



# 50 Days of Wisdom

## Volume 10: Days 451-500

### Introduction:

#### The Believer's Glorious Inheritance

*"In the world you will have tribulation" ([John 16:33, NKJV](#)).*

Those words from our Lord are almost a truism—something so obvious it need not be stated. We are all intimately acquainted with the troubles of this life. On a personal level, we physically decay with each passing moment, even if we're healthy ([2 Corinthians 4:16](#)). On a societal level, we see the effects of sinful decisions all around us. John MacArthur observes, *"We are watching our country [America] freefall into godless darkness, sexual perversion, gender insanity, crime of all kinds, the breakdown of law and order, family destruction, and above all, the constant flood of lies and efforts to silence the truth."* In light of this individual and institutional decay, even Christians may be tempted to despair.

One way to combat this temptation is to remember our place in the plan of redemption: predestined, regenerated, and justified, but not yet glorified. In his sermon [The Believer's Glorious Inheritance](#), John MacArthur explains why [Ephesians 1:11–14](#) is a comfort for those who feel overwhelmed by the troubles of the world. In these four verses, Paul writes:

*"[In Him] also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."*

John MacArthur explains,

Paul is really calling on these troubled believers living in the worst life of their day to suffer patiently and wait with hearts full of praise for the eternal inheritance that was promised to them. He's calling for them to understand the spiritual heavenly blessings that were already secured for them by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the elective purpose of God in eternity past, and they were just waiting for the full realization of them when they entered glory.

The apostle Peter also reminded suffering Christians of their *"inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you"* ([1 Peter 1:4](#); cf. [Colossians 3:24](#)).

Because of this, we know that our best days await us beyond this life. Again, John MacArthur says, *"This is not our best life, not by any means. To all who are in Christ, our best life is yet to come. Our best life is the glory of heaven."* This is our great comfort in tumultuous times—our hope is not in this world, but with Christ in the world to come.

To be further encouraged in this glorious truth, listen to [The Believer's Glorious Inheritance](#) by John MacArthur.

[By Jacob Trotter](#)

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Let's pray.

Our Father, we are overwhelmed that we have been chosen before the foundation of the world, that Christ redeemed us by name, by identification personally in His death on the cross and rose for our justification, and that You, in predestining us, predestined us to an inheritance, laid up for us, as Peter said, undefiled, untarnished for us, and that inheritance is that we will be the inheritance of Christ Himself. You give us to Him as the inheritance passed down from You, the Father, to Your Son. And at the same time, we will receive a full inheritance of all that He possesses as joint heirs with Him.

May we set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth. May we not get caught up in all the disappointments and distractions. May we see Christ clearly, keeping our eyes fixed on Him, being transformed into His image from one level of glory to the next. That is our prayer, in His name, who asked us to come boldly, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[By John MacArthur](#)

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul* – (Servant of God)

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## How to Use This eBook:

**Simply read one message each morning.** *(For a further understanding of the message content and context, click on the provided web link at the end of each message.)*

Starting each morning in this way is how you *"walk and talk with God in the cool of the day"* (Genesis 3:8), just like Adam and Eve did in the garden.

This process yields many benefits:

1. The early morning Bible study will be your spiritual breakfast (manna), which will nourish your soul throughout the day.
2. The early morning Bible study will fill your Holy Spirit's sails and propel your spiritual ship in the right direction throughout the day.
3. The early morning Bible study is the method that God uses to speak to you personally as the Word comes down through the Bible study.
4. Since prayer is the method that man uses to communicate with God by sending up his thoughts and concerns, the early morning Bible study sermon will put you in prayer mode throughout the entire day.
5. The early morning Bible study will produce many questions but will also provide all the answers. *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7.*
6. The early morning Bible study is a demonstration of honoring and worshiping God.
7. Each Bible study guarantees your transformation into a more spiritually mature Christian through the renewal of your mind. *Romans 12:2.*
8. By following this process each morning, you will not only hear God speak directly to your heart through these messages, but you will soon become a mature, cast-iron soldier, saint, servant, and son or daughter of the Most High God.

## Additional Notes:

1. It is recommended to share one message each day with your family, perhaps during mealtime.
2. To maximize concentration while listening to the audio files, it is helpful to read along with the audio transcript.
3. It is also beneficial to cut and paste transcript texts that are important to you while listening and then re-read those texts in the evening.
4. Please share this eBook with others; however, altering this content in any way is not permitted.

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Day 451

## The Resurrection

Why are we talking about our Christian inheritance on Resurrection Sunday? Because this inheritance, this full, glorious, eternal salvation, this living hope secured for us in heaven, protected by the power of God, is only made possible, 1 Peter 1:3 says, *"through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* No resurrection, no inheritance. No resurrection, no eternal hope. No resurrection, no salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. The astonishing historical event of Jesus Christ's resurrection opened heaven and all the treasures of eternal glory. If you deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christianity becomes stupid, foolish, and ridiculous because it makes promises it can't deliver. But Jesus did rise. In John 14:19, Jesus said, *"Because I live, you will live also."* Wow! Because I live, you will live also. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is what opened heaven for all of us. At least a dozen times in the New Testament, it says that God raised Jesus. However, we know God slew Jesus. It pleased the Father to bruise Him. God killed Jesus. He was God's chosen Lamb, a substitute for sinners. God made Him the sacrifice for our sins. And then God raised Him to validate the sufficiency of His sacrifice. And heaven opened for Him, and He ascended back, and heaven opened for all of us as well. That's why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so essential. It's the cornerstone of the Christian faith. We have eternal life because He conquered death for Himself and us. Our best life is yet to come with Him in glory. And I hope that will be your best life, too. What can we say except, *"Lord, thank You for reminding us of the greatness of the resurrection and the glory of it. Thank You for life in Christ. Thank You for eternal life. We celebrate that with grateful hearts. We are humbled because we are unworthy. Thank You for Your forgiveness. Thank You for your mercy. And Father, open heaven wide for unsaved souls this Easter day and give them this living hope. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen."* Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-334\)](http://GTY.org) – **Your Best Life: Now or Later?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 452

## How to be Content

Contentment comes from focusing on positive things. Therefore, you must train yourself to be positive. I'm not talking here about some game you play with yourself in positive thinking. I'm not talking about imagining things to be positive when they're not. I'm saying to focus on the positive truth of God's revealed Word. Negative thinking causes discontent. You are constantly thinking about your problems, suffering, lack, mistreatment, and abuse; everyone is doing this to you; you don't have this; this isn't working out; your wife or husband doesn't understand you; and so on. You've experienced hardships from beginning to end; this type of negative thinking fosters depression. It is so essential to train yourself to think positively. If there's any moral excellence, if there's anything in you to be worthy of praise, it will be when you have learned to set your thoughts on things above and not on things on the earth. When the Word of Christ richly permeates your being, causing you to speak to yourself in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and

when you find yourself singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, you are a person who is thinking on the things above. The contented person has a mindset that is positive toward the things of God, and what happens in this world is of little consequence. So contentment then flows from a mind, engaging in thankful prayer and focusing on positive things. Contentment and satisfaction in life also come from following the right example. If you want to learn to be a content and satisfied person, find somebody like that and pattern your life after them. You need a model. The Apostle Paul says, *"Take me as your model; pattern your life after me."* People need a positive model, one that is content and satisfied. Here's the bottom line of contentment: Paul knew that God was the source of everything. That's how he lived, and that's why he's a perfect example. So, what does it mean to be content? Well, for a Christian, it's a positive focus on what is right. It involves identifying a model or an example and adhering to that pattern. All I care about is life and godliness. I don't care about this world; I just care about my life before God. That's my preoccupation. My contentment is in the Lord. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-21\)](http://GTY.org) – **Seven Keys to Contented Living – [TOC](#)**

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Day 453

### **Speak the Truth**

Throughout the Old Testament, lying lips are always evidence of disdain for God, as it reflects God's hatred of lying. Understanding that God despises lying is straightforward. If you're a contented liar, you're taking on God. It's an abomination to Him, and it shows disdain for Him. I warn you: Heaven will record every lie you ever tell. According to Matthew 12:36, every word you say is on the divine record, and there will be an accounting for every word. Hell is full of liars, and heaven is full of forgiven liars. This is a difficult time for parents because they must teach their children to be honest. If you train them to do anything, train them to tell the truth. We always told our children, *"The wisest thing you can ever do is to admit that you lied, because the consequences will always be worse if you lied than if you told the truth."* And that's how God deals with us, right? 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."* But if we cover our sins and lie, we put ourselves in jeopardy. Train your children to speak the truth; it's absolutely critical. You, as a parent, should enforce consequences when your children lie or express anger. For now, they need to know the dire consequences of lying. They need to fear lying because a person who doesn't fear the consequences of lying will commit any crime or sin. You want your child to be so afraid of lying that when he does lie, he won't look at you, his head will drop, his eyes will begin to close, he will fumble for words and shuffle his feet, and you'll know he's lying. This is because you've instilled his conscience with the truth, causing it to activate. Additionally, be aware that revealing the truth in this society will always come with a cost. This will be the main source of church persecution because we are the truth-tellers, and a lying culture can't tolerate the truth. As a result, we will be the true enemies of this deceptive worldly system. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-23\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Disastrous Sin of Lying – [TOC](#)**

Day 454

## The Effects of Sin

What are the effects of sin? What does sin cause? First, sin causes evil to overpower us. Sin turns a person into a victim of evil as evil dominates the mind. It says in Jeremiah 17:9, *"The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."* It says in Ephesians 4 that the mind is dark, that the mind is alienated, that the life of God is absent. It says in 1 Corinthians 2 that we cannot understand the things of God. In Romans 1, that the mind is reprobate. In other words, sin has dominated the mind so that its thinking process is overpowered with evil. It thinks evil, it plans evil, and it conceives evil. Evil also dominates the will by the evil that overpowers the sinner. He is a total victim. If evil dominates his thinking, it will also dominate his will, as he will want to do what he conceives, and evil dominates what he conceives. And then evil dominates the affections. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Their loves, their affections, their wishes, their wants, their desires, their longings are toward those things which are not right. And so man is overpowered by evil. And sin is in the nature of even a Christian. It's in the essence of a Christian. It's in the person of a Christian, like a sleeping lion and the least thing can enrage it. It's an overpowering thing. It smolders sometimes high like a flame, sometimes low. And the slightest wind of temptation fans it to fury. Sin also brings us under the dominance of Satan. People think that they're free—really free—to do whatever they want. We say they're free spirits. Listen, the only free person is one who's had his sin covered and is free to do what's right. A sinner is not free. He is under the total domination of sin and the control of Satan. And it's obvious. They are visibly the devil's children because they manifest his ways. They bear the mark of satanic control. So man is a slave to Satan. He is not free; he is totally controlled. And Satan works in him to accomplish his own will. Jesus said, *"Only if the Son makes you free are you free."* So, what are the effects of sin? Sin overpowers us and brings us under the control of Satan. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-7\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Ugliness of Christmas](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 455

## Standing in His Presence

This is just incredible. Jude 24 says, *"Now to Him who is able to keep you from falling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy."* God is able to keep you and *"to make you stand."* Right now, we stand in grace, according to Romans 5:1–4. But someday, we'll stand in glory. This is the opposite of falling; it is standing. This is enduring to the end. This is the perseverance of the saints. True believers have been given a faith that endures. In other words, *"He who keeps us will set us in the presence of His glory."* If you ever truly confessed the Son, you will always confess the Son. If you ever truly believed in the Son, you will always believe in the Son and the Father. When somebody falls away, it's because they never were of us. Being kept has to do with earth; standing has to do with heaven, standing in the presence of His glory. All of this means that He keeps us here and takes us there. This is amazing grace—really astonishing.

Whenever anybody is in the presence of God in Scripture, they are traumatized and terrified. It was a frightening experience because they know they're sinful. That is a place where no sinner can stand. But someday we will stand in the presence of His glory, blameless. And instead of fear, there will be great joy. What Christian could say, *"You know, I've kept myself saved, and I deserve to stand in His presence?"* What kind of ridiculous idea is that? Right now, we are not blameless. We are treated as if we were blameless because Christ bore our sins and we've been given His righteousness. And God treats Christ on the cross as if He lived our lives so He can treat us as if we lived His. But we are not yet worthy of entering heaven. That's why we have to be transformed; we have to lose this body of flesh and go into God's presence and receive a new body. But that will happen. We will not merely exist as survivors. We will not just be free from guilt and sin; we will be holy, blameless, and faultless. We will not only not violate God's law, but we will keep every bit of it forever. It's not just that we will be there in the absence of sin; we will be there in the presence of holiness. We will not only not be capable of doing evil; we will only be capable of doing right. We will have every power and passion liberated from evil and devoted solely to holiness. And we'll be there with our heads lifted up, blameless before God. And instead of fear, trauma, panic, and fainting, we'll be overwhelmed with joy—forever. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(65-15\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Saint's Guarantee](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 456

### **The Effects of Adversity**

Another principle of Christian living is to relish and cherish the effects of adversity. According to 1 Peter 1:3, you have an inheritance. You're protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. That's all good. God has saved you, forgiven you, and promised a resurrection—an inheritance that remains unfading, undefiled, and reserved in heaven. You're protected; you're going to reach heaven. That's guaranteed. Then verse 6, *"In this you greatly rejoice."* Of course! He continues, *"Even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials."* The idea that Jesus wants everybody healthy, wealthy, prosperous, and pain-free is just absolutely a lie. All of this prosperity, health, and wealth preaching is a fabrication and a deception. You desire trials. Let me give you one good reason. This is because verse 7 states, *"That's the proof of your faith."* This is because if you declare, *"Oh, I believe in Jesus; I'm a Christian,"* and a trial arises, you may crumble under its weight, begin to blame God, deny Him, and ultimately walk away. Then that trial revealed your faith's illegitimacy. But if you're the real thing, the trial may be hard, difficult, and painful. But when you come out the other side and say, *"Glory to God, for He has something better; I trust Him, I love Him, and I'll follow Him no matter what the price,"* you have just received a tremendous gift from God. That's an assurance of your saving faith's reality. You passed the trial, and you now know. How valuable is it to know your salvation is the real thing? Verse 7 continues, *"It is more precious than gold that is perishable."* I can't think of anything more precious than knowing that my salvation is real so that I can fully enjoy it. And that becomes known to me through trials that test me, and I come out triumphant on the other side through the power and grace of God. People will persecute you

for your Christian testimony, subjecting you to unjust suffering. However, just keep on rejoicing. Why? It finds favor with God. God will reward you in eternity for everything you suffer here in His name. According to 1 Peter 2:21, *"You've been called for this purpose, like Christ was to suffer unjustly."* What do you do? Verse 25: *"You are continually straying like sheep, but now you return to the Shepherd and guardian of your souls."* He's saying trials drive you back to the Shepherd. You get so far away; you find yourself in the wilderness; the wild animals are around you; and you turn and race back to the Shepherd. Trials have the benefit of giving you the assurance that your faith is saving faith. And trials have the benefit of driving you in the direction of the Shepherd, which is where you want to go, casting all your cares on Him because He cares for you. So, what do trials do? They perfect you, verify you, strengthen you, and establish you. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-403\)](http://GTY.org) – **You Are What You Think** – [TOC](#)

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Day 457

### **How to Please God**

There's only one way to please God. How? Hebrews 11:6 tells us, *"Without faith, it is impossible"*—to do what?—*"to please Him."* So there's only one way to please God, and that's by faith. Therefore, all the individuals in the Old Testament who believed in God possessed not only a substantial faith but also a conviction that guided their conduct. They gained approval from God because the only way you can gain approval from God is through faith. Abel believed God regarding sacrifice, did it by faith, and God approved of Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's. Enoch had faith in God that he would not die, and he did not die because God was pleased with him and took him to heaven. Noah believed in God's promise of rain, and as a result, he inherited God's righteous deliverance. Abraham and Sarah trusted in God for a child, and a nation emerged from their lineage, fulfilling God's promise. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Amram, Jochebed, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel all believed in God, received God's approval, and became heroes in this chapter's hall of fame. They trusted what they couldn't see; they bet their lives on it, and God approved of that faith. There's only one way to please God, and that's to believe Him. And what that means is to believe His Word. It does not please God when you do not believe His Word. It only pleases Him when you believe His Word. So the nature of faith is that it brings substance into our lives when it's faith in the Word of God, and it produces convictions that guide our behavior. So that is the essence of faith and it pleases God. And because it pleases God, it brings His heavenly blessing. Now, here's an illustration of faith. Was anybody there when God created the heavens and the earth? No. Yet Scripture tells us that God spoke creation into being. By faith, we understand that. Nobody was there. I always want to remind the scientists of that when they say, *"We don't believe the creation account."* That's because you weren't there. *"But it doesn't fit the evolutionary model."* That's because it's not scientifically explainable. Creation is not a scientific event; creation is God creating an entire universe in six days. There is no scientific explanation for creation, just as there is no scientific explanation for Jesus walking on water, raising someone from the dead, creating new eyes in a blind man's head, or creating new limbs for a quadriplegic. There are no scientific explanations

for miracles; that's why they're called miracles. And the most massive miracle of all miracles is the miracle of creation. It's ridiculous to try to apply any kind of scientific model to the six-day creation of the entire universe. There is no scientific explanation for it. So, do you want to gain approval with God? Believe in the creation account. If you believe that, you are a person of faith, and God is well-pleased. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-10\)](#) – **What Faith Is** – [TOC](#)

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Day 458

### **The Burning Heart**

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained to them the Old Testament. Afterwards, according to Luke 24:31–32: *"They said to one another after their eyes were opened and they recognized Him,"* - and they understood everything - *'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?'"* Why? Because understanding the Bible creates a burning heart. Burning with what? You are filled with gratitude, joy, exhilaration, hope, confidence, faith, enthusiasm, and excitement. The better you understand Scripture, the more joy you have, because the more you understand God's marvelous purposes for you in Christ, the more joy it produces. The burning heart is sheer joy; it's what catapults them, according to verse 33, out of that place. They go all the way back seven miles to the eleven Apostles, and they start trying to explain this experience to these guys, who can't quite figure it out because it's just way over the top. They're trying to unpack all of this because their hearts are literally on fire with joy. And then, to continue from there, go to the very end of the book, Luke 24:50-51, *"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven."* It's the ascension. Then this in verse 52: *"And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with"* – what? – *"great joy."* So what's my goal in this? I want you to have joy. I want you to have the great joy that produced verse 53: *"They were continually in the temple,"* –doing what?– *"praising God."* They desired further clarity regarding Scripture, a deeper understanding of Scripture, and specifically, a deeper understanding of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as depicted in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus declared that the Old Testament revealed the truth about Him. Only when they understood the Old Testament did the Apostles come to affirm and have complete faith in Him and His work. Jesus is the express image of God, the exact reproduction of His person, the fullness of God, and seeing Him in all His glory produces unspeakable joy. We want you to worship with greater joy, greater exuberance, and greater gratitude, because then you will see Christ in all His glory. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-431\)](#) – **Christ the Expositor** – [TOC](#)

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Day 459

### **What Makes Men Weak?**

Since men are called by God to manage the house, they are, in being qualified to do that, qualified to manage the church. But no woman is the head of a house, and no woman can be the head of a church. It's abundantly clear what Scripture says about life in the church as regards to women preachers. And here, without any confusion, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:3, *"But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man; man is the head of a woman; and God is the head of Christ."* So God's the head of Christ; Christ is the head of man; and man is the head of a woman. That's the order; that's the divine order; that's how it has to be. Now, when a woman dresses in a socially feminine style, she is declaring her understanding of God's order. She was declaring her understanding of the divine uniqueness of being a woman, and she was testifying to her submission to that divine design, as well as her submission and devotion to her husband. Furthermore, as a Christian, she was declaring her devotion to Jesus Christ. Women must dress in a way that clearly designates them as women. And men must dress in a way that clearly identifies them as men; that's the issue. And this is God's design. Anything other than that is disgraceful. God created man from nothing, and woman from man. The man's glory is in the image of God; the woman's glory is that she was created by God from man. Verse 8 and 9 say, *"A man doesn't originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed, man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."* In other words, keep these distinctions clear: authority and submission. And culture so clearly recognizes this that all cultures have those kinds of distinctive marks. Listen, the most holy, submissive creatures in the universe are the angels, right? What are the angels? They're ministering spirits who serve the Lord constantly. As a result, they are the purest and highest of all submissive creatures. And when women demonstrate their submission, they put their obedience on display to the most submissive of all creatures, the holy angels. The Lord is actively working in the church to showcase it for the angels, and these angels anticipate seeing the church and witnessing the Lord's glory there. How disappointing must it be for angels to look down and witness rebellious women attempting to usurp leadership, preaching roles, and overpowering their husbands? Wherever you have that kind of woman, you have weak husbands. Wherever you have a collection of such women in leadership, you will also have weak men. And whenever there are weak men, the entity in question will inevitably face destruction. Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(81-56\)](http://GTU.org) – **Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach? – TOC**

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Day 460

### **Keeping Spiritually Separate**

Those of us who have been converted were struck by the law; our conscience was activated, and the Spirit prompted us to repent because we were convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The Spirit opened our blind eyes, stripped off the blinding of Satan, and we saw the light of the gospel of the glory of God shining in the face of Christ. The truth is everything. Sound doctrine is absolutely everything. All of us who call ourselves Christians should agree that there is a body of doctrine that is non-negotiable. The articles of faith that make up this body of truth are the very essence of faith, once and for all delivered to the saints. These are the real fundamentals of the

faith. They are doctrines. Listen, they are so indispensable and absolutely required that you must break fellowship with anyone who denies them. Did you hear that? You cannot engage in any kind of cooperative religious activity with someone who denies these doctrines. Why is that so? Listen again to Scripture. *"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness? What fellowship has light with darkness? What harmony does Christ have with Belial? What has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Come out of their midst; be separate; do not touch what is unclean."* Believing in these fundamentals of the faith is essential for salvation, and it also shapes the alliances we can form as believers. Nothing is more clear from Scripture than the teaching that a boundary exists between true and false doctrine. Paul said this in Galatians 1:8 and 9, *"Even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached, let him be damned!"* And John writes in 1 John 4:1, *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."* And John says in 2 John 9, *"Anyone who goes beyond does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God."* If your Christology is wrong, you're not a believer. Verse 10: *"And if anyone comes to you and doesn't bring the true teaching about Christ, do not receive him into your house; do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds."* Listen, doctrine is so critical; you can't be saved without it, and it defines who you can cooperate with in any endeavor that's supposedly on behalf of God. These verses command us to keep spiritually separate from those who corrupt the essential truths of the gospel and who tamper with the glory of the gospel of Christ. Why? Because they attach the guilt of the false teacher's evil deeds to the one who fails to distinguish between truth and error. This is a stern warning. Repent and believe!

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Day 461

### **Why We Must Forgive**

We must forgive because it mirrors the nature of God, and we are His children. We are to forgive because it is forbidden not to forgive. We are to forgive because the Most High has forgiven the most, and we, the least, should forgive the least. We must forgive, because all sins offend God the most, and He forgives. We must forgive, because if we don't forgive, we'll isolate ourselves from Christian fellowship, bring ourselves under discipline, and live in a condition of diminished sanctification because God will not forgive our sins. Another reason is that the absence of forgiveness renders us unfit to worship. That should be obvious—you can't worship if the Lord is chastening you and not forgiving you temporally. Also, no one should draw near to God with an intention to worship if he has any unsettled grudges with another believer. You cannot bring the issue of bitterness, hate, anger, and unforgiveness to the place of worship, regardless of who is at fault. God doesn't want worshipers who are filled with unforgiveness. In addition, not to forgive is to usurp the authority of God. It's the ultimate ego trip. You presume to have the sword of judgment and will wreak havoc on someone's life. Are you going to gossip about them, slander them, and foment lies as you exaggerate the realities? You are taking on God's role. You're not

God. You don't have to wish the worst for somebody who offended you. God will take care of all necessary matters. You're not the judge. If you act as the judge, you're saying, *"God is too slow, too indifferent, too preoccupied, too weak, or God is too unjust. I'm going to have to take this into my own hands."* That is blasphemy. God alone is able to deal with sin, and He always does. He has a perfect and true understanding of the offense; you don't. He has the highest standard; yours is lower. He has full authority; you have none. He is impartial; you're not. He is omniscient and eternal, seeing the end from the beginning; you're shortsighted and ignorant, seeing nothing beyond today. He exhibits wisdom, goodness, and perfect holiness, while the sin of anger blinds you. You are not in a position to judge anyone. You're not qualified. Leave it to God. Additionally, the injuries and offenses you endure serve as the trials that ultimately refine you. Criticisms, injustices, offenses, false accusations, persecutions, mistreatments, abuse, and unkindness—all of those are within the providence and purpose of God. That is what God uses to perfect you. As a result, the injuries and offenses against you are the trials that perfect you. Christ accomplished the most when He was suffering unjustly, right? That sums it up. And in the suffering, He said, *"Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing."* Forgiveness is everything. It's the only thing that's going to sustain love in a marriage, family, friendships, and the church of Jesus Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-2\)](http://GTY.org) – **Forgiveness in the Age of Rage** – [TOC](#)

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Day 462

### **The Problem with False Assurance**

The Bible literally brims with warnings for those who deceive themselves about salvation. And the reason there are so many warnings is because so many people have been deceived. In Matthew 7, our Lord says, *"Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord.' And I'll say I never knew you."* It's not just a select few or a single group; it's a multitude. Also in Matthew chapter 7, it says there's going to come a day when people are going to expect the door of heaven to be open, and it's going to slam shut forever in their faces. What a fearful thing! So many people think they're saved; they think they're safe from judgment, and for them, it's going to be a shock. What lulls people into that deception? What makes people really think they're saved? Firstly, I believe that a false assurance often leads people to believe they are saved. Let's assume that someone led you to Christ and told you, *"Now, all you have to do to be a Christian is pray this little prayer and say this little formula based on certain statements."* Therefore, simply by praying, saying, and signing on the dotted line, you have achieved salvation. This often leads to a false sense of assurance. Listen, if you feel in your heart that you want to invite Jesus Christ to become the Lord and Savior of your life, and you've done it before, do it again. Don't let somebody's false assurance or somebody's false certification take the place of the convicting work of the Spirit of God. And I think a lot of times in our evangelism, as long as somebody says the prayer and signs on the line, we give them this little psychological game that they don't ever have to worry about whether they're saved or not. When Jesus said, *"The seed of the Word is cast on four soils,"* only one out of four turned out to produce salvation. Don't go around certifying people's salvation. You give them false assurance. Let God give them assurance through His Spirit, witnessing with their spirits that they are the

children of God and crying to Abba Father. When they add virtue to their faith, let God give them assurance. As they incorporate patience, godliness, and love into their faith, their election will become certain, they will recognize the forgiveness of their sins, and they will not lose sight of the reality of salvation. That's God's work, not some human certification. However, I do believe that many individuals have received assurances of salvation, which they mistakenly believe to be true. Therefore, 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2255\)](http://GTY.org) – **Empty Words** – [TOC](#)

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Day 463

### **Understanding Human Inability**

Utter ignorance of God is the condition of every human being from birth. They are alienated from the life of God and cut off from God all together. Ephesians 2 says: *"They live in darkness and death."* Ephesians 4 says: *"They're hopeless, helpless, and lost."* They talk about God, say they believe in God, and have some kind of idea about God, but it's a devilish lie because they don't know God. I read a survey this week. What they came up with was very interesting. It's a denial of human depravity. Sixty-seven percent of the people in this study said, *"Everyone sins at least a little, but most people are good by nature."* Forty percent said, *"God loves me because of the good I do."* Only sixteen percent said, *"People do not have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative."* Eighty-four percent said, *"Of course they have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative by doing good things."* Seventy-one percent of Americans agree that an individual must contribute his or her own effort for personal salvation. Sixty-four percent of Americans agree that a person obtains peace with God by first taking the initiative to seek God, and then God responds with grace. So summing it up, the majority said, *"We sin a little, but by nature, we're good. We do good, and God rewards our good deeds by loving us. We have the ability to turn to God on our own initiative. And salvation involves us taking the initiative, and then God responds to us."* That is a massive lie believed by most people. So, is it possible for a sinner, without God's assistance, to choose Christ, turn away from sin, embrace the truth, receive the gospel, believe, and experience salvation? If you say yes, then you don't understand man's sinful nature, because Scripture clearly states that man can do nothing to repair his relationship with God and that God must do it all. This is a lie that claims that there's goodness in man. It's a failure to understand God and human depravity. But I think even worse than that is that people hate God and don't know it. I hear people speaking positively about God who often say—*"God bless you,"*—who hate God. Why am I saying they hate God? Because they hate His law, His moral standards, the Scripture, and righteousness, and they are comfortable with sin and iniquity. You hear people say, *"Well, yeah, I love God, and I'm a Christian, and yet I live this life of sin and immorality."* You don't love God; you don't know God. You have concocted a god who tolerates your iniquity. And when I introduce you to the true God, who confronts your sin as sin, the hatred you harbor for God turns toward me. You can only know God by knowing Christ. He is the only path to God. Jesus

said, "You can't know God unless you come to Me, and you can't come to Me and confess Me as Lord unless the Holy Spirit enables you to do it." It's a divine miracle. Repent and believe!

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Day 464

### **Sin Without Restraint**

Rationality is built into human existence. Every human being is, to some degree, a rational being. That's why he knows he needs to eat; that's why he knows he needs to protect himself; that's why he knows that when he's ill, he needs to find a doctor; and when he's wounded, he needs to have something to repair the wound. He understands the cause-and-effect realities of the world. And if he understands cause and effect, that's reason. Reason works on cause and effect: do this; this is the effect; do that; that is the effect. Reason is merely a chain of cause-and-effect realities. If everything around you operates in this manner and you continue to trace the cause back, you will eventually ask yourself, "*Who is the ultimate cause of everything?*" So rationality leads you back to an ultimate cause. The Big Bang theory, which asserts that nobody times nothing equals everything, lacks rationality. That is very irrational. That is a form of insanity to say the entire universe came out of nothing by accident. It's folly of the rankest kind. Only folly says that all of this is some great accident. Therefore, reason leads you back to God. Personality connects you to a God who embodies personality. Relationships take you back to God, who is relational. All of these are reflections of God. Therefore, when man suppresses the truth, he not only obliterates God's written revelation but also obliterates the revelation inherent in his own reason. Romans 1:21 states, "*Even though they knew God,*"—historically speaking, it's impossible not to come to an ultimate cause because you have to go against what is obvious and true. Yet, "*They did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became empty in their speculations, and their foolish heart became darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.*" Do you know why, throughout human history, they have shifted from the true God to worshiping bugs and animals? Because bugs and animals don't have any moral requirements. They create their own gods in their own image because those gods do not require righteousness. Therefore, they're trying to get rid of the one and only true God because they want to get rid of the Lawgiver. Why? They dislike the idea that His Law contradicts their unrighteousness. Ensnared in falsehoods and deceit, collective groups such as LGBTQ endeavor to normalize their sins, thereby stifling the divine truth inherent in them and enabling them to indulge in sin without restraint. Verse 22 says, "*Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.*" Today, you can get a Ph.D. in this kind of folly, but according to Scripture, you're still a fool. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM19-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **Telling the Truth in a Post-Truth World** – [TOC](#)

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Day 465

### The Best Part

There are some fake evangelists and fake Christians who think they're going to get a heavenly reward. They're going to say, "Lord, Lord, we did this in your name." And Jesus will say to them, "Depart from Me, I never knew you." What they think they're going to get, they're not going to get. However, the people who are the true believers and who did the true seed sowing are going to receive more. More of what? More of everything—more of all the grace, goodness, and kindness of God. So we sow and sleep humbly, because we're not in charge of the results. We sow obediently, because it's the very nature of being the light that we shine. We diligently sow because our usefulness is proportionate to our faithfulness, and our efforts will reap eternal rewards. But we must also sow confidently. Look at Mark 4:30: "And he said, 'How shall we picture the kingdom of God?' It's like a mustard seed, which, when sown on the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, and when it is sown, however, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches, so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade." Do you know why we sow confidently? We sow confidently because we know that God has determined an exponential outcome. Isn't that marvelous? What's going to be the final outcome? What should we expect from this little, tiny seed and these men? Like a mustard seed, explosive growth. This tiny little seed produces a bush as high as fifteen feet and as wide as five or six feet. This is how the kingdom will rise. Small beginnings—no one could ever imagine that very soon they would be saying about this little seed kingdom, "These people are turning the world upside down." That sums up the kingdom's final explosive growth: the gospel spreads across the world, and the church spreads across the world, ultimately culminating in the glorious, final reign of Jesus Christ over the whole earth. Therefore, we can sow the seed humbly, obediently, diligently, and confidently, and leave the results to the Lord. Why? Because hard hearts shatter in the most unlikely circumstances and ways, igniting spiritual life. I tell you what, it's pretty exciting to be a part of this. But the best part of all, next to sowing the seed, is that the burden of salvation is not mine. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) ([GTY128](#)) – **The Theology of Sleep – TOC**

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Day 466

### How Man is Justified by God

The issue of how man can be reconciled with God was not settled 500 years ago during the Reformation; it was settled over 2,000 years ago. The books of Galatians, Romans, and the rest of the Scripture settled this issue. It was settled, and it was clear that it's the same salvation given testimony to in the Old Testament. It is the righteousness of God that comes to the sinner through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe. "They are justified" – Romans 3:24 – "as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Salvation is only by grace through faith, and the righteousness of God is imputed to the sinner who believes. Galatians 3:21 says that

righteousness is not achieved by the law. And on that verse, Martin Luther wrote this in his commentary on Galatians: *"Here Paul is saying that no law of itself is able to give life; it only kills. Such works as are done, even according to God's own law, do not justify us before God. They make us sinners. They do not pacify the wrath of God; they kindle it. They do not obtain righteousness but hinder it. They do not give life, but kill and destroy it. The law in itself does not justify, but has the opposite effects."* Galatians 3:10 says, *"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse."* Luther discovered that, and then he discovered the glories of the gospel, the blessed gospel of grace and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the gospel. How can a man be justified by God? By the righteousness of God being given to him by faith in Christ. How non-negotiable is this gospel? Galatians 1:8 tells us, *"Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be damned, cursed!"* What an indictment! If somebody comes with a different Jesus, a different Holy Spirit, and a different gospel, and you accept it, you are damned and cursed. This is frightening. We should not accept any corrupted gospel, be it the gospel of works, the prosperity gospel, the gospel of natural theology, the gospel of wider mercy, the new perspective on Paul, or whatever you want to call it—any other gospel is not to be accepted. Damnation is to be pronounced on any other gospel. For the final word on the exclusivity of the gospel, let's go to heaven and find out which gospel is being celebrated in heaven. Are they celebrating any gospel of works or human merit? According to Revelation 5, John sees the throne, and verse 9 tells us exactly how we are able to come into God's presence: *"We were bought by the blood of Jesus Christ."* That's the substitutionary blood atonement of Christ. All of heaven's worship goes toward the Lamb, who shed His blood. That's the only gospel celebrated in heaven. And that's the gospel that Paul proclaims and defends. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **Getting the Gospel Right** – [TOC](#)

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Day 467

### **Listen with Confidence**

It needs to be drummed into the heads and hearts of all Christians who have been seduced by contemporary lies that if we just get better at marketing the gospel, we can be more convincing, and more people will then be saved. We only need to present the gospel truth. Please know that music doesn't have anything to do with it in terms of style. The content of what is said and sung in music may convey the gospel. But it's not about mood. It's not about music, not about invitations, not about any human effort. You don't do God's work with human means. Mark 4:28 says, *"The soil produces crops by itself."* It's divinely automatic. How encouraging is that? Regeneration, transformation, spiritual transition, conversion, and new birth can't be produced by anyone or any human means. The whole process is divinely automatic. You can't start it, and you can't stop it. Once it begins, it continues until it reaches its full potential. All you can do is be there to enjoy the harvest. Like in 2 Timothy 2:6, the hardworking farmer does what he does so that he can enjoy the harvest. We have no role in the actual work of salvation, but we do get in on the harvest. What do you mean by the harvest? Well, fellowship is one way we enjoy the harvest, don't we? Making friends for eternity, whom we don't even know yet, is another harvest.

We'll meet them in heaven. We will enjoy the harvest forever and ever. We'll taste the harvest. Therefore, the gospel's success does not depend on our ability to change the heart, make the gospel more acceptable, or manipulate the will or emotions. The work of salvation is divinely automatic. So, we listen dependently. Right? Or maybe you like the word "*humbly*" better. But we must listen confidently. Why? Because the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that blossoms into a mustard tree. The proportions are stunning and staggering. Tiny seed, massive tree. Jesus is saying, "*This is going to be massive. Massively out of proportion to the size of its beginnings.*" This is a prophecy of triumphant growth. The gospel and church have grown throughout the history of the world, and will ultimately culminate in the millennial kingdom, where Christ will rule the whole world. Thus, we are listeners. We hear with understanding. We are the privileged. What's the greatest privilege of a Christian? To know the truth. Right? What is the distinguishing mark of a Christian? A Christian is one who knows the truth, obeys the truth, and loves the truth. To be listeners. And how do we listen? We listen with obedience, appreciation, dependence, humility, and confidence. What an amazing privilege has been granted to us. Think of it this way: If you're a believer, you speak God's language. When He speaks, you understand it perfectly. But it's a foreign language to everybody else. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(41-20\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Listen to the Lord** – [TOC](#)

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Day 468

### Jesus's Three-Part Method

What is Jesus's method? In Matthew 9:37, He says, "*The laborers are few.*" In other words, "*You can't do it alone. The laborers are few.*" What is that? Insight. That's the first part of His three-fold method. First, you have to understand the problem. What are you going to do about a lost, hell-bound world—a world of hurting people who need compassion? What actions will you take to alleviate the plight of men and women ensnared by deceitful shepherds who feed them falsehoods that ultimately destroy their souls? What are you going to do? First, you have to have the insight to see that there's a problem and that you don't have enough workers. That's insight. The insight then moves on to the second element of His method, which I refer to as intercession. Verse 38 doesn't say, "*Now panic.*" It doesn't say, "*Do it yourself, and do it as quick as you can.*" It doesn't say, "*Come up with a great program.*" It says in verse 38, "*Pray for the Lord of the harvest.*" The very God who is the Lord of the harvest—that's a judgment term—is the judge and the One we beseech to send the workers to prevent the people from ever getting to judgment. There is a part of God that demands judgment, and there is another part of God that desires no one to be present for judgment. However, as soon as you begin to pray for the Lord to send the laborers, you will quickly begin to feel as though you are the one who should be going. This transition from intercession to involvement occurs naturally. Now, it's important to note that the individuals who initiated the intercession also became involved in the process. Right? So what is God's method? First, we have insight; we understand that people are lost and there are few to reach them; and then we begin to pray, and out of our prayers will come our involvement. It's a marvelous method. God's people have insight, intercession, and involvement. Friends, God has called us to teach His

Word, to proclaim His kingdom, to touch people's lives, and to be moved to do that because His love is in us, because we see their condition, and because we understand they are headed to hell. He has commanded us to scrutinize the situation, gain understanding, and offer our assistance by pleading for God to dispatch workers; and when our summons arrives, akin to Isaiah, we respond with, *"Here I am, Lord, send me."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (2269) – **The Harvest and the Laborers** – [TOC](#)

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Day 469

### **Giving Your Body to God**

God wants true worshippers. As living sacrifices, we act as priests, offering sacrifices to God. First, we must offer our soul to God. Secondly, the body must be presented to God. Romans 12:1 says: *"Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."* This refers not only to the physical body but also encompasses all aspects of human existence, including your thoughts and reasoning, as well as everything that defines you as a human being. *"Present"* means to surrender, to yield, to offer up, and to hold nothing back. Like a priest who brings a sacrifice and lays the whole thing on the altar, you put your body on the altar, and by doing that, you are saying, *"I give You, God, my body."* I give it as a living sacrifice, not a dead sacrifice. I continually offer my body for your purposes, and I offer it as a living and holy sacrifice set apart from sin. In other words, you're making a presentation of yourself to obey your master. Sanctification is the result of an active presentation of the soul first and then the body to God. This is an action in which you present and surrender your body to God. That is your responsibility, and it is necessary for your sanctification. That is so very, very important. Your sanctification as a believer is dependent on you getting a hold of your body and offering it to God. This is not easy. Paul says, *"I beat my body into submission, lest in preaching to others, I myself would be disqualified."* So God wants your body to be a sacrifice offered to him in holiness, not just your spirit and mind. Sometimes, when you hear people say, *"Well, I'm a very spiritual person,"* if you're talking in biblical terms, I'd like to say to them, *"Well, if you're truly a spiritual person and you're concerned about offering your spirit to God, I've got some news for you. He wants your body, too. How are you doing on that side?"* It's essentially the foundation of all sanctification. It's an act. It's an aggressive act. It's an act that demands that we beat our bodies into submission. You could compare that to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac was about to be a dead sacrifice, but Abraham, who offered Isaac, was making a living sacrifice. What was he sacrificing? His son, his beloved son, the promises of God, the covenant of God, his heir, his hope, his future—everything, but he was willing to do it out of obedience. That's a living sacrifice. God is satisfied only when the soul is followed by the body offered to Him. Real worship is not elaborate. Prayers are not liturgy, not ritual, not candles, not stained glass, not anything external. It is the act of giving the soul and body to God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (80-414) – **Elements of a Living Sacrifice** – [TOC](#)

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Day 470

## Oh, What a Blessing

The first characteristic of the shepherd's relationship to the sheep is that he gives his life. Secondly, he loves his sheep. Of course, this is the driving force behind his selfless sacrifice. In John 10:14-15, Jesus says: *"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."* This explains why He lays down His life voluntarily for the sheep, because He knows them. The word "know" in this context implies a loving relationship. If we replace "know" with "love," we could interpret John 10:14-15 as follows: *"I am the good shepherd; I love my sheep and my sheep love me— just as the Father loves me and I love the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."* So when you see the word "know" in this context, it refers to the idea of a loving relationship. He loves His sheep. He knows more about them than just their names and identities. He has a loving relationship with them. He knows them lovingly. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, *"Depart from Me" - what? - "I never knew you."* It's not about information. He knows who they are. However, he doesn't have a loving relationship with them. He gave His life for His sheep because He knew and loved them. John 3:16 says, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."* That's why the Father gave the Son; that's why the Son gave His life. He loves His sheep. This stands in stark contrast to the false shepherds and leaders who lack both love and affection for the sheep they purport to shepherd. But Jesus loves His own. In John 14:21, Jesus says, *"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."* There is the language of love. In John 14:23 He says, *"If anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."* So that is the relationship between the Good Shepherd and the sheep. He gives His life because He loves them. Oh, what a blessing it is to be in His flock! Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(43-53\)](http://GTU.org) – **I Am the Good Shepherd** – [TOC](#)

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Day 471

## Repentance is Life-Changing

When we look at the issue of repentance, we know that it's a part of faith and a redirection of will, but it's also life-changing. That's the third thing you need to understand about repentance: it is life-changing. You're never the same again, never. It alters everything. Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes this in his great classic work, *The Sermon on the Mount*. He says, *"Repentance means that you realize that you're a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, and that you are hell-bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you, that you long to get rid of it, and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form. You renounce the world, whatever the cost, the world in its mind and outlook, as well as its practice; and you deny yourself, take up the cross, and go after Christ. Your nearest and*

*dearest, and the whole world, may call you a fool or say you have religious mania. You may have to suffer financially; it makes no difference. That is repentance.*" The understanding of repentance has always been consistent. Repentance is a complete and life-changing process that begins at salvation, thereby initiating a permanent and ongoing process of confessing sin. And this kind of repentance is consistently what the Bible teaches; it's consistent throughout Scripture. You can find it in the Old Testament. For example, Isaiah 1:6 says, *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek justice; reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins are as scarlet, they'll be as white as snow; though they're red like crimson, they'll be like wool."* You want your sins washed away? Then repent. That's what Isaiah is saying. It begins internally: cleanse yourself, and then it extends to your actions: eliminate the evil from your deeds and stop engaging in wickedness. This is just the biblical standard, and it doesn't ever change. Salvation comes to those who turn from sin to God. When John the Baptist comes along and says, *"Repent,"* everybody knows what he's talking about. It's not shocking. And there's no legitimate gospel message that does not press the issue of repentance. Conversion to Christ demands this. Of course, some people want to hold on to their sin while having it conveniently forgiven. That's not repentance, not at all. Look, there are two kinds of people: those who pretend to be obedient but are actually rebellious, and those who begin rebellious but repent. Jesus warns all those people who say they want to serve God but never really get around to it. They really just want God to serve them. But true repentance is life-changing. It alters everything. And you're never the same again, never. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-288\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Doctrine of Repentance](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 472

### **The Miracle of Conversion**

What's wrong with everybody? Why is the world such an evil, chaotic, dark, and demonic place? According to the Journal of Psychology, everybody's basically good. So I guess we can all go home. What's wrong with everybody is laid out here. This has to be understood. There's only one race, but there are many ethnicities. There's only one human race in various shades of brown, depending on how much melanin you have or don't have. However, humanity not only shares a common physical nature but also a common spiritual nature: all members of the human race are sinners. Now here is how ungodly people act, because this is how they think. It's a matter of the mind. Notice in Ephesians 4:17, *"Futility of mind."* In verse 18, *"Darkened in their understanding,"* and the word *"ignorance,"* it's that they don't know. First Corinthians 2:14 says, *"The natural man understands not the things of God; they're foolishness to him; and they're spiritually discerned, and he can't know them."* It's always been an issue of the mind: *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."* Proverbs 23:7. Their thinking is corrupted. Maybe the most familiar treatment of that is in Romans 1, where it says, *"Professing to be wise, [men] became fools."* Why? Because verse 21 says, *"Even though they knew God"—God was revealed in His creation—"they didn't honor Him as God or give thanks, they became futile"—empty, or useless—"in their speculations"—their*

intellectual musings—*"their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,"* and so *"God gave them over to"* sexual immorality, homosexuality, and a reprobate mind. It's a mind game. It's about allowing the truth to come to the mind so that there's understanding. Therefore, if you are a true Christian, you have undergone reprogramming. You learned Christ; you heard Him speak to you through His Word; you learned your lesson by the power of the Holy Spirit; and you embraced the truth that's in Jesus. And that totally transformed you. You can no longer live the way you used to because of the calling we received from God. You now share unity in the truth, the written and incarnate truth in Christ, the privileges of receiving spiritual gifts, God's grace to be a part of Christ's body, the Holy Spirit's presence that conforms us to Christ, and the obligation to speak the truth with love. We've been transformed. John said in 1 John, *"If anyone goes out from us, it only manifests they never were of us."* Why? Because we're a new creation, and that's eternal. But before the miracle of conversion, all ethnicities are hostile to God, dominated by pride, greed, lust, and selfish pleasure—the whole human race, including us. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49–21\)](http://GTY.org) – **What's Wrong with Everybody?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 473

### Unmasking Apostates

In Jude verses 5 through 7, we have the unmasking of the spiritual enemies of our Lord, the spiritual enemies of the truth, and the terrorists in the church. They are so dangerous that severe condemnation is required. Here we are given three cases of apostate judgments. *"I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds" – or chains – "under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they, in the same way as the angels, indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh" – he's talking about homosexuality, called sodomy – "and they are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire."* Jude says Israel is the first example. Because they became immoral, insubordinate, and irreverent, as we will see, God destroyed them all in the wilderness after He delivered them from Egypt. And then the angels, who dwelt with God in the heavens, rebelled, abandoned their proper abode, and came all the way down to earth and cohabitated with the daughters of men. This is one of the horrifying manifestations of global evil that God submerged in the flood. Of course, there is the horrific sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, where homosexual passions ran so high that the men of the city attempted to rape angels who came to visit Lot. In each case, there is a judgment. In verse 5, we read of the destruction of those in Israel. Verse 6 states that the angels remain in eternal bonds under darkness, awaiting the judgment of that great day. And Sodom and Gomorrah are waiting for the punishment of eternal fire. They are now in burning torment and awaiting the final hell and lake of fire to come at the end. Jude establishes this about apostates: whoever they are, be they Jews, angels, or Gentiles in Sodom and Gomorrah, apostasy receives severe judgment. So, to help us understand apostasy, Jude starts with three cases of apostate judgments. He then proceeds to the second point: the

three characteristics of the apostate nature. And this is where we learn why God judges them the way He does. Apostates are just like immoral, irreverent, insubordinate Israel, angels, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Apostates do the very same thing. They defile the flesh; that's immorality. They reject authority; that's insubordination. They revile angelic majesties; that's irreverence. Another term for irreverence is blasphemy. These three characteristics define the nature of an apostate. If you want to spot an apostate, look for those three things: they have to be unmasked as to their morality, their disobedience, and their rejection of the truth of God, the Word of God. And they have to be unmasked as to their irreverence. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(65-7\)](#) – **How to Identify Terrorists in the Church** – [TOC](#)

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Day 474

### **The Gift of Healing**

I've been there with the disabled people. I am acquainted with numerous individuals in our church who arrive in wheelchairs, struggle with speech, are unable to walk, and require assistance. I wish I had healing power. But I don't have that power, and no one does. Imagine how thrilling it would be if I, or someone else, possessed that power. If you could simply visit a cancer ward or an AIDS clinic and miraculously heal everyone there, or go to areas where people suffer from tuberculosis and other diseases or tumors and just heal everyone. Why don't the TV healers do it? Where are they? Well, maybe if they all got together—and, like, twenty of them went through a hospital—they could do it collectively. However, you're never going to see one of them in a hospital unless he's visiting sick friends or sick himself. To pull off their deception, they must stay in their tent, their building, or their TV studio. They are not planning to travel to Africa to provide healing services. They aren't going to go to India or Bangladesh. Why? Because they can't heal, no one can. And listen to this: Even God doesn't promise you healing. What He does promise you is death. Hebrews 9:27 says, *"It's appointed unto men once to die."* You have that promise from God. You will die. You have no promise that you will be healed. Your faith has nothing to do with whether you're healed or not. You can't activate some kind of healing by just believing. That kind of positive thinking is useless and pointless, and people become filthy rich by selling that deceptive lie. I watched one the other night that said, *"Send me a thousand dollars, and I will talk to God, and your healing will come."* Roman Catholicism has claimed the gift of healing over the years. They say they have John the Baptist's bones, Peter's bones, pieces of Christ's cross, and some of Mary's breast milk in a vial. They claim that you can receive healing if you come into contact with it. Millions of people have bought tickets to Bosnia and Herzegovina because the Virgin Mary supposedly showed up there and talked to six kids in 1981. Look! People are desperate for healing. And if you offer it, they'll unload their money, if you're clever enough to deceive them. They even have it in the pagan world—the oriental bloodless healers. But there's no promise of healing—none at all. And whatever they say about healing is completely fraudulent. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(41-6\)](#) – **Kingdom Power** – [TOC](#)

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Day 475

## Saving Faith is Forever

We already looked at the saints who will die in the future during the great tribulation. This is the great truth of the perseverance of the saints. In the end, they survive with their faith intact. Now, let's examine Hebrews, chapter 11, which focuses on the saints of the past. Verse 13 says, *"All these died in faith."* What does that mean? They hadn't received the promise. They were living in faith—faith that hadn't seen the fulfillment of the promise. They hadn't seen the one they trusted and believed in. The Messiah hadn't even come. But they all died in faith. How did they die? They all died in faith. Their faith survived all of those horrible persecutions. This is the faith of the Old Testament saints, who overcame death, endured torture, outlasted imprisonment, conquered chains, withstood fierce temptation, underwent martyrdom, and survived every kind of hardship. True faith can't be killed. It could not be destroyed in the Old Testament, and it will not be destroyed in the future time of tribulation. And it's the same now. True faith is relentless. It endures anything and everything. It's the nature of faith that God grants that is everlasting. You say, *"Well, what about people who make a profession of Christ and walk away?"* According to First John 2:19, *"They went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would have continued with us."* On the other hand, here is the perseverance of the saints. These tribulation saints will take all that the Antichrist can give, and they will endure. They will persevere patiently, with sustained, persistent faithfulness, under the most relentless and vicious persecution and martyrdom ever known, and, therefore, they will die and enter blessings. Blessed are the dead. What are the characteristics of their perseverance? In Revelation 14:12, they do two things: they keep the commandments of God, and they keep their faith in Jesus. They obey, and they trust. They keep the commandments of God. That's a characteristic of a true believer. That's what true believers do. Obedience is always the evidence of true, saving faith. An enduring commitment of true Christians to obey the Word of God is the mark of salvation. Not only do they obey, but they trust. They maintain their faith in Jesus. They keep their faith in Him. They're loyal to Christ. Even under the deadly reign of Antichrist, they are loyal to Christ. The Old Testament saints, even though it cost them their lives, were looking forward to one who hadn't even yet come. They were living in hope. That's the nature of saving faith. It is, by nature, enduringly obedient and trusting, like those in Hebrews, chapter 11, and Revelation, chapter 14. True believers will continue to obey and believe. Saving faith is forever, and obedience is consistent. It doesn't mean we're perfect, but obedience is always the path on which a true believer walks. Saving faith is marked by obedience and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (80-423) – **Blessing the Dead** – [TOC](#)

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Day 476

## The Sign of Jonah

In John 15:24, Jesus said, *"If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both Me and My Father."* They were God-haters. Who in the world would say that the Jews in Jesus' generation were God-haters? You might say that about the Romans, who worshiped Caesar but rejected the true and living God. You might say that about other nations in the world that had their own false deities. But who would say of the Jews that they are God-haters? Listen, anyone who rejects the Lord Jesus Christ is a God-hater. You cannot love God and hate Christ. As Jesus said, you cannot honor the Son without honoring the Father, nor can you honor the Father without honoring the Son. That's what verse 23 was telling us. *"Whoever hates Me hates My Father as well."* It is the most dangerous posture to take: to hide under a cloak of morality, a cloak of religion, and then to reject the diagnosis of your own wretchedness, your own sinfulness, your own unworthiness, your own inability to save yourself, commend yourself to God, and therefore reject the work of Jesus Christ. As we have learned in the book of Jude during our study of apostasy, Christendom, along with all other religions worldwide, is rife with self-righteous individuals. Their false righteousness condemns them to hell. So the final statement is that this is a wicked generation. And it proves to be true. Just a few months from this, they will put Jesus on a cross, even after a brief, euphoric Palm Sunday, when they thought maybe He was their Messiah but soon turned on Him and screamed for His blood. So the final statement is made: *"This is a wicked generation."* And, dear friends, all of you who stand with that generation against Jesus Christ are classified in the same way. There is grace; however, it seems relentless grace with our Lord. He then says this: *"This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks a sign. Yet no sign shall be given to it, but the sign of Jonah."* The word *"but"* opens the window of grace. What is the sign of Jonah? Matthew 12:40, *"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* And just as Jonah came out of that virtual death alive, Jesus will come out of actual death alive. That is the sign of Jonah. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-162\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Last Sign](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 477

### **A Devilish Ritual**

Infant baptism is not in the Scripture; it's not New Testament baptism; it's not the New Testament equivalent to circumcision; and infant baptism is not consistent with the nature of the church. Furthermore, infant baptism does not align with the Reformation doctrine of salvation. What do I mean by that? The Reformers rediscovered the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone. The doctrines of justification and imputation state that our sins are placed on Christ in His death, and His righteousness is given to us. That's imputation. That's the great doctrine. Faith alone is the only condition by which salvation is received—by faith alone. The great mark of the Reformation was justification—not by sacrament, not by ceremony, not by symbol, but by faith through grace. How is it possible that they could understand that and then come up with something like infant baptism, which by a ritual on a baby confers to that baby salvation? Infant baptism is nothing; it has no saving efficacy, delivers no grace, confers no faith,

and is a symbol of nothing. It is absolutely and totally pointless. Infant baptism leads to ritualism, confusion, and false security. You know, the Reformers' cry wasn't tradition, tradition, tradition. It wasn't the fathers, the fathers, the fathers. What was it? Scripture, Scripture, Scripture. We believe what we believe because that's what Scripture teaches. And yet Scripture does not teach that. We don't try to pick a fight with people for the sake of antagonism, but of necessity. We need to speak the truth and make the truth clear and unmistakable, as it's revealed in Scripture. This devilish infant baptism practice has endured through two millennia of church history, beginning in the early third century, embedding in the fourth century, and persisting to this day. We could only ask that the Reformation be a complete Reformation, so there would be no confusion about the true church. It is so important that we know who the true church is, so that people will not be confused and not think they're saved because they received some rite as an infant, and parents will not think their children are saved because of that. We need to be faithful to the truth and proclaim the gospel. And to those who believe, may we be obedient, baptized, and make that profession of faith, confessing Jesus before men, so that Jesus will someday confess us before His Father, who is in heaven. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-369\)](http://GTY.org) – **Is Infant Baptism Biblical?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 478

### **The Most Rejected Doctrine**

The doctrine of human depravity is the most hated doctrine, and it's the most distinctively Christian doctrine because only Christian truth teaches it. It is also the most contrary and rejected Christian doctrine, because human fallenness is a condition of deception, darkness, and deadness. And reason can never escape the Fall. All men share the universal condition of deception. *"The god of this world,"* says 2 Corinthians 4:4, *"has blinded the minds of the unbelieving."* So everybody is naturally evil, essentially evil in nature, and incurably evil to the degree that they are unwilling and unable to hear the truth, believe the truth, or come to Christ. In fact, they are hostile. This also applies to religious people. This goes for Old Testament Jews. And that's shocking. They had a sentimental notion of who God was. They had a partially informed notion of who God was, but it was not the true God of the Old Testament. They had created God in the way that they wanted Him to be. He would be a God who approves of their righteousness. And by the way, I need to say that religion is not a step toward God. Religion is the final blasphemy. It's the final stage of the sinner's depravity. Why? When you construct a god of your own creation, akin to a hybrid god, you transgress both the first commandment, which prohibits the worship of any other gods, and the great commandment, which commands you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. There's no room for any other god. Therefore, religion is not a step toward God. It's the final blasphemy. This is particularly challenging for people to comprehend, as many individuals turn to religion as a means of self-justification and guilt relief. Man is never more sinful than when he belongs to a false religion or has invented a false god, a false Christ, or a false gospel. That's not an improvement. That constitutes the gravest of all blasphemies. The most heinous sin of all is to have another god than the true God, another

Christ than the true Christ, and another religion. Isaiah 64:6 says, *"Your righteous acts are nothing but filthy rags."* So, do you understand? This is the real challenge in evangelism. You're engaging with individuals who despise the very place where evangelism must begin. And that begins with their recognition of their utter sinfulness, their unwillingness, and their inability to hear the truth, understand the truth, embrace the truth, love the truth, and come to God and Christ. They are much more likely to find their way into a false religion than to embrace the truth. Therefore, the first step in understanding the gospel is for the sinner to understand the true nature of sinfulness and the demonic nature of all false religions. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-132\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Most Hated Christian Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

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Day 479

### Four Profound Lessons

In the midst of Paul's suffering, he learns four profound lessons, which he gives to us here. And listen, if these lessons are effective in addressing the deepest suffering, they are equally applicable to every other category. Lesson number one: God uses suffering to humble His children. There are times when God, who is sovereign over Satan at all times and sovereign over demons at all times, uses Satan and demons for His own ends. God wants His children humbled to the point that He, the sovereign over even the forces of hell, will use them to humble His own servants. So, thank God for what humbles you. Embrace the suffering that humbles you, for He gives grace to the humble but resists the proud. Lesson number two: Profound suffering has a very positive effect on your prayer life. Where else are you going to go? Paul faced the greatest trial by turning to the only one he knew to be sovereign over all things, all circumstances, all persons, righteous and unrighteous, his Lord. And he asked Him to remove the suffering. This is what happens in times of extreme stress. Our prayer lives are enriched, and we enter into the richest, deepest, sweetest communion with the Lord, far sweeter than the prayer we offer in times of prosperity. Lesson number three: God uses suffering to display His grace. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, *"He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you.'"* So the point is, God uses suffering to put His grace on display. God answered not by removing the pain, not by removing the trouble, but by increasing the grace, which then increases our confidence in our salvation and in the presence of God and the goodness of God. These kinds of tests are where we experience the enduring grace that leads to assurance. God wants to display His grace. He has a right to display His grace. And He finds His glory in His grace. Lesson number four: God uses suffering to perfect His power. Not only is *"My grace sufficient for you,"* but *"My power is perfected in weakness."* God's power just begins to operate in its fullness when you have none left. The suffering that humbles you, the suffering that draws you into My presence, the suffering that dispenses My grace is also the suffering that makes you powerful. When you find yourself in a state of brokenness, depleted of personal resources, and utterly reliant on God, that's when you truly become powerful. So what's the end of it all? Paul goes from sadness to joy. Verse 9, *"Most gladly."* He says, *"I get it, Lord, I get it. It's about humility, intimacy, grace, and power. I embrace the suffering. I embraced the spear that rammed through my otherwise proud flesh. I embrace*

*the pain. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore, for Christ's sake, I am well content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*" That's the heart and soul of the Christian life. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-313\)](http://GTY.org (80-313)) – **God's Purpose in Our Pain** – [TOC](#)

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Day 480

### **Christ is Sufficient**

We don't have much classic philosophy anymore. New Age philosophy is not about thinking; it's about feeling. Philosophy used to be a rational exercise. Now, in a postmodern world, it's an irrational exercise. In studying the history of western philosophy, I discovered nothing but the degenerate mind of man, without God, trying to find reason, purpose, and reality in the universe, in life, and inside himself—a hopeless effort. In First Corinthians 1:19, God says, *"It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside."* That's God's own commentary on the uselessness of human philosophy, the bankruptcy of any effort to discern truth that relates to the soul of man and his eternal life and destiny outside of Christ. Paul cautions the purveyors of human wisdom in Colossae, reminding them that Christ provides all they need. It's a call to vigilance and a call to affirm the sufficiency of Christ. Attacks on the truth are always present. These attacks often stem from human efforts to discredit or add to Scripture. You need to be aware of this to ensure that no one takes you captive. Paul says in Galatians 5:1, *"do not be led into bondage by human reasoning when Christ is utterly sufficient."* Philosophy is just human reason. It has to do with explaining the world, origins, laws, creation, spiritual reality, values, ultimate truth, and the meaning of life apart from Christ. Colossians 2:8 describes this as *"empty deception."* That's philosophy. It's an empty deception, an empty lie, and a delusion. It is deceptive because it sounds good and is propagated by articulate people, but it lacks any value. Further, he says, *"It is according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."* And Paul says again that all truth, the riches of knowledge, and wisdom reside in Christ. Christ is all you need. Philosophy does not advance you; it regresses you. It takes you backwards. It's rudimentary. Rudimentary refers to concepts such as ABC's, baby talk, and principles that are suitable for children but not for adults. It's an explanation of nothing. Why would you go back to such rudimentary solutions when you have the most complex spiritual realities of the universe, delineated clearly in Scripture and made clear to us in Christ? The truth of the matter is that the world's philosophers tend to look at Christianity's purveyors, those of us who believe and proclaim the true gospel, as ignorant, lowlife, simplistic, and unsophisticated. The truth is we possess the mind of Christ because we have Christ. We have all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Him. We have all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Him. We are complete in Him, in whom all the fullness of Deity dwells. Philosophy adds absolutely nothing. Christ is sufficient! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-329\)](http://GTY.org (80-329)) – **Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Everything** – [TOC](#)

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Day 481

## How We Silence Our Conscience

We are all born loving sin, loving ourselves, hating righteousness, and hating God. Therefore, it's human nature to love sin and hate God. The Bible says that sinners will reason in their hearts, like in Psalm 12:4: *"With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?"* As if to say, *"God's not making any claim on my life; I'll say what I want, and I will do what I want."* Isaiah 57:4 characterizes sinners as rebellious children who stick out their tongues at God. Sin would dethrone God, depose Him, usurp His authority, and set self in His place. Therefore, all sin, at its core, is an act of pride. Pride says, *"Move over, God. I'm in charge; I'll do what I want."* All sin is also blasphemy, because it attacks God. And when we come into this world, we love sin, as well as our rebellion, pride, and blasphemy. We delight in it, and we seek every opportunity we can to manifest it. But we have a problem. We have a conscience, and it tells us that we are guilty. It hammers us. It's like a relentless ringing in our spiritual ears. And so, what do we do? We try to silence our conscience by camouflaging our sin, redefining it, or disavowing our responsibility. And you could summarize how we do this in three ways. First of all, in order to quiet our conscience, we typically try to cover up and mask sin. This isn't new; Adam and Eve did this in the garden. Genesis tells us that when they sinned, their eyes opened, revealing their nakedness. They then sewed fig leaves together to create loin coverings. And then they hid themselves from the Lord's presence. They tried to cover up to hide. A second way we try to deal with our sin is to attempt to justify ourselves. Sin is always somebody else's fault. The human mind is endlessly creative in trying to justify itself. Perverted thinking leads us to act this way. Thirdly, we are oblivious to our sin. In other words, we may sin in absolute ignorance. We're so ignorant of God's law that we just sin inadvertently. That's what distinguishes us as sinners. Sometimes we believe that because we don't see the act of sin, we don't have to deal with the attitudes of sin that are ingrained in our hearts. So we as human beings have a conscience, and it's triggered when we sin by the highest law known in our hearts. And since even pagan people have the law of God written within them so they know what is right and wrong, their conscience afflicts them with guilt. They have to deal with that. How do they do it? Usually, they cover it up, justify it in some way, or simply ignore it. Now, that's a dangerous way to live, because ultimately, it's going to damn you and send you to hell because you're camouflaging the very thing that you have to respond to in order to come to a Savior. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-129\)](http://GTY.org) – **Keeping a Pure Mind** – [TOC](#)

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Day 482

## Full-Orbed Worship

With regards to the Holy Spirit, as believers, it isn't just that we don't want to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, which believers can do. It isn't just what we don't want to do. It's that in our regular communion, worship, and praise, we need to identify the three persons of the godhead in meditation, prayer, and submission. We need to dwell on the special mercy and the special

ministry of each person of the Trinity toward us, and we need to make a specific response of love and submission and joy and gratitude distinctly to each member of the Trinity. This, says the Puritan John Owen, is full-orbed communion with God. Another Puritan, Thomas Goodwin, writes: *"Our worship is sometimes with our Father, then with the Son, and then with the Holy Spirit. Sometimes our hearts are drawn out to consider the Father's love in choosing us. Sometimes our hearts are drawn to the love of Christ in redeeming us. And sometimes the love of our hearts is drawn toward the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, reveals them to us, and takes all the pains with us."* Have you ever thought to thank the Holy Spirit for taking all the pains to work on your sanctification? *"Thank You Holy Spirit, thank You for teaching me, thank You for warring against the flesh, thank You for interceding for me, thank You for sealing and securing me, thank You for guiding me away from the path of temptation, and thank You for empowering me in the face of sin."* Now, that's what Thomas Goodwin is calling for when he says, *"It is only when we understand the work of each member of the Trinity distinctly that we have a true communion with God. We should never be satisfied until all three persons lie level in us."* That is to sit, as it were, in the midst of them while they all manifest their love to us. This is the greatest experience that Christ ever promised to us in this life: to sit in the midst of the Trinity and be the recipient of all the love coming from the Father, all the love coming from the Son, and all the love coming from the Spirit on our behalf. This is true worship. There are a lot of ways to look at it. For example, our salvation is initiated by the Father, ratified by the Son, and communicated by the Holy Spirit. The Father chooses us for life; the Son provides the sacrifice that leads to life; and the Holy Spirit gives us life. And being able to recognize the ministry of each member of the Trinity means being able to have full-orbed worship and full-orbed communion. So what we're trying to do is gain a better understanding of the work and ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit so that we can enhance and enrich our own gratitude, thanks, and worship of Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-416\)](http://GTY.org) – **Giving Thanks to the Spirit** – [TOC](#)

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Day 483

### **A Word to the Wise**

Wisdom is living skillfully. So what's the most important factor in wisdom? When acquiring wisdom, there are numerous areas that can enhance our living skills, but let's focus on the most crucial one. First of all, the number one issue in gaining wisdom is to fear God. How do you know that? In Proverbs 1:7, we read, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* Proverbs 9:10 says, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is true understanding."* The beginning, that is to say the first, the most essential, the controlling principle in wisdom, is the knowledge of the Holy One, knowing God, coming to know God, having a relationship with God, which is offered to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, after knowing God, we are to fear Him. That means having reverence for God, holding Him in awe, holding Him in respect, and worshipping Him. Those of us who are spiritual fathers, who are responsible for the raising of a generation of godly young people, whether we be parents, college professors, college leaders, college presidents, pastors,

teachers, or just those who influence on a personal basis, have the responsibility to teach the next generation to live with respect for God. That's the issue. To live with respect for God as holy, as sovereign, and understanding who God is. Obviously, we live in a climate where God is absolutely rejected. University campuses are populated by those who are into materialistic, naturalistic, and evolutionary atheism. They want nothing to do with God. They don't want God in creation. They don't want God to be a part of their morality. They don't want God anywhere in their world. Therefore, they do not fear Him. They have no awe for Him. They have no respect for Him. And they have no wisdom; therefore, they catapult themselves and all who follow them in their society into the abyss of confusion, tragedy, and judgment. We are here to teach you to respect God, fear God, have awe for God, and worship God. That means to respect His Word, in which He reveals Himself. Psalm 138:2 says, *"God has exalted His Word as high as His own name."* You can't respect God without respecting His Word, which means obeying, knowing, loving, and following His Word. That means to respect His law, to respect His power, to respect His authority, to respect His displeasure about sin; to respect His right to chasten; to respect His right to judge; to respect His love, His mercy, His grace, His tenderness, and His kindness. That is to say, to respect everything that's true about God—everything. According to Jesus in John 4, we are to worship in spirit, which means with emotion and heart, but also in truth. We are to worship God as God truly is. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (TMU135) – Pursuing Divine Wisdom – [TOC](#)

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Day 484

### **Why is God So Patient?**

We are reminded not to think lightly, not to despise or belittle the riches, the fullness, the goodness, kindness, tolerance, and patience of God, just because He holds back His anger and grants blessing. God is very patient with people. He is benevolent for a long time. He holds back His hostility for a long time. He has the power to bless and the power to avenge, and He blesses and He holds back vengeance. If God was only about justice, He would have long ago taken His hand and wiped out the world, as He once did in the Flood. But not before hundreds of years of patience and another 120 years of a preacher of righteousness named Noah warning people about their sins. God is by nature generous and kind, giving benefits to sinners. We refer to this as common grace; it bestows blessings upon both believers and unbelievers. He has tolerance, which means he withholds the justice that sinners deserve for an extended period of time. Nehemiah 9:17 says: He is *"slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness."* He is good to men. Sinners enjoy life, prosper, and receive temporal and earthly blessings, along with all its joys. And we all live past the point of justice because the wages of sin is death; we should all be dead after one sin. God has every reason to wipe out the entire human race. However, His goodness and forbearance cause Him to bring positive blessings into the lives of sinners and to withhold judgment. Why is He so patient? Romans 2:4 tells us: *"God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance."* To repent, to believe the gospel, to come to Christ for forgiveness; to see that God is by nature a Savior because of His goodness, because He withholds just judgment. But men despise God's goodness; they abuse His kindness. Sinners have a kind of vague, undefined hope

of impunity. They just think they're going to be okay. The kind of feeling that says, "Aw, *this can't happen to me. I'm basically a good person.*" They sort of openly claim exemption from judgment. But nothing could be further from the truth. The Jews took God's goodness for granted, and people take it for granted today. They take love, friendship, beauty, warmth, emotions, food, drink, clothing, nature, children, and pleasure for granted. They live in mercy. They live in God's kindness, blessing them while withholding judgment. They live there for such a long time and in such comfort that they grow accustomed to the grace and believe they deserve it. However, what they fail to understand is the message in verse 5, which states that as long as they persist in their stubborn and unrepentant ways, wrath accumulates, "*storing up until the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*" All of their sins accumulate in the books. And they will be judged out of the books for every single sin; no sin will be left out. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-400\)](http://GTY.org) – **Abusing the Goodness of God** – [TOC](#)

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Day 485

### **How to Reach the World**

What is necessary to make us effective in reaching the world? Number one: availability. That's where any kind of effective ministry begins; it starts with showing up. It starts with being initially available. It's been said that availability is the most important ability. There is a sense in which that is true because no matter what other ability you might have, if you're not available, the other ability is not of any consequence. So, everything starts with being there. Showing up. Nothing happens except to those who are available to have it happen. When Isaiah (in chapter 6, verse 8) said, "*Here am I. Send me,*" he was reiterating the point of availability, which is the starting point of any effective service to Christ. There are some big people who think they're big with their own plans and their own agendas who never bother to show up with the redeemed, and consequently, they miss the momentous events and settle for the trivia of human life. It's fair to say that fulfilling the mission duty of your life to make disciples of other people begins with meeting the Lord at the appointed place, in the Word, in prayer, and in the assembly of the redeemed. Hebrews 10:25 says, "*Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.*" You're never going to have any kind of impact on the world unless you are willing to set aside that designated time and place to be in the presence of the living Christ, with His people, in His Word, in communing prayer with Him. Many people never bother to go to the lost because they can't even bother to get together with the saved. They never have much to say to those that are without Christ because they have very little to say to Christ Himself. You have to ask yourself about your availability because I'm convinced that those people who are most effective in making disciples are doing that because there is an overflow of privileged communion with the living Christ. They choose to be in the Word, pray, and gather with the redeemed, and that fellowship with the living Christ inspires them to further His cause. There is a second feature: worship. To worship is to acknowledge deity, to acknowledge majesty, to acknowledge sovereignty, to acknowledge glory. Becoming a disciple maker necessitates this, as I firmly believe that love and adoring praise for Christ are the only things that can truly control you. You don't evangelize in isolation. It comes out of a worshiping

heart. If I really love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, then His cause is my passion, right? Where's your heart? If your heart is set on Christ, then Christ is all, His kingdom is all, His cause is all, and His purpose is all you live for. Therefore, you have been available and be a worshiper in order to make disciples. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-66\)](http://GTY.org) – **Reaching the World** – [TOC](#)

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Day 486

### **Characteristics of a New Creature**

Peter tells us that the only way your salvation will ever be verified, the only way that calling and election can ever be made sure, is when you add to that, virtue. And when you incorporate virtue into that, the reality of it becomes apparent. When he talks about virtue, he means kindness, love, and all of those characteristics of a new creature. Peter says, you will have the knowledge of your salvation, the assurance of your salvation, not by remembering a past event but by seeing a present virtue. 1 John makes the same point: you can tell if you're a Christian by what's happening in your life right now. And this is true. When Christians find themselves living in a sinful situation for an extended period, one of the first things they lose is a sense of security. They start questioning their true salvation, as it stems from the evidence of our lives and the confirmation of the Holy Spirit within us. So if you don't live a different life, there's a real possibility you're not a different person. New creatures act like new creatures. However, it's important to note that despite this being an absolute and God's declaration of *"this is how it is,"* there remains a cooperating element of my will. So how do you know if you are saved? Paul says if you are a new creature, you will live like it. But you became a new creature by the sovereignty of God and your own will. You will live it out based on God's sovereignty; you are a new creature, and you respond to that on your own will—so both are present. The Bible often makes statements like, *"This is how a Christian lives,"* and then translates this principle into a command such as, *"This is how you are to live."* This is what God will do in your life if you're a believer. However, it is your responsibility to carry out these actions. You see, you are not a robot; you are involved, paradoxically, in the explosion of divine energy in your life that makes you who you are to be. Paul sets it forth in terms of commands. He says, *"Since you are a new creation, and since new creations are different, here is how you are to be different. Here's how you are to be distinct. Here's how you should distinguish your life from others."* And, beloved, it goes without saying that the church better be different, or we don't have anything to say, right? Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1930\)](http://GTY.org) – **Principles of New Life** – [TOC](#)

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Day 487

### **The God of Peace**

The peace that the Lord provides is divine. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 says, *"Now may the Lord of peace Himself grant you peace."* The Lord of peace is the one who bestows it. He is the one who grants it *"Himself,"* emphasizing His personal involvement. May God, the Lord, personally give it to you because it comes personally from Him. It's the very essence of His nature. Simply put, peace is an attribute of God. Did you ever think of God as being characteristically peace? He is peace. God is both love and peace. At all times, God is in perfect peace. God never experiences stress, anxiety, worries, doubts, or fear. God is never at odds with himself. He never finds Himself in conflict; He never struggles to make up His mind. He is never troubled or indecisive. He is never unclear or unsure. He is never threatened. God lives in perfect calm, tranquility, and contentment. Why? This is due to His complete control over everything and His ability to manage it precisely as He desires at all times. He enjoys perfect and eternal harmony within Himself. He therefore is peace. And here He is called *"the Lord of peace."* This is not the worldly peace, but the genuine, divine peace. He is peace and the source of peace. Every member of the Trinity is peace and gives peace. First Corinthians 14:33 says, *"He is not the author of confusion but of peace."* He is peace, its originator, source, and author. Secondly, it's not only divine; it's a gift. *"Now may the Lord of peace Himself grant you peace."* *"Grant"* speaks of a gift. God bestows peace as a gift to those who belong to Him. Therefore, peace is a gift from God, given to us by Jesus Christ. He is the giver of peace. It's as if the Father authored peace, the Son purchased peace, and then gives it to us now in this age through His Holy Spirit. God says I'll give peace, but not to the wicked. Thomas Watson wrote: *"Peace flows from sanctification, but they, being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace. They may have a truce but no peace. God may forebear the wicked awhile and stop the roaring of His cannon, but though there be a truce, yet there is no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid, but there is a great difference between a stupefied conscience and a pacified conscience. This is the devil's peace. He rocks men in the cradle of security. He cries, 'peace, peace,' when men are on the precipice of hell."* Then listen to this great statement: *"The seeming peace a sinner has is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but the ignorance of his danger."* So it's not peace from the knowledge of his happiness but the ignorance of his danger. It's the delusion of peace. True peace is the fruit of saving grace. And the one who lacks saving grace does not have true peace. Whatever peace Satan can convince him he has is the peace of his ignorance, because he does not understand his true condition or he would have no peace at all. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(53-17\)](#) – Peace in Every Circumstance – [TOC](#)

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Day 488

## The Light of the World

Let's examine biblical darkness from a unique perspective. It's important to understand the darkness that is perpetuated on the world by the sins of the fathers. Adam, our human father, sinned, and the whole human race fell. Even though Eve sinned first, Adam acted in the place of all of humanity, and it was the fall of Adam that brought about the fall of the entire world. Men have that responsibility. The world has fallen and has become dark. It's been dark ever since the

fall of Adam. And the present darkness is to be understood by understanding the role that fathers play in the increasing darkness of the world. The Old Testament talks about the sins of the fathers. It doesn't talk about the sins of the mothers; it talks about the sins of the fathers being visited on the third and fourth generations. In other words, the sins of the fathers corrupt successive generations. They bear significant responsibility for the state of society and culture. The world has always been dark. It was dark before our Lord came, because Isaiah the prophet, in chapter 9 verse 2, says, in a prophecy of the coming of Christ—*"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."* And he is speaking of the future, of the darkness of the world before Christ came. That's a prophecy of the arrival of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by His own confession, is the Light of the world. So, before the Light came, the people of the world were in darkness. Yes, God had shed His Light of glory on the world in many ways, but never, never as definitively and as powerfully as He did when the glory of God was shining in the face of Jesus Christ, who in John 8:12 said, *"I am the Light of the world; [whoever] follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life."* Since He came, the world has experienced the impact of the Light that shattered the darkness, namely the arrival of Christ. And through the two thousand years since His arrival, millions of people have come to the Light and have been redeemed, and are now part of the Light, having been transferred from darkness into Light. Christian influence has gone on for two thousand years. It has shined in particular in the West, with its mission zeal for the rest of the world, sending missionaries from the West to cover the globe to extend the Light to the ends of the earth. So the world has experienced Christ's Light in a common-grace way: through the gospel. The transformation of people through the power of the gospel has brought Light to the world. And Christians, like mirrors, reflect the Light of Christ in a world full of darkness. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-30\)](http://GTY.org) – **From Darkness to Light** – [TOC](#)

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Day 489

## God and Government

What does it mean when Jesus said, *"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesars"*? Paul says, *"Here's what that means. Be in subjection to the governing authorities and pay your taxes."* This is submission to civil order. As we live our lives as a living sacrifice, as we live in the will of God, proving what is good, acceptable, and perfect, it affects all our relationships. It affects our relationship to the body of Christ. It affects outsiders, and it affects even our enemies. But it also affects our relationship with the civil authorities. Therefore, Paul emphasizes a principle in Romans 12:17, *"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone."* Verse 14 instructs us to bless those who persecute us, not to curse them. We're to never pay back evil for evil to anyone. No matter what society does to us, no matter what the authorities do to us, we never pay it back with evil. In verse 18, we seek to be at peace with all men, as far as we can. We leave vengeance to God. By serving our enemies, we not only resist evil but also triumph over it through the power of good. In our relationship with the government, the principle is clear: No matter what they do to persecute us, we don't retaliate. There's no place for personal vengeance. The believer is to be a peacemaker, which is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. You overcome evil with good. These are

authorities with the primary agenda of punishing evildoers and protecting those who do right. There is something to be gained for the gospel even when you suffer unjustly in silence for the sake of keeping a pure conscience before God. You want to be an influence for peace. You want to do right and thus silence the ignorance of foolish men. You want to honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king. Even in the face of persecution, Christians must obey the laws, rulers, and authorities of their system out of obedience to God and a clear conscience before the Lord. We don't want to be a part of the problem; we definitely want to be part of the solution. We do that with the gospel and godly living. But I want you to know there is a legitimate exception to obedience to the government. There is a time when we're allowed not to obey the government. This is where the government's authority ends. When the government forbids you to do what God commands you to do, you do what God commands you to do. When the government tells you to do what God has not allowed you to do, that's where you stop. You don't do that because you have direct revelation against that sin. When the government mandates what God forbids, we obey Him. We refuse to disobey God. We do what God has commanded us to do and we accept the consequences. That's exactly what we are called to do. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-363\)](http://GTY.org) – **Government in Biblical Perspective** – [TOC](#)

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Day 490

### God Can Be Trusted?

If you wonder whether God will keep His promises to you, just look at Israel. Look at all that they have endured—and they are flourishing. And they have strength and leadership that make this country's leaders look like little children. God does keep His promises. And I'm thankful for what the Lord has done for us in the past. I'm thankful for the cross. I'm thankful for the resurrection, the ascension, the intercession, and the coronation of Christ. I'm thankful for my salvation, but I am also thankful for what is yet to come. And there's nothing to fear. Yes, Satan is doing exactly what he desires to do. This is exactly the plan. Satan is doing exactly what he desires to do, but at the same time, exactly what God allows him to do. In the future, God will allow Satan to collect the mass of God-haters into one place at the battle of Armageddon so that Jesus can wipe them out in one moment upon His return. We know the end of the story of human history, don't we? So let's rejoice and be thankful. People sometimes say to me, *"Is it important to know the future?"* My answer is, *"Absolutely."* I don't want to know everything about the future; all I want is to know who will win and that I will be on that team. Scripture lays it out for us. Nothing is happening that isn't in the plan and in the book. Everything is on schedule. Israel exists. They're beleaguered. They're hated. They're being attacked, not only by immediate neighbors but by the planet, and that's going to continue to escalate. But God will protect them; He will preserve them until the day when they look on the One they pierced and mourn for Him as an only son, and salvation comes to Israel. And when that happens, judgment will begin to fall on the ungodly in this world, and in fury, they will come after God and the Jews at the end of the time of tribulation. They'll all show up in Jerusalem, where they will meet Christ, and in a flash of sovereign, supernatural power, they'll be roadkill for the birds. That's the plan. Therefore, we can express our gratitude

now, as we are aware of what lies ahead. And one day, when salvation arrives, the Jews will join us. All of this, whether it's the salvation of the church or the salvation of Israel, is a salvation purchased by Christ at the cross. He bore in His body the sins of all who would ever be saved. And so while we look forward, we trust the future for us, because we see the future being fulfilled for Israel, and we know God can be trusted. At the same time, we are commanded by the Lord to look back at the cross, to see the fountain of our salvation, the blood of Christ. Repent and believe! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-23\)](http://GTY.org) – **In God We Trust** – [TOC](#)

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Day 491

### **Our Responsibility**

Last year, in 2017, was the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, and the Pew people did a survey and found out that the majority of Protestants believe that salvation is by faith plus works. That's exactly what Catholics believe. Those Protestants who believe what the Reformers protested against aren't protesting anymore. Protestantism and Evangelicalism are extremely confused about the gospel. Part of the problem is that there is no courage, no boldness, and no conviction to stand up for the true gospel against the encroachment of those systems that demand work as a part of salvation. We have a responsibility not only to preach the gospel but to guard it. There really are only two religions in the world, and they're pretty simply defined. There is the true religion, which is salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; and then there is every other religion that is some form of human works—religious works, moral works, ethical works, ceremonial works. The reading of Galatians, Romans 3, and Ephesians 2 is enough to set in your mind with absolute certainty that works play no role in salvation. But according to Acts 15, *"Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"* This was a way of saying, *"You don't go from paganism to Christianity; you go from paganism to Judaism to Christianity. Judaism is the vestibule, Judaism is the foyer, Judaism is the porch, and Judaism is the door. You can't just go from paganism into the kingdom of God."* They wanted to impose those same external legalistic rituals on the Gentiles. The book of Acts records only one church council, which convened to determine whether salvation relied solely on grace and faith alone or on both grace and faith and works. The apostles concluded that it was through grace and faith alone. However, false teachers had told the people that they only thought they were saved when they were not. In Acts 15:1 they said, *"Unless you're circumcised, unless you follow the other customs of Moses, you can't be saved."* These are believers; they are identified as believers. But these are believers who have been bewitched, and part of the bewitching is that they have been bewitched about the gospel, and they have been bewitched about the role that works plays in the gospel. Now again, these are believers. *"They have"*—according Galatians 3:3—*"begun by the Spirit."* *"They have been"*—verse 5—*"provided with the Spirit."* They have been truly converted, but they have become bewitched about the role that works plays in the gospel. So Paul said, *"Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be damned!"* Consigned to everlasting damnation in hell! It is our responsibility to get the

gospel right, and you've got to address those people who get it wrong. They have to be exposed. They can't get away with it. Salvation is by faith alone. Not by works. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(SC18-3\)](#) – **The Importance of Doctrinal Courage** – [TOC](#)

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Day 492

### **Understanding the Analogy**

The third chapter of John is a very important portion of Scripture on the new birth and being born again. Our teacher here is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The terminology "*being born again*" is part of evangelical lingo and has been for a long time. But in spite of the fact that it's familiar terminology, there seems to be a failure on the part of most Christian people to understand what new birth means. It's not obscure or difficult to figure out; it's all bound up in the analogy itself, being born. Look at John 3:3. Jesus said, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Our Lord's message is very simple. Only through being born again can one enter the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the sphere of salvation; it's the people ruled by God who have eternal life and are on their way to heaven. The only way to enter the kingdom of God is by being born again. That's the only way. Apart from that, no one enters the kingdom of God. The point of our Lord's analogy is simply this: being born is not something that you have anything to do with. You didn't have anything to do with your physical birth, nor do you have anything to do with your spiritual birth. Being born physically is something that happened to you, completely out of your control. In both cases, it was God who ultimately created you. Your parents could give you physicality, but only God could create your spirit. And in the spiritual sense, being born again is an act of God by which He recreates you. It's a new birth. And that's the point of the simple analogy. This is what we call the doctrine of regeneration. What does it mean? It simply describes the necessity for a person to receive a new birth, a new life, a new nature, a new disposition, a new character, and a new mind from God, without any contribution on their part. The spiritual birth is the second work of God in salvation. The first work of God was election, when He wrote our names down in the Lamb's Book of Life, chose us before the foundation of the world, and predestined us to become His children. That was the first act of God. The second act is to regenerate us. The work of election took place in eternity past; the work of regeneration takes place in time present. To understand the doctrine of regeneration, one must understand the essence of salvation as a work of God. And that's the point here. We should not misunderstand this analogy, as it is very instructive, simple, and basic. To enter the kingdom of God, whatever it is you may have accomplished morally, religiously, ritually, or ceremonially in terms of human goodness, is immaterial because you can't contribute anything to your birth spiritually, any more than you contributed to your birth physically. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-12\)](#) – **The Blueprint for Being Born Again** – [TOC](#)

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Day 493

### **It that Biblical?**

One of the responsibilities we have in spiritual leadership is to protect the flock of God. We guard and warn you about things you need to be warned about. I was watching the 2017 presidential inauguration. They called Paula White to the podium, where she prayed. Now, she is a representative of all that is unacceptable and even heretical in the name of Jesus Christ. She is affiliated with the prosperity gospel, word of faith, name it and claim it, and health and wealth movements. I'm not saying this out of any personal animosity toward her. Nevertheless, she represents the kingdom of darkness, masquerading as the kingdom of light. She belongs to a movement that features prominent figures such as Norman Vincent Peale, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, T. D. Jakes, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Hagin, and Creflo Dollar, all of whom you may encounter on *"Christian television."* People in that movement have an aberrant, defective, and heretical view of God. Scripture says that God created man in His own image. But these people have created gods in their own image, which are nothing more than a projection of their own humanity and wishes. Here's what they teach: know what you want, believe you will get it, visualize the fulfillment, speak it out loud, and you will attract it like a magnet because you have the God power within you to create what you want. It consistently works for every individual. Just place your order, and it's yours. That, in a sense, is the entire prosperity gospel theology. Your thoughts and your words have creative power. Your life is the reality that you have created. What you think, believe, visualize, and say shapes the reality you live in, as these actions attract that reality. You literally have divine creative power. If you like what you get, keep saying the same thing. If you don't like what you get, start saying something else. This way of thinking is quite common; by simply believing and speaking your desires, you can literally cause the universe to reorganize itself to manifest them for you. Statements like this are common, and I'm quoting, *"You have the power and the energy of the universe to create your world. You are the designer of your own destiny. You are the author of your own story; the outcome is what you choose and you speak."* As a result, you can have anything you want because Jesus is your personal genie. And what do you think they desire? Wealth, health, prosperity, success, fulfillment, and satisfaction. The wish list is never for humility, brokenness, holiness, sacrifice, unselfishness, or love. It's always health, wealth, and success. All temporal, all material. That's the prosperity gospel, and none of that is Biblical. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (TMU290) – **Rejecting Heresy About God the Father** – [TOC](#)

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Day 494

### **Faith in God**

Moses wrote the Pentateuch, which are the first five books of the Bible. In Genesis 3, Moses makes the first reference to the coming Lord and Savior. Genesis 1 and 2 record the creation; Genesis 3 includes the fall of man and the consequent devastation of the universe and all that's in it, including humankind. That most amazing section of Scripture explains why the world is the

way it is. But at the very end of it, from verses 20 to 24, you have the first look at the gospel—the promise of redemption, the plan of salvation. As soon as man falls, God sets in motion the means to rescue him. This is because God is by nature a Redeemer and a Savior. In verses 20 to 24, there are four elements that are essential to our salvation. Faith and hope from man's side. Atonement and security come from God's side. And that is the sum of redemption's plan: faith and hope, atonement and security. The salvation of sinners, their deliverance, and their rescue from sin and death has always been by faith, in hope, through atonement and security. Now, faith is the first essential for redemption and salvation. Habakkuk 2 said: *"The just shall live by faith."* This is repeated in the New Testament. Ephesians 2: *"We are saved by grace through faith."* Romans chapter 3: *"Not by works, but by faith."* Saving faith can be defined in this way: believing what God said, believing the Word of God, and trusting God's Word. Whatever God says is true. Obviously, Adam and Eve had not believed or trusted God's Word. They decided that God was not honest and truthful. They succumbed to the devil's temptation and chose to believe in him instead of God. This decision led them into a world of sin, sorrow, suffering, and death, ultimately dragging the entire human race and the entire created universe down with them. All of this occurred because they chose to believe in Satan instead of God. And so they found themselves cursed by God. How did they know Satan lied? Because they know their condition now. Death has struck them. God has now cursed them. And God is inflicting pain on them: pain in childbirth, pain in submission to a husband, pain in tilling the ground. When the pain came, they knew Satan was the liar and God was the truth teller. But before they were kicked out of the garden, God told them that they were going to produce more humans. Did they believe God? Verse 20 expresses their faith in God: *"Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living."* They now believed God. They believed that they were going to be the first two people to produce human life. Therefore, Adam named his wife Eve. Eve means *"life."* He named his wife *"life."* That is faith in God and His Word. And faith is one of the four elements that are essential to our redemption. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-26\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Foreshadowing of Redemption – TOC**

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Day 495

### **Understanding Redemption**

The word redeemed used to be a very popular word in the evangelical vocabulary; I don't hear it much anymore. Therefore, I believe our comprehension of the wonderful reality of redemption may have diminished. Nonetheless, the issue of redemption is at the heart of the gospel. Redemption is a more narrow and specific word than salvation. Redemption views our salvation from a particular perspective. In fact, it focuses on the method of achieving salvation—paying a price. And God is the recipient of the payment. Yes, we are in bondage to sin, like a prisoner, but our bondage to sin has then consequently put us in bondage to God, who is the judge and executioner of all who sin. We are literally in God's prison, waiting judgment. We must pay God the redemption price in order for Him to be satisfied and release us. The good news is that Christ is our Redeemer. Thomas Watson, the Puritan writer, said this: *"Great was the work of creation,*

*but greater the work of redemption.*" It cost more to redeem us than to make us. In the one, there was but the speaking of a word; in the other, there was the shedding of blood. Therefore, redemption is more specific than salvation, as it concentrates on the method used to achieve salvation. Redemption focuses on what God did to deliver us, to buy us from bondage. It looks at our hopeless, helpless condition as prisoners of iniquity on death row and the price that God ordained and accepted for our emancipation and liberation. So what is Peter contemplating when he describes our redemption by the precious blood? Well, God released the Jews from their 430-year slavery in Egypt through a series of plagues. The final plague was the death of all firstborn people and animals in Egypt. God then gave the Hebrews instructions on how to escape the slaughter. They had to sacrifice a lamb and spread its blood on their front door's crosspiece and side pieces. The lamb's blood would be shed in place of the firstborn's blood. The lamb's blood was a substitution for the death of the firstborn. You could put it this way: the lamb's blood redeemed, ransomed, rescued, and delivered the firstborn from death. This is how lambs' blood purchased and redeemed. The blood of the lamb served as the ransom price, a concept that must have resonated with Peter, given his constant celebration of the Passover throughout his life. So, in 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, Peter makes a glorious statement about redemption: *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your futile conduct inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."* Peter is saying that we are redeemed, ransomed, rescued, and delivered from our hopeless condition by the precious blood of God's lamb, Christ Jesus, our Savior. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-433\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Infinite Value of Redemption** – [TOC](#)

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Day 496

## **The Gospel's Glory**

Divine truth is the most important thing there is. It saves us, sanctifies us, and gives us the hope of glory. By it, we understand what God expects of us, and as a result, we understand what we are to obey and what we are to be. That is the path that leads to blessing in life and reward in eternity. So truth matters more than anything else. God is true. Scripture says, *"Let every man be a liar, but God is true."* God cannot lie. Christ is The Truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. And Scripture, said Jesus, in John 17:17, is truth. As Jesus instructed us, we are here to worship the truth: to believe the truth, to speak the truth, to meditate on the truth, to understand the truth, to walk in the truth, to love the truth, to delight in the truth, and to obey the truth. It's all about the truth. In fact, we might be better named Truth Community Church because that's really at the very heart of it. The truth is the way things really are. That's what truth is. It's reality, and God is the author of the truth. He has determined what is true, and He is the revealer of what is true. Now, of course, the Bible is true. It contains the truth about the true God, the true Christ, and the true Holy Spirit. It contains everything we need to know, and it's an inexhaustible source of truth. I spent 43 years going through the entire New Testament verse by verse, and my only regret is that I went too fast. When I came out of seminary, what I didn't understand was that I would have to spend a significant portion of my ministry trying to make the gospel clear to the

church—not so much to the world, but to a very confused church. So let's look at the gospel according to Paul, who was a warrior of truth. What was his gospel? What is our gospel? What is the gospel of grace, the gospel of peace, the gospel of salvation, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel of the blessed God? What is it? We need to know what it is because it's that gospel that we proclaim. According to 2 Corinthians 4:4, it is *"the gospel of the glory of Christ."* That's why Paul was willing to go to extremes, endure a life of pain and suffering, and ultimately become a martyr. It stemmed from his understanding of the gospel's glory. He understood the superiority of the New Covenant. And if you really ever understand the glory of the gospel of salvation, you could never tamper with it. You see it in all its majesty, all its beauty, all its fullness, all its glory. So there's no need to ever give people a simplistic, truncated version of the gospel. What they need is to be given the full glory of the gospel. Therefore, we must bestow upon them the complete splendor of the gospel's glory. Repent and believe!

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Day 497

### **A Divine Curse**

We are obviously living in very bizarre times that have produced massive fear and confusion. On top of that, our society is drowning in a sea of lies, lies about virtually everything, and lies on top of fear and confusion create an almost fatal insecurity and a devastating chaos. We have little confidence in believing what politicians say, what health officials say, what social activists say, what university professors say, what the media says, or, frankly, what religious leaders say. These people have consistently deceived us. But there is One to whom we can turn and always hear the truth: that is to the living God who has revealed Himself on the pages of Scripture, the one true living God. Here is a verse that clearly defines the true condition of today's deceivers. Isaiah 5:20: *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"* Essentially, that's the sin that signals their coming judgment. Turning truth, righteousness, and virtue upside-down. A devastating divine judgment awaits them. They turned against God and flipped truth and morality on its head. They argue that keeping innocent working people confined to their homes and away from their jobs and businesses is critical in order to prevent them from contracting the Covid flu. But it's also essential—in fact, more essential—to let people bent on doing harm run free in the cities, destroying the very places individuals earn their living. They lock up the weak and the fearful, and let the strong and violent run loose to create havoc. They call on all forces, bring the world to a halt to stop a virus, and then remove all restraint when a far more deadly virus of evil sets out to destroy an entire nation. They demand justice when a criminal's life is taken, and then applaud lawless mobs of criminals attacking the police. They put the police in a position where they can't act to protect property, but rebel mobs are allowed to destroy it. You can't shop in a store, but you can loot it. You can't work, but you're free to steal. You can't attend church, but you can burn it down. You can't eat in a restaurant, but you can demolish it. Now we're seeing charges being brought in these riots, not against the rioters, but against the police! We witness

leaders who completely control the weak out of fear of contracting the flu, while at the same time controlling the strong to create chaos and fear. And by the way, if you worship the gods of anger, hate, or vengeance, you have the freedom to conduct church anywhere, anytime, indoors or outdoors, without any restrictions. You can worship the god of mayhem, and their perverted solution is to abolish the police who protect the good and punish evil. Isaiah 5:20 expresses exactly what's wrong: *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness!"* That's a divine curse on deceivers. Repent and believe!

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Day 498

### **The Marks of a Fool**

Wisdom is the most essential thing in a family's life. And we're talking about something that goes beyond knowledge. In spite of the fact that we live in a world of exploding knowledge that we can barely keep up with, we are still described in the Scripture as fools. In Romans 1, it describes humanity as *"professing to be wise, but having become fools."* Romans 1 says that *"men became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."* Essentially, no matter how much knowledge they have, men are described as fools. Ephesians 5:14 gives us a description of humanity. It says the nations walk in an empty-minded manner, darkened with sin and ignorance, so that they cannot understand divine truth. They are left then to function out of that darkened mind, and it shows up as sensuality and the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. So, the difference between unbelievers and believers is the difference between a fool and one who has true knowledge and wisdom, wisdom that is from above. 2 Timothy 3:7 says, *"Fools are ever-learning, but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* What a hopeless course that is. And there's a reason for that. First Corinthians 2:14 says, *"The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them."* The bottom line? Human wisdom cannot ascertain the truth of God. Human wisdom is just another name for foolishness. This is the pervasive, universal reality that characterizes all human beings. Proverbs 22:15 says, *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child."* Why? Because we all come into this world as fools. It's part of being sinful, alienated, and separated from God. So what characterizes or marks the fool? According to Scripture, they all reject God. That is referring to the one true and living God. All fools reject God. Psalm 14 says: *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"* So the first characteristic of humanity, the natural man, is that he rejects God. That's where his foolishness begins. The second characteristic of a fool is that they worship themselves. Proverbs 12:15 says this: *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes."* Or, Proverbs 28:26, *"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool."* He is his own source of truth, as well as his own standard of right and wrong. For all intents and purposes, he is God; he sets the rules. This, of course, is idolatry, and it's a universally common idolatry among those who reject the true God, worshipping themselves as if they were God. A third characteristic of fools is that they mock sin. Proverbs 14:9 says, *"Fools mock at sin."* According to Scripture, fools and their mockery of sin are described as follows: they walk in darkness; they cling to sin; they are corrupt; they are

abominable; they are self-sufficient, self-deceived, empty-talkers, liars, angry, lazy, contentious, hypocritical, idolatrous, and self-destructive. Therefore, no matter how much knowledge someone has, fools reject God, worship themselves, and mock the whole notion of sin. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-77\)](http://GTY.org) – **Divine Wisdom for the Family** – [TOC](#)

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Day 499

### **When the Earth Will End**

I chose to discuss the end of the universe this morning due to a climate change conference taking place in Scotland this week, and I felt it was essential to clarify the situation. Someone must tell the truth about Earth's future, and it won't be that group or anyone connected to them. The Word of God gives us the truth, and I want you to understand what's going on around you. There are so many lies, so much deception, so much chaos, and we want to always turn to the Word of God to find the truth. For a long time, we have heard that climate change poses the greatest threat to humanity and the planet. All of this nonsense going on is an impossible approach to total destruction of life as we know it in this society and in the world. The Earth is a disposable planet. If you want an illustration, you wouldn't really try to permanently save a Styrofoam cup, would you? Relative to God's plan and to eternity, this planet is a Styrofoam cup that has a very brief usage. According to Scripture, human history ends with judgment. It ends with judgment, which destroys everything we know about our created world. At the end of the Tribulation, there will be a first judgment. In fact, during the Tribulation, the destruction will be epic—unheard of in world history. It will come to an end when the Lord returns and destroys the ungodly, changes the face of the planet, and establishes His thousand-year kingdom. At the end of the thousand-year kingdom, He will completely uncreate the entire universe and replace it with new heavens and a new earth. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, Paul tells us that the believers escape, but the rest of the world feels the full fury of God's wrath in the Day of the Lord. This is what the Bible teaches, and it does so unmistakably. This is what we believe, because we believe the Word of God. So Peter writes to believers to help us understand that Jesus is coming and not to fall victim to the teaching of the false teachers and the people who are indifferent, even among Christians, with regard to the return of Christ. Peter wants to establish with absolute certainty in the lives of believers that Jesus is coming, that He is coming to destroy this universe, and to establish a new heaven and a new earth. The lead-up to that event will involve massive destruction and devastation on this temporary planet. The bottom line is that only Jesus determines when the earth will end. If you think we're messing the earth up, you haven't seen anything. Wait until you see what Jesus is going to do with it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-125\)](http://GTY.org) – **Reserved for Fire** – [TOC](#)

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Day 500

## What Will Set You Free?

Over the years, there has been a phrase that has been used with regard to freedom. *"The truth shall set you free."* There are myriad interpretations of it. There's a psychological interpretation that says, *"Tell the truth, and you'll be free from guilt."* And yet, most of the philosophers, psychologists, and cynics would agree that there is no real, absolute truth. Truth is whatever you want it to be for your own well-being; there's no objective, absolute truth. Thus, being yourself will free you from mental anguish. *"The truth shall make you free"* has also found its way into academia. They will tell you that the search for the truth no longer drives science; instead, grants from the ruling political party primarily drive it. Consequently, science and universities have been completely compromised by politics. Moreover, the government itself has also been completely compromised. If you were to view the original CIA building, you would notice a carving on the front that reads, *"The truth shall make you free."* And we all firmly believe that the CIA is not a reliable source for discovering the truth. They have been utterly compromised by our culture's politics and ideologies. At one point in our history, people would assume they were the guardians of all that is true, right, and good. However, the corruption has corrupted them to such an extent that they are unable to escape. But the freedom we're talking about here and the freedom we want to proclaim to the world is not political freedom, social freedom, psychological freedom, philosophical freedom, or scientific freedom—it's spiritual freedom. The only truth that will liberate your soul and free you from sin forever is the gospel truth. The only way you'll ever know the truth that sets you free from sin and death and hell is to know the truth, which is in the Lord Jesus. He is the truth and His Word is the truth. So who is it that has experienced spiritual freedom? A genuine follower of Jesus Christ. The one who perseveres in the truth, endures through blessing and suffering, is faithful and obedient—that soul is a son of God and not a slave of sin. Christ has liberated us from the bonds of sin, granting us freedom. May each of us examine our hearts to make sure that our faith is the real thing. We measure this by our love for the truth and our desire to obey, live, and proclaim it. This is the standard for someone who has overcome sin, transformed into a son of righteousness, and become a slave to virtue and holiness. According to John 8:32, *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-120\)](#) – **The Truth Shall Set You Free** – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul*

[TOP](#)