

# The Cost of Not Following Christ

*Missions Conference 2009*

By Paul Washer

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**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 5:21

**Preached on:** Tuesday, October 20, 2009

## **Grace Community Church**

P.O. Box 10608

San Antonio, TX 78210

**Website:** [www.gccsatx.com](http://www.gccsatx.com)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/gcc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/gcc)

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Well, as always it is a tremendous privilege for me to be here. This morning I have a great amount of joy in my heart. I feel like I am going to explode, not for what you would think. This morning about 4:30 the Lord, I believe, woke me up and dealt with me over several tiny foxes that were ruining the Lord's vineyard, several tiny sins that are not tiny at all and gave me a marvelous time to see my need of grace to ask for repent... for forgiveness and to delight in pardon.

And what is amazing is I have been walking with the Lord for 26 years and after the prayer time and after then getting up and studying and things like that, I was overwhelmed at the joy that was in my heart. After 26 years I should have realized it is because things were right, things were right.

I just praise God for who he is, that he is so kind, that he is always working to sanctify us, to chance us, to mold us. There are no great men of God. There are only pitiful, weak, sinful men of a great and a merciful God. We should always remember that.

We are talking about following Christ at any cost, but this morning I am going to preach on Christ. I will always start everything I do with him because it is nonsensical to go any place else until you have dealt with him. But some of the things that we are going to think about possibly this week will be, well, the cost of following Christ. But have you ever thought of the cost of not following Christ? Have you ever thought how much you have already lost in this life because you have given yourself to the vanities of this world and not given yourself to following Christ?

Other things that we will consider is this, that the Christian life and missions is supernatural. The songs that we sang today I agreed with every one of them and they were wonderful and they were seeking to moved you to reach out to people. I am sorry that is not enough. It won't happen. A song won't do it. You must be filled with the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit and then witnessing will not be a work. It will be an outflow of that great power moving within you.

I will tell you this. I will say certain things and until I give the explanation you will think I am charismatic. But I will tell you this. Just because there is every kind of heresy out there with regard to the person of the Holy Spirit it does not mean that I am going to allow them to take the ministry of the Holy Spirit away from me. I know this. You cannot breathe apart from the fullness of the Holy Spirit. You cannot serve Christ apart from the fullness of the Holy Spirit and there are thousands of songs that seeks to move your heart to do the right thing. You will not and cannot do the right thing unless you be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now that is all there is to it.

But this morning we are going to speak much about Christ, about Christ.

Let's open up our Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 21. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>1</sup>

Some of the greatest theologians down through the ages of the Church have been afraid to touch this passage. What does it mean? That the one Isaiah saw in the temple, the one of whom the angels cried out, "Holy, holy, holy," on that tree, he who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf. This is a thing that you must understand. You must understand it. Even to begin a text like that let me say this. If your mind is wandering you ought to fall down on your face right now and just weep that a passage like that can be read about the Christ who redeemed you and you are still apathetic. If you think after a while that I have gone too long on this issue, know that your heart is wrong and you should repent. There is no greater message, no greater thought than what Christ has done for us on the cross. And if that doesn't move you it is because your heart is dead.

You may have religion. You may be evangelical. You may have prayed that sinner's prayer a thousand times, but I can assure you, you know not God.

So we will speak about Christ and the cross because that is the primary motivation for everything. If you have any motivation in the Christian life other than Jesus Christ you are an idolater. If you seek to do things because they are right, because they are moral, because they honor this person or that person, it is idolatry. Everything we do we do for him.

And so the more we know about him the more we will be pushed, moved, strengthened to follow him.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Another reason why I am dealing with this issue is because we have missionaries here and guests and ministers. My dear friend, this country is not gospel hardened. It is gospel ignorant and it is gospel ignorant because most of its ministers are.

We have taken the gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to four spiritual laws or five things God want you to know. We tell people Jesus died without being able or willing to explain it. Then we call them to say some little silly little prayer after us. And then we boast about their redemption and yet they do not grow in sanctification. We need to hear the gospel again and again and again. It needs to be expounded and explained. It needs to be believed in by the preacher knowing that he doesn't need another tool. The gospel is enough. The gospel is the only message that can save. He needs to know how to expound it and then he needs to know how to call men to Christ, not by asking them to repeat a prayer, by commanding with the authority of God that they repent and believe the gospel.

So we always must start a mission organization and a mission conference on the message of the gospel.

I am amazed at how many conferences I go to. I hear about how we ought to preach to the lost and that is true, how the world needs a Savior and that is true. I hear about statistics and methodologies. But most of it is rot. What we need is to understand the message, the only message that has the power to save.

Now let's look at our text.

“[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”<sup>2</sup>

Now I want you to think about this and think deeply. He knew no sin. Do you see the miracle in that? I want you to think about it this way. There has never been—and for those preachers who believed they arrived to sinless perfection or those Christians who believe they never sin, just tell them this. There has never been one moment in your life as a pagan or as a Christian, there has never been one moment in your life that you loved God as he ought to be loved.

One time someone asked me, “What is the greatest sin?”

I said, “Well, I never thought about it that way. I guess I have to think about it.”

I thought about it for a moment and I said, “Well, I suppose the greatest sin would be to break the greatest command. And the greatest command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.”

I am here to tell you today you have never done that, never once. And yet... Now listen to me. There was never one moment that Christ did not love the Lord his God with all his

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

heart, soul, mind and his strength. That takes obedience to a whole new level, doesn't it? That takes sinless perfection to a whole new level. There was never one time, never one thought, never one deed in which he did not love the Lord his God with every fiber of his being.

So when it says he knew no sin, wow. There has never been one moment or one deed in your life where you did it all, thought it all, said it all for the glory of God. Yet there was never one moment in the life of the captain of your salvation that he did not do everything he did for the glory of God. The miraculous nature of the life of Christ from the moment he was born till the moment of his death he loved the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. And everything he did, whether eating or drinking, he did it unto the glory of his Father.

There is enough right now to do nothing but sit here for the next seven days and ponder what I have already said. There is enough truth and majesty in what we have just heard to drive us around the world doing missions a million times. The greatness, the supremacy, the excellency of the man Christ Jesus.

But now it says here, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin, to be sin."<sup>3</sup>

Now, what does that mean? What does it mean?

You know, you can say a lot of things. Can you explain them? What does it mean that Christ became sin? Does it mean that when he was on that tree he became defiled, that he became corrupted, that he became in his nature, in his person something vile, something loathsome, something sinful? What does it mean that he was made sin?

Well, the answer is found for us in the same text. Look in verse 21.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>4</sup>

How did Christ become sin? How was he made to be sin? Well, how are we or how do we become righteous when we believe in the gospel? So there is your answer. The moment a person believes in the gospel they do not become a righteous being. That is to say, the moment they believed, their nature, their entire person is not so transformed that they become perfectly righteous as a being and never again sin. That is not what the Bible teaches. We are not infused with some special grace that makes us above sin.

So the moment you believed in Christ you did not become a righteous being and I can prove it. You still sin.

What happened was the moment you believed Christ you were forensically or legally declared righteous before the throne of God. It was a legal declaration before the throne

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

of God. You are righteous not based upon your own virtue, not based upon your own merit, but based upon the virtue and the merits of another, Jesus Christ the Lord.

So on believing in Christ we become legally declared righteous before the throne of God and—here is the important word—God treats us as righteous, as perfectly righteous in Christ.

So now we understand how he was made to be sin. When Jesus Christ was on that cross his nature did not become polluted. He did not become some corrupt, vile being. But our sins were imputed to him. And before the throne of God he was considered declared guilty and he was treated by God as guilty.

He always was and is and will be the spotless Lamb of God. But on that tree the sins of his people were imputed to him from the Latin phrase [?] which means to think or consider. He was legally declared guilty and then God treated him as a righteous God should treat the wicked and that is terrifying.

So that is what it means.

I want you to think about something. And it is a common, it is a vulgar illustration, but it is the best one I can find. Just think about this for a moment. It is one thing for a sinner who hates God to stand before the throne of God as guilty and to be treated as guilty. It is terrifying beyond words, but it is quite another thing for the precious and holy Son of the living God to hang before his Father and to have his Father declare him guilty and to have his Father treat him as the infidel, as the law breaker, as the criminal.

You see this rubbish about God made people because he was lonely. God did not make people because of some need. He made people out of the overflow of his abundance, not his lack. And he was not lonely because within the trinity we have this eternal, glorious relationship between the Father and the Son. The Son always being the Father's delight, they needing absolutely nothing from anything or anyone outside of themselves. They needed no heaven. They needed no earth and they needed no angel or man, but this perfect unity. And then on that tree for that to be broken, for that to be broken.

Think about it for a moment. Let's say that two of the ladies here who are very evangelistic and very godly and care about souls, they go out to somewhere in Detroit or Chicago or some metropolitan area and they decide that they are going to share the gospel with prostitutes. And so as they are sharing the gospel with a group of hardened, seasoned prostitutes the police come by with a paddy wagon and round up all the prostitutes and throw them in the paddy wagon and because of association these two dear sisters are thrown in the wagon with them.

Now, the hardened prostitutes, they will be laughing, chuckling, telling jokes there in the paddy wagon. They have been through this a million times. This is not a problem for them. The two dear sisters are sitting there almost to the point of being nauseous to vomit, terrified, feeling horrid, wanting to die, wanting to hide, wanting to escape.

They get to the police headquarters and they are all booked and finger printed and roughly treated. The girls are all sitting there in a cell laughing and talking to one another about how quickly they will get out. But the two Christian ladies are sitting there, again, beyond almost the ability to breathe, so full of shame, so full of guilt, so full of association with evil. It is something they do not know. It is not common to them.

Now, as I said, that is a pitiful illustration, but you and I were born as creatures who drink down iniquity like it was water, revel in sin and boast in it. We can no more understand the wickedness, the evil of our sin than a fish can understand he is wet.

Christ who knew no sin became sin.

We, prior to coming to know Christ lived under the wrath of God to such a degree that the apostle Paul called us children of wrath. Christ never knew anything but the favor of his Father, never knew anything, but this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased and yet on that tree it all changed. It all changed.

Now, I want us to look at several things. I have actually brought notes today because there is so... this is an intricate thing. I want you to see it. It is very important. Christ bore our sin and Christ became a curse.

And you say, “Yes, brother Paul, I have heard some of you sermons. You preach on that.”

No, we are going to go much deeper. I think two years ago when I was here I spoke something of think but we are going to go farther now.

Christ became a curse on that tree. As the Scriptures say, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”<sup>5</sup>

You are under a curse. To be redeemed from the curse, Christ had to suffer the curse in your place. He had to become a curse. Christ redeemed us from the cure of the law being made, having become a curse in our place.

Now, what is a curse? It is the complete opposite of blessing. And what I want to do today is I want to go through both blessings and turn them on their head, show you the opposite of blessing and I want to go through curses and show you that every covenant curse in the entire Bible fell upon the head of the Son of God when he was on that tree. Every curse that should fall upon and crush the covenant breaker—which is you and me—in order to spare us, had to fall upon him.

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<sup>5</sup> Galatians 3:10.

Now, first of all, if you want to know something about a curse then think of something about a blessing. One of the greatest passages on blessing that we have in the entire Scriptures is the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter five.

But I want to switch them around. You know them:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.<sup>6</sup>

And so on and so forth.

Well, now we are going to turn those around and I want you to realize that this is what fell upon Christ.

According to Matthew five, the blessed are granted the kingdom of heaven, but the cursed are refused entrance. The blessed are recipients of divine comfort.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”<sup>7</sup>

But the cursed are objects of divine wrath and so was Christ.

The cursed are satisfied, but the blessed are satisfied, but the cursed die miserable and wretched. The blessed receive mercy. The cursed are condemned without pity. The blessed shall see God. The cursed are cut off from his presence. The blessed are sons and daughters of God and the cursed are disowned in disgrace. This is what fell upon Christ.

Listen to me. You listen carefully. If you can learn only one truth from everything said this week, then learn these words. The only way you could ever be blessed in anything is because he died cursed in everything. It adds a whole new meaning when someone asks you, “How are you doing?” And you go, “Blessed.”

Well, while you think blessed, then let your lip tremble for a moment because you are blessed only because he died cursed.

How we can so quickly learn to play in this superficial age of ours, learn to play marbles with the diamonds of God. That blessing of yours that you so boast of and rightly so, think of the cost every time it rolls off your lips. Think of the cost.

There was a transaction. You are now blessed, but only because he was cursed.

Now, there is an illustration of what it means to be cursed that I have used for years. I can't find another that would be better. But it is this. To say that someone is under the curse of the law, the curse of God because of their sin is to say this. That the last thing

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:4.

the accursed person will hear when they take their first step into hell is all of creation standing to its feet and applauding God because God has rid the earth of them.

See, that is why there is not much power in gospel preaching anymore because we are too afraid to say things like that. Under the band, away with them to eternal destruction.

Yet Christ redeemed us from that curse by having that pronounced upon him. Thus, he suffered outside the gates of the city.

Now, I want to do something. I have gone into all the old covenant, the Mosaic law and the curses and pulled them out because what you have to understand is if these curses were to fall upon the head of the covenant breaker, that is you. And I want to show you now how these covenant curses instead of falling upon you, fell upon the only covenant keeper there has ever been and that is Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in the book of the law we discover that Moses is told to divide up the people of God and they are to stand on two different mountains. Those that stand on Mount Ebal are to pronounce all the curses of God upon the covenant breakers, those that are disobedient to the law. And those who stand on Mount Gerizim are to pronounce all the blessings that should fall upon the head of the covenant keeper.

Let's look at these curses, but as they apply to Jesus Christ when he was our sin bearer on that tree.

He is on the cross and he cries out such an important statement that it is transliterated for us, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"<sup>8</sup>

And the answer from heaven, from the Father's throne is this. "The Lord, the Lord God almighty damns you."

The Christ looks up to heaven and cries out, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"<sup>9</sup>

No answer of consolation, but only this. "The Lord your God damns you."

And then he goes on. Now these are all the curses verbatim. Divine judgment looked down upon the Christ while he was hanging on that tree and says, "The Lord sends upon you curses, confusion, rebuke until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly. The Lord smites you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart and you will grope at noon."

Is it any wonder to you why it became so dark at that time? You will grope at noon, as a blind man gropes in darkness with none to save you. The Lord delights over you to make you perish and destroy you and you will be torn from the land. Cursed shall you be in the

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

city and cursed shall you be in the fields. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed shall you be when you go out. The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze and the earth which is under you iron. You shall be a proverb and a taunt among the people.

Let all these curses come upon you and pursue you and over take you until you are destroyed because you would not obey the Lord your God by keeping his commandment and his statutes which he commanded you.

Now think about this. The only covenant keeper must via the Lord Jesus Christ when he took our sin upon himself, he was treated as the one guilty and the only covenant keeper is now treated as the single covenant breaker. And all the curses of the law from the throne of God are cast down upon his head.

Let me keep going with the curses of the law. As Christ bore our sin upon Calvary he was cursed as a man who makes an idol and sets it up in secret. That is the way the Father treated him. He was cursed as one who dishonored his Father or mother, who moves his neighbor's boundary mark or misleads a blind person on the road. He was cursed as one who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan and widow. He was cursed as one who is guilty of every manner of immorality and perversion, who wounds his neighbor in secret or accepts a bribe to strike down the innocent. He was cursed as one who does not confirm the words of the law by doing them.

Do you want to talk about the sufferings of Christ? Get all romantic about the crown of thorns and the whip on his back. You don't understand the cross. That is not the pain of the cross. The pain of the cross is not what puny men did to the mighty Christ. The pain of the cross is what God the Father did to his only begotten Son.

Some of you have never even heard such preaching. And yet you claim to be preachers of the gospel, conservative, fundamental and all those other terms. This is the true cross.

There is a passage in Proverbs that says, "Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, So a curse without cause does not alight."<sup>10</sup>

So how do all these curses alight upon the Christ, the one Isaiah calls the Branch?

There was no cause in him. Even his enemies could not find reason to condemn him. It was because he stood as the old Baptist preachers used to say, he stood in your law place.

He bore your guilt. He was condemned by holy God as you ought to be in order to satisfy justice, appease the wrath of God and make it possible for a holy righteous God to forgive wicked men and yet still be holy and righteous.

Now, I want to go on for a moment, skip through some notes.

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<sup>10</sup> Proverbs 26:2.

Psalms 32. Let me read it to you.

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!  
How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And  
in whose spirit there is no deceit!<sup>11</sup>

Get on the cross and let's just turn this text around.

Sin was imputed to Christ.

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!  
How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity.<sup>12</sup>

But on the cross sin was imputed to Christ. He was exposed before God and the host of heaven. He was placarded before men. The iniquity of you that he carried was not forgiven him, but he was crushed under the wrath of almighty God.

That is what happened.

In the renewal of the mosaic covenants in Moab there is a very, very important passage that explains what will happen to the one who does not obey all the words written in the book of the law so as to perform them. And this is what it says. I want you to listen.

“The anger of the LORD and His jealousy will burn against that man, and every curse which is written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.”<sup>13</sup>

Now listen to this.

“Then the LORD will single him out for adversity from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant which are written in this book of the law.”<sup>14</sup>

The covenant breaker was to be singled out and upon his head all the curses were to fall. But the covenant keeper, the covenant breakers are now saved because the only covenant keeper who ever walked this planet was singled out in their place. And all of the fierce hatred of God against evil fell upon the Son of God who stood in the place of his people.

Do you remember—I hope you do—in Numbers six there is the priestly blessing? Let's just read it for a moment.

Turn with me to Numbers six for a second, verse 24.

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 32:1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 29:20.

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 29:21.

The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.<sup>15</sup>

One of the greatest theological and philosophical questions in all of Scripture is this. If God is good, he can't do that. If God is just, he can't do that. Why? Because we are wicked and a just God should act justly with us.

Sometimes when I am speaking at a university I know the cards are stacked against me and I know that they think I am going to get on the platform and I am going to start speaking about righteousness and holiness and wrath and all these things and they are waiting there to debate and yell and scream and holler. So I stand before the university audience and I say this. You have a great problem. And I know what they are all thinking.

“Yes, we have this great problem because of your Puritan view of God.”

No, you have a great problem, a terrifying problem. It is this. God is good.

And I can just see their eyes. “Well, what is the problem with that?”

Well, the problem with that is this. He is good and you are evil. And because he is good and loving he must deal with loveless evil people like you.

You see, so how can God pronounce a blessing like that upon the head of the people of Israel? How can he pronounce a blessing like that upon you? This is how. Because the Lord looked at his only begotten Son on that tree that day and said this, “The Lord curse you and give you over to destruction. The Lord take the light of his presence from you and condemn you. The Lord turn his face from you and fill you with misery.”

Now, talk for a moment about the wrath of God.

Preacher, I have heard a thousand Easter sermons and most of them make me sick because they will talk at length, go on and on and on about the crown of thorns and the whipping on the back and the nails in the hand and the spear in the side and just on and on and on about the physical sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Christ did suffer physically. That was a part of our redemption. It was necessary. We had to be saved by a bloody sacrifice. But if you leave it there, you have not taught the people anything about the cross, nothing because as I have said a million times the pain of the cross is not just what men did to Christ. It was what God did to his Son.

He is in a garden and he cries out three times, “Let this cup pass from me, let this cup pass from me, let this cup pass from me.”

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<sup>15</sup> Numbers 6:24-26.

I have heard preachers say that is the Roman cross, that is the cat of nine tails. That is this and that and every other thing.

Let me ask you a question. Have you read Church history? Well, if you have then you understand for the next several centuries after the death of the Messiah and his resurrection that there were countless Christians who died on cross, even crucified upside down, covered in kerosene and pitch and tar and set on fire to provide lights for the streets of Rome.

And history tells us that the great majority of those Christians of those Christians went to that crucifixion of theirs singing hymns joyfully and rejoicing that they could suffer the same fate as their Lord.

Now, are you going to tell me that a group of tiny little mortal Christians are bolder and braver than the captain of their salvation? Are you going to tell me Christ trembled at a Roman whip?

He laughs at the Roman legions. What was in the cup?

I will never forget when they are teaching at a wonderful classic reformed school and I told them, I said, "I am going to teach on propitiation today."

They asked me, they said to teach to the entire student body.

I said, "Well, I am going to preach on propitiation. Who is going to be in there?"

They said, "Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade."

Ok. And then the headmaster looked at me and he said, "Won't be a problem."

So I got in there and I started teaching and I finally said, "Students, what was in the cup? What was in the cup?"

I will never forget. A little eight or nine year old girl raised her hand.

I said, "Yes, dear."

She stood up. Put her hand on the desk and she said, "Sir, the wrath of almighty God was in the cup."

Out of the mouth of babes. What most evangelical preachers if they know it they never teach it. She knew it clearly.

Listen to this. I just want to read from the prophets.

“For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.”<sup>16</sup>

What was in the cup? The wrath of God.

For thus the LORD, the God of Israel, says to me, "Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."<sup>17</sup>

But it was Christ on that tree who reached up and took the cup of the wrath of God out of the hand of God and drank it in the place of his people. That is the gospel.

Imagine for a moment that you are standing an eight of a mile away from a dam that is 10,000 miles high and 10,000 miles wide and filled to the brim with water, you and your little village. And all of a sudden in one moment's time the wall of that dam is torn away and here comes this massive flood of water, a deluge. It doesn't matter how strong you are swimming, it doesn't matter the length or degree of your endurance. There is no hope. The fleetest of foot cannot run away. You are going to be crushed, every one of you.

And right before the water reaches the town the earth itself opens up and drinks down the mighty deluge to the point that not even one drop of water touches your shoe.

So was the wrath of God coming against you and so did Christ open himself up and drink it down so that not one drop is left for you.

Imagine a mill stone 10,000 pound mill stone with another 10,000 pounder on top of it. One turning each in a direction countering the other and all of the sudden you take a single grain of wheat and you stick it in there between the two. Not even a moment or a fraction of a moment. Close by to the pressure, the weight, explodes it. It comes around. There is nothing left of it.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies [under the wrath of God], it bears much fruit.”<sup>18</sup>

Now, I want to quote a passage and I am also going to give the interpretation of it from my favorite author of all time and my favorite work of all time outside of Scripture and it is John Flavel talking about the essential glories of Christ. Please read that. I can't read it without weeping. I can't even think about it without dancing. I have never seen such an exaltation outside of Scripture.

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<sup>16</sup> Psalm 75:8.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremiah 25:15-16.

<sup>18</sup> John 12:24.

What I call this is the Father's bargain. John Flavel, what he does is set up for us in eternity the Father and the Son are speaking about man and the fall of men. This is their conversation.

"Here you may suppose," John Flavel says, "the Father to say when driving his bargain with Christ for you."

The Father speaks. "My Son, here is a company of poor miserable souls. They have utterly undone themselves and now lie open to my justice."

You ask somebody some time. "Are you saved?"

"Yes."

"From what?"

"From sin."

No, no, my friend. Sin wasn't after you. When a man gets saved he gets saved from God. The justice of God was coming for you. God saved you from himself. God saved you for himself and God saved you by himself.

He interposed against his own justice that was coming for you. They now lie open to my justice. Justice demands satisfaction for them.

God cannot simply pardon. His own justice must be satisfied first. He says, "Justice demand satisfaction for them or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them. What shall be done for these souls?"

And so Christ returns. He speaks. "Oh, my Father, such is my love to and pity for them that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their guarantee."

Now listen to this language. "Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee."

And what is he saying? You know, there are many people who make commitment to love and then when it gets too tough, too costly they say, "No, I never intended this. No, no. This has gone too far. I didn't know what I was doing when I made the commitment."

The mighty Christ is standing there before the Father and he says, "Bring in all their bills. Show me exactly what they owe thee."

So that when we became incarnate, when he left the glories of heaven he knew exactly what he was doing. He knew exactly how much it would cost.

He says, "Bring in all thy bills that I may see what they owe thee. Lord, bring them all in."

Now this is beautiful. This is the doctrine of justification. "Bring all their bills in that their may be no after reckonings with them."

Do you understand what he is saying? "Father, bring them all in, every one of them. We will deal with them there on that tree so that when I die they are each and every one of them paid in full so that after, after, after that moment, the moment they believe there will never again be a reckoning with them. They will be completely, perfectly, forever justified in your sight. Not one bill, not one crime outstanding."

Remember this. Adam and Eve sinned one time and it cast the entire universe into condemnation. If one bill, the tiniest among them is left outstanding you still go to hell.

So he said, "Bring them all in. I want to see them so that afterwards you will never again approach these people as judge to condemn."

Know this, that the one who judges you on that final day, Christian, you will not be looking into the face of a judge, but a Father who judges because all has been paid.

Now he goes on. "At my hand shall thou require it, Father. What they owe you, at my hand, you shall require it of me. I would rather choose to suffer their wrath than they should suffer it upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debts."

And then the Father responds, "But my Son, if thou undertake for them," now listen, "Thou must pay the very last mite. Expect no abatement."

When you are in the jungles on the Amazon a deluge can come, a rain can come so quickly it will fill up your boat in five minutes and you are sunk. You see, a storm coming down the river, terrifying, winds blowing. You are trying to make it to the side. You are hoping that somehow before it reaches you it is going to abate. It is going to calm down. It is going to divide. It is going to go in some other direction.

And what the Father is saying to his Son is, "Son, if you take this, expect no abatement. The full force of my wrath and justice that must be poured out on them will be poured out on you."

And he says this. "If I spare them, I will not spare you, Son."

The Son replies, "Content, Father. Let it be so. Charge it all upon me. I am able to discharge it and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, yet I am content to take it.

I want to close in the book of Genesis. An old man there is tested with regard to idols in

his heart. God approaches Abraham and he says this. “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love.”<sup>19</sup>

Do you think God is trying to tell us something here? Do you think that God is maybe pointing to something much farther away, someone much more glorious than Abraham’s son?

“He said, Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”<sup>20</sup>

So the old man, he obeys. He takes his Son. It is remarkable again. In Old Testament writings I can see its place. I can seem to indicate that something is going on here to teach us and that we hear of no struggle by Isaac whatsoever. Again, is he pointing to something much greater than this event? This son, this only son whom Abraham loved lays down on an altar and the old man raises back that knife, possibly lays his hand on the brow of his son and as he is given over to the will of God and brings down the knife his hand is stayed and he hears this.

“‘Abraham, Abraham... Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ he said. ‘Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’”<sup>21</sup>

Then Abraham looks over in a thicket and there is a ram caught by the horns. And he calls the place Yahweh or Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide. And everyone breathes a sigh of relief. What a beautiful ending to the story.

There is only one problem. It is not the ending. It is the intermission. Hundreds of years later, hundreds and hundreds of years roll by and the curtain opens up again. And there hangs Jesus Christ, God’s Son, God’s only Son whom he loved. And he cries out, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”<sup>22</sup>

And God takes the knife out of Abraham’s hand and slaughters his only begotten Son in your place.

That is why when I hear these TV preachers. Please I am not a violent man and I am most certainly not a strong man. Don’t ever point to your new car and say, “Jehovah Jireh.”

I will say, “Let your car die with you.”

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<sup>19</sup> Genesis 22:2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 22:12-13.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34.

Jehovah Jireh, it is not talking about providing a car. It is not talking about providing a lamb. The Lord will provide a lamb who must die under the wrath of God.

Do you know God said this to Abraham, “Abraham, Abraham... Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.”<sup>23</sup>

Now you and I who believe can say this to God. “God, my God, I know that you love me since you have not withheld your Son, your only Son whom you loved from me.”

Missions, you need to be pumped up about missions. You need to be moved about missions. You need to be motivated. Let your motivation die with you. I care not a cent for motivation if this does not move you to devotion, if this does not move you to missions then nothing will help that stone dead cold heart of yours. It is Christ, making much of Christ.

The world needs to hear the real gospel. You know why missions and church planting and Church growth and all this other stuff, so many systems and cultural ideas and this and that and relevancy and all this mess in the evangelical community. Do you know why it is necessary? Because people no longer understand the gospel, the very people who are supposed to preach it. We have to go to every sort of goofy trinket to try to find some power, to try to find some relevancy because we don't know the gospel.

Men are hard. Men are stone dead. Men hate God all over the world. There are not people around this world waiting for us to go to them and tell them. When you go there and tell them they won't even want to hear it. But you go for him and then by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ the Spirit of God will come down and raise the dead and he will get a people for himself.

He will not do it by finding some cultural key to unlock the heart of a certain people group. He will do it through your faithful preaching of the gospel. What this world needs today are preachers who preach the gospel over and over and over and over.

Is it any reason? Have you read through? Read through, I dare you, hundreds, thousands of Spurgeon's sermons. Do you know what you will find? When you read the first one, you read them all. He preaches about one thing, Christ. It doesn't matter what his text is. He is going to go right back to Christ. He is going to go right back to the cross, he is going to go right back to the justice of God being satisfied and the wrath of God being appeased. Is it any wonder why Spurgeon is considered the greatest preacher who ever lived? I'll tell you why, because he knew the gospel and it is all he preached and it never got boring to him.

We don't need more missionaries. There is more mission activity going on in this world today than there has ever been. Every sort of mission organization, every sort of

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<sup>23</sup> Genesis 22:11-12.

missionary, every sort of ministry. But how many of all of it has to do with the transmission of the doctrinal, biblical truth, of teaching the Word of God to people?

If you go out to the field don't take with you some system. Don't take with you some strategy. Don't take with you all the different things they are teaching as essentials in missions today. You take with you a Bible. You walk out into that plaza. You open it up and you preach Christ. Not some modern contemporary four spiritual laws, five things God want you to know about Jesus gospel, the real gospel. Preach it and call men to repentance and call men to faith and let them know this, that the evidence of true conversion is the continuing work of sanctification. That is the evidence.

So much to be said and so little time and I have taken so much from you, but I don't regret it. You need this. We will talk about missions. We will walk about going. We will talk about it. But as my wife likes to say, "What part of go don't you understand?" How much of this needs to be explained?

I pray the Holy Spirit will fall down upon this place and honor the Christ. That's what I pray.

God bless you.