

## Dead Men Walking pt 2

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Ephesians 2:1-3  
**Preached on:** Sunday, September 4, 2016

### **Anchored in Truth Ministries**

1915 Avalon Ave.  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth](http://www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth)

Let's go to Ephesians 2 as we continue to look at these truths out of Ephesians, but while you're turning there, I want to mention another verse to you to kind of set the foundation of what I'm going to end with in just a few moments. Paul writes to the church at Corinth and he says, "To the church of God which is at Corinth," now listen to this phrase, "to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours." So he says, "I'm writing to the church of God which is at Corinth," then he amplifies that, "you are those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus," past tense verb there so already you are in the position of sanctified, set apart as God's own people and we know the word "church," ekklesia, means "called out ones," the same idea. God has called you out from just being a regular citizen of the world and a citizen in the kingdom of darkness; you are called to a different status and place. You are in a new sphere now that you are one of those called in Christ Jesus.

Now, the phrase "in Christ Jesus" encompasses everything Christ accomplished on the behalf of his elect children he came to redeem and save. So he says, "I'm writing to all of you in the church of God. You are sanctified ones in Christ Jesus through the means and merits of Christ. You are set apart as God's own." Then he said, "You are saints by calling." It's kind of saying the same thing again, the word "saint" means "holy one" or "sanctified" or "set apart one for God." And you're a saint because God called you to salvation through the Gospel and by the means of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the word "saint" is used about 67 times in the Scriptures, maybe some translations would use a different word here and there but it means "holy one," and the great majority of those times it's in the New Testament and over and over and over again it is emphatically clear that the word "saint" is just another word for Christian; it's another word for "true believer" or "saved ones." And I told you this morning I want to share with you briefly how the lady they call in the Roman Catholic system of religion, Mother Teresa, is likely not a saint and likely not a good example to emulate or pattern your life after. Saints are those whom God has saved by grace through faith, or you could say in grace alone, through faith alone, for the glory of God alone. Nothing else. Now, we'll get to the dear departed Mother Teresa in just a few moments.

Look at Ephesians now. We're looking at Ephesians 2:1-3 and what a startling, penetrating and in many ways overwhelming passage of Scripture. I mean, I can only just in my mind's eye think of a Greco-Roman culture so worldly in so many ways, though they had their polytheism and had all their gods, but they were really secularists because the gods are gods they made up for their own secular and lustful pursuits, and in that kind of status, like all men full of pride and self-confidence, I mean, the Romans ruled the world and then Paul shows up and he writes to the church at Ephesus,

1 And you were dead [or being dead] in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Now, this is a great big truckload and we began unpacking it to some degree last time we were together on Sunday night and I call this "Dead Men Walking," because he uses that phrase to begin with, "you were," or being in the state of being "dead," it's a continuous action. You in this state, this fear of being a dead one before God, and it's the concept of a putrefying corpse and there is nothing more unattractive, there is nothing more unlovely, there is nothing more unappealing or that you and I would want to avoid more than a rotting corpse. But Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit uses that image to characterize what we are spiritually before God in and of ourselves. Now, we'd like to think we look a lot better but we don't.

I reminded you that there were three basic views of mankind that have been in existence throughout history. One view, more of the liberal progressive view of today, now, the so-called progressive of today is just the regular liberal of yesterday, they have not changed. They change their words but the same principles apply. But anyway, the liberal or progressive would say: man is okay, he needs to keep evolving so we can keep doing better and cure the unfairness and injustices of society but man is okay, he's just not quite there, he just needs to keep evolving. Others, more of the liberal theological stripe. You see a whole lot of this in a lot of the mainline denominations today where they have embraced a liberal view of things though they claim they still hold to Christianity, and they would say, "Well, man has some sickness but there is a spark of divinity there. There is a spark of goodness and we just need to help man do better and help his environment and he can get back on track again and we can help all of mankind." Then there is the biblical view, the Apostle Paul view, the Lord Jesus Christ view, the view that indisputably if you were an exegete of the text, you come to this conclusion. You can't come to any other conclusion and that is that man is not just okay but needs to evolve further, man is not just sick and there is a spark of divinity so there is some hope and he can do better, but thirdly, you hold the view that man is dead. He is dead. As far as his spiritual life, his standing before God, he's dead.

And so we began that with I. last time, he's dead in trespasses and sins. The idea of a trespass is that we violate the clear commands of God he has laid out for us. James says if

you violate one commandment, you're as guilty as if you had broken all the commandments. And then sin means we fall short. God made us for a certain application, if you will, for a certain type of life, a certain type of behavior, a certain level of living and we have all failed that. We are not functioning up to what he made us for and in that we are all therefore born, let's back up, conceived in the womb as spiritually dead beings. Paul writes, "You being dead." Not that you did this and got dead, you didn't get yourself dead, you came into the world dead spiritually speaking.

So now we go a little bit further, II. because Paul continues on here and I use six descriptors to outline what I'm convinced is taught in these first three verses. Not only were we dead before God spiritually, dead in trespasses and sins, secondly, we were deviant. Deviant. It means we were willing participants in a sinful fallen or deviant world. There is a world and a world system that is AWOL on God. A world and a world system that has turned traitorous. It's a rebel world and we are conceived, we are birthed and we just naturally grow up and gladly walk in the flow of deviancy against the one true God and our Creator. We see this in verse 2, as he says, "in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world." The world is a world that is perverse, it is deviant and you were deviant with it. You were walking right along with it. We were in heart and mind one with this deviant rebellion that is headed by Satan himself. God's standard for behavior has been fully rejected by this present world system and we naturally speaking fit comfortably in the system and choose fully to indulge in the deviant course of the world system.

You might say, "Now wait a minute, I know people that come into the world and they are troubled by wickedness, they are troubled by sins, they don't participate in this and that." Well, we all have ways that we kind of discipline ourselves so that we don't maybe look like others and we compare ourselves with ourselves so we make ourselves feel better. We all do that, but in our hearts we are still full of self-concerned, self-consumed, self-exalting pride. That's this deviant world. You do understand – now listen to me – you do understand that every second of your life where you have a thought not about God's glory first but about your own pleasures and joys first, then you are deviant to your Master's design because when you get glorified one day and your old fallen deviant flesh nature will be taken away, our unglorified deviant flesh nature will be taken away, you'll be given a new glorified nature – now listen – then every moment of all eternity, every thought of yours will be God's glory and how can I serve him. And it won't be a drudgery, it won't be a difficulty, it will be a joy. It will be the joy of your life to have that disposition, but that's not what you're conceived with, that's not what you're born with and that's not what you are before Christ saves you. You are deviant.

The Bible says Satan is the god of this world and we are rebels in this rebel rebellion against God. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." We have deviated off course. God is the Great Shepherd, all of the people should be his children, his sheep, but instead of following the Shepherd, we say, you know, we think we're smarter than the Shepherd and that is a deviant course that we take.

I think one of the things that trips some people up is how the truth is we are most deviant when in our deviancy we put on religion. We put on an outer cloak, a cosmetic cover of religion. We join the church. We get baptized. We take the Lord's supper. We clean up some morals in our life. We change our ethics. Something tragic happened, something scary happened and got our attention so we do a self-cleansing, if you will, and kind of patch ourselves up, but the problem is that's just more deviancy. It's not fixing anything at all and it stinks before God.

Now, here's the way the Apostle Paul is illustrating this. Paul would say when you put on religion, you add that on to what you are, you're taking a half rotten corpse and just putting a suit on it or a new dress on it and that is so grotesque. The Bible says, "all of our righteousness is as filthy rags." Jeremiah 5:31, as he talked to the condition of the deviant nation of Israel, he says, "You're so deviant, the prophets," well, he didn't say that, he says, "The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their own authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?" Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 23:15 that they made their converts twice as much a child of hell than they were before they were converted under the Pharisees. That's interesting, isn't it? He said, "You get these people to put on strict religion. They clean up some morals, they stop doing some of the don'ts, they start doing some of the do's, they start giving money to the work of the temple and they start going through the rituals and the motions of religion, but nothing has really happened. They've just become more deviant and now they have an outward exterior of righteousness but in their hearts they are still rebels against God."

Remember, the greatest form of worldliness is religious good works because that's the most common thing in a fallen world whereby men think they please God is to put on some works. It's the most natural form of God-less worldliness is to put on some religion and "start doing better." It's the flesh putting on a religious façade and as Jesus told us in the prophet Jeremiah before Jesus was in his earthly ministry told us, putting on a religious façade over this old deviant flesh is not a new thing at all. In 1 John 2:15, John wrote in his epistle, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Now, what he's saying is this whole world and the whole world system, when you love it, you're loving a deviant pattern, something that has gone off track from the Creator God's intentions and that's exactly where we are, Paul says to the church at Ephesus and to all of us before we are born again. We live in this world, we love this world, we're dead to God and we are deviant. When the Apostle Peter began preaching to the people on the day of Pentecost, I use the sermon from my friend, a message, what was it, a year or so ago? What did he say? "Be saved from this perverse generation." The same concept as deviancy, a crooked, off-track generation.

So before we go to III, let's think about it. Paul says, "You are dead. You are being in the state of dead to God and dead spiritually. You just naturally have just walked along from your deviant heart in a whole deviant culture and world." And one of the ways one of the prophets said it as I mentioned to you earlier was Isaiah 53:6, "all we like sheep have deviated, we've gone astray." But it doesn't end there, does it? "But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." Well, Paul hasn't gotten to that part yet because he wants to drive it home even moreso.

Let me do that for just a moment here, going to III. Paul says, "Your condition before God before conversion, you are dead, you are in the state of being dead spiritually before God. You are naturally walking in deviance before him. And then, thirdly, you're demonized. There is a demonic spirit that is at work in all of you. You're controlled and led by demons." Verse 2 again, the second part, he said, "according to the prince of the power of the air." Your deviance is inspired by a spiritually unholy influence in your life. Satan and his demons control and lead the lives of the unregenerate.

I don't think there's any way you can be an American and be my age and observe what's happened in our country without knowing that a spiritual power behind the scenes is coordinating what's going on. You can't. There's no other way all of this wickedness could take hold and there be enough agreement and camaraderie together to, on so many fronts, whether it's the media or the politicians or the institutions of higher learning, how they've all armed themselves arm-in-arm in the God-less, if you will, conquest to bring our nation against God and to walk in deviancy. It's demonically inspires. It's demonically controlled.

2 Corinthians 4:4, the apostle was writing to the church at Corinth and he says, "in whose case the god of this world," that's Satan, "has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." So Paul says there is a spiritual force at work in men's thinking in this world and that's what you are before you're saved. There is actual spiritual demonic powers at work in the hearts and minds of the unregenerate. You say, "Pastor, does that mean everyone's possessed by demons?" I don't know that I'd use that expression but if they're not possessed, they're oppressed. Demons are at work.

Now, there is a sense, just for sake of explanation only so don't go out and quote this way out of context, but there's a sense in which the Gospel does not save. A dead, deviant, demonically controlled man will not on his own hear and receive the Gospel. Millions hear the Gospel but they will spend eternity in hell. But it is the Gospel – now listen – applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation. Boy, we've left the Spirit out. Do you know what we've done in modern evangelicalism? There is something of the Gospel still floating around out there and here's what we've done: instead of praying and in dependency looking to and depending on the Holy Spirit, we've said, "Okay, we'll take the Gospel and our modern clever techniques and get people saved." We've substituted our cleverness for the power of the Holy Spirit and you just look around, you just study what's going on in churches, you just study what's going on in the cities, it doesn't have to be cities, all over the place, how you'll say, "Well, they're preaching something of the Gospel," and I thank God for that, by the way, praise God for that, but instead of a humble yielded dependence on the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit, there is almost a total ignoring, other than maybe a little verbiage of token acknowledgment of the Spirit, but it's pretty much set aside. The Spirit is set aside, but we're going to use our modern clever techniques to get men saved.

I think I mentioned this the other day. There's a huge national conference sponsored by Southern Baptists. I'm not going to use any names. And they had men lined up to speak. I know these men. I know some of them personally. I know their ministries well. I thank God for good things that they do, but the whole emphasis was techniques to get more people saved. I want to go and run through a wall somewhere. There is but one technique to get men saved and that's to get out of the way, preach with passion and conviction in the power of the Spirit the true Gospel, and pray and trust the Spirit of God will apply it to men's hearts. Do you know what we've found? Are you listening to your pastor? When you live out the Holy Spirit and your techniques help "get them saved," then you've got to keep coming up with techniques and clever things to keep them around. But do you know what I found with you guys? If the Gospel and the Spirit of God gets you, I've got you for life. It's worse than cocaine, you can't kick the habit. It's just, "Give me more of Jesus. Give me more of the word. Give me more of the book." Again, we're not on a hobbyhorse. You say, "Well, you kind of stay on that hobbyhorse." Well, maybe I do but it's a good horse to stay on, that we're not out to just say every bit of the creative stuff churches are doing is all evil but I'm telling you, it's way out of balance, it's changing the emphasis off of what it ought to be on and, for God's sake, don't raise your children under that kind of shenanigans. Raise them where you, I, all of us are desperately depending on the word of God and the clear Gospel to change their hearts.

What I'm saying is demons are behind all the other things that men do and all of us, every single one of us according to the Apostle Paul is a demonically influenced, if not controlled individual before God saves us. You see, the demons are masters of deception and they are master counterfeiterers. Satan, the Bible says, disguises himself as an angel of light and their counterfeiting is their great art. You see, the kindest gentleman, the nicest lady, the finest young person who has not been converted to Christ is a demonically controlled and influenced rebel against God. Now, the flesh can put on outward facades of goodness but inwardly there is no selfless love for God and for his kingdom. Did you get that? They can put on lots of stuff but there is not that residing germ of, "I want God glorified and his kingdom spread no matter what happens to me." You see, you can't fake that. Either the Spirit puts it there or it's not there.

All that is there until the Spirit changes your heart is just self-consumed, demonically-inspired, self-glorifying lust. The outside may appear white and clean, remember the Pharisees Jesus spoke to? He said, "You guys are like white-washed," then he said the word and you're talking about a word that slam-dunked the Jewish religious leaders. Oh, my goodness. He said, "You guys are like white-washed tombs." Now, why was that so bad? Because a Jew taught that to touch or be around a dead body made you spiritually and ceremonially unclean before God. I mean, Jesus didn't just say, "You touched a dead body," he said, "You are one." I'll tell you, Jesus was a man's man. You didn't go in that crowd and say that. Do you know what would happen if you went in that crowd and told them, "You're like a white-washed tomb"? The next thing they're going to be saying is, "How can we kill this guy?" which is what they said and what they did. Of course, God was behind it all, wasn't he?

So even though men in their natural state are dead, deviant and demonically influenced and controlled, they may indeed put on an outward appearance but inwardly, according to the word of God, they are a putrefying corpse of filthy sin and they are dead to God and we remind ourselves again – now listen to me – the greatest evil is human goodness we substitute for the new birth. Human goodness that we look to in place of truly having experienced the new birth, and can I say to you that Methodists have become masters at helping men put on human goodness instead of coming to know the new birth. Presbyterians have become masters at teaching men how to put on human goodness instead of experiencing the new birth. The Church of God, the Assemblies of God have become masters at helping men put on human goodness instead of experiencing the new birth. And Baptists have become masters at helping men go through motions and clean up and put on some human goodness instead of experiencing the new birth. And do you know who's behind all that? Demons. Who else would take well-intending men's notions of walking down the aisle, men who ask men to walk down the aisle were not evil men but walk down the aisle, pray this prayer, fill out this card, and then we find out later that the stats are absolutely indisputable, overwhelmingly those people are not converted. But Satan wants you to look to anything and everything whereby you do something, you put on something that you can look to – now listen to me – other than sheer, total, absolute dependence on Jesus Christ.

So Satan is behind all of these delusions and all of this work and he's working in the hearts and lives of all of men who are not yet converted but 1 John 3:8 says, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil." I mean, look, there probably has never been a day and you take the Greek culture, the Roman culture and the Jewish culture of Jesus' day and the Apostle Paul's day, and how they were steeped and solidified in false Gospel, false viewpoints, false philosophies. I mean, just smothered and drowning in it, and there came a blazing light of truth when Jesus was born, and when Jesus began to preach and when men were converted and God called them to preach and a blazing light of truth went through the earth and God, man by man, woman by woman, young person by young person, by the Gospel being preached and the Spirit of God arresting their hearts, showing them their sin, birthing new life in them, enabling them to repent of their sinful ways and put their faith in Jesus Christ, one by one the power of Satan was considered naught in their lives.

And he's still doing that today. I got to counsel with an adult lady just a couple of weeks ago who has been gloriously converted. I've never talked to a person with more strong clear evidence of brokenness and awareness of her sin and joy and satisfaction in Christ and Christ alone to save her. Now, we might put on something here at the church and darken the lights and might put something scary on the screen and get a lot of people to respond, but when folks call and say, "I need to come talk to you. I've got to talk to you." And they come up here in the middle of the week, I'm telling you, it takes the whole Spirit of God to do that. And no wonder in the Bible, getting back on the hobbyhorse just a little bit, you know, in the Bible you see not one tiny trace – now you listen to me – of techniques to get people saved. It's not in there. I'm telling you, you have to get a 1949 Coke bottle and stand out in the sun at 12 noon on August 12<sup>th</sup> to look through it to try to find a technique to get men saved in the Bible. It's not there, but do you know what is

there? Preach. Preach. Preach. Preach. Testify. Witness. Teach the word, the truth, and call men to believe in Jesus Christ. And if the power of God changes them, it's nothing for them to come and tell somebody, "Something's happened in me. What's the next step?" There is no technique to get that done other than God's means, primarily preaching, but he does use our witnessing, he does use our testifying, he does use our Bible studies, and praise his name for all of it.

Well, back to the so-called Mother Teresa. Let's talk about her for just a moment and, Lord willing, I'll finish this up next Sunday night. Mother Teresa was one who gave her life in India with astounding degrees of selfless service to lepers and others who were hurting and dying and, to be quite honest, that many others had abandoned. But if Mother Teresa embraced and trusted in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic system of religion, then Mother Teresa was involved in dead works and was not a saint of God. Hebrews 9:14 tells us, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Paul is saying, or whoever wrote Romans, they are saying there is a moment when Christ and the power of the Spirit changes your heart whereby – now listen, this is the primary repentance that happens – you turn from trusting in all the works, all the religion, all the good stuff you're clinging to, that your conscience is wrapped up in dead works and the moment happens when you're enabled by the Spirit of God to say, "That's not the road home. That's not true. I'm so defiled in my very basic nature I could never do enough works to appease a holy God. I will turn. I will repent of that trust and I will place my complete confidence in Christ's death and blood alone to cause me to be considered justified in his sight," and then you start performing true works for God, not in order to obtain salvation but because Christ has saved you. But all the works of any system of religion, be it the Roman Catholic system or the Baptist system or the Methodist system, whatever men have invented or created within religious systems whereby they carelessly and sometimes intentionally begin to teach or allow people to think if you jump through these hoops, if you do these things, if you perform these rites, rituals or observances, then you are obtaining a standing before God, the Bible says that is a dead work. It's a dead work.

Brother Tom, it could be in charismatic circles. Some good brothers and sisters in Charismatic circles, but they've taught folks, perhaps unintentionally but it has come to the conclusion if you get slain in the Spirit, if you speak in a tongue or a miracle happens, then you can be reassured because you experienced that, you had that performed, that your one of God's, and if that's what you're looking to for your assurance, that's a dead assurance, that's a dead work. It's simple but substantial faith in Jesus Christ and him alone. Now, folks, if I'm going to be your pastor, this is what we're going to preach: Christ alone. Christ alone.

Dead works originates out of our dead hearts. Remember Paul said in Ephesians, "You're dead in trespasses and sins." And in these dead hearts, our hearts are full of fear and guilt and selfishness, "What's going to help me?" and then you begin to look for things in that fear, in that guilt, to make yourself okay before God. And I am convinced and nothing is more at fault than the Roman Catholic system around the world to give these people in

their fear and guilt a false system to buy into whereby they can feel like, "Maybe I'm gonna get home," and it's a lie from hell. It's not going to get them home. It's not going to get them saved. It's not going to justify them before a holy God. All they're going to do is go to God and say, "I did this. I did that. I did this. I did that. The priest said this. The priest said that. I did this and did this." And God's going to say, "You did every bit of it out of the capacity of a rotten, hellish, rebellious nature before me and so all the stuff you put on was but a dead work."

Real quick, Philippians 3. The Apostle Paul uses his own passionate devotion to his Jewish religion to illustrate how it counts as nothing before God. Real quickly, Philippians 3:1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you." Then he says, "Beware of the dogs." He's calling these people who teach works salvation as dogs. "Beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision," that means just the true people of God. He says those Jews and those Jewish religious leaders who tell you you've got to be circumcised to gain some sort of ceremonial cleansing and sanctification for God are liars. They are evil workers. We are the true circumcision. Now look at verse 3 again, "who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh." That means if your flesh does the work of baptism, you don't put your confidence in that work. If your flesh takes part in the ordinance of the Lord's table, that's an ordinance God gave but we don't put confidence in that work. We put no confidence in the flesh in whatever work it may be: Catholicism, Jewish teachings, whatever it might be.

Verse 4, so Paul uses himself, he says, "although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh." He's making a point. "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin," He said, "I was in the best tribe." "A Hebrew of Hebrews," he said, you pick up great devoted Jews, I was at the top of all of the list. "As to the Law, a Pharisee," the Pharisees were the most diligent teachers and observers of God's law. Verse 6, "as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." He said, "You talk about working your way to heaven, if anybody could have worked their way to heaven, I was on my way." Verse 7, "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish," that's manure, that's dung, "so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith." So Paul says, "Every single thing that I performed when I was so highly esteemed as a devoted servant of God, I don't just say, 'Well, you know, that wasn't really good.'" He said, "No, that was manure. That was the filthiest stench, wretched stuff that you could possibly imagine and now my confidence is faith in Christ and that alone to save me."

Now, if Mother Teresa, and we can hope, somehow in her final days recanted of her confidence in the Catholic system of religion and cast her faith in Christ, then she would

be certainly a saint and be saved, but if she died with all of her devotion, with all of her sacrifice and all of her works and that there was confident trust in any of that, which is what the Catholic religion teaches, she is not in heaven, she is in hell. She is not a saint of God.

In Catholic doctrine, and one thing you'll find out about...well, I don't know if you're not even interested, but if you study, read or especially if you talk to a priest or a leader in Catholic doctrine, they say everything. They really do. You would think, "Well, this guy's a Baptist." But then as he keeps talking, he goes all over the place and when they deal with who is a saint and what is a saint, they do that. For example, to them a saint is one who is canonized after death and after you die and get to heaven, you perform a miracle for those still living on the earth who intercede to God through you. And when you're in heaven and you perform a miracle on behalf of someone who prays through you to God, then if two of those are affirmed by the church, then you are qualified to be canonized as a saint. There is not one half word of Scripture to support that.

Now, at the same time they'll say, "However all true believers," and they go further, "and followers," and that's how they get all their works system in, if you're not following according to all of our doctrines and teachings, then you're not saved, and that's why they keep control over people and grow their system. He says all believers and followers are saints but there is a special, I guess these are super-saints. And they have now affirmed that Mother Teresa has been prayed to by two people who experienced church certified miracles and so she has been canonized as a saint.

One of the things that was interesting is Pope Francis, the world's leading socialist, has been cleaning some stuff up because he said, "I began to discover over recent decades that people were being canonized when they had a whole lot of very wealthy people supporting the process," because if we're going to canonize Tom when he dies, what would happen is people in the church would give money to provide the airfare and it's got to be meticulously researched. We've got to find out if somebody prays to Tom after he dies, that they really get a miracle. So that takes money and time and research and they found out that big donors got the people they were supporting canonized a whole lot quicker than poor folks did. Aren't you glad your sainthood before God doesn't depend on big donors in the church? Here's what happens, folks: when you leave this book as your only and final authority, you're just like a dog chasing your tail. The messes, the error, the recklessness that you can get into.

Another verse and I'm about done. I know we're five minutes over but I'm working as hard as I can go here to help us all here. 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter. Listen to this. Paul writes to the Corinthian church. They have been functioning in the flesh in their services. They've been abusing spiritual gifts for their own flesh glory. He said, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions," here we go, "to feed the poor," everything to just make myself destitute and impoverished to help others and care for others less

fortunate, "and if I surrender my body to be burned," it's implied, "for them, but do not have love, it profits me nothing." Now, the first question is: if you do that, you must be wonderfully loving. Isn't that the most loving thing to impoverish yourself and then give your body in the burning fires of martyrdom for the sake of those less fortunate? That's what Mother Teresa did. But Paul said, "But if you don't have love, if the centerpiece of your heart was not true Spirit-wrought agape love, do you know what you get in eternity for that whole lifetime of impoverishment and giving your body to be burned for the sake of the less fortunate? Do you know what you get in heaven for that? Zero." Zero. You get nothing. You get nothing.

This love that Paul is referring to is the love that's given when you're born again. The Bible says the love of God – now listen – is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That means when the Holy Spirit regenerates your heart, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you, he brings a – listen to me – a new love that is not natural, it's supernatural but if you're saved, it's supernaturally natural. It's a new love that comes from God and planted in you, not on the basis of your worth, merit, inherent goodness or anything you do, but just sheer grace of God, brings the Spirit in you, imparts that love in you, and that germ of love whereby for the first time in your life, you begin to, in the smallest ways, think in terms of, "What glorifies God and what's good for his church? That's my main motive now." When that love is the motivation, then your works, then your service, then your sacrifice matters to heaven, but not to earn heaven, it's just the fruit of what God has done in your heart and in your life.

So if a lady called Mother Teresa who did all these things in India went to her deathbed trusting in Catholic doctrine, she is neither a saint and of all people, she's probably the worst possible example to follow because nobody on earth did Jesus condemn more than the Pharisees who put on good works but did not have a heart that trusted in Jesus Christ and him alone.

Now, Satan is the master counterfeiter, don't you think his greatest work would be works that are clothed in Christian garb but are not sound and not true? Sir, I challenge you tonight, ma'am, I challenge you tonight, young person, I challenge you tonight to turn to Jesus Christ and him alone. Repent of all other things you're looking to or trusting in whether it's a baptistic ordinance of walking down an aisle which the Bible does not require, or a Catholic ordinance of doing something in the priestcraft of the church, or some other church's teaching on works and needing this sign or this wonder to know you're saved, I'm charging you tonight to repent of looking to any and all of that and say, "Christ, tonight, fully and whole-heartedly I trust in your death for me and that alone to cleanse me, to make me justified in your sight." And the Bible says whoever believes on him will not be disappointed. What a great promise.

Let's stand in prayer.