little glance over here to me in faith, I am going to sweep you into such a paradise, all this joy unspeakable and full of glory, all the pleasures and the joys at my right hand. I am going to immerse you in this very day. This day you will be with me in paradise.”

I will tell you that. When men believe this they believe that there is glory. They believe that there is a Christ like this. They believe there is such a Savior. They believe that there is one so beautiful, so glorious, all together lovely. Sin just falls.

Men will let it go in a second.

That thief looked and his eyes were opened and he saw.

“I don’t want to hold on to anything. This one next to me is worthy, worthy, worthy. Lord, I am not going to ask you...”

Do you know what? He was mocking before. He was mocking with the other thief.

“If you be the Christ, then come down off here and save us, too.”

No more of that. He is done with wanting to save life in this world. He is done with everything this world has to offer. He is not pleading for that anymore. Do you know why? He let go it. He is no longer a stupid monkey. He has now been enraptured by the glory and that very day it was all glory for him.

Folks, we have a Savior of great glory. Oh, may God give you eyes to see it. Very often when people come to me I say, “Go to the book of John. Go to the book of John and just read.”

Why? Because I believe that the book of John reveals so much glory. Not that there aren’t other places. Not that the other gospels don’t. They most certainly do. But unless and until sinners see Christ, unless they believe that he is precious, they will never come in because they will never fit through the door into the kingdom, because they will buy into the lie of sin, though it cost them their soul. May God help some of you there to see what others of us have been allowed to see. And we are thankful for the grace of God that allowed us to see it. May God have the same mercy on your souls. Amen.