

Witnesses of Repentance

Repent or Perish

By Peter Nortier

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Luke 24:47-48; Galatians 1:15-16

Preached on: Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mercies of God Association

1553 Knapp Street NE.

Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/merciesofgod

Well, between the two of you, you had a mighty locomotive combined. Now let me be the caboose. And the caboose always carries up the rear. And I will be glad to be the caboose tonight and like our brother said, "There is a lot of sovereign grace churches that are dead from the neck up." And it is so sad.

Now there is a danger that you can become intellectually correct and spiritually wrong. And in our sovereign grace churches we find very clearly people are raised under the truth. But I will tell you right now it doesn't do a bit of good. It has got to be personal. Only God can make it personal.

Now take your Bibles, if you will, and turn to Luke chapter 24. Our subject tonight I am going to bring out, the witnesses of repentance.

Now repentance today is unknown, unpreached, unwanted and unexperienced in the vast majority of our religious people at this hour and that includes sovereign grace.

If you have never repented then put it down. You have never been converted. Repentance towards God and faith in toward our Lord Jesus Christ is God's method of redemption. And I will tell you right now. There isn't any other way. We are not saved by baptism. We are not saved by the doctrine of grace. We are not saved by speaking in tongues. We are not saved by walking the aisle. We are not saved by taking the preacher by the hand. We are saved when God reaches down and brings us to repentance and faith.

Luke chapter 24. Look with me, if you will, at verses 45 down to verse 53. There is the Lord Jesus.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.¹

¹ Luke 24:45-46.

Let's bow for prayer.

Our Father, tonight sanctify this endeavor and make it acceptable in thy sight. Lord, give listening ears, attentive minds and an open heart. And then, Lord, do whatever work has to be done in each individual soul that you have brought this way. Lord, we will never meet again in the same capacity that we are meeting at this hour. And so, our God, we pray. Help every one of us who know thee to pray and seek thy face because, Lord, I personally believe there are some here tonight that don't know you. Some of them, Lord, are raised under the sound of the gospel and yet they are going to die and go to hell. Oh, our God, be pleased to stop by some heart's door tonight and do whatever work has to be done. And, Lord, if I am in the way, you move me out of the way, but, Lord, do the work that has to be done.

Above everything else, Lord Jesus, we pray that thou would be glorified in this endeavor. Thank you again for this time together. We ask in that blessed name. Amen.

As I mentioned before, we are to be witnesses of repentance.

Look at our text tonight, if you will. Notice carefully verse 47.

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.²

I want to call your attention to the three words that are found here. What are they? Witness, repentance and then we find also remission. We need to know what they are and we find the meaning of these three words are very important to our text.

There is one more in there and it ought to be preach. And we find that word preach means to set forth the good news because the good news of the gospel is what? Christ has died for sinners. Christ was buried for sinners. Christ rose again for sinners and I will tell you right now. Christ is still calling sinners out of darkness.

Now let me ask you a question. Have you repented? Do you know what we are talking about? You may have a head knowledge like I did. But I will tell you right now. You have got to have a heart experience. And if that experience has never become yours, I will tell you again. You don't know what it means to be a witness of repentance.

Our lesson falls into these two simple categories. First of all the meaning of these three words and then, secondly, we are going to look at the method used in the production of remission.

Now look at these three words.

“Ye are witnesses.”

² Luke 24:47-48.

Now that word “witness,” a witness is someone who has seen something and was personally present when the event took place. Peter said he was personally present at the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew what happened. He was a witness to it.

Now you listen. If you are saved here tonight, you are a witness to what took place in your soul. You can’t explain it fully, but I am going to tell you right now. It is a mystery how it took place, but it is a reality that you can’t get over. And we need to understand that and a witness is someone, as I mentioned before, we see very clearly the word “witness” comes from the word μαρτυριον (mar-too’-ree-on) from which we get our word “martyr.”

Now what in the world are you talking about? It means to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something or that he was taught by divine revelation.

Now hold your seat. Those two things are true in your salvation and mine.

What are you talking about?

We not only have experienced something, but I am going to tell you this. We have been given it by divine revelation.

And I will go into that a little bit later, but this is the meaning of the term witness. It comes, as I mentioned before, from μαρτυριον (mar-too’-ree-on) from which we get our term “martyr.”

Then we find the believer knows Christ by divine revelation and has had an experience with the Lord.

Take your Bibles now. Keep your finger on Luke. We will come right back to it. But turn to Galatians chapter one if you will and look with me at verses 15 and 16. Here you have the apostle Paul giving his testimony and notice carefully how he brings it out.

Notice what it says.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.³

Now what are you talking about?

Paul the apostle here is talking about an experience. He had an experience with the Lord Jesus.

³ Galatians 1:15-16.

Now have you? What happened to you when you supposedly got converted? Did you just walk the aisle? Did you just take the preacher by the hand and did somebody just read a verse of Scripture to you and say, “Do you believe that? Well, if you do, then you are saved.”

Beloved, that is not an experience. An experience is something that is particular and peculiar to you. But now you listen. In salvation experience it is particular to the individual because God deals with that individual according to their personality. But are you listening? That experience will have the general characteristics that we can all talk about. They will be the same. And I will get into that in just a few moments. Because now this is the word “witness.” What does it mean? It means that you have seen or heard or had an experience and therefore you can talk about it.

One reason sovereign grace people don’t testify is because they don’t know what it is to know Christ. We might as well face it. Ninety-five percent of our Baptist people in our churches today, including sovereign grace, have never had a real experience with the Lord Jesus. And when they haven’t had that real experience I will tell you right now. They can’t talk about it.

How do you know, preacher?

All right. Let’s stick for tonight. After services I wonder what you are going to talk about. I hope and pray it is talking, you are going to talk about the things that you have heard tonight. But usually the first thing that is on their mind is something to eat or where they are going to go or what they are going to do and so on and so forth. And they walk out and I will tell you right now. They forget where they have been.

Now that is true. Not only in other churches. It is probably true in this church because all churches are just about the same.

Now we find the word “witness,” as I mentioned before, the believer knows the Lord Jesus Christ by divine revelation and has had an experience with the Lord. The apostle Paul said, “It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb.”⁴

What did he do? He called me by his grace?”⁵

For what purpose? “To reveal [Christ] in me.”⁶

Not on the outside, but in him. And I want to say to you very kindly, if you are saved here tonight, you can’t help but love the Jewish people. And I will tell you why. If you are saved tonight you have got one living in you. And you can’t hate the Jewish people because salvation is of the Jews and the Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew and he takes up his abode in us when he reveals himself to us as our all sufficient Lord and Savior.

⁴ Galatians 1:15.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Galatians 1:16.

Now are you a witness tonight? I hope and pray that you are.

But then we have to be a witness of something.

Now, preacher, what more are you talking about?

Well, we are a witness to repentance.

Look again at our text, if you will. We find very clearly:

And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.⁷

All right. Witness of what?

If you are saved here tonight you are a witness of repentance.

Now as I mentioned before, repentance is unknown, unwanted, unpreached and unexperienced by the vast majority of our religious people. When you talk about repentance, I will tell you right now. You will empty a church in a hurry. It will be emptied just as quick as if you mention the word predestination or foreknowledge. People today hate the doctrine of repentance. And I have had more than one so called Christian come to me and say, "You know, the whole trouble with you is you are too strong on repentance."

You can't be too strong on it because without repentance there is no faith. Without faith there is no Christ. And without Christ I want to tell you again. There is no salvation.

We find repentance and faith are to be preached in Christ's name around the world and yet we find it is not being done.

Now what is repentance? Let me give you a definition or so if I may. First of all, repentance is sorrow or deep contrition for sin as an offense and a dishonor of God, a violation of his holy law and a base ingratitude towards the being of infinite benevolence. That is quite a testimony.

Then look again. It is called evangelical repentance and it is accompanied by a change of mind, a change of heart, a change of attitude, a change of action and a change of will concerning God as well as a change in behavior, speech and outlook concerning life.

Now that is evangelical repentance. And I am going to tell you right now. It is accompanied by godly sorrow. People today don't know what it means to weep over their sin. We have dry eyed conversions and we have dry eyed preachers and we have dry

⁷ Luke 24:47-48.

eyed churches and I will tell you right now. The whole kit and kaboodle are going to hell. They just don't know what true repentance is.

Now I am going to ask you a question. Do you? Have you repented? You may know a little bit about it, but is it an experience with you? Have you had the experience of repentance come upon you? If you don't know what I am talking about, throw it out because I will tell you right now. You are missing Christ. Because without repentance there is no faith. Without faith there is not Christ. And without Christ there is no salvation. And God's method of salvation is still repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I want to say there is another word. We find there is a third word. It is the word "remission." Notice carefully.

Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.⁸

All right. Let's look at the word "remission" for just a moment.

Remission is forgiveness, pardon as well as a giving up of the punishment to a crime. Now let me repeat that. Remission is forgiveness, pardon as well as the giving up of the punishment to a crime. The Greek word ἀφεσιν (af-es-in) means forgiveness, pardon, a letting go as if no crime had been committed. And we find Romans chapter four, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."⁹

Now hold your seat and pay close attention. If you are saved here tonight, no charge can be laid against you, not a one. Let me prove that to you.

Turn to Romans chapter eight for just a moment if you will, the book to the Romans chapter eight and we find in verse 31. Listen to these words if you will and revel in them and rejoice in them as they are real to your soul.

In Romans chapter eight verse 31 we read:

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.¹⁰

Now Satan's primary thing is to do what? He is going to try to get you on a guilt trip. Now he will bring back the sins that you and I have done years ago and he will try to

⁸ Luke 24:47-48.

⁹ Romans 4:8.

¹⁰ Romans 8:31-34.

cause them to plague us. If we listen to this voice, he will. But you have to remember one thing. If we are saved here tonight, our sins have been washed in the blood. They cannot be brought up against us and we have no right to do it.

Hezekiah the king said these words in Isaiah chapter 38 and verse 17.

“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back”¹¹

Now you listen. That became personal to me. It still is.

Satan, you can't put me on a guilt trip. You can't make me go back and look at all those old sins because I will tell you right now. They have been washed in the blood. They are gone and they are gone forever and they are separated as far as the east is from the west.

You see what a privilege it is to be a true believer? Now I am going to ask you a question. Are you one? Have you truly repented?

Well, what in the world takes place in repentance? How in the world does God do all this work for us? And that is what our lesson will be here tonight. I am going to share with you just a few moments that if you are saved here tonight, you are witness, you are a witness of repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now follow along with me as I lay out these steps because I am going to tell you right now. I want you to go back and examine your salvation as I set forth these things.

It does us good. Peter said that we are to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if [we] do these things, [we] shall never fall.”¹²

And Paul also said, “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”¹³

Now no true believer is a hope so, think so, guess so, wonder so, surmise so believer. If you are not saved here tonight that is your category. But a true believer knows beyond a shadow of a doubt because like the apostle Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded [or fully convinced] that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”¹⁴

What about you tonight? Are you a witness to repentance? Oh, I hope and pray that you are.

¹¹ Isaiah 38:17.

¹² 2 Peter 1:10.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 13:5.

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 1:12.

Now how in the world does God do this? Well, let me give you, if I may, these simple things. First of all when God sets out to save an individual he doesn't come to that person like is taught today.

God would be so happy if you would just come forward. God would be so happy if you would just accept the Lord Jesus.

Now, you get this. I cannot find that term "accept the Lord Jesus Christ" in the Bible.

Preacher, what are you talking about?

I am the one that has been accepted. We are "accepted in the beloved in whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of [our] sins."¹⁵

And if you will go back from Genesis to Revelation and you will find out that when God dealt with an individual, I will tell you right now. They didn't come to accept God. They didn't come to accept God. They were afraid that the Lord God of heaven wouldn't accept them.

Start with the Garden of Eden. We find what did Adam and Eve do? They tried to run away. But when God shut them up what happened? We find he made them face their sin and then to their utter amazement what did he do? He took the skins of an animal and clothed them, sending forth the typology that the Lord Jesus Christ which has died for them as well as he died for you and me.

What takes place in true repentance? Let me share it with you. First of all, I want to say to you very kindly, there is a sanctification of the individual. God doesn't come to you and say, "Oh, I would be so happy if you would let me save you."

No, sir. I will tell you what God does do. I will tell you what he does. He sets you apart. And the word "sanctification" means to set apart. Now you get this. I mentioned it before. You just hold your seat. God has a time and a place and a date and a person with whom that individual is going to come in contact when that individual gets converted.

You see, God uses preachers today. It is by the foolishness of preaching that people get converted. You don't get saved by a flannel graph. You don't get saved by a movie. You don't get saved by a video. You get saved by the preaching of the Word of God. And our churches today are doing what? They are setting aside the preaching of the Word of God and they are putting on every kind of play and cantata and everything like that and they are bringing in a great big crowd, but I will tell you right now that like the preacher does here, he draws his breath and he draws his salary and he is leading his congregation to hell.

Have you repented? If you have, the first thing that took place was this. God set you apart.

¹⁵ Ephesians 1:6-7.

What are you talking about, preacher?

Well, let me give you an example if I may.

Turn to Acts chapter two and look at me verse 37. In the book of Acts chapter two and verse 37 the Word of God says these words. Peter was preaching on the day of Pentecost and he warned them and he told them. He said, "This same Jesus is Christ that you have put on the cross, that you have crucified."

And we find in verse 36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."¹⁶

Now look what happened.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"¹⁷

Now Peter didn't say, "Come forward and I will have a personal worker talk with you." He didn't say, "Come forward and sign a decision card." He didn't say, "Come forward in sin." He said what? Peter said, "Repent."

Now what are you talking about? Turn about. Turn away from your sin. Turn away from the world. Turn away from everything. But turn to Christ because if you don't, I will tell you right now, you are going to burn.

And I want to say to you very kindly, if you made a profession of faith tonight and your life hasn't changed completely and radically, you better go back and find out if you have ever truly been converted. Too many so called Christians today they look and act and smell and behave and talk and dress like the world and they are supposed to be saved.

A girl has no right to wear a mini skirt in the first place and in the second place a woman has no right to come with her bosom showing and yet we find this is set forth in our churches and they get up there and they sing praises to God. It is an abomination unto him.

You know why? He expects us to do what? He expects us to be modest. And people today for the most part they come in their shorts and they come in their halters and they come in any other way. It shows one thing. They have no respect for God. And I will tell you right now. They will all tell you. "Yes, I am going to heaven." But it is a lie because I will tell you right now. They have never been sanctified by God the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶ Acts 2:36.

¹⁷ Acts 2:37.

In the sanctification of an individual this is what takes place. We find there is a setting I mentioned before, a setting of a time table concerning the salvation of every individual.

David and Mephibosheth is a good example.

David said, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him [for Jonathan's sake]?"¹⁸

And what did he do? I will tell you what he did. He sent an army after Mephibosheth. First of all, he found out where he was. Mephibosheth was living in Lodebar which means the place of no pasture. And David sent and fetched him.

Now you get this. If you are saved here tonight, there came a time in your life where God sent and fetched you.

What are you talking about, preacher?

David's army came down there or his troops, I should say, came down there. They knocked on the door and said, "Is Mephibosheth in here?"

"Yes, he is."

And what happened?

I will tell you right now. They picked him up and said, "You are going to come and meet the King David."

Now God does the same thing in the Holy Spirit. He brings us into a meeting place with the Lord God of heaven and when that takes place it is a sanctification of the individual. He seeks us out where we are.

Now he found me as pastor of the Van Avenue Baptist Church in [?], Louisiana. I have been a Baptist preacher for eight years, pasturing three churches, held all kinds of revival meetings, emptied more than one church because of my preaching at that time. It was such law conviction.

But God had a time when he said, "Peter Nortier, you are going to get converted."

I didn't know it, but God did. And he sent a preacher by the name of L R Shelton from New Orleans. I had heard him on the radio and I had him up for a meeting and I will tell you right now. There came a miniature awakening and I got converted.

I did not know what it meant to be a lost sinner. Do you? If you have never been lost, you have never been found because Christ Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. And people today don't know what it means to be lost.

¹⁸ 2 Samuel 9:3.

When David sent out for Mephibosheth I will tell you right now there was a seeking of the individual to where he was residing and then I will tell you right now. David called him and when God sets out to save a sinner he gives us a call.

Now, preacher, what are you talking about?

John 5:25.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”¹⁹

Now you get this. If you are saved here tonight, God sought you out. He called you by name. It was an invisible call. It was an irresistible call. It was a personal call. It was a sovereign call. It was a frightening call. But he called you by name. You didn’t hear a voice out of the blue. It didn’t come out of the wall. But I will tell you what did happen. The voice of God came into the deepest recesses of your soul and you knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Lord God of heaven was talking to you. You didn’t know if he was talking to anybody else or not. But I will tell you right now. You knew and you knew that you knew it, that he was talking to you personally.

And then something else happened. It was not only a call, but we find what took place here. There was a startling of the individual. When God gives you that call he shakes you from center to circumference. It is a startling call.

Have you ever been pulled over by a state trooper? If you have, you know what I am talking about. When you see the blue lights behind you the first thing you do is look at your speedometer and you say, “Uh, oh.”

All right. What does it do? It startles you.

Now God uses the law of God to startle the individual.

Paul said, “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”²⁰

And God takes the law of God, writes the spirituality of it and reality of it upon your heart and I will tell you right now. He makes you stand before him, guilty, hell bound, hell bent, hell deserving. And I want to tell you right now, your mouth is shut. You are silent before God. And you are under the curse of God and I will tell you again. He startled you from center to circumference.

Now most people today haven’t been there. He put a fear of God in the heart of the individual.

¹⁹ John 5:25.

²⁰ Romans 7:9.

When I was under conviction I will tell you right now. I didn't think that God would ever save me. I walked and I walked up and down in the back yard and on that Saturday afternoon suing for mercy and crying unto the Lord God of heaven and I finally came into the house and I sat down in a chair and I cried out from the deepest recesses of my soul and I said these words. "Oh God, be merciful and send me to hell for I am such a rotten, filthy, good for nothing sinner."

And the next breath, "God, be merciful to me [the] sinner." ²¹

And are you listening? He heard my cry.

Do you know what I am talking about? Have you been there? You will never forget that experience that you have had with the Lord Jesus. And, you see? You can't be a witness of repentance unless you have had the experience of repentance wrought in your soul. And this is exactly what God does.

Now he will deal with you according to your personality. He dealt with me like a tornado because I happened to be just a big old Dutchman and I will tell you right now. I am hard headed and stubborn and everything like that. And God had to knock me off my pins and he did so.

With other people he did to them like he did with Lydia. What did he do? He opened her heart silently and softly and tenderly because she was that kind of a person.

But are you listening? We both have the same thing.

Do you know what I am talking about?

You see, your experience with God is personal with you. That is why I believe in particular redemption. It is personal to you. And I am always talking about this all the time.

So many times you say, "Well, particular redemption."

And we come along and we say, "Well, by particular redemption we mean that God is going to save some and let others go."

That is true.

But particular redemption to me is this, that God singled me out particularly. He dealt with me peculiarly. He dealt with me personally. He dealt with me majestically and I will tell you right now. I have never gotten over it, how he dealt with me and he is still dealing with me.

²¹ Luke 18:13.

Oh, I know I am converted. But when the fear of God grips the heart of an individual, you don't have to ask that individual if they are going to hell. They will tell you. They will raise you.

How long have you been in the churches where they used to be, as we have had, used to have the old, what they called the old mourner's bench, didn't they? They would come down and people would cry and wail and mourn and God would save them. We don't have that anymore. We have gotten sophisticated and you know what happens is this. As soon as anybody dares raise their hand that they are a lost sinner and we have some high powered so called individual go up to that individual and try to lead them on a profession right away and they shake the tree before the fruit is ripe and all they get is green fruit.

And that is going on in our churches today, even in sovereign grace churches.

Don't let it go on in this church. I say to you very kindly, because I love you and I don't want to be a stray and I don't want anybody to die and go to hell. But I know some are going there. But I have this assurance. That those that Lord God of heaven has called out from eternity, they are going to come. They are going to come.

I have seen them come. And I have seen some go away. I have seen them come to Christ. I have seen them mourning and weeping and I have seen some of them also begin to mourn and weep and then over night they become hard and indifferent and the next thing you know they become the worst enemy you have because they have sinned against the Lord God of heaven. They turned their back on him and God let him go.

Now don't let that happen to you if you are not saved here at this hour.

Now, as I said before, there is a startling call, a startling reality. The fear of God is implanted every time this takes place. Then we find what takes place is this. All right, there is the fact of the curse of God's law written upon the heart. And we find that there is a facing of a just and righteous and sin hating God. And then what takes place—and this is all part of the Word of God, now, I should say all part of the Lord's God work. What does he do when he puts an individual in that category? He also puts the cry in their heart to sue for mercy.

The publican cried out, "God, be merciful to me [the] sinner."²²

Abigail cried out to David, "Oh, spare me, Lord."

And we find what happened. Are you listening? That cry is heard. And if you have ever been under conviction and you have gotten... God has given you the reality of true repentance, I am going to tell you right now. There came a cry in your heart. "Lord, oh Lord, have mercy on me."

I told you a moment ago I begged the Lord to send me to hell and I didn't realize until

²² Luke 18:13.

four years later that I had preached on that. I had prayed the same prayer that Job wrote about in Job six.

But God didn't hear that kind of prayer in one sense of the word. Let's put it this way. He heard it, but he didn't answer it. Do you know why? Because the next prayer that came out of my heart was this.

“Oh, God, be merciful to me [the] sinner.”²³

That cry for mercy was heard and answered. And I will tell you right now. I am still an object of mercy because, you see, we sue for mercy. Now hold your seat again. I want you to notice. When that takes place we are not standing to accept the Lord Jesus. We are standing at God's disposal. He can save us or let us go. When we are under that kind of conviction we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that if God doesn't save us, we will never get saved.

We know also we can't make him save us. We can only sue for mercy on the basis that Christ died for sinners and I am the sinner. And then to our utter amazement what takes place? Are you listening? There is a cry that comes into the heart and we find what takes place. We are standing at the disposal of the Lord God of heaven and then we find out very clearly that the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ is our only hope.

You know what I am talking about tonight? How real is the Lord Jesus to you? He ought to be more real to you than your own wife, than your own daughter, than your own son.

You say, “Preacher, what are you talking about?”

My wife and I have been married for 53 years. She is real to me. But are you listening? The Lord Jesus Christ is even more real because what are you talking about? He is closer to me than she is because he is inside of me and she can't get there.

Now, what about you tonight? Have you ever stood at God's disposal? Do you know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you are hell born, hell bent, hell bound and a hell deserving sinner? And all you have is to cry, “I sue for mercy,” and then what happens? We stand at the disposal of Christ. The sufficiency of the Lord Jesus is our only hope. And then what takes place is this. There is a salvation of the individual that becomes the outcome.

Now listen carefully. How long God will keep you under conviction is known only to him. Our brother brought the testimony of Charles Spurgeon last night. But I bet you he didn't know it, but Charles Spurgeon, I have a testimony of Charles Spurgeon that he was under conviction for five years. And people told him, “Charles, oh Charles, it is so wonderful. Charles, just believe.”

²³ Ibid.

And Charles said, "I wish I could believe. I can't believe."

And I will tell you right now. Salvation is all of God and all of grace. And when he answers that cry this is what takes place.

You say, "Preacher, what in the world are you talking about?"

Follow me, now. Faith is created inside and imparted to us.

Turn to Ephesians chapter two if you will and look with me at verses eight through 10 and see for yourself. In the book of Ephesians chapter two verses eight through 10. And as I mentioned the other morning or this morning I should say, so many people stop at verses eight and nine. But in verses eight through 10 we read these words.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. [Now look at these words]. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.²⁴

Now, preacher, we are his workmanship. That means that the Lord Jesus Christ is both the author and the finisher of our faith. And we are saved, beloved, by the faith of Christ.

That is why Paul said:

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. [For] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.²⁵

Now when God puts that faith there, nobody can take it away. Nobody.

You remember Samson? Blind as he was, made fun of, a spectacle. But his hair was growing long. And even though he was in that category, he cried and said, "Lord, let me avenge myself one more time."

And God did what? He put him between those two pillars and that great temple and Samson reached his great big arms and he pulled those pillars down. And are you listening? They came crashing down and those people went to heaven and Samson went to hell because he died with them. He didn't lose that faith.

If God has given you the true faith, are you listening? Come hell or high water, it cannot be taken away from you. And I hope and pray that you know what I am talking about

²⁴ Ephesians 2:8-10.

²⁵ Galatians 2:19-20.

because listen carefully, if you will. Faith is created and planted within. And then the fact of remission—follow me now—the fact of remission is made real to the individual.

In conviction, I will tell you right now. You are upset. You are scared. You are crying. And I will tell you this. You look around and you say there is no hope. But suddenly and mysteriously and absolutely and indelibly what takes place? The Lord God of heaven implants faith in your soul. One moment you couldn't believe. The next moment you can't help but believe. And what takes place is this. The conviction is gone and it is such a startling reality to you that I will tell you right now. You sit back and say, "Oh, that can't be. That just can't be."

But it is because this is what it says.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."²⁶

And, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁷

Now you get this. Nobody can take it away from you. But are you listening. Nobody can give it to you but God. You see, nobody can give it to you but God. And the amazing thing of it is this.

Can he give what? He determined it where? Before the foundation of the world as our brother so aptly brought it out.

All men were under conviction.

We don't know that.

And some people, you know, like I had a so called missionary in Minnesota tell me one time. He said, well, he said, "I am going to heaven because I have been elected."

I said, "But when did you get saved?"

He said, "Well, I don't know that I am."

I said, "Then, what are you going to heaven on?"

He said, "I am going to heaven on election."

"No, you are not," I said, "You are going straight to hell." I said, "Your election is going to damn you."

The only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ because he still says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: [and] no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."²⁸

²⁶ Romans 8:1.

²⁷ Romans 5:1.

Now let me leave this with you. Do you know what I am talking about? Can you go back where you stood before God, a guilty, lost, alone, crying, weeping, wondering, scared sinner? You knew that you deserved to go hell. You knew you were going there. You didn't know the Lord Jesus Christ would save you or not. But I will tell you right now. All you could do is plead for mercy. And like the publican you smote your... I said, you smote your breast and you bowed down your head. You couldn't look up. You were so bowed down with conviction that he couldn't look up and he smote himself upon the breast and by the deepest pathos of his soul he cried out, "God, be merciful to me [the] sinner."²⁹

And the Lord Jesus spoke up and said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified."³⁰

I said it before. I will say it again. The greatest thing that can happen to you if it ever does is for the Lord Jesus Christ to save you.

Let me leave this song and this little testimony with you, if I may.

I have been a lost sinner, have you?
Condemned and could not believe.
By distinguishing grace,
All my sin had to face,
I have been a lost sinner, have you?

I am going to heaven, are you?
Working your way there won't do.
Because the work is already done
Between the Father and the Son,
I am going to heaven, are you?

I have been a lost sinner, have you?
Shut my mouth, become guilty, have you?
No one else could I blame,
If he sent me to hell,
I got justice, I'd tell,
Shut my mouth, become guilty, have you?

I am washed in the blood, are you?
Washed and made whiter than snow.
All my sin by the score,
He will remember no more
I am washed in the blood, are you?

²⁸ John 14:6.

²⁹ Luke 18:13.

³⁰ Luke 19:14.

And the reason I know the Lord Jesus, do you?
I met him at the end of my way.
Oh, repentance was sweet,
When I fell at his feet.
I know the Lord Jesus, do you?

Now how long does it take?

In the West Indies a number of years ago there was a man that came with his [?] and they held a meeting in this particular prison and I went to the West Indies a number of years ago and I visited the prison in Saint Lucia and I saw there a man whose hair was white. And I found out he was scheduled to die, but that is not the man I am going to talk about.

But in this prison there were 12 people that were condemned to die. And the warden of the prison asked the song leader and asked the evangelist, he said, "Would you like to talk to them?"

And they said, "We would."

So he took them into the compartment where they were kept apart from all the rest of them. And he began to preach the gospel. And they noticed over on the left hand side there sat a man and he looked at him and he listened and once in a while a tear would come to his eyes and he would shake his head and look away.

And the evangelist turned to the singer and he said to him, he said, "Go over and talk to that man."

So he went over there and he said, "Sir," he said, "Are you ready to die?"

He said, "No." He said, "I am going to be hung at six o'clock in the morning.

And the song leader said, "Well, if you could only read this," he said, "it will help you."

He said, "I can't read."

And that threw back the song leader more or less on his heels. But the best he knew how he talked to him. He said, "My friend," he said, "The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost." And he quoted this verse of Scripture.

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."³¹

And then he said to him, point blank, he said, "Let me give you another message."

³¹ Isaiah 1:18.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”:³²

He said, “Sir,” he said, right there, he said, “You can be saved.”

The Spirit of God got a hold of that old boy and in that prison there is nothing but an earthen floor and he fell on his face and wept and he turned, he turned that earthen floor, that little spot where he was weeping, so desperately, he turned that, you might say, into a little band of mud. And it wasn't long after that he got up with a shining look in his eye and he said to him, he said, “Please,” he said, “sing the song that you were teaching us.”

And the song was going like this.

Jesus, my Lord, will love me forever;
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever;
He gave His life to ransom my soul;
Now I belong to Him.

Now I belong to Jesus;
Jesus belongs to me;
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity.

And when they walked out of that compartment they saw those brown arms reaching out through the bars and they heard them singing, “Jesus, my Lord, will love me forever.”

Six o'clock that morning they came to that man. They put him on the scaffold and they said to him, they said, “Do you want us to tie your hands behind you?”

He said, “No.”

They said, “Do you want a hood over your head?”

He said, “No.”

They said, “Do you have any last words?”

And he said, again:

Jesus, my Lord, will love me forever;
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever;
He gave His life to ransom my soul;
Now I belong to Him.

³² 11 Timothy 1:15.

Now I belong to Jesus;
Jesus belongs to me;
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity.

And when he got through singing that, and he had a beautiful voice, there wasn't anybody in that courtyard that were waiting to watch him die, there wasn't anybody there that wasn't crying like a baby.

And when he got through he turned to the warden. He said, "I am ready."

The trap door was sprung. Out into eternity he went, but that old boy is still singing, "Jesus, my Lord, will love me forever."

Now I am going to ask you a question. You are not in prison tonight like he was. But you are in a prison of sin if you are not saved.

You say, "I am not condemned."

Oh, yes you are. Every individual outside of Christ is condemned already and every individual outside of Christ is living under a reprieve and only God knows when that reprieve will end. But are you listening? God brought you here for the purpose of hearing exactly what you are hearing and now I want to tell you right now. This may be the last opportunity you will ever have.

But right here I say to you like that song leader told that man. He said right here, "You can be saved if you will just sue for mercy on the basis that Christ died for sinners and you are the sinner."

Oh, may God search your heart. And if you don't know him, may something have been said to stir your heart and cause you to sue for mercy because the greatest thing that can ever happen to you, if it ever does, is for the Lord Jesus to stop by your heart's door and call you with that effective, personal, marvelous, gracious, wonderful and eternal call and bring you out of darkness into his light forever.

Oh, if you are a witness of repentance, don't keep it to yourself. Share it with others. When you go to the Laundromat if you go there, if there is people there, just walk up to them and say, "May I ask you a question? Are you going to go to heaven when you die?"

And listen to them answer. And then tell them that Christ Jesus is still the world's only Savior.

Now the greatest thing that can happen to you is for you to get converted. And if you are, become, if you haven't been, so become a witness.

You have experienced repentance? Tell people what God has done for you personally. Share with them how the Lord brought you down into the dusty and ashes of repentance and raised you up in salvation. Don't get argument with them about doctrine or anything like that. You are wasting your time. Talk to them about the Lord Jesus because he and he alone is worthy to be talked about.

Brother, preacher.