

Dead, Dry Doctrine?

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Bible Text: Deuteronomy 32:1-4

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Turn in your Bibles this morning to the book of Deuteronomy and the 32nd chapter. I will begin reading in verse one and read about the first four verses, Deuteronomy 32 and verse one.

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.¹

I don't know how many times that I have heard men speak saying something like this.

“That is preaching just dead, dry doctrine.”

And the sad thing is, sometimes it comes from the lips of those who are supposed to believe the gospel. To me it is a sad thing to hear anyone use the word “doctrine” as if it was a dirty word, one to be avoided.

Some say things like this.

“Don't preach doctrine. Just preach Jesus.”

But this is not what God says, nor is it the way that he uses this word. You see, this word is used in the Bible almost 50 times. And rather than speaking of it in that light, he says it like this.

“Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine”²

¹ Deuteronomy 32:1-4.

² Proverbs 4:1-2.

I give you good doctrine.

And if you look here in this second verse you will find out quite a bit about this doctrine that he is speaking of.

He says, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”³

We would certainly at this very hour welcome such a shower in the natural. All the blades of grass, all the flowers and the remaining crops and all these things. They just cry out with this kind of rain. They wouldn't receive it as something bad. And this is how God in his condescending mercy to us speaks of his doctrine so that we might have some kind of invitation as what it is to his people.

What does this word “doctrine” mean? Well, it simply means teaching. It has to do with that which is taught but not only that, it has to do also with the reception of what is taught, the reception of the teachings that are taught. And it is not here simply a teaching or something that is taught that can be merely accepted if one wills or rejected if one wills. And that is because he says it is my doctrine.

If something is only the doctrine of a man, if it is your doctrine or my doctrine or the doctrine of Dr. so and so, then it is always presented as that which can be either believed or not believed. Not so with God's doctrine. His doctrine is to be received and believed as well as it is to be taught. It is the doctrine of God. But this is also the reason that men by nature reject it and will not believe it of themselves. It is because the natural mind, the carnal mind is enmity against God. As a matter of fact, we will receive about any other doctrine. We will believe about anything.

I heard this week the man who is famous and so trusted for his hurricane projections. He said this. He said, “What men are saying and believing about global warming,” he said, “It won't be many years before they will look back and realize how foolish it was.”

We will believe anything and especially in the spiritual realm, we will believe anything and anybody as long as it is not accurately God's doctrine. But if you notice here, his doctrine as it comes to his people and as it is before the world, it comes as a sovereign doctrine. Why does she use the rain to illustrate it or the dew? It is because just like God's doctrine, just like his doctrine, men cannot say whether they will have rain or they won't have rain, whether the dew will fall or whether it will not fall. If it was such with men with the dew or the rain we would have a shower right now.

But it comes from the sovereign God who gives his doctrine just like the rain, just like the dew that falls. It comes with a power that cannot be stopped. And this further shows where the problem is. It is doctrine that is like the rain and dew which is not dead. Think about this.

³ Deuteronomy 32:2.

He said, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew,”⁴ sent by God sovereignly. It will be like the rain which is moist and living and refreshing. So if the rain falls on that which is already dead, which has no life in it whatsoever, it will be absolutely of no benefit to us. But if the rain falls on what he describes as the living, on that plant or on that grass to which God has given life, it is refreshment. It is life itself. It is wonderful because it is made alive by God.

And so God’s doctrine as it goes forth is only received with delight and benefit by each and every one of his people who have been made alive by the Spirit of God and given faith of God to believe it, to rejoice in it. And this is how he likens us as he speaks through the apostle Peter.

He says, “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”⁵

So what we have here is this reality. Those who think that this doctrine is dry and dead are really dead themselves, dead spiritually. If God’s doctrine that by which he called his own Word, his own speakings, as he says here, “Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth,”⁶ he says, “This is my doctrine and if it is received or thought of as nothing but dead dry doctrine, that is the testimony of death.”

If it comes to my ears as such, if it is in my mind such nothing but dead, dry doctrine, then I am dead, dead in trespasses and sin. And what men call dry, dead doctrine is really the doctrine of the living God. His doctrine is the gospel. His doctrine is the doctrine of Christ. And according to God this doctrine is ordained of him and sent of him to a people who will receive it wherever they are found and rejoice in it like a lost thirsty man in the desert.

It is going to be rain to some herb that he has made tender. It is going to fall as that which is welcome and so needed to somebody who is in this world which is a desert place. This is what he says about it.

“They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.”⁷

Why? Because that is the will and purpose of God. That is the means by which he reveals his self and his salvation to his people. That is the means of blessing. All the blessings of grace, that is the way it will come to them. And when the Lord Jesus Christ was here on this earth he identified with this doctrine. Let me read you what he says in John seven.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 1 Peter 1:24.

⁶ Deuteronomy 32:1.

⁷ Isaiah 29:24.

“And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine.”⁸

This is Jehovah’s servant speaking. And he attributes as Jehovah’s servant his fact that the doctrine is not his, especially but the Father’s particularly.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.⁹

He said, “I am come and my doctrine is the doctrine of him that sent me,” and it is a doctrine through which he is glorified and exalted.

And then he says this in Matthew seven.

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.”¹⁰

What does that tell you and me? His doctrine is simply his sayings which are the sayings which, which are the will, which are the doctrine of the eternal God. That is sin.

“For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”¹¹

Turn over to John 17 for just a minute. John chapter 17 and look down at verse eight at what our Lord prays to the Father. He says of these that the Father gave him out of the world, verse eight.

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.”¹²

His doctrine, the doctrine of God has got something to do with words. He is called the Word and we will never know him who is the living Word apart from the written Word. Listen to what he says.

“For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”¹³

And then he goes on to say this.

⁸ John 7:15-16.

⁹ John 7:16-18.

¹⁰ Matthew 7:28.

¹¹ Matthew 7:29.

¹² John 17:8.

¹³ Ibid.

“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”¹⁴

And then a little later he says, “Father, I pray for them that shall believe through these words.”

The words, the sayings of Christ and furthermore his sayings and these sayings of his apostle are the same and they are set in Scripture in opposition to every other teaching.

Listen to what he says in Matthew 16.

How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.¹⁵

When he said to them, “Beware the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees,” he was not talking about bread. He was saying, “Beware of the influence of, the intermingling with and the whole of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”

And their doctrine was simply the doctrine of salvation by man’s works. They had all their little rituals and ceremonies. They had their oral law and their tradition. They had a way to dress. They had a way to tithe. They had a way to do this and that and the other. But when it is all boiled down to its finest essence, they believed that they recommended themselves to God on the basis of something that they did or something that they did not do or something that they thought, something of their own works. And Christ said, “Beware of that doctrine,” because Christ’s doctrine, the doctrine of God is salvation by the grace of God. Works and grace will not mix. They are contradictory to one another in the matter of salvation.

God’s doctrine, he says, is in Christ through his blood and his righteousness, plus nothing. And it is still the same today.

And although this has been the doctrine of God throughout all eternity when it is preached and I should say even by Christ himself, it comes to fallen man as something absolutely new and novel and so contrary to what we have been taught by men and taught by religion and so contrary to what we naturally want to believe that it shocks us.

It is easier to call it dead, dry doctrine and let’s hear a sermon with a lot of illustrations and let’s hear a man stand up and tell a lot of stories and let’s hear somebody stand up and tell us how we are to live and what we are to do and talk about stewardship or whatever it is, anything but this doctrine.

¹⁴ John 17:9.

¹⁵ Matthew 16:11-12.

Tell us about anything or anybody other than God. Tell us anything, any story, give us any information historical events, whatever it is, do anything, but set forth the things that distinguish the Lord Jesus Christ.

They thought when Christ preached it was some new doctrine. They thought when he spoke the things of God it says they were astonished at his doctrine. They were afraid of the authority that seemed to be joined to his doctrine. But the doctrine of God just like the rain comes down from heaven and has the authority of God behind it and it says what he commands. And it promises what he promises and it is thus saith the Lord, because it is God's gospel.

And we wouldn't even have to use terms like that if it were not as the apostle Paul warned us there are another gospel.

Do you notice how that he really doesn't say that there are other gospels? And the reason why he doesn't say there are other gospels, he does say that there is really not another gospel, there is just one gospel, one doctrine of God. But the reason he doesn't say that is because put them all together, they are simply man's ways.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”¹⁶

There are many ways in that way. But regardless of what they are, they are the way of death. . And that is what seems right to us. That is what this flesh wants to believe. That is what we want to hope in and trust in. And apart from the grace of God that is exactly what we do. And this is what all of God's prophets and God's preachers need and this is the message that they have to preach and must preach. God says, “It is my doctrine.”

And that is because it glorifies only God.

If you wanted a rule of thumb to take and have in your mind so you would be able to determine what is of God and what is not of God, just ask yourself if you read something or hear something, does this ascribe all the glory to God? Or does it in some way glorify man and his ability or his will or his works or something like that?

You see, this is the only thing that gives hope to a real sinner. And this is what it is appointed to be to the Lord's people in every age, good years. And this is what Paul who was himself taken to the backside of the desert where he had to unlearn a multitude of things that he had learned sitting at the feet of Gamaliel and when God almighty taught him the things that he himself was to know and the things that he was to speak to others, every time he writes to Titus or Timothy he reminds them of this.

Take your Bibles. Hold your place here and turn over to 1 Timothy and the first chapter. Look at what it says in the very third verse.

¹⁶ Proverbs 14:12.

He is writing to this young preacher and this is the instruction to every preacher if he be such in every age.

He says in verse three, “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.”¹⁷

He said, “I left you behind and it was for this specific purpose that you charge, that you teach, that you instruct these left in your care that they teach no other doctrine.”

Now rather than somebody, rather than Paul saying, “You tell them, I mean, you go and you assure... be assured that you don’t preach anything but Jesus, don’t preach any doctrine,” no he said, “You make sure that none preach any other doctrine.”

All right. Look over in 1 Timothy four and verse six.

“If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.”¹⁸

What does he say a good minister of Jesus Christ, a good under shepherd of the flock of God, what is he? He is a servant who in his seeking out and in his study is nourished up by the grace of God in the words of faith and of good doctrine and he puts the brethren in remembrance of these things.

Look down also in verse 13. He says to this preacher, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”¹⁹

You see, this is not something outside of the gospel. This is the gospel.

Look also in verse 16.

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them.”²⁰

Continue to live a life that is consistent with what you preach, continue in the doctrine.

“...for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”²¹

That is the gospel. That is the doctrine.

Look down in chapter five of 1 Timothy and verse 17.

¹⁷ 1 Timothy 1:3.

¹⁸ 1 Timothy 4:6.

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 4:13.

²⁰ 1 Timothy 4:16.

²¹ Ibid.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.”²²

Sometimes people lay to the charge of a preacher this. Well, he is not really much of a preacher, but he is a pretty good teacher. They don't know they have paid that man the highest compliment. Somebody is thinking of preaching as who can preach the loudest or tell the best stories or entertain the most or whatever it is, have the most seeming authority behind it.

I hear somebody say sometimes, “That was powerful preaching.”

I read that. I heard that not too long ago. He did some powerful preaching. What does that mean? I am asking you. What does that mean? You can take about everything that is in every person you have ever heard preach, but they didn't preach the gospel, now, but they preached the loudest.

One lady said, “He preached hell so hot you could feel the fire,” but he didn't have a clue of the gospel. He didn't say what thus saith the Lord. He went though the Bible maybe like somebody picking strawberries, picked the ones that he liked, thought were the ripest.

Well, he had such a forceful personality or he had the greatest eloquence of tongue. That is not powerful preaching. You want me to tell you what powerful preaching is? Powerful preaching is the preaching of the gospel and it is only powerful preaching if it is attended by the power and might of the Spirit of God and otherwise it is just words falling off the lips of a man.

That hymn writer said it right. All is vain unless the Spirit of the holy one come down. Unless God the mighty and powerful Spirit takes the true things of God and brings them into our heart and makes them to be like the refreshing rain on that parched place, it may be the loudest, it may be the most intellectual, it may be the most illustrative, it may be the most entertaining, but it is not truly powerful preaching.

Look over in 2 Timothy chapter three and verse 16. Well, let's look back at verse 15.

Paul says to Timothy:

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.²³

Do you see that? All Scripture.

²² 1 Timothy 5:17.

²³ 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

Look over in chapter four of 2 Timothy. In the second verse he says to this man, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”²⁴

How are you going to reprove the Lord’s people? With doctrine. How are you going to rebuke the Lord’s people? With doctrine.

But now listen to this. How are you going to encourage them, exhort them? With doctrine. With the gospel. The gospel by which God reveals his grace in Christ to us is the same gospel by which we are reprovved and rebuked and exhorted and encouraged.

But, sadly, Paul says, knowing what he knows by the Spirit of God:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.²⁵

Fairy tales, stories, man’s wisdom.

For this doctrine is to be held steadfastly to. It is to be believed. It is to be contended for. And our lives are to be consistent with it. And that is the way it was in the early Church and that is the way it is to be in today’s Church.

“Then they that gladly received his word...”²⁶ That is what Peter preached. “...were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly [first of all] in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”²⁷

What is the first thing he said that characterized the New Testament Church that Church at Jerusalem? They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine.

Turn back to 1 Timothy chapter six again. He closes out this first letter here in this last chapter to Timothy he says, “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour.”²⁸

In other words, this simply means that the Lord saves his people wherever they are at. He doesn’t guarantee them civil liberty. He guarantees them spiritual liberty. And he was saying here, “If you are a servant, if you are a slave in situation and the Lord in mercy

²⁴ 2 Timothy 4:2.

²⁵ 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

²⁶ Acts 2:41.

²⁷ Acts 2:41-42.

²⁸ 1 Timothy 6:1.

reveals his salvation to you in Christ,” he said, “You count your masters worthy of all honor.”

...that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.²⁹

You see, this doctrine carries with it in all those who believe it, a life that reflects exactly the grace that has been given.

Turn over to Titus chapter one. Look down at verse nine as Paul describes to Titus what a bishop is, a pastor, a preacher of the gospel.

“But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.”³⁰

Verse nine.

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”³¹

What does he preach? What does he teach? Sound doctrine.

Chapter two verse one. He said, “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”³²

What is that?

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing

²⁹ 1 Timothy 6:1-5.

³⁰ Titus 1:8.

³¹ Titus 1:9.

³² Titus 2:1.

uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;
10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.³³

Paul writes to that church at Ephesus and he says, “Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”³⁴

Now how important is this doctrine? Well, like I said. When he says “doctrine” here in Deuteronomy 32 that means that that word has the thought not only of that which is taught, but that which must be received. And it is so essential to and necessary to our salvation and to God’s glory that this is what John says.

He said, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”³⁵

Now that is not me making something there. That is God making it there.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.”³⁶

I don’t care how many times he or she uses the name of Jesus, say they love Jesus, they have served Jesus, all this. No.

“He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there³⁷ come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.”

You say, “That is pretty hard.”

That is what God says of his doctrine which is the doctrine of his Christ. And all who now Christ and believe on him, they do so because they have been indoctrinated by God.

Why is it that some believe and some don’t believe? Is it anything in them?

No. These that believe have been literally indoctrinated by God. That is what he says. That is what Christ says in John six.

He said, “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God.”³⁸

³³ Titus 2:2-10.

³⁴ Ephesians 4:14.

³⁵ 2 John 1:9.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ 2 John 1:10-11.

Well, I had a funny feeling. Well, so did I, lots of times. Well, I just think that this is what the situation is. Well, I thought a lot of things and have been wrong.

Where do you get your hope? What is the basis of you believing you are going to go heaven? What is the basis of you believing that God will accept you?

He said, “And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard...”³⁹

Certainly by the ear gate, but more than that.

As Christ says, “He that hath an ear, let him hear.”⁴⁰

“Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, [Christ said] cometh unto me,”⁴¹ believes on me, believes the doctrine of Christ which has to do with the things of Scripture which distinguish him and teach us who he is and what he has done.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Well, which one are you talking about? Why would just simply the name of Jesus or why would this have any bearing on whether or not you really had a confidence that is soundly based? This is the doctrine of God our Savior which is what? That salvation is of the Lord.

And the truth of the matter is we can know everything else except the doctrine of God and really know nothing.

Well, you know how to do this. You know this about your job. You know this about what your money and school. You know this because you do this. You know all these things. But what is that going to matter when you stand before God? You know the current events. You read the newspaper. You do all these things. I tell you we best be reading the Scriptures.

You see, it is like rain. Salvation is God’s to give or to withhold. And he gives it to whom he will just like he gives the gospel to whom he will. Everybody hasn’t heard the gospel. Multiplied millions of people will never hear of this gospel. That doesn’t make them any less accountable.

You see, his doctrine is the doctrine of grace, that salvation is all of God’s grace. That means it can’t be merited or deserved or earned or in any way approved of. It is all of grace. God’s doctrine is that the gospel is the good news that salvation is all in Christ. That is not in what he tells us to do. It is in what he has done. It is all in Christ as the one

³⁸ John 6:45.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

⁴¹ John 6:45.

whom God has appointed and accepted. It is in him as our representative before God. It is in him as our prophet who speaks to us for God. It is in him as our priest who offers to God the sacrifice of himself to put away our sin and it is in him as our king to rule over us from his own exalted throne.

Turn back to Deuteronomy 32. Look down at verse three.

He says:

Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.⁴²

I will publish the name of the Lord. Who is that? Jehovah. But not just Jehovah in some abstract sense, Jehovah, Jesus. I will publish his name. That is what the gospel does. And that has his name, the name has to do with his renown and his glory has to do with how he has saved a people and honored all the attributes of God.

I tell you. We have never seen God. We have never seen the Lord Jesus Christ until we have seen him as the one who as God manifested in the flesh saved all his people from their sins and in doing so he glorified and magnified the godhead in all his attributes.

We don't know anything about the love of God or the grace of God or the mercy of God or the righteousness of God or the holiness of God or the power of God or any of his attributes until we come to see them in Christ crucified. That is his doctrine.

As a matter of fact, he goes on to say this.

“Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.”⁴³

That is what the doctrine of God does, the gospel does. He says he is the rock. What does that mean? He is the eternal, unchanging, unchanging in his everlasting covenant, unchanging in his purpose and will, unchanging in his choice as his people, unchanging in his looking to Christ to provide everything necessary for their salvation.

This is the glorious truth that God is just to justify every sinner that Christ died for. Now you look at that fourth verse.

“His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”⁴⁴

You see, the gospel, this doctrine of God Paul says in Romans one is the gospel wherein the righteousness of God is revealed.

⁴² Deuteronomy 32:3-4.

⁴³ Deuteronomy 32:3.

⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 32:4.

And if we have a gospel, if anyone has a gospel, has a Savior, has a salvation wherein God is not shown to be perfect in what he does, that means accomplished exactly what he intends to and does it in a gloriously holy way, but if he does not show himself as a God of truth and without iniquity and just and right and all his ways just, that is not the doctrine of God.

Let me tell you this. This will get most of them. Those who believe that Christ died for all men and yet at the same time we know from the Scriptures that most of them are going to perish in hell, well, let me tell you this. If Christ died for them, then God would be unjust to send them there.

And if they are not possessors of a perfect righteousness, he would be unjust, he would be unholy to take the rest of them to heaven.

But the gospel declares that Christ died for his people and his blood shed takes away all their sin, makes atonement for all their sin and his righteousness imputed or charged or reckoned to their account by God himself makes them perfectly righteous in God's sight. Just and right is he.

You see, the cross as well as the gospel that declares it is a declaration of God's righteousness that he is right to save each and every one in Christ and their righteousness which is the fact that he makes them in Christ the very righteousness of God and therefore he gets all the glory and does all the saving.

It is kind of like this. We have got a plant out here. We don't know if it is dead or alive. We are going to put all the fertilizer we can to it and we are going to look at it and check it and hoe around it and all that stuff. But if the rain doesn't come...

If the rain comes and nothing happens, we will know it was dead. If the rain comes and it strengthens, turns green, we will know that God gave it life because that rain was a blessing to it. And we follow the command of Scripture, the command of our Lord.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”⁴⁵

Because we are looking for his sheep. We are looking for that planting of the Lord, because they will be out here in this desert, dry and parched and he comes to them and gives them life and this gospel rain, this rain, the doctrine of God, it won't be dead dry doctrine to them. It will be like rain, rain, grace, mercy.

Paul said:

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,

⁴⁵ Mark 16:15.

through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.⁴⁶

The gospel is his doctrine. The gospel of grace, is free and sovereign grace, the gospel of Christ crucified, the gospel wherein he is shown to be righteous to save all his people in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother Tim James said in a message, “Some will say that doctrinal preaching and belief are hard and cold and dry, but such know nothing. The doctrine of God is the rain upon the tender earth. It is refreshing and blessed. Some may come with dotting questions such as, ‘Can you have Christ without doctrine or can you have doctrine without Christ?’ These are the play things of infected minds. The fact is that you and I know nothing about Christ without doctrine and we know nothing about true doctrine without Christ. Christ is both the living and the written Word.”

And that is what our Lord is saying where Joe read.

“If any man thirst...”⁴⁷

Well, I don’t like this. I don’t like this doctrine.

Well, you are not thirsty. You are still dead.

But he said, “If any man thirst...”⁴⁸

They just had this big religious shin dig there in Jerusalem. All the rituals and ceremonies you could imagine even things under the law which were now come to an end.

He said, “A lot of you are leaving satisfied. But if you are still thirsty...”

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.”⁴⁹

Now you tell me how man can drink of Christ. He is not here in body. He cannot be seen by the natural eye or any other of our natural faculties. You can only drink of this doctrine, believe this gospel, partake of this Christ by the enabling of God’s Scripture. Believe on him. What? What he has revealed of himself and his salvation.

That is not dead, dry doctrine. He said, “My doctrine is like the rain.”

There are people on this earth right now that live in such drought plagued areas that if it

⁴⁶ Romans 3:24-26.

⁴⁷ John 7:37.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

were to start right now dropping drops of rain out of the sky they would run out into it and just let it fall on them, just drink it literally as it comes down from heaven.

If it keeps on in this country there may be some that do that. And that is the way the Lord's sheep receive his doctrine. Living, life giving, refreshing.

Let me hear about that which glorifies God because that which glorifies God in Christ is my salvation.

Father, help us. Create as we have sung that soul thirst in us that we might drink of your doctrine, of the gospel concerning your Son, that we might know that refreshing blessing. Help us we pray. Grant that we never count the gospel of your Son to be [?]. Grant that we never speak in such foolish terms, but give us the delight to hear when any speak the truth as it is in Christ. We thank you and we praise you. We give you all the glory. We are thankful for everything that you have given us. And we pray your continued mercies in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen.