

Four Great Fears Removed

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Romans 8:31-39

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Fear. Paul said, "I was with you in much fear, in fear and trembling." Scripture talks about the fear of the Lord being the beginning of wisdom. And the prophet said, "Come and I will teach you how you ought to fear the Lord."

There is as much said in the Old Testament Scriptures about the fear of the Lord as there is about the love of God. And people in Old Testament days who were identified with God were identified in this way, "He feared the Lord." Isn't that correct? He feared the Lord. And the rebels of our day are identified in Romans chapter three as people before whose eyes there is no fear of God.

Fear.

I want you to turn, first of all, to Isaiah chapter six. Now, I am going to read some Scriptures to which I have referred so many times, but I have just briefly and paraphrasingly quoted them. This time I am going to read them. A revelation of God's holiness struck fear in the heart of Isaiah, a revelation of God's holiness.

He says in Isaiah 1, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings. With two his covered his face. With two he covered his feet. With two he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is fully of his glory.' And the post of the door moved at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, 'Woe is me for I am undone. I am cut off.'" That is the word. "I am cut off because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts."

That is fear. That is fear. Woe is me. I am cut off. I am cut off.

Now, turn with me to the book of Job. A revelation of God's holiness struck fear in the heart of Isaiah. A revelation of God's power and omniscience struck fear in the heart of Job, Job chapter 40. And these were special men. This wasn't the run of the mill individual of that day. These were men who would be regarded as unusual, gifted, moral, righteous men. These were leaders of the people. In Job 40, in fact, God himself said of Job, "He is a righteous man who fears God and hates evil." But when he saw the Lord, Job

40, I'll just let you follow it. "Moreover the Lord answered Job," Job chapter four, "And said, 'Shall he that contendeth with the almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God let him answer it.' Then Job answered the Lord and said, 'Behold I am vile. What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.'"

In Job 42, verses five and six, listen to this. This is fear, great fear. He said, "I have heard of thee. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, I repent in dust and ashes."

That is fear. That is trembling before the power and the omniscience of God.

Luke chapter five. Here is an incident. I don't think I have ever heard anyone preach a sermon from this passage, Luke chapter five. I have referred to it a time or two, I have heard others refer to it. But in Luke the fifth chapter, verse five through nine, a revelation of Christ's sovereignty. Christ's absolute, unchangeable sovereignty, fearful sovereignty even over the fish of the sea. You talk about Christ being sovereign over the wind, the weather, the elements, over men, kings and kingdoms and armies and all these things. But here he is sovereign over the fish and where they swim, and where they swim and where they form their schools.

You say, "Preacher, you are going too far."

All right. Look at Luke five, Luke chapter five, verse four. "Now when he left speaking he turned to Simon and he said, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your net for a draught.' And Simon answering said, 'Master...'" Now here is an expert fisherman. He was a man who has made his living fishing all of his life, who knew that sea like the back of his hand. Peter knew that lake, that sea. He said, "'Master, I have toiled all night and I have taken nothing. Nevertheless at your word I will let down the net.' And when they had done this they enclosed a great multitude of fish and their brake and they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships so that they began to sink."

Now, I have heard that preached on, but listen to Peter's response and reaction. This I haven't heard a message. "When Simon Peter saw it," the power of Christ, the absolute sovereignty of Christ even over the fish, even over the fish, when he saw it, "he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, 'Lord, depart from me. I am a sinful man. You have got no business keeping business with me. One of your greatness, one of your majesty, one of you sovereignty has no business keeping company with me. I am in company too far ahead of me, too much above me. We have no reason to be seen together. You are too much sovereignty and majesty and I am too much sin and corruption.'"

And, if you will, turn to Revelation one. Now here is John, a revelation of God's holiness struck fear in the heart of Isaiah. A revelation of God's power and omniscience struck fear in the heart of Job. And a revelation of Christ's sovereignty even over the fish of the sea struck fear in Peter's heart. Up to that time Peter, I suppose, thought he was,

you know, he and Christ were partners and copilots and all this different sort of thing and he was going to reign in the kingdom with Christ and sit on one of the thrones and all of this. And when he saw that what he was dealing with, when he saw the company he was keeping, when he saw the one with whom he was associating and his majesty and his power and his authority, he just said, "I am in above my head. I am just in over my head. And, Lord, you just need to find somebody else and depart from me because I am a sinful man. I am a sinful man. I am an empty creature."

And then John. Now, if you remember this is the one who at the Lord's Supper at the last table, this is what we call the beloved disciple. And he was so intimate with Christ, he was so intimate he even leaned his head on Christ's breast at the Last Supper, you know, the pictures of the Lord's table they have John leaning his head. Well, that is scriptural I suppose. And he was leaning his head. That intimacy, that closeness, he took upon himself to enter into that type of relationship and to touch the master. He said, when he wrote 1 John he said, "What our hands have handle, what we have seen and heard declare we unto you." But he had that close a fellowship with Christ that he didn't hesitate to touch him, to touch him, to lean his head on his breast.

Now wait a minute. Listen. Watch this. When he saw the glory of Christ, a revelation of the glory, the resurrected glory of Christ...I want you to listen to his reaction. Verse 12 of Revelation one, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlestick and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head, his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow. And his feet were as a flame of fire. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow and his eyes as a flame of fire and his feet like unto fine brass as if the burned in a furnace and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars. And out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword." I suppose, the Word of God. "And his countenance, his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

You think of his countenance as the sun shining in its full strength. No leaning on his breast there, no me and Jesus got a good thing going there. No familiarity there.

"When I saw him, when I saw him I, John, I fell at his feet as dead."

You know, I think it might be said also as the apostle Paul grew in the knowledge of God's greatness and God's grace and the knowledge of himself in his unworthiness, he...I know the Scripture is inspired. I know that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write this Word, to writ this Word. This is not the word of men. This is the Word of God. And yet the Lord did not bypass the personality. The Word is the inspired Word of God, the God breathed Word of God and yet it is so written by these men that their personalities shine forth in the writing thereof. God doesn't bypass the personality and bypass the individual. You can even tell by the way they write and the way they talk who wrote the books. There are certain things, characteristics of certain writers. And yet it is the Word of God. And yet being the Word of God it does not bypass the writer's personality nor fail to reveal his own growth.

For example, I will tell you about Paul. Early in his ministry and some of his early writings he said this. "I am not worthy to be an apostle. I am not worthy to be an apostle."

Now, that in itself is strong language. I am a preacher. He said, "I am not one whit behind the chief apostle, though I am not worthy to be an apostle." He said, "Who is Peter? Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are nothing. We are just the planters and sowers. God is the husbandman. We are nothing."

But then later on he wrote in a book and he said this. This is a little stronger. There is a little more humility shining forth here. He said, "I am less than the least of all the saints. I am less than the least." Here this great apostle, this founder of churches, this writer of Scripture, this man intimate with God is saying, "Take all of the believers in the churches," he said, "And you can put me beneath the least one. I am less than the least of all believers, all the saints, because I persecuted the Church of Christ."

And then in one of his last books he is sitting down there in prison writing to Timothy in one of his last books that he ever wrote, the old man, the white haired old man. He is sitting down there in jail and he is dictating a book to the man who wrote it for him and he said, "This is a faithful saying. Let it be preached. Let it be declared. Let it be accepted by all men, worthy of acceptance by all men that Jesus Christ came into this world, he visited this world to save sinners. That was his mission. Of whom I am chief."

That is even stronger. "Christ came to save sinners of whom I am chief."

What I am saying is this. I am saying that the more a true believer learns, the more there is revealed to him the greatness and majesty and might and power and glory of God almighty and everything about God his throne, his kingdom, his Word, his Church, his ministry, his gospel, the older we get and the more we grow in an understanding of the holiness and the power and the sovereignty and the glory of God, the more we are going to see of our own sinfulness, wretchedness, unworthiness and inability.

Now what I am saying is something that I am experiencing and I know a few that are experiencing this. The general run of religionists with whom I have associated through they years, they get a little more cocky, they get a little more haughty, they get a little more righteous, they get a little more sure of themselves. That's right. They get a little more confident. They can lay hold of a situation. They need a little less preparation. They can put everything off to the last minute. They just don't need to bury themselves.

There are some old believers and there are some bold believers. There aren't many old bold believers. There are some old believers that have seen some things, they have seen some glory, they have seen some majesty, they have seen their indebtedness. When I stand before his throne dressed in beauty not my own. Then my God I shall know just how much I owe.

And there are some folks realizing that. There are some folks that are seeing the majesty

and the glory and the fire. But a few folks have been around long enough to see some of that. And there are some cocky, haughty, proud, got the world by the tail on a downhill pull of believers, but there aren't many old bold believers because the more we see of his majesty, the more we see of his grace, the more we see of our own unworthiness.

Turn to Isaiah 40 and listen to Isaiah talking over here, Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah 40, verse six. Listen to this. Isaiah 40, verse six. "The voice said, 'Cry.' And he said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All flesh is grass and all the goodness or glory of the flesh is as a flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass.'"

That's when we start in at preaching. No, sir. That is the whole journey. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of the Lord standeth forever. The contemplation. Here is what I am saying, the contemplation of the greatness and the glory and the majesty and the sovereignty of God, the contemplation of our own infirmities, our own afflictions, our own failures, result in great fear, in a great fear, a fear of God. And that thing grows. And anybody that is honest with you will tell you that at some time...every believer will tell you at some time he experiences some of these fears. And I am going to deal with four of them tonight. Here they are. I will just give them to you. There are so many fears, but here are four that I think are, perhaps, the most prevalent with all of us. And I can handle them from Romans chapter eight if you will turn over there, Romans the eighth chapter.

And I believe everybody here can identify with this right here. I am coming at you not only from the Scripture, but from my personal experience. These are four fears with which I struggle and have struggled and I expect to struggle. The first one is a fear of Satanic attack.

Now, Satan is very real, very real. Turn to 1 Peter chapter five. Satan is very real. I hear preachers some time on television and other places saying to believers, "Now, you just tell the devil to go on back to hell. Don't you...you just challenge him and doesn't the Scripture say resist him?"

But now let me tell you something. Paul talks about Satan's subtlety, subtlety. He says, "I fear lest Satan in his subtlety..." This is in 2 Corinthians 11. "...should deceive you like he did Eve and take you away from the simplicity of Christ."

Satan is so subtle. He is so crafty. He is so deceitful. Somebody said, "He knows human nature better than anybody but God." Somebody said, "Satan is an expert student of human nature. He has been studying it for 6000 years. He has been practicing his craft on human nature for 6000 years. He knows where to touch us. He knows when to touch us. He knows how to touch us. And he knows how to cover the hook with the bait so that you can't even see it."

Oh what a subtle creature, what a crafty creature. I tell you this. I want to show you something in a minute, but look at 1 Peter chapter five, verse six, 1 Peter 5:6. "Humble yourselves."

"Come on down," Barnard used to say, "Off your high horse. Come on down off your high horse. Humble yourselves, therefore under the mighty hand of God that he in his own pleasure and purpose may exalt you in due time in his own good pleasure, in his own time. You don't need to exalt yourself, Christ will in his own time. Cast all your care upon him, upon Christ. You don't need to fight for yourself. The battle is the Lord's. He cares for you. Be sober. Be vigilant because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfastly resist him in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

You say, "Why did you read that?"

I read that to show you of the reality of Satan. He is not omnipresent, but he is present. He is not omnipotent, but he is powerful. He is not omniscient. He doesn't know everything, but he is a heap smarter than we are.

Now, I will tell you this. Adam could relate some things about Satan's subtlety. And I will tell you this. Job could write a book on Satan's power. He could write a power on Satan's power. And Peter, the apostle, the one who bragged so much, the one with such confidence, the impulsive Peter, he fell before Satan's onslaught and even the apostle Paul in writing to a church said this. He said, "Satan hath hindered me. Satan hindered me."

He had some conflicts with Satan. Even our Lord Jesus Christ was taken up on the mountain and tempted personally by Satan for so many days.

Turn to the book of Jude. Now here is a shocking Scripture. I think this would be an answer to those who underestimate the subtlety and power of Satan. I think this would answer those who carelessly get involved in what we call demonism and casting out demons and playing with these things.

Jude, verse eight. He talks about these filthy dreamers who defile the flesh, who despise dominion, who speak evil of dignities, who speak evil of position and authority and of powers, speaking evil of things they don't even understand.

"Yet Michael the archangel, Michael the archangel when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, even Michael did not bring a railing accusation against Satan." Even Michael did not take it upon himself to rebuke Satan or to have any dealings with him. But rather he said, "Satan, the Lord rebuke thee."

And I'll tell you this. When we talk about Satan, I believe our best refuge is to flee to the blood of Christ and flee to the arms of Christ and say, "Lord, handle this for me. I am up

against an enemy too powerful for me, to wise for me, to crafty for me, to deceitful for me. I am going to have to be like Peter of old. Lord, pray for me. Deliver me.”

But here in Romans chapter eight, if you will turn back over there. I see something to allay my fears in reference to Satan. Now, I have pictured...

You said, “Preacher, you have presented a pretty strong case for Satan.”

All right. I have wanted to. I have tried to. He is powerful. He is mighty. He is strong. He is like a roaring lion. He is seeking whom he may devour. He will tear up churches. He will tear up people. He will destroy whatever he can destroy.

Well, what are we going to do?

All right. Look at Romans eight, verse 29. “For whom he did foreknow,” that’s God’s foreordination, God back in eternity chose a people. “He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that Christ might be the first born among many brethren.”

Now, God has got a purpose. God has got a plan. See, people say, “God has got a plan for your life.”

I am saying, “God has got a plan for Christ, for Christ, Christ.” And we are in Christ. God chose us in Christ. And he has predestinated us to be like Christ.

“Moreover,” verse 30, “Whom he did predestinate he called, whom he called he justified, whom he justified he glorified. Now what shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?”

That is your refuge. That is about the only thing you can use to allay the fear of the attacks of Satan, of the power of Satan, of the...this conflict with Satan. If God be for me who can be against me? Who can be against me? That is what he is saying. Who can be against me? If God is for me in covenant mercies, if God is for me in electing love, if God is for me in redemption, if God is for me in substitution, if God is for me in high priestly intercession then I don’t have to fear Satan and his attacks. I don’t have to fear that Satan is going to win victory over my soul if God is for me.

Now, then, if God is not for me I am like a leaf before a roaring storm. I am like a leaf before a raging forest fire. I have no strength in myself.

All right. Here is the second fear, the fear of our sins. There are not many religionists and not many church members who care to reflect upon or mention their sins. This is one thing I found wrong with biographies. This is one thing I found wrong with testimonies, that the average biography seems to indicate that the person of whom they are writing didn’t have any faults, didn’t have any infirmities, didn’t have any struggles, didn’t have any doubts, didn’t have any fears. But honest believers are concerned about their sins. They fear their sins. They fear their flesh.

Look at Romans seven. Listen to Paul, Romans seven, verse 15. And I will tell you. Sin takes so many directions. There are the sins of omission and commission. There are secret sins and there are open sins. There are sins of action and sins of attitude.

I said one Sunday here of what I haven't done, at least I thought. There are sins of thought and imagination. There are sins of flesh and sins of spirit. And Paul is talking about these here in Romans 7:14. He said, "That which I do I allow not for what I would that do I not and what I hate that is what I do. If then I do that which is would not I consent to the law that it is good and now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is perfect, that which is holy, I do not find in my self the ability. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not it is no more I that do it. It is not the spiritual me. It is not the regenerated Paul. It is sin that dwelleth in me. I found a law, a principle that when I would pray my thoughts are fleshly. When I would worship my thoughts are carnal. When I would give, sacrificially, the flesh rebels against it. When I would do this, when I would do that evil is present with me. It is present with me. I'm not a totally spiritual man. I am a fleshly man. I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members. I see the presence of another ...of another law, of another principle, of another person, of another school of thought warring against the spiritual law of my mind. And, too often, bringing me into captivity to that principle of sin which is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am."

Do you ever wrestle with that? Do you ever battle with that?

Well, what is the answer? David said, "My sins are ever before me, always, never leaving. They are always there. I can't think on Christ for thinking on my sin. I can't think on the blood, for thinking on my evil."

Well, let's look at Romans eight, again, verse 32. How can we relieve these fears? All right. Here you are. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Christ up for us all, how shall he not with Christ freely give us all things?"

What things? Righteousness, redemption, holiness, sanctification, pardon, forgiveness, life. That is why Christ came. He said, "I came to seek and to save the lost. I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I came. I am the bread of life. Eat and live. I am the water of life. Drink and live. I am the door. Come through me and go in and out and find pasture. If Christ died for us shall not God with Christ give us all these things?"

Verse 33. "Who is going to lay any charge to God's elect, anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Well, shall not God charge us?" No. He said, "It is God that justifies."

"Well, shall not the law charge us? No. Christ has satisfied the law." The law is content.

“Well, shall not Satan charge us?” Oh, no. Christ said, “The prince of this world came and found nothing in me. I have defeated him and drove him away.” He has got no charge to bring against a child of God.

Our sins are very, very real. Are yours real?

But I’ll tell you this. His death is very, very real. My sins are very, very real, but his righteousness is very, very real. And if God spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us in our stead, in our place, shall God not give us all things that Christ purchased? Let that take your fears away. Let that lift your burden and lift your doubts and fears.

I am not saying that we are to go on in a giddy, happy go lucky, foolish way. “My sins are gone, you know, whoop de do, you know.” I know that.

Rejoice in Christ, but, brethren we are under a great burden, aren’t we? And we’re just...we’re not going to quit the fight or quit the battle or stop wrestling against our flesh, the flesh warring against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh so you can’t do the things that you would. But let’s don’t keep looking at the battle all the time because you will be so fearful and doubtful and all. Let’s look to the cross. There mercy was great and grace was free. Pardon there was purchased for me at Calvary. That was where Paul looked here. He looks to the cross.

All right. Here is the third fear that roams around in our minds, these fears, these fears, these fears. The fear of Satan. But Christ has conquered Satan. Fear of our sins, our sin. But Christ paid for our sin. He paid for our sin. But fear of final condemnation. Now, I can tell you. You don’t think, you know, it is hard to find an honest man. I know a little bit about what Rob was talking about one time when he said, “Honest people don’t wind up in hell.” Honest people, people who come clean with God.

And I can tell you this. That there is no fear that I ever experienced that is quite like this one. There is nothing to be compared with this. Every time I read this Scripture or quote this Scripture there is a thud right here in my stomach, I mean literally. And there is a tingling in the back of my neck because it is so dreadful and so unthinkable and yet so possible. Don’t you think it’s not. And many are going to hear of it.

“Lord, have we not preached in your name and cast out devils and done many wonderful works?” Only to hear him say, “Depart from me. I never knew you.”

Can you read that and not feel?

Because I’m saved.

Well, bless your heart. I’m glad you are. That’s about all I can say. I’m glad you have that kind of...I’m sorry you have that presumption. But maybe your refuge will do you some good. But I will tell you this. I tell you this. A reasonable honest man knows that

salvation is a gift, that salvation is by the grace of God and salvation is in Christ. And, brethren, I am telling you this. I can only answer one thing to that. Look at Romans 8:34, Romans 8:34. I am not going to say, "I preached" or "I made a decision" or "I joined the church. I have been baptized" or "I have lived the best I could."

I am going to say this. "Who is he that condemneth?" And I will give you four reasons for that fear to be allayed. And these are, Charlie, the only four reasons I know, right here. Christ died. That's it. That's where it all is right there. I don't know any other reason for God not to tell me, "Depart from me," except one reason and that is Christ died. I know of no other reason.

I am being totally honest with you. I know of no other reason for God almighty to say to me...not to say to me, "Depart from me. I never knew you. Bind him hand and foot and cast him into hell." I know of no reason for God not to say that to me, personally, except one reason. Christ died, John, that's the only reason. Christ died.

Well, Paul gives four reasons. He said not only did Christ die, but he rose again. "Yea, rather, is risen again." He is risen again.

You say, "Preacher, your preaching along this line causes people not to be sure."

Well, brethren, we can't be sure of this flesh. We can be sure of him. We can be sure of his sacrifice. I am redeemed if my faith is in Christ. I am redeemed if I am a child of God. I am redeemed if Christ died for me. I am redeemed if he intercedes for me. I am redeemed on that basis, not on the basis of what I have done or haven't done. It is on the basis of Christ's sacrifice.

God does business with his Son and with us in his Son. It's just like when you get in trouble or something. You hire a lawyer. And he, the judge is on the bench and your lawyer is here. Don't you get up and skidaddle up there and start talking to the judge. Your lawyer goes for you. Isn't that right, Bill? Your lawyer goes and stands there and talks to the judge for you.

Christ is my advocate. And I will tell you, if he doesn't represent me and if he doesn't stand for me I'm...you see, I'm guilty. There isn't any question about that. I am a guilty fellow. But if Christ can't get me off I'm not going to get off.

And, you see, what he pleads, my advocate, he doesn't plead my goodness, he doesn't... "Well, Father, he has done pretty good since he changed and he has kind of straightened up."

No, sir. He is just standing there and says, "Father, he is guilty, he is guilty, he is sinful. He ought to be sent to hell. But, Father, you see these wounds? I died for him. You see this blood? I suffered for him. Do you see this righteousness? I worked it out for him. He is clean because of what I did."

Now that's it. You don't do business with God. Christ does. Is that too hard? That's so. That's so. You don't do business with God. You do business with Christ. He does business with the Father. And he is not going to plead what you have said and done and given and all these things. He stands there before the magistrate, before the throne, before God's tribunal, before the highest court and he says, "Set him free. I died for him." He pleads his wounds.

And the only reason I'm not going...who is he that condemneth? Our Lord says, "Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord is going to enter the kingdom of heaven. For many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, we preached, we did these things.' 'I never knew you.'"

What is to keep me from hearing that? It's just right here. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather he is risen again. He is even at the right hand of God. He also maketh intercession for us."

That's it. And that's where it all is.

Now, here is the fourth fear. And that is the fear of falling away. Some do. In fact, many do. In fact, John wrote about it. He said, "The departed from us."

Paul wrote about it in Hebrews. He said, "They are like the dog that is turned to its vomit, like the pig that is returned to the wallowing in the mire." He said, "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world."

Judas was one of the twelve. He departed. There are so many accounts in the Word of God of those who have departed from Christ, who walk no more with him. All the way through the four, what we call gospels, it said they listened to him and then they walked no more with him. Or they followed him for a time and then they walked no more with him. They walked no more with him.

My friends, this thing of salvation is in three tenses. The Bible, we must...and I talked to my Sunday school class about this this morning and this doesn't lessen the truth of instantaneous salvation, not at all. He that believeth is saved if he truly believes. But, you see, it takes time to reveal whether that true faith is true faith. That is where we run into what we are talking about perseverance. In other words, it is true. If a man truly repents by the Spirit's operation. If he truly believes by the Spirit's power, if he truly receives Christ, he is saved and always will be saved. But there are a lot of folks who say they truly believe whose hearts are deceived. The heart is desperately wicked. It is deceitful above all things. Who can know it?

There is false faith. There are plenty of examples in the Word of God. Many followed him because of the miracles. Many followed him because of the loaves and fishes. Judas followed him three and a half years. That was his whole life, the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he quit and then sold him out.

So what I am saying, I am not denying that faith saves, that repentance and faith save. A man is saved. But because we declare him saved and he declares himself saved and the church declares him saved, it doesn't mean God declares him saved.

And that is what I am saying. We have been saved. We are being saved. And our salvation is nearer than when we believed. And that is the reason so many folks get fouled up on Hebrews chapter six, those enlightened and illuminated and all these different things. If they should fall away there is no more repentance. But Paul is just warning us. He is set out to warn us. And I tell you. Through all the years of my ministry I have seen ministers depart from what we call the gospel. I have seen deacons depart from what we call the gospel. I have seen elders depart. I have seen men last for a year. I have seen them last for two years. I have seen them last for five years. I have seen them last for 10 years. I have seen them last for 30 years and then quit, and then quit.

I have seen them go back into Arminianism or free willism. I have seen them go into entertainment. I have seen young ladies sing, supposedly, for the glory of God to make a congregation weep and yet somehow money offered and just go into it just like they never did believe the gospel. And this is what I am saying. I am simply saying. How long are you going to last?

But if you are one of his own, you will last eternally. And that will be an evidence.

Now, brother Barnard said one time, a young lady said, "Do you think I'm saved?"

And he said, "I don't know, honey, why don't you see me in 30 years and let's see if you're still trusting Christ? Let's see if you are still walking in the Word. Let's see if you are still looking to the cross. Let's see if you are still fellowshiping with the redeemed. Let's see if you are still identified."

Will I continue? Let's see. See the promise in Romans 8:35. Where are we going to get any strength here? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Now, brethren, we can be separated from a profession, we can be separated from a job, from a vocation. We can be separated from serving in a church. We can be separated from a lot of things, by a lot of things for a lot of reasons." But the love of Christ, that's what...the love of Christ. My love for him? Oh, no. His love for me. That's where it is.

"Who shall separate me? Shall tribulation? Trials?" No matter how severe, trials. Distress? Oh, sometimes the distress is really tough. It's rough. The persecution? Persecution. Hated for my sake. Famine. Got enough money to pay my bills. Can't afford this and that. Nakedness. Peril or sword, conflict, war.

No, sir. As it is written, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long." We experience all these things. "We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

These are good for us. That's what I was talking about a while ago. Jay and I were talking about it. These things are good for us. I tell you, actually it is not trials that bring down a believer nearly so much as prosperity. It's not failure but success. He is in more danger when he is standing in the sunshine than he is in the rain. He is in more danger on the mountain than he is in the valley. These are things that just help us conquer.

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels or nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.”

Now, here is the question. And this is the question of questions. There is no possibility of God's elect perishing, no possibility. But here is the question. It needs to be settled in ever heart. Am I in Christ? Am I in Christ? Am I just in religion? Am I just in a form for religion or am I really sincerely, definitely for all eternity in Jesus Christ?