



50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 11: Days 501-550

Introduction:

Exposing the Campaign for Immorality

The 2024 Democratic National Convention is a revelation of the sinful depths to which our society has sunk. It's a celebration of all that God hates.

A keynote speaker, Oprah Winfrey, declared that without aborting babies, there is no American dream. Achieving limitless abortion is at the top of their agenda. The Democratic Party has become a death cult.

"For he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. But he who sins against me injures himself; all those who hate me love death." Proverbs 8:35–36.

In further evidence of the prevailing evil, a clinic was set up at the convention to provide attendees with abortions and vasectomies—a hateful assault on family. The DNC platform emphasizes the celebration of homosexuality and transgender perversion—a further assault on the Creator and His creation. The DNC set up gender-neutral prayer rooms throughout the convention center equipped with Islamic prayer rugs, thus promoting satanic religion.

So here is the new American dream: blatant immorality, homosexuality, child sacrifices, and satanic religion, all reflecting the death of truth, conscience, and virtue but mostly a rejection of the Bible—the Word of God. Blasphemy against God is the dominant theme. God is not mocked. He will respond with judgment. His first wave of judgment is operating even now, as described in Romans 1:18–32. That passage in Romans describes what takes place when God abandons a nation. They are given up to immorality, homosexuality, and a reprobate mind (which is moral insanity). There will also be in the future a final judgment as described in 2 Thessalonians 1:5–10. Everything leads to physical, spiritual, and eternal death. Shockingly, joining the death cult are "*Judas evangelicals*," who have sold their souls to the devil, supporting his cause for popularity, fame, and money.

While the DNC is the catalyst, the need for addressing these pressing issues is much bigger than any political agenda, as society at large has moved beyond acceptance of sinful behavior and now celebrates it. The promotion of this behavior is inescapable and spreads far wider than the borders of the United States.

In light of this, I want to provide a series of messages offering clarity to many critical issues. These messages are timely and timeless. They will inform us on important biblical truths so we can share with those who are lost, as well as those who profess Christ but are not being faithful to God's Word.

Exposing the Campaign for Immorality – Series

[Abortion and the Campaign for Immorality](#)

[Homosexuality and the Campaign for Immorality](#)

[By John MacArthur](#) - Grace Today: 9-1-2024

Let's pray.

Our Father, we pray that You will lift up Jesus Christ in this nation, exposing all the false professors who claim to know You and Your Son in their own hearts, not only for their own eternal safety but also so that they might understand the true gospel and have true love for Christ.

And Lord, we have no right to ask for anything for this country, as You have not promised it to us. But we do ask that there might be, even in this dark hour, a great moving of the truth and the gospel to save sinners before the judgment is final. Please make us shining lights in the midst of the darkness and exalt Your Son; we pray in His name. Amen.

The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul – (Servant of God)

Please subscribe on our website to receive notifications regarding future publications. All volumes and articles are free; they are our gift to you. Visit us at: MarkPaulMinistry.com.

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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 501

Just as God Designed

By God's design, families form the foundation of humanity. And where God-ordained families are strong, you have a strong culture and a strong church. The relations in those families follow into society, and you have an ordered society. Those relations follow into the church, and you have an ordered church. Men lead, feed, protect, and provide. Women support and nurture. Children obey. So the church should be the highest manifestation of that divine order, and that's what Paul says in Ephesians 5: "*Husbands love their wives and wives submit to their husbands.*" The church is seen in that marriage, because that's the relationship that it has to its Lord. That's God's design. However, the world—particularly the world we live in—is very different. It's not made up of families anymore; it's made up of individuals. Marriage means very little to anybody, whether you get married or not. And if you do get married, you can get divorced as fast as you can get married. Family doesn't mean anything. Male authority doesn't mean anything. Female submission doesn't mean anything. So you have all these individuals running around defying God's design, and the world rebels strongly against these God-created roles, reaching the point where it actually denies they exist. Perhaps it began a few years ago, when women began to insist on keeping their maiden names in marriages as a sort of power symbol. Now, we've reached a point where we deny the existence of gender altogether. Individualism has so perverted the culture, and the culture has so perverted the church, that the churches are increasingly rejecting the will and command of the Lord. This is not unclear. They have no interest in honoring the Lord. Rebellious women pastors and preachers flood the church in roles that were designed for men. The same thing they're doing in the secular world is being done in the church. How can you do that when the Word of God is so crystal clear? Paul anticipates the possible defenses of women preachers. Their only defenses are that they are the author of Scripture, or they are the author of a higher scripture than God, or they get personal revelation from God saying it's fine. This is the daily routine of someone trying to justify their disobedience through a special, intimate, personal revelation where Jesus talks only to them. If you don't recognize the command of God, we don't recognize you as a preacher or a spiritual person. Paul's words are the Lord's command. Violate that command, and you're not a preacher, and you're not spiritual; you're a fraud. The Word of God is clear. Men, we have our worlds to conquer. But the precious women who walk in the Spirit, live their lives in faith, love, sanctity, self-restraint, and raise godly children are the heart and soul of the church, and they are a blessing to us all. Women are the heart of the church, and men are the strength. Just as God designed. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-56\)](http://GTY.org) – **Does the Bible Permit a Woman to Preach?** – [TOC](#)

Day 502

The Fatality of Sin

Sin makes a person an object of God's wrath. Sin is what condemns and damns us. It is sin that sends men to hell. We are exposed, as Ephesians 2:3 says, *"to the wrath of God."* God's wrath is not some momentary, whimsical passion; it is a holy hatred; it is an act of His pure and holy will against that which is evil and unacceptable, and He will destroy it. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, a mighty God, a judging, wrathful, and vengeful God. And so sin makes men the heirs of God's wrath. There is a sword hanging over every man's head, held by a thread, and someday the thread will snap and judgment will fall. Sin also exposes a person to all of life's miseries. Sin brings the worst of everything to the individual. Job said in chapter 5, verse 7, *"Man is born unto trouble, and trouble becomes his name."* Trouble is everywhere. According to Paul, Adam's sin has subjected the creature to vanity, emptiness, and uselessness. There is something missing. There's an unsatisfaction, so it's trouble and nothingness. You live a life of sin, and you get trouble and nothing else—emptiness. What a conundrum, what a paradox! A man enters the world with a cry and leaves with a groan, with nothing in between—only emptiness. Sin has stripped a man of his honor. He has lost his dignity. He is robbed of peace. He knows no lasting joy, no hope, no meaning, and no values. *"There is no peace,"* says God, *"for the wicked."* Isaiah 48:22. The wicked are more like a troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Listen, sin brings the worst things in life. It also exposes men to the ultimate misery. The ultimate consequence of sin is that it condemns people to hell. Jesus taught the doctrine of hell. He was the one who framed and articulated it in the gospels. The apostles embraced it, and the New Testament repeatedly reiterates it. And we need to know this, dear friends: of the eight billion or so people living on earth today, all of them will die. And if they die without Christ, they will all face hell. Hell awaits the vast majority of people. Spurgeon said, *"Man is hanging over the mouth of hell by a solitary plank, and the plank is rotten."* And that is ultimately the fatality of sin. What a horrible thing it is. However, the beauty lies in the fact that the Savior's arrival can cure the ugliness of sin. He came once to save, but now he keeps Christians clean on a daily basis until His return. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-7\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Ugliness of Christmas** – [TOC](#)

Day 503

The Guarantee

Joy defines heaven. Zephaniah 3:17 tells us another aspect of heavenly joy: *"The Lord your God will rejoice over you with joy. He will joy over you with singing."* Isn't that great? Not only are we going to sing praise to God, but He's going to sing praise about us. Jesus went to the cross for the joy that was set before Him. And what's that joy going to be? Fellowship with us. He's going to rejoice over us. God's going to rejoice over us, and we're going to rejoice over the Lord and over the Father. Spurgeon wrote, *"I think that's the most wonderful text in the whole Bible. God Himself singing? I can imagine that when the world was made, the morning stars sang together, shouting for joy. But God didn't sing. He said it was very good, that's all. There was no song. But when all the chosen race shall meet around the throne, the joy of the eternal Father shall swell so high that God will burst into infinite song."* Absolutely nothing can ever change that. As Romans 8 points out, *"Nothing can separate us from the love of God."* Well, rest, dear Christian, and join the

celebration of verse 25: *"To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time"*—that's the past; *"now"*—that's present; *"and forever"*—that's the future, *"Amen"*—so let it be. All credit goes to God, who is our Savior, through Jesus Christ, who is our Lord. We will be there because He kept us, preserved us, and presented us. The value of salvation is in the guarantee. Listen to what Spurgeon wrote: *"And when I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the end, when I heard it said that Christ said, 'My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand,' when I heard that said, I must confess,"* said Spurgeon, *"that the doctrine of the final preservation of the saints was the bait that my soul could not resist. It was sort of life insurance—an insurance of my character, an insurance of my soul, an insurance of my eternal destiny. I knew I couldn't keep myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe forever, and I longed and I prayed to find Christ because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary salvation, as some preach, but eternal life, which could never be lost, the living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever, for no one and nothing could ever separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* And it was that great doctrine that brought Spurgeon to salvation. What's the point of it if there's no guarantee? But there is. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(65-15\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Saint's Guarantee** – [TOC](#)

Day 504

Keep a Good Conscience

A Christian must retain the full function of their conscience. You have a gift from God in your conscience. It accuses or excuses you. It's a mechanism in you that reacts when you do right and wrong. When you do what is right before God, it confirms you. When you do what is wrong, it accuses you. This is a gift from God. It's like pain. You say pain's a bad thing? No, pain is a good thing. Pain indicates you have an injury and tells you to stop doing what you're doing. Pain is a warning system. If you didn't have pain, you would die. That's what leprosy is. Leprosy is the death of all nerves. People think leprosy eats fingers, but it doesn't. Because they can't feel anything, they rub their fingers off. Because they can't feel, they rub their ears off. Because they can't feel, they rub their noses off. You're glad you have pain, because discomfort is God's way of warning you about physical damage. Conscience is God's mechanism to warn you about spiritual damage. Peter is well aware of the role that conscience plays. In 1 Peter 2:19, he speaks about the conscience toward God. Chapter 3 verse 16 says, *"Keep a good conscience."* In Chapter 3, verse 21, again, he says, *"Appeal to God for a good conscience."* You want a clear conscience. I love the testimony Paul gave in 2 Corinthians 1:12. He was being falsely accused over and over. So how did he defend himself? Here's his defense: 2 Corinthians 1:12: *"Our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience."* Paul is saying, *"My conscience is not accusing me. You're accusing me, and others are accusing me. But my conscience is not accusing me. I have lived my life in holiness and godly sincerity; that's how I've conducted myself in the world and toward you."* When

you have a clear conscience, you're a happy human being. So, keep a good conscience. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-403\)](http://GTY.org) – **You Are What You Think** – [TOC](#)

Day 505

A Warning to Liars

Every day, somebody looks in the mirror, and they're seeing their god. And they tell themselves, *"Our God, the god we created, would never do this to us. Oh, our God would never punish a nation for mutilating children, slaughtering infants in the womb, or advocating the destruction of everything righteous. No, not our God, the god of our invention."* You may think God is on your side when you blaspheme and abominate Him, but He isn't when you bring Him into complicity with your gross transgressions. But that's what people do. And then they say, *"Wait a minute. Our God's fine with this."* I witnessed a woman in a Presbyterian pulpit on television, ostensibly praying to God, expressing gratitude for the presence of transgender people in the church—in a pulpit, as a form of prayer. To what god do you think she is praying? The god in their mirror. There is no other god. The constant lying is the most significant illustration of the hatred for God that dominates the power structure in our world and nation. They lie about everything in order to cover their sin, advance their sinful desires, protect themselves, or become rich in power and money. There's never been a time when we have been drowning in so many lies and liars. There have always been lies and liars because every person, in their default position, lies, but we have never had to deal with them beyond the scope of our normal relationship, so that the world dumps all of its lies on us nonstop through the phone, television, radio, internet, etc. And now, the world is maniacally trying to censor people who speak the truth. They lie about everything, be it about a person, COVID, or any other topic. But we have to tell them, and this is a compassionate warning: If you're a liar, you're going to hell; it's that simple. Unless you have been transformed into one who speaks the truth, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven; instead, you will be on the outside, in a lake of fire. Whether your lies are direct lies, half-truths intended to mislead, perjury, exaggeration, boasting, flattery, slander, false accusations, hypocrisy, deceitful behavior, or whatever kind of lies—if, as the Book of Revelation says, you love and practice lying, you'll never arrive in God's holy heaven. Only transformed and forgiven liars find a place in heaven. So let the church stand firm, right? Let the church speak the truth. And we must always speak the truth to one another. Why? Because we are the people of the truth, and the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-23\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Disastrous Sin of Lying** – [TOC](#)

Day 506

Scripture is Sufficient

The apostle Paul, writing under divine inspiration, pronounces a severe curse: damnation on those who preach a corrupt gospel. He condemns false teachers and their bogus religious systems. He categorizes false Christianity as one of the most heinous sins imaginable. He then cautions us against forming alliances with those who are in such error. So what are the fundamental beliefs that define sound doctrine and determine our relationships? First of all, if a doctrine is truly fundamental, it must have its origin in Scripture. It cannot have its origin in tradition, a vision, a prophecy, or any mystical experience; it cannot have its origin in intuition. If a doctrine is truly fundamental, if it is a sound doctrine, it must have its origin in Scripture. It can't have its origin in a papal decree, the magisterium, or a church council. It must have its origin in Scripture. So we say we must be relentlessly biblical. It is Scripture that is able to make you wise unto salvation, according to 2 Timothy 3:15. Therefore, the written Word of God contains all true doctrine, as well as all fundamental and essential doctrine to make us complete and equipped for every good work. If there were necessary doctrines that are not in Scripture, then 2 Timothy 3:15 would be a lie. They're all in Scripture, and only in Scripture. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 19, verse 7: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, complete, converting the soul."* That means Scripture is sufficient. The Reformers understood this, which is why they established the foundational sola of all solas as sola Scriptura, which is Latin for *"Scripture alone."* You can appreciate the significant impact this change had on the Catholic world. The Roman Catholic Church commonly pronounced damnation on people who held to sola Scriptura. They damned anyone who questioned the pope or the church's dogmas. For example, Canon 1 of the Seventh Session of the Council of Trent pronounces anathema, or damnation, on anyone who says that there are more or less than seven sacraments established by the church council. So if you said, *"I think there are eight, or I think there are six,"* The Council of Trent damned you to everlasting hell for tampering with something that the church invented. Never mind that the sacraments among the seven of confirmation, penance, and extreme unction don't even exist in Scripture. Therefore, denying something that doesn't exist in the Bible from the beginning is unjustifiable. That's where the conflict stemmed from during the Reformation. According to the Bible, there is no spiritual authority outside the sacred writings of Scripture that gives us the wisdom that leads to salvation. There is no papal decree, oral tradition, latter-day prophecy, or experience that can be considered fundamental. For something to be fundamental, it must have its origin in Scripture, as all true doctrine does. Repent and believe! GTY.org (TMU272) – **Delivered by Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

Day 507

The Most Serious Sin

You can't know God unless you come to Christ, and you can't come to Christ and confess Him as Lord unless the Holy Spirit enables you to do it. You cannot accomplish this on your own because you don't know God, and you are inherently rebellious, hostile, and an enemy from birth. You're alienated from God and hostile in mind. Not only are you alienated from God because you don't know Him, but you also hate Him. You might love a god of your own creation who tolerates your sin, but it's not the true God. You say, *"Well, what can I do about it?"* Cry out to God to be gracious

and give you life. And there's even more. Jesus says in John 15:22, *"If I had not come and spoken to them, if I had not done the works among them which no one else did, they would not have sin."* What does that mean? They wouldn't commit sin in a specific area. It does not imply a general sin. Of course, everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glory; all are sinners. However, they would not have committed this one sin. And what is that one sin? It is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. That is the damning sin. Christ is the full revelation of God. He's the glory of God in human flesh, so He is God's full revelation. Therefore, the greatest sin is the rejection of the greatest revelation, and the greatest revelation is Christ, and the greatest sin is to reject Him. Hating God inevitably leads to eternal damnation in hell. To hate God in the full revelation of Christ is to bring upon yourself an eternal judgment of far greater degree. Christ came and revealed God in a way He'd never been revealed before. So sin in man reaches its apex when they reject Christ. We have a nation here of people who have been exposed to the story of the Lord Jesus Christ; they've been exposed to the gospel, and there is still a massive rejection of Jesus Christ, and that is the most serious sin any human being will ever commit. Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(43-86\)](#) – **Why the World Hates Christians, Part 2** – [TOC](#)

Day 508

Falling Victim to Deception

A failure of self-examination is another thing that lulls people into deception about their salvation; they never really examine themselves. They become so engrossed in the concept of grace, believing that everything is grace and forgiveness, that they fail to confront their own sin. They hear somebody say, *"Well, you don't have to confess your sin; your sin's already forgiven. It's all taken care of. Everything is set aside. Don't even worry about that; just go on and live your life."* It almost borders on what is called antinomianism, or an attitude against the law of God, to the extent that they cease to scrutinize their own lives. Why does the Lord bring us repeatedly to His table in First Corinthians 11? The purpose is to enable an individual to scrutinize their own beliefs. Second Corinthians 13:5 says, *"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves."* If you don't, you're in danger of self-deception. You must examine your sins and your motives. Why do you do what you do? And trust me, if your salvation is truly genuine, God will validate it through His Spirit's testimony in your soul. But if that confirmation isn't there, you shouldn't be under the illusion that just because it isn't there, you're okay— by some certification, by somebody, or by some little prayer you prayed. I believe that a fixation on religious activity also contributes to people's delusions of salvation. In other words, they go to church, hear sermons, sing songs, read the Bible, attend a Bible study, and take a class. Their involvement in religious activities leads them to believe they have achieved salvation. However, this is a profoundly mistaken belief. Many individuals within the church remain unsaved. They are tares among the wheat. I also believe that the fair-exchange approach, as I refer to it, is what lures people into deception. This is the process where, rather than confronting the negative aspects of your life and questioning your Christian beliefs, you focus on the positive aspects of your life and engage in a fair exchange. For instance, you may find yourself thinking, *"Oh, I can't be that bad. Look at what*

I've done over here." And instead of honestly evaluating your life with integrity and asking yourself, *"Am I a believer?"* you're constantly weighing the positives and negatives. Instead of asking yourself, *"If I am a believer, can I continue to pursue this path?"* you may say, *"Well, I know I do that, but oh, look what I do over here,"* and then make a fair exchange, thereby distorting the truth. Therefore, a false assurance, a lack of self-examination, a fixation on religious activity, or a fair-exchange approach can lure you into deception. Nonetheless, in each of those scenarios, you fall victim to deception. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2255\)](http://GTY.org) – **Empty Words** – [TOC](#)

Day 509

Giving Your Mind to God

Real worship is not elaborate. It is the act of giving the soul and body to God. However, it also entails surrendering one's mind to God. Now these are all interconnected. If you don't give your mind to God, you're not going to be able to sustain giving your body to Him. In a moment, you might present your body as a living sacrifice. That might happen after your salvation. It might happen for a while, but, eventually, how you think will take over what you do with your body. That's the way it is. *"As a man thinks in his heart, so he is."* Thus, the mind is critical. Along with the body, the mind must come. Romans 12:2 states, *"Do not be conformed to this world"—this age—"but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* So, if you get motivated, you may say, *"I want to give my body. I want to change what I'm doing with my body. I want to set aside the sins of my life. I want to present my body with all of its attitudes, all of its thoughts, and all of its actions, and I want to give it to God."* And then you walk out with all your good intentions. But if you don't program your mind correctly, your body will come off that altar. This is just part of reality. The mind is so critical. So how do we deal with the mind? Don't be conformed to this age. What do we mean by *"this age"*? The fallen, unredeemed system of Satan—the evil world system. So if you're going to present your body as a living sacrifice to God, you're going to have to make sure that your mind, which dictates how your body functions, is not completely absorbed into this world system. If you have been transformed, you have been removed from the world, and you have come out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. So, you present your body, but in order to continue presenting it, you will need to rewire your mind to resist the corruption of this age. That's a challenging thing to do. How are we going to do that? *"Stop allowing yourselves to be fashioned like this evil age."* On the other hand, *"be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* It's the metamorphosis of your mind—the transformation of your mind. You need to be transfigured into glorious form. Your outward image—who you are—must come from heaven and not hell. Let yourself be transformed by the renewing of your mind. How? You renew your mind through the Word of God because it is the source of renewal. This immerses your mind in divine truth, and there's no shortcut. So the soul is first given to God, and then the body. And that living sacrifice of the body given to God can be sustained as an offering to God when the mind is constantly being renewed by the truth of the Word of God. [GTY.org \(80-414\)](http://GTY.org) – **Elements of a Living Sacrifice** – [TOC](#)

Day 510

We've Lost Our Minds

How do you know when God gives up on a nation? Romans 1 says, *"God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity."* You'll have a sexual revolution. God lets go, and there'll be an explosion of immorality, and bodies will be denigrated. This began for us many years ago with the emergence of the hippie movement, the playboy mentality, the sexual revolution, and the promotion of free love and sexuality. Fornication has now become as commonplace as eating lunch. Immorality has taken over the entire culture. The music, the movies, the television, and the lifestyle are all reflected by the media. So the first thing that tells you you're under judgment is that you have had a sexual revolution. Verse 26 provides the second indication: *"For this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions."* They succumbed not just to passions, but to something far more degrading. And here it is: *"Their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural."* Lesbianism. Why is lesbianism mentioned instead of homosexuality? This illustrates the severity of the judgment, as women are typically the last to succumb to such behavior due to their maternal instincts and their reliance on men for protection and security. So, when God unleashes His judgment and lets go of a culture, lesbianism will emerge and flourish. Not just them though, verse 27 says: *"In the same way, the men also abandoned the natural function of the woman, burning in their desire toward one another."* That's an interesting phrase. I recall reading about Helyer, the coroner of New York City, who performed 30,000 autopsies. In his book, he made a noteworthy observation: *"When I see a murdered body, I can determine in five seconds whether the perpetrator is a homosexual due to the outrageous overkill."* He wrote, *"Whatever those passions are, they're out of control."* That's when a society is given over to degrading passions, women with women, men with men, as verse 27 says, *"burning in their desire toward one another,"*—like the Sodomites—who wanted to rape the angels in Genesis 19—*"men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their person the due penalty of their error."* What's that? AIDS and other venereal diseases. So how do you know when a nation is under divine judgment? There'll be a sexual revolution, followed by a homosexual revolution. This signifies that God has forsaken a particular culture. But that's not the end. Verse 28 says: *"Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God,"*—see, every one of these is because they rejected the truth of God—*"So God gave them over to a depraved mind."* What is a depraved mind? It's a mind that doesn't function; it's insanity. I used to wonder, *"What is that insanity going to be?"* When you're a man and you think you're a woman, or when you're a woman and you think you're a man, that's insanity. We've lost our minds. That is evidence of God's judgment. Repent and believe! GTY.org (TM19-1) – Telling the Truth in a Post-Truth World – [TOC](#)

Day 511

Spiritual Terrorists

False teachers inevitably have to have a source for their deception. The truly effective false teachers and apostates will undoubtedly claim that God communicates with them in secret, through their dreams, and through their visions. These are revelatory experiences. Apostate false teachers, from Joseph Smith to Benny Hinn, and everybody in between, claim that God speaks to them in their dreams, in their visions. And this, of course, transcends the necessity to be submissive to the Word of God, which is not in their hearts anyway, and gives them the illusion of authority. And God gets blamed for all their aberrations. They reject the Word of God. What they teach is nothing but the figment of their own perverted, polluted, evil imaginations. These apostates, with their evil and corrupted minds, remain in the church with the intention of destroying it. These spiritual terrorists, under Satan's control, harbor only perverted and sensual ideas in their minds, which they use as the foundation for their own deceptions. At its simplest, they reject God's word and base their lies on the musings of their own deluded brains. At the highest level, they assert that they have received messages from God, such as "*The Book of Mormon*," "*Science and Health*," and "*Key to the Scripture*." They also claim to have received revelations instructing them on specific actions, and they have even claimed to have received messages in dreams and visions. However, the bottom line is that they are unwilling to completely submit to the authority of the Word of God. They've rejected that. False teachers, as I said, have to have a source for their deceptions. This was so commonly the claim that false prophets made—that God talked to them in a dream—that it was almost synonymous with the false prophet. False prophets, apostates, and terrorists always want to direct you away from the truth and away from God because they're immoral, insubordinate, and blasphemous. If anybody comes along and tells you God talked to him in a dream, cling to the Word of God; do not follow that dreamer. Jeremiah 23 is a chapter that pronounces judgment on false shepherds. It is nothing but the wicked musings of their own depraved heart, and they claim to have had a dream in which God has revealed something to them. Christians get suckered by these people. They lead real Christians astray. So I'm telling you, when somebody says they have a vision, I write them off immediately. That's the end. They are liars and deceivers. Such claims lead Christians astray because they are spiritual terrorists. We are repeatedly warned about this in Scripture. Don't listen to anyone who says God spoke to him in a dream. You are to listen to those who teach you the Word of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(65-7\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Identify Terrorists in the Church** – [TOC](#)

Day 512

Relationships of the Shepherd

What is the relationship of the Good Shepherd to the Father? John 10:17-18 tells us. "*For this reason, the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*" The Father gave a command to Jesus: "*Lay Your life down and take it up. You have the authority to do that, and I am commanding You to do it.*" That's why the Father loves His Son, because of His obedience. Yes, the Father chose Jesus to be the Lamb, the acceptable sacrifice. Yes, the Father

is the One who killed the Son by the predetermined counsel and foreknowledge of God. He was the sacrifice. Jesus is telling us this was a perfect act of willing obedience. He voluntarily did what the Father commanded Him to do, and that's how He demonstrated His love to the Father, and that's why the Father loves Him. That's what the Father wanted Him to do; that was critical to the plan of salvation—to gather the redeemed into eternal glory. He did it voluntarily. Jesus said, *"If you love Me,"* - do what? - *"keep My commandments."* That's how you affirm your love. His relationship with the Father was one of love and obedience. That's a model for us. Another relationship exists: that between the Good Shepherd and the world. Jesus divided the crowd. The divisions, though, are not necessarily between believers and non-believers. There are divisions among non-believers, and that's what we have here. A division occurred among the Jews because of what Jesus had said. Many, if not the majority, of the Jews could be classified as irrational blasphemers. The second group consists of more rational individuals. However, they both end up in the same hell forever, because it really doesn't matter whether you curse Jesus or whether you think you need to treat Him more reasonably. That kind of hesitation gets you nothing. You either confess Jesus as Lord or die in your sins and occupy the same hell with the extreme blasphemers. So we meet the Good Shepherd. In relation to His sheep, He lays down His life for them, loves them, and unites them. His relationship with the Father is that He loves and obeys Him. His relation to the world is that He's rejected either by those who blaspheme Him in a kind of irrational way or by those who rationally tolerate Him. But for us, we'll place ourselves among the disciples there that day, and we'll say of Him, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* We declare Him to be the Great Shepherd of the sheep who came out of the grave. He is our Shepherd. Hallelujah! Repent and believe! GTY.org (43-53) – **I Am the Good Shepherd** – [TOC](#)

Day 513

How Believers Live and Die

The first wonderful reality of being blessed in death is based upon how we live. For death to be a blessing, you must live believing in Jesus and obeying God's commands. That is what believers do. Believers live their lives most purely; they live their lives most nobly; they live their lives most purposefully. They live life most fully, most richly, most joyously, and most happily. They live life in a most exemplary, most productive way because they have been transformed to do that. Even without heaven, this is the best way to live. But there is heaven. The righteous life in and of itself is the best. But it's the best because there is heaven, and when death comes, death becomes blessed. So first of all, death is a blessing to the saints because of how they live. They live the best way. They live in faith and obedience to God, which then produces blessings and divine supervision for all the issues in their lives. However, we are not content to stop there, as the ultimate point is death. Yes, we live with perseverance, but what's more important and crucial is how we die. And how do we die? We die with promise. We live with perseverance; we die with promise. Revelation 14:13 says: *"And I, John, heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.'"* Why is the Holy Spirit saying "Yes?" Well, who was

it that convicted you of your sin before you were saved? God gave the Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Who was it that gave you new life? Who was it that regenerated you? You are born of the Spirit. Who was it who took up residency in you? Who is it that lives in you? The Holy Spirit. Who is your illuminator, the one who teaches you everything? It's the Holy Spirit. Who fills your life and leads you to obedience? Who is the one who makes the Word of God alive and practical? Who is the one who gifted you? Who is your strength through every temptation and trial? Who is the one who comforts you in all your sorrow? Who is the one who strengthens you in all your weaknesses? The Holy Spirit. And when you finally die, the Holy Spirit will say, "Yes, yes." That's why in Ephesians it says, "*We are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption.*" It is the Spirit who keeps, guards, and protects us. And when we finally die as martyrs under the worst circumstances, we enter into the blessedness of the next life, and the Spirit says, "Yes; yes." That's His work—to bring us to glory. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-423\)](http://GTY.org)
– Blessing the Dead – [TOC](#)

Day 514

The Human Condition

Paul's going to delve a little deeper into the condition of every human being, and he's going to give us a specific description. He talks about the way sinful people are. First of all, Ephesians 4:17 says they're selfish. They "*walk*"—meaning daily conduct—"*in the futility of their mind.*" Their thinking is so warped. The focus is on "*their mind.*" This is what happens to sinful people: They think they are the source of the truth. They don't subject themselves to the truth of God. They reject the truth of God, so their mind is basically the purveyor of their philosophy, theology, and religion. And if they believe themselves to be the source of truth, they are insane. But this is not new. Back in the Old Testament, Judges 21:25 says, "*Everybody did that which was right in his own*"—what?—"*in his own eyes.*" This is what people do; they worship themselves. This practice is futile, as it stems from the wretchedness inherent in human pride. The word futile refers to something that is useless, worthless, empty, void, or vain. If you want to live a vain, empty, void, meaningless, useless, or worthless life, then just live in your own head; just decide that everything that you can think of is the way reality is. This has permeated our culture to such an extent that it has reached a level of insanity we never imagined, to the point where people openly deny their biological or sexual identity, which is not even a mystery. Intellectual emptiness fills our society. In his speech the other day, I heard President Biben say that he wanted to do all he could in his administration to protect the transgender community so that they could fulfill their God-given potential. So, we're already under divine judgment, and he's calling down more judgment. The sexual revolution, the homosexual revolution, and the insanity that permeates this culture all serve as evidence of the massive judgment that is already upon us. People are just fools, yet they think they're wise. Universities are the hub for deceitful PhDs, espousing ideas they mistakenly believe to be wise when, in reality, they are the leading fools. Colossians 2:18 describes this futility of mind as "*they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind.*" So what's wrong with everybody? To begin with, they're selfish. They want to design their own standard of morality and

invent their own religion. They want to be their own god. However, Peter says in 1 Peter 1:18 that Christians have been redeemed from this futile way of life by the miracle of conversion. Rejoice! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49–21\)](#) – **What's Wrong with Everybody?** – [TOC](#)

Day 515

Believe in the Divine Purpose

Some Christians say, *"Well, I don't know what's going on in my life; I'm a Christian; everything should be going right. And some people are telling me that if there are problems in my life—illness, disappointment, and lack of success—it's because I don't have enough faith, I haven't found the right formula, I haven't figured out the right strategy, I haven't read the right book, gone to the right counsel, or heard the right message. Therefore, if I could simply resolve this issue, I could free myself from all these negative circumstances and continue to lead a prosperous and fulfilling life."* Nothing could be further from the truth. When God really does His work in your life, He puts you in a place of pain and suffering. As Peter said, *"After you've suffered a while, the Lord will make you perfect."* And it's in the midst of that you discover your true strength, and then you say with Paul, *"I am well content with weaknesses, insults, distresses, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* Embrace the pain. Embrace the suffering because you believe in its divine purpose. Samson, strong in weakness, crushed the enemies of God. Joseph, strong in weakness, rose to the throne of Egypt. Job, strong in weakness, saw the glorious face of God. Paul asked for prominence, and God gave him humiliation. Paul asked for power; He gave him weakness. Then he became usable. Some words of a song go like this: *"There burns a fire with sacred heat, white hot with holy flame, and all who dare pass through its flames will not emerge the same. Some as bronze, some as silver, some as gold, and then, with great skill, all are hammered by their sufferings on the anvil of His will. I'm learning now to trust His touch and to crave the fire's embrace, for though my past with sin was etched, His mercies did erase. Each time His purging cleanses deeper, I'm not sure that I'll survive, yet the strength in growing weaker keeps my hungry soul alive."* And the chorus: *"The refiner's fire has now become my soul desire, purged and cleansed, and purified so that the Lord may be glorified. He is consuming my soul, refining me, and making me whole. No matter what I lose, I choose the refiner's fire."* Let's pray. Oh God, what more could we desire than humility before You, intimacy with You, a flood of sufficient grace, and power for Your cause—all things that result from our suffering. We embrace that with Paul. Gladly, we embrace it. Gladly, we are content with it that You might truly be glorified and honored through us. Oh, Refiner, refine us; we choose the Refiner's fire. We thank You, O Lord, for the good gifts of grace and power, sweet fellowship, and humility that come to us through our suffering. We look forward to the day when we will be free from suffering in eternal heaven. But until then, may we suffer whatever refining we need so that the glory of Christ may be manifest through us in this world and that His saving power may be on display for others to see and believe. It's in His name that we ask. Amen. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-313\)](#) – **God's Purpose in Our Pain** – [TOC](#)

Day 516

How Jesus Healed Others

Jesus' healings, unlike those of TV healers, are characterized by six distinct realities. Number one: He healed with a word or a touch. Not with some incantations or formulas. Secondly, He healed instantly. Rehab was never required. It's always that way. He heals with a word or a touch, and He heals instantly. Thirdly, He healed totally. He didn't say, "*Sip a little honey and water and take it easy for a few weeks.*" He didn't say, "*Claim the healing by faith to make sure you can secure it.*" His healings were instantaneous. Fourth, Jesus healed everyone. And He did it every day. He banished illness from Israel. Fifthly, He healed organic disease. He didn't heal lower back pain, heart palpitations, a headache, or some other invisible ailment. He reversed paralysis, palsy, blindness, and deafness—things that were undeniably supernatural. Sixthly, He raised dead people. That was no more difficult than any other healing. It was all creative. For instance, he attended a funeral in the city of Nain, approached the casket, and uttered the words, "*Young man, I say to you, arise,*" prompting the young man to stand up and start speaking. He raised the dead. I don't see the TV healers at the mortuary. Where are they? I don't see them at the cemetery. I don't see them in the funeral lines trying to relieve people's suffering by raising their dead. And by the way, Jesus did all of this healing in full public view every day in a different location. He did not perform these healings in a set environment or under strict control, but rather in any place, at any time, under any condition, in any circumstance, and always in the open. Oh, and His miracles didn't require faith. It would be pretty hard for dead people to have faith. He didn't say, "*If you believe, I'll raise you.*" His miracles didn't require faith; virtually everyone He healed was an unbeliever. Some of them came to faith as a result of the healing, like one out of the ten lepers, but they weren't believers when He healed them. That wasn't the point. To say to somebody, "*If you have faith, you can be healed,*" is bizarre because there's no precedent for that in the Bible. He consistently performed miracles in public throughout his entire ministry. Everywhere, all the time, every day, just as a routine of daily activity. And He healed everybody. There were no categories that were beyond His power. So when you look at healing the way Jesus did it, He healed with a word or a touch. He healed instantly. He healed totally. He healed everyone. He healed organic diseases. And He raised the dead. Then in Verse 38, "*He said to His disciples, 'Let's go somewhere else.'*" In other words, I made my point: It's not about everybody getting healed; it's about proving who I am. I've done enough to make it evident. So let's go somewhere else, because somewhere else we can do it again. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(41-6\)](http://GTY.org) – **Kingdom Power** – [TOC](#)

Day 517

Christ is All We Need

It's a myth that somehow the simple gospel is not sufficient. Christ is all we need. There are neither spirits nor angels above Him. He is all we need, and He has provided us with a complete

salvation. Colossians 2:11 says, *"You were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."* That is a magnificent statement about our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Through faith, we literally died with Him to the old life—the removal of the body of flesh—became buried with Him in His death, and rose with Him in His resurrection. That's a complete salvation. He has transformed us from death into new life. In verses 13 and 14, He not only provided a complete salvation, but a complete forgiveness. *"And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us"*—that's the record of all our sins—*"and which was"*— of course —*"hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."* I want you to notice something, verse 9, *"In Him"*; verse 10, *"In Him"*; verse 11, *"In Him"*; verse 12, *"Buried with Him, raised with Him"*; verse 13, *"He made you together alive with Him."* It's all about being in Him and with Him. And because we have Christ, we have complete salvation and complete forgiveness. It's so complete that He has literally blotted out our transgressions; cancelled out, erased, and wiped off our sins. In verse 15, on our behalf, *"He disarmed the rulers and authorities"* — the hosts of hell, the demons, Satan — *"He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them"*— again —*"through Him."* When He disarmed the rulers and authorities, we triumphed over them through Him. Because we have Christ, we have complete salvation. Because we have Christ, we have complete forgiveness. Because we have Christ, we have complete victory over all the hosts of hell. Philosophy and human opinions add nothing whatsoever to that. What we offer when we present the gospel is what this text presents. We are offering a transformation through faith in Jesus Christ from death to life. We are offering forgiveness for all of our sins because Jesus paid the full penalty for those sins. Jesus literally nailed the list of our sins to His cross and labeled it *"Debt Paid in Full."* In the gospel, we are offering a true, total, and complete triumph over Satan and demons. Philosophy and human wisdom can do nothing to embellish that. Nothing! Christ is all we will ever need. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-329\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus Plus Nothing Equals Everything** – [TOC](#)

Day 518

The Final Sign

The experience of Jonah is analogous to that of Jesus. The great fish swallowed Jonah, just as the grave swallowed Jesus. Jonah's career should have ended; Jesus' career should have ended. Jonah's miraculous deliverance from certain death contrasted with Jesus' actual resurrection from death. Jonah's deliverance from the clutches of death ushered him into a great and powerful ministry, and so did our Lord's resurrection. By the way, with this reference, Jesus authenticates the biblical account of Jonah. The sign of Jonah then is the resurrection of the dead, from the dead, Jesus' own personal resurrection. Now, look at verse 30: *"Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation."* What was the final sign? The

resurrection. What greater sign could there be? Jesus conquered death for Himself, the greatest sign. The people of Nineveh heard one poor prophet who, by his own confession, was wicked, perverse, rebellious, and sinful. He calls himself that in his own prophecy. He had only one sign, which they heard him describe; they didn't see it, but they still believed in it. And look at this: the Son of Man is a sign to His generation. After all they've seen, there's one more final sign to seal the reality of who He is, and that's the resurrection. What was their response when Jesus underwent His death, burial, and resurrection? Look at Matthew 28:11. This comes after the resurrection. There's no question about what happened. In Chapter 28, a severe earthquake occurs. The Lord's angel descends from heaven, rolls the stone away, and sits on it. His appearance is like lightning, and his garments are as white as snow. And the guards saw it. The sheer terror of seeing a heavenly angel, feeling the earthquake, watching the stone roll away, and witnessing Jesus rise from the dead sent them into a semi-coma. Matthew 28:11 picks up the story. *"The guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened."* Of course, they all knew that Jesus had said He would rise after three days. That was the final sign. So the chief priests called an assembly with the elders, and they counseled together. They gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, *"You are to say His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep."* They knew that's not what happened. They bribed the soldiers to lie. These are the religious and moral leaders. And they are the people who put themselves in a position to literally ignore the truth. And so they bribed the guards to lie rather than believe in the resurrection. Listen to this: Matthew 28:15 says, *"So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day."* It didn't matter what Jesus did or what the miracle was. The final sign only confirmed the wretchedness of their unbelief. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-162\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Last Sign** – [TOC](#)

Day 519

It's an Amazing Time

Sin, according to MTV, is not based on absolute moral standards. Instead, it's a question of each person's own preference. In other words, what is sin to me may not be sin to you. The MTV program on sin concludes with an appeal to universal tolerance. Listen to this. According to MTV, *"the real danger of sin is anything that harms your ego. That's sin. And no sin is as evil as the killjoy attitude of those who think sin is an absolute standard that offends a holy God."* Thinking that is the worst sin. That's how perverse the culture has become. Their entire defense of sin reminds me that we live in a culture given over by God to its own evil lusts. People love their sin, and they will go to extreme lengths to justify and rationalize it. And as long as they do that, they damn themselves, right? If you fail to accurately identify the illness, you'll never find the correct cure. You can't come to salvation unless you understand sin. Obviously, then, this kind of thinking is deadly and damning to those who are deceived by it. And this is what concerns me: this kind of thinking has invaded the thinking of Christians. Christians are casualties of the culture's redefinition of human behavior. Churches, which once would not tolerate adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lying, and cheating, are very tolerant of it now. Churches that once wanted to

confront sin don't confront it anymore. We've all fallen into the psychological game of self-esteem and ego-building. This is typical of all the movements of the Christian church. It isn't in every church, but it certainly is where the thrust is. And if you speak against it, you will face severe consequences. We have allowed the world to redefine God's moral law and even God's character, making Him more tolerant of sin than He is. Therefore, constant exposure to the Word of God is essential. In this current era, churches require constant exposure to God's divine standard more than anything else. Instead, churches are succumbing to the MTV mentality and providing more of the same worldly content, which I find inconceivable. There ought to be such an irate ground swell of hostility against this that it literally would overthrow those kinds of churches that are watering down the truth. We should be so enraged by this acquiescence that it ignites a spiritual revolution. It's amazing to me that in a time when the culture is being defined by MTV, churches are trying to adapt to the culture. It's incredible. On the other hand, what people desperately need is constant exposure to the Word of God, which is the only thing that's going to keep you sensitive to divine morality week after week as you are assaulted by the other stuff. Despite the urgent need to maintain our sensitivity to God's standards, true holiness, and purity, churches are neglecting this in favor of providing entertainment for their members. It's an amazing time in which we live. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-129\)](http://GTY.org) – [Keeping a Pure Mind](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 520

The Most Minimized Doctrine

The doctrine of total depravity is the most minimized because it is so offensive to a mind controlled by Satan. That leaves us in a very difficult position. What should we say next, assuming we can continue the conversation after expressing that without being thrown out? We say, *"Well, that's what the Bible says."* Take a look at Ephesians 2 in relation to the human condition: *"You were dead in your trespasses and sins."* Dead is dead. If you're going to pick an analogy, dead is the choice. Dead means no life, no capacity, no response, no impulse, and no understanding. *"You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked"*—before you were a believer—*"according to the course of this world."* You were the walking dead. And who was controlling you? *"The prince of the power of the air."* Who is that? Satan is *"the spirit working in the sons of disobedience."* This is your condition. You are the walking dead. You live in the deadness of a fallen world and an evil system under the full power of Satan, who is not only working around you but is working in you. And how does that affect you? Verse 3 states that we are *"in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and [who] are by nature children of wrath."* Divine wrath is your natural destiny. This is true for every person. Ephesians 4:17 says, *"You walk in the futility of [your] mind."* Verse 18 says you are *"darkened in [your] understanding"* and *"excluded from the life of God."* Therefore, your mind is empty when it comes to truth. That means you're dead. You're bearing the marks of ignorance, hardness of heart, verse 19, *"callousness,"* which means your entire fallen mind is scarred over so that it cannot sense the truth, and therefore you're *"given over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."* This is the human condition, and once again, it's the most hated

doctrine. But that's what the Bible says, and I'll show you a couple of illustrations. In Genesis, God looked at humanity and said, *"All I see is evil continually."* Jeremiah says, *"The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."* Romans 8:6–8 is a diagnosis from Paul: *"The mind set on the flesh is death,"* verse 7, *"because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; it does not subject itself to the law of God; it is not even able to do so,"* verse 8, *"and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."* This underscores the concept of being unwilling and unable to please God. You are in the flesh, driven by its lusts, and this flesh is hostile to God. It can't subject itself to God's law. It's not even possible. So this is the sinner's condition. You're so sinful; you're unwilling and unable to believe the truth. And because you lack the capacity to accept the truth, you hate it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-132\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Most Hated Christian Doctrine – TOC**

Day 521

A Marvelous Realization

In the Upper Room before Jesus was taken and crucified, He says to His disciples, *"I'm leaving; I'm going to go away, and you're not going to be able to get to Me, but I'm going to tell you something; it's to your advantage that I go away."* How could that be to their advantage? They didn't want Him to go anywhere. They didn't want Him to leave. They wanted Him to stay and set up His kingdom, and that would be the end, the culmination, and the fulfillment of everything. And then He says this: *"If I do not go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I'll send Him to you."* What is better than having Jesus? Having the Holy Spirit. You mean the Holy Spirit wasn't around? Yes, but Jesus says, *"He has been with you, but (once I leave) He will be"*—where?—"in you." The Holy Spirit was always around. In Genesis, the Holy Spirit was the Creator. He moved on the face of the waters and created. The Holy Spirit has always been the life-giver, and the Holy Spirit has always been the one who convicts. He's been striving with men, according to Genesis 6. The Holy Spirit has always been the one who brought life to spiritually dead people, and all men have been dead since the fall. Without the Holy Spirit, there would be no salvation in the Old Testament, no believing faith, no redeeming repentance, no genuine conversion. The Holy Spirit was present to provide guidance and leadership. The ministry of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the Old Testament period to some degree. He was with them, which may be a way to understand that for those necessary things like salvation and sanctification, the Holy Spirit was required. But here comes the Son. Isn't that a better thing? Isn't it even more wonderful to be in the very presence of the incarnate Son of God? One would certainly think so. In the Old Testament, the Spirit was there, the Son was promised, but now the Spirit is still doing His work and the Son is also there. So how can Jesus say, *"It's better if I go away"*? The answer to that is because the Holy Spirit brings to the believers, from the time of the founding of the church on, a ministry that has never been known before. It isn't that the Holy Spirit wasn't here; it's not a question of absent and present; it's a question of degree and extent. The best thing that could ever happen to any people, better than having Jesus Christ in their midst, is to have the Holy Spirit in them. And that's us. We're living in

that wonderful, marvelous realization. That's why Jesus says, *"It's better that I go, so I can send the Holy Spirit."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-416\)](http://GTY.org) – [Giving Thanks to the Spirit](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 522

Be a Guardian of Your Mind

Wisdom is skillful living, and the most important factor in skillful living is the fear of God. And wherever God is feared, sin is also feared. If you don't fear sin, it's because you don't fear God. Show me a holy person, and I'll show you one who hates sin and fears God. Show me a person who tolerates sin, and I'll show you a person who doesn't have respect for God. That's the controlling influence in your life. How you view God is the most important thing in your mind. It is the most controlling reality in your mind—how you view God. If you have complete honor and respect toward God, then you're not going to be so easily led into sin, because you know it dishonors Him, and you respect Him too much to do that. If you believe in the sovereignty of God, that is, that He rules everything in the universe, brings to pass all His own purposes, and is in control of everything, you're not going to doubt and fear when your little world starts to look like it's going bad. So remember, how you view God is the most controlling influence in your entire existence. According to Proverbs, fearing the Lord prolongs life, is more profitable than wealth, brings abundant life, keeps one from evil, results in riches and honor, and produces humility. Those who fear God sleep satisfied and are untouched by evil, says chapter 19. Those who fear God have confidence. Those who fear God will be honored and praised. And those who fear God will have their prayers answered. All of that is in the book of Proverbs. This is the most crucial lesson: *"Fear God."* Come to know Him, love Him, respect Him, and honor Him; that's the beginning of everything. The second most important component of seeking wisdom is to guard your mind. The positive side of wisdom is to seek to honor God; the negative side is to prevent other stuff from polluting your thinking. Holding on to the truth is a major theme in the book of Proverbs, chapter 3. I can't emphasize anything more than that. Hold on to the truth. Don't let anything steal the truth. Don't let anyone pollute your mind. Why? Because Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Watch over your heart with all diligence,"* —literally your mind—*"for from it flow the springs of life."* In other words, *"Guard your mind, for out of it comes your conduct; and out of it are the issues of life."* How you think determines how you live, because your mind is the controlling influence on how you act. Therefore, if you aspire to be an educated individual and live life to the fullest, you must fear God. Additionally, you must guard your mind, shielding it from harmful influences. That's how to be a guardian of your mind. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU135\)](http://GTY.org) – [Pursuing Divine Wisdom](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 523

Is God Unjust?

For people to say God is unjust because there was an earthquake, a tsunami, because somebody got cancer, or because people die in terrorist acts is an incredible turnaround from the truth that God is so good and merciful that He withholds judgment and pours out mercy, though it's undeserved. In 1660, William Gurnall expressed his belief that *"the greatest miracle in the world is God's patience and bounty to an ungrateful world."* People look at the Old Testament and say, *"Ah, what a brutal God. He turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. He bids Abraham to offer his son on an altar as a sacrifice. He sends snakes to bite disobedient Israelites. He causes the ground to swallow up certain people. He sends His servant Elijah to bring down fire from heaven and wipe out a hundred soldiers, and He has bears come out of the woods and shred young men who spoke evil of the prophet Elisha. He seems to choose favorites, Jacob over Esau. He hardens Pharaoh's heart and sends plagues on Egyptians. He commands the extermination of every man, woman, and child among the Canaanites. What kind of a God is this?"* The fact that the man lives another day is evidence of God's goodness. Sinners get used to goodness. They become comfortable with goodness. They become comfortable with kindness and grace. And all they can see is something that appears to be an unjust act—way too severe, almost whimsical, almost arbitrary. Our perception of God as cruel or unjust stems from our ignorance of our own sinfulness and reluctance to accept His provision. He has made provisions to rescue us from His justice and bring us into eternal bliss, namely the grace of the gospel of Christ and the cross. Sin should produce death—instantaneous death. God doesn't owe us life. Any sin brings death, and it can come at any moment. God gives life freely to man for the purpose of showing His kindness in the face of man's cosmic treason, and He has every right at any point to take existence back from any sinner in an act of just punishment. However, God is so kind and merciful that He sent His Son into the world to take the punishment for all who will repent and come to Him. He is patient, but He has provided more than just patience; He has provided a sacrifice in our place. We have become so accustomed to receiving mercy, to committing sins without immediate consequences, and to misusing grace, goodness, and kindness that we mistakenly perceive the appearance of justice as injustice. We would never tolerate the insubordination and rebellion that God tolerates. His patience is much greater than ours, so sinners abuse his kindness. We feel offended if God is not merciful, only because we don't understand what we really deserve. But there will come a time when His patience runs out. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-400\)](http://GTY.org) – **Abusing the Goodness of God** – [TOC](#)

Day 524

Effective Attitudes

When your focus is solely on Christ, He becomes everything. His kingdom, cause, and purpose are all you live for. To make disciples, you must begin by being available and be a worshiper. The next is submission. We could even use the word *"participation."* Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, *"All authority has been given to me in heaven and earth,"* which is another way to say he is king. King over all kings. Sovereign over all sovereigns. He is in charge—absolutely in charge. Therefore, He calls us to submit and participate in His kingdom. Jesus has the freedom to do exactly what He

wants, when He wants, how He wants, with what He wants, and to whomever He wants. The statement, then, is intended to establish who is in charge. He is king; He is authority; we submit to that authority; and we participate in the unfolding of His kingly purpose. He is Lord. He is sovereign authority over heaven and earth, and that means all of us. So what are the necessary ingredients for effective evangelism? First of all, to be available, to be present. Secondly, we should be filled with awe, wonder, and a heart of worship. Thirdly, to be submissive and eager to participate in the purposes of the great King of all kings. Those are His terms, and that's where you begin. You don't evangelize the world in a vacuum. You don't make disciples on a whim. It's the overflow of these three great spiritual attitudes: availability, worship, and submission. Show me a willing, worshipful, humble heart, and I'll show you an instrument that God will use. Many of us are caught in the inane trivia of the world, spending our time, life, talent, energy, money, and resources on stuff that will burn and wondering why God doesn't use us to make disciples. We need to take a step back and begin with these attitudes. The first step towards correction is to examine your heart. Do you have a willing heart? Are you available? Are you there, listening to the voice of God? Communing with Him? Hearing Him speak through the Spirit? Do you have a worshipful heart? Do you have a humble heart, submitting to the privilege of sharing in His kingdom? A fourth attitude is obedience. Verse 19 says, *"Go therefore."* It's saying this: If you're available, if you're worshipful, and if you're submissive, therefore go. And here we come directly into contact with obedience. This verse contains a command. The command is to make disciples. How do you make disciples? By going, baptizing, and teaching. That's the simple structure. Going he says, is very obvious. How can you make disciples of all nations if you yourself are not going? The assumption is that they aren't coming; you're going. So we start with availability, worship, submission, and obedience. And we make disciples the way the Lord told us to, with effective attitudes. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-66\)](http://GTY.org) – [Reaching the World](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 525

Christians Tell the Truth

Paul gives us a general statement in Ephesians 4:17 to 24. And his general statement is simply this: Christians are to be different. You do not walk as the Gentiles or the heathens do (verse 17). You don't walk in the blindness, the darkness, the hardness of heart, the insensitivity, the lasciviousness, the uncleanness, and the greediness. You're different. In Christ, you put off the old man (verse 22). In verse 23, you put on the new man. That's general. You're putting on a new lifestyle, a new walk, a new pattern of living. So he gave those generalities in chapters 1 to 3, based on who you are. And Chapters 4 to 6 tell you how to live. You put off the old; you put on the new. But then he gets very specific in verse 25. *"Wherefore put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."* So first of all: you exchanged lying for speaking truth. The Bible makes it very clear that liars go to hell. Conversely, it's true that people going to heaven are not liars. Lying is not characteristic of a believer. Yes, there may be times when we sin and fail, but there's no way you can look at your life and see a constant flow of lies and find any biblical basis for believing you're a Christian, because hell is reserved for those

who lie. Therefore, if you consistently lie, if your life is filled with lies, and if you struggle to deal with the truth, you are indicating that the devil is your source and hell is your destination. Regardless of your claims, religious beliefs, or the frequency of your church attendance, you will not be a part of God's Kingdom, as liars do not enter heaven. People who go to heaven aren't liars. One of the chief characteristics of our human lifestyle today is lying. Do you realize that our entire world system is based on lies? We're to put away lying; we're to be different in that sense. It's incredible that people lie about the little things and the big things. It's simply a way of life. It stems from a depraved nature. It lies because it's of its father, the devil, who is the father of lies, who has developed a system of lies. All religious systems, apart from the truth of Christianity, are a pile of lies. Lies, lies, and more lies. Satan lies about life, death, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, heaven, and hell; he lies about what's good and what's bad. Everything, the whole thing, is based on lies. When he creates a religious system, he incorporates a sliver of truth to make it seem okay. It's like the clock that doesn't work; it's right twice a day, and that's all. The entire economic system in which we live is based on lies. Our government lies to us all the time. That's just the way it is in our world. But Christians tell the truth. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1930\)](http://GTY.org) – [Principles of New Life – TOC](#)

Day 526

Is Salvation by Grace or Works?

2017 was the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, a year full of celebrations of the Protestant Reformation. Yet, the majority of Protestants surveyed believe salvation is achieved through faith and works. That's not a small error; it's a huge one. Why? Because those who place their trust in works of any kind, whether ritual, moral, or ethical, the outcome is only damnation. And for anybody who preaches that, there is a pronounced curse. Yet you don't find many preachers today who condemn those who advocate for faith and works. When was the last time you heard anybody declare a curse on the Roman Catholic system of the pope or any other works system? Where's the courage of our convictions? In this age, which demands acceptance and tolerance, we have lost our courage. So Paul wants to help us understand how urgent it is. In Galatians chapter 5, he gives his final defense of justification by faith, which is experiential or practical, because of the power of the Spirit is made evident in a truly regenerated believer. If you're in Christ, you're being led by the Spirit, and you're seeing the fruit of the Spirit. So why is Paul making such a big fuss about false teachers pushing circumcision? Doesn't it have some symbolic meaning? It does, and here's why: Procreation is the clearest manifestation of human depravity. You will never fully understand how profoundly sinful we are unless you understand that we produce only sinners. We just produce sinners, who in turn produce more sinners. Because we are so internally corrupt, that simple rite on that very part of the human body where sinners are basically conceived was a declaration by God that said, *"You have a sin problem that is so profoundly deep that it's the very essence of your nature; and you need a cleansing equally profound."* It was a symbol of that utter wretchedness that shows up in reproduction. But it was only an outward sign. It never brought salvation to anyone, nor did any other ritual. Bulls and

goats' blood did not save anyone. The Mosaic ritual of circumcision had no righteous merit; it had no saving value. Circumcision was just this painful realization that you needed cleansing at a profound heart level. It was only a symbol. So Paul is going to help us to understand that you can't push it past that and make it something necessary for salvation any more than you can make baptism necessary for salvation, or any other rite or ceremony. And so he says, *"It was for freedom that Christ set us free from those externals."* Those were the shadows; Christ is the substance. He says, *"If you think there is any merit in circumcision, you just made Christ useless."* Therefore, you must choose between a religion of law and works and a religion of grace and faith, and no hybrid is acceptable. If you add anything to Christ, you lose him. So where is this doctrine being preached today? Unfortunately, it's only being preached by a minority of Protestants who understand Scripture, like the Apostles did, that salvation is by grace alone and not by works. Repent and believe! GTY.org (SC18-3) – [The Importance of Doctrinal Courage](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 527

True vs. False Peace

Divine peace only comes to those who believe. However, there is a kind of false peace that you see in people, and they will defend it. This false peace exhibits the following characteristics: It has confidence that all is well, but the confidence is based on conceit, not fact. It is based on pride, not truth. It is not a peace that comes from an understanding of their true condition, but rather a peace that comes from their conceited assessment of themselves as worthy. It is the peace of presumption. It is the peace that says, *"I'm okay; I'm a good person; God surely will take me to heaven; I know everything is going to work out in the end; I'm sure it's all going to be fine."* It's the peace of pride. It's the peace of conceit. It's the peace of ignorance. It's the peace of the stupefied conscience, as Thomas Watson called it. It's a delusion. The second aspect of an unregenerate man's peace is that it separates from what God has united. Simply stated, God joins peace to holiness. Holiness and peace are two sides of the same coin; they are back-to-back. You cannot have peace without holiness. And in Psalm 85:10, the Bible puts it this way: *"Righteousness and peace have kissed each other,"* they have fused. The foolish, boasting man, according to Deuteronomy 29:19, says, *"I have peace even though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart."* In other words, he's living under the illusion that you can separate what you are from your condition before God; you can't. The wicked are sinful and vain, and yet they think all is well between them and God. It's not. What a delusion. You might as well try to suck health out of poison as to suck peace out of sin. You're not going to find it there. There's another component about this false peace. It cannot pass the tests of life. In fact, whatever this false peace is, it is easily shaken. It is severely shaken at the least trouble. And it leaves people in despair. On the other hand, true peace, that deep-down confidence that all is well between us and God, when it is tested, is made stronger. False peace tested is made weaker. Therefore, true peace welcomes trials. It embraces the cross of life. The false peace the world has is based on conceit and ignorance, separated from holiness, and untested. Only God can give true peace, and He gives it only to the redeemed. It becomes the fundamental possession of every child of God. Paul said in

Romans 5:1, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God."* It comes to the justified. It's that peace that God gives to His own, that deep-down confidence that all is well with our soul. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(53-17\)](http://GTY.org) – **Peace in Every Circumstance** – [TOC](#)

Day 528

After Darkness – Light!

Jesus said in John 8:12, *"I am the Light of the world; whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life."* However, there's a problem. And John 3 identifies the problem, *"Men loved darkness rather than Light because their deeds are evil."* They love the darkness because they love the evil deeds that constitute it. Therefore, the darkness accumulates from one generation to the next. That's why the Bible says evil men will grow worse and worse. It's accumulated. So here we are, two thousand years after the Light arrived, and the world is as dark as it was before He came. We are a generation that has seen the fall of the Christian West. We have witnessed the collapse of this nation and the decline of Christian influences in the West, and now we find ourselves in a new era of human history that parallels the period before the arrival of Christ. This is a neopagan world. Its characteristics are precisely what they were in ancient Rome and Greece before the Light arrived. Allow me to provide you with a brief overview of history. The gospel arrived, brought the Light, it flourished in the West, and, as you are aware, spread to other parts of the world. But the Fall and the encroaching darkness began to be dominant in two ways: the corruption of the Roman Catholic system, particularly the papacy, and the corruption of royalty. That is, the people who wielded the power were corrupt. They were corrupt in the Roman Catholic system, and any reading of history will show you that; and they were corrupt in their monarchies all over the West. Corruption in high places was rampant. That corruption did not necessarily overturn the power of monarchs, the power of the Roman Catholic system, or the power of the Pope. What happened was the monarchs used lethal power to control people, and the papacy did exactly the same thing. And by the time you get to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, you have the outbreak of rebellion against all of that, which we would include the Reformation, and particularly the Enlightenment. The Reformers legitimately rebelled against autocratic monarchs and Roman Catholicism's corruption. And because there is always a faithful remnant and a genuine church of Jesus Christ, it blossomed and flourished in a fresh, new way under the influence of the Reformers, known as the Protestant Reformation. A Protestant is a Christian who belongs to one of the many branches of Christianity that developed out of the Protestant Reformation, which began in the 16th century as a protest and rejection to medieval Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. The Reformation rescued the gospel from darkness. These words capture the driving force of the Reformation: *"After darkness, light!"* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(49-30\)](http://GTY.org) – **From Darkness to Light** – [TOC](#)

Day 529

The Truth of Regeneration

Salvation is not gained by those who try harder or by those who live better. Salvation is not gained by those who become more moral, more religious, take religion to its highest level, or forsake certain vices. No, nothing a person does can bring them into the kingdom of God. Only those who are born again from above can enter the kingdom of God. The kingdom of salvation opens its doors only to those who abandon all human effort as a means of salvation, who cease trying to earn their way in and literally are born from above by the power and will of God. Let's look at the sinner's worry. Nicodemus is a Pharisee. Pharisees were literally archetypal hypocrites. In fact, Jesus condemned them. Nicodemus rose to prominence in academia and biblical knowledge, earning him the title of *"the teacher."* But on the inside, he knows he is not in God's kingdom. He has no assurance that his eternal soul belongs to God. He lacks the assurance of forgiveness for his numerous transgressions and sins, the most common of which is his hypocrisy. The greatest of which is his rejection of the way of salvation, which was always by faith and grace and penitence, and not his works. So he is a hypocrite. He has no relation to God, no place in the kingdom, no assurance of forgiveness, no hope of heaven, and he knows all that because the spirit of a man knows what's in a man. So he comes to Jesus, and he wants to know how to get into the kingdom. And Jesus says to him, *"If you want to enter the kingdom, you've got to be born again."* Only those who are born again can enter the kingdom of God, the realm of salvation. Which is to say, *"Nothing you've ever done makes any contribution."* And in that one statement, He shatters to bits all the stained-glass ideas of religion, and He demolishes all the illusionary notions of religion. All religious and moral works are useless and impotent, providing no means for a man to enter the kingdom. This is the truth of regeneration. It is based on the idea that man's greatest efforts are futile, and that neither our moral deeds nor our religious practices can satisfy or please God. Ephesians 2 says, *"You're [born] dead in trespasses and sins."* Ephesians 4, *"You're [born] cut off from the life of God."* This is a dead man, a blind man, an ignorant man, a hopeless man, and on top of that, a hypocrite. From there, you can't get to God's kingdom. Unless you're born again and have another birth that comes like your first birth from above, you cannot enter God's kingdom. God created you physically; now He needs to create you spiritually. This introduces to us the truth of regeneration. You must be born again (spiritually) to enter the kingdom of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-12\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Blueprint for Being Born Again** – [TOC](#)

Day 530

Fleecing the Flock

If you have a television, you have been exposed to the prosperity gospel, the word of faith, the name it and claim it, and the health and wealth movements. These are all fraudulent schemes designed to enrich the individuals who promotes them, at the expense of everyone else who falls for their deception. People in those movements use this scheme as a means to accumulate

wealth. People like Benny Hinn, Marilyn Hickey, Frederick Price, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland, John Hagee, Robert Tilton, Coontz, Roberts, Hagin, and Paula White are just a few of the hucksters. They all claim that every so-called "Christian" has the personal, divine power to recreate life's realities into exactly what he or she wants. It's all theirs. And you use the name of Jesus like a genie. When you rub the magic lamp, Jesus emerges as a genie, eagerly awaiting the activation of a person's sovereign faith to grant their desires through the force of attraction. And they do this in the name of Jesus Christ! It's not just a lie; it's a lie that preys on those who are desperate. So it's a predatory lie. It's for predators who want to become rich at the expense of disappointed and troubled people. Joel Osteen is the latest version of this mind-creating pantheistic heresy. He has the largest church in America. In his book, Michael Horton wrote, *"Osteen has achieved the dubious success of making the name it and claim it teaching of Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn mainstream."* He has brought it into the mainstream! Let me be blunt. Joel Osteen is a pagan religionist, legalist, and quasi-pantheist who uses Jesus Christ as a footnote to satisfy critics and give him access to Christians so he can fleece the flock. He believes that men save themselves by virtue of their inherent power. He has a definitive book called *Your Best Life Now*. He says that anyone can achieve all of his dreams through faith and words. You want health, wealth, happiness, and success? You want a new car, a new house, a new job, a new wife? Whatever it is, you literally can speak it into existence. By the way, this is only your best life if you're going to hell. If you're going to heaven, this is not your best life. Therefore, for those who adhere to his teachings, he is correct in suggesting that this could potentially be their most fulfilling life. Let me quote him: *"If you develop an image of success, health, abundance, joy, peace, and happiness, nothing on earth will be able to hold those things from you."* That's the law of attraction. Joel Osteen says, *"Believe, visualize, speak out loud, and your words release your power, giving life to whatever you want."* In other words, God's not sovereign; you're sovereign. This is hyper-Pelagianism. At this point, we recognize the real source of Joel Osteen's religion, as well as that of all the other hucksters. He is a mouthpiece for Satan. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(TMU290\)](http://GTY.org) – **Rejecting Heresy About God the Father** – [TOC](#)

Day 531

Salvation Requires Atonement

Following their expulsion from the garden, Adam and Eve believed in the salvation God had promised, as well as in the Savior that would come. They believed the command, *"Be fruitful and multiply; you're going to have offspring,"* which incorporated repentance. They had to turn from believing Satan to believing God. They had to turn from trusting the Devil to trusting the Creator. Their attitude toward Satan was dramatically changed. It is evident that Adam and Eve were once believers in God. And then they had become believers in Satan. However, since he named his wife *"life,"* they have returned to believing in God, His word, and anticipating the fulfillment of His promise that the Redeemer would come through his wife. Here's the essential nature of faith: It has a repentant element: you turn from believing liars and lies to believing God and the truth. And this is where we see the gospel of salvation. There is a promise that someone will come and

crush Satan's head. He will be a human being and He will come from Eve, because Eve will produce humans. So now they believe God; they don't believe Satan. Their salvation requires faith. They believed all that God had said and today it's the same for us. We are to believe all that God has said—far more than Adam and Eve knew in the garden. We know the full story, don't we? Revelation is now complete because we have the entire Old and New Testament. But it's not enough just to have faith; that's on man's side. What about God's side? Salvation on God's side requires atonement. This brings us to our second point of discussion. Salvation requires atonement. God cannot simply accept your faith unless He has made a provision for it to bring redemption, reconciliation, and rescue. So we read in Genesis 3:21: *"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them."* This shows the sovereign initiative. This is God fulfilling His divine purpose. The unworthy couple deserved only death, but God immediately acts to show them that He has a rescue plan for them and will provide an atonement for their sins. God is gracious, and God acts in a gracious, compassionate, merciful way for the shameful couple. Therefore, God made garments from animal skins for Adam and his wife. Why? Their innocence had given way to evil thoughts, and they now felt shame by their nudity. The main point is that God provided for man's physical clothing to cover his shame. This is an act of mercy on God's part, as well as a symbol of God's desire to cover our spiritual shame with His provision. Therefore, man's responsibility of having faith is not enough. Salvation on God's side requires atonement. Repent and believe! GTY.org (81-26) – **A Foreshadowing of Redemption** – [TOC](#)

Day 532

Redeemed from What?

What were we redeemed from? We were redeemed from God's judgment. We were redeemed from the hand of the God to whom the price was paid. It was God who had to be satisfied. We had to be redeemed from the hand of God as our judge because we had been placed into His hands by our sins, transgressions, and iniquities. Therefore, God redeemed us from sin, judgment, and hell. Peter gets even more specific. What defines that sin? In 1 Peter 1:14, he gives us four insights. *"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours."* In regard to sin, the first thing we have been redeemed from is lust. That means the strong, overwhelming, compelling desire for evil and sin. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—this is what dominates us. As a result, our redemption from sin frees us from the dominance of lust and sinful imagination. The second thing we are redeemed from is ignorance. Ephesians 4 says, *"We are alienated from the life of God. We are in darkness and ignorance."* As a result, God has redeemed us from the judgment He imposed on us for living lives entirely consumed by lust and enmeshed in darkness and ignorance. There's a third way that Peter defines our former life: 1 Peter 1:18, *"Being redeemed from your futile way of life."* Futile means empty, vain, pointless, powerless, valueless, useless—your useless life. Why is it useless? Because any life is useless if it isn't lived to the glory of God. For His glory, God created us all in his image. And any life that is not lived to the glory of God is useless, and in that sense, hell. It is the eternal dump for wasted and useless lives. Verse 18 redeems us from a fourth aspect of sin,

the *"futile way of life inherited from your forefathers."* What is that? Tradition. Every society, culture, and every family has inherited some form of religion. Man is a worshiper, and he will happily worship anyone but the true God and in any way but the true way. Man is inveterately religious, and the world has always been filled with false religions that pass down from generation to generation, giving them a kind of historical legitimacy. Even though they are lies and deceptions, they collect ceremonies, rituals, and descriptions that all give them a sense of reality, and they accumulate millions of people who defend, proclaim, and acknowledge them. However, the spread of all false religions only strengthens the bondage. So this is the bondage among all men; they are bound by their own lusts, ignorance, uselessness, and lying traditions. As a result, God, the judge, binds them and imprisons them until the moment of their execution. Therefore, when the question is asked, *"From what have we been redeemed?"* It is bondage to sin and judgment and hell. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-433\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Infinite Value of Redemption – TOC**

Day 533

The Mercy of Ministry

Paul, first of all, endured everything that he endured because he saw the glory of the gospel and he saw it from a personal viewpoint. But Paul also saw ministry as a form of mercy. In 2 Corinthians 4:1, he says, *"Since we have this ministry, as we received mercy."* There are some people who believe they have earned the right to preach the gospel, represent the gospel, and proclaim the gospel. Let me tell you something. I'm not worthy. You're not worthy. None of us is worthy to proclaim this gospel. It is a mercy that we're allowed to do this. Listen to the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1:12: *"I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, who strengthened me because He considered me faithful, putting me in to the ministry, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor, yet I was shown mercy."* Do you know why I'm in the ministry? Because God is merciful. I don't have a right to do this. I haven't earned this. People might say, *"Well, you've been to seminary."* That wouldn't do it. Or, *"Oh, you have a communication gift."* That wouldn't do it. The very fact that I can stand here and open the Word of God and proclaim the glorious gospel of Christ is a mercy to an unworthy sinner, and the elevation of this is so staggering. The privilege is so overwhelming. Here's the good news: It wasn't my strength that earned this right, and it isn't my weakness that forfeits it. It's a mercy. I don't deserve it. God gives it to me as a mercy. And in spite of my failures and my weakness, He continues to give me this mercy. And because I understand the ministry as a mercy, I don't have a lot of expectations for what I'm able to accomplish. I hear about pastors who have burnout. Burnout is a thing that happens to people who don't get their expectations met. They say, *"I deserve better than this. You can't do this to me. Things aren't working out. I shouldn't be treated this way."* People get burned out in ministry. They get warped. They get weary of well-doing because they have unrealistic expectations of what they think they deserve because they're qualified, because they're prepared, or because they work hard. The truth is, every waking day of my life and your life that the Lord gives us the opportunity to proclaim His gospel, it was nothing

but a mercy. What a mercy that I am able to do this—to get up in the pulpit every Sunday, as I have for well over 50 years. Is there a greater privilege than this? Is there a greater honor than this for an unworthy servant? Paul never got over that. He never got over the glory of the gospel and the mercy of ministry. Nor should we. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM11-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Glorious Gospel** – [TOC](#)

Day 534

They Were Right!

Everything is upside-down, turning criminals into heroes and demonizing the real heroes. How did we get here? How did we get so twisted? We need the truth, and that truth is in God's word. It's neither my responsibility nor my interest to give you any human opinion, mine or anyone else's, but you do need to hear from God. To help you understand who's to blame, look at Romans 3:10–18. Here we have a summary of human nature. *"There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside; together they have become useless; there is none who does good; there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they keep deceiving; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their paths; and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."* That's a pathology that would make a sensible psychologist to go and get a job at a gas station. That's what you're dealing with; good luck. These verses contain three aspects. There is character; there is conversation; and there is conduct. Here is the definition of character: *"None righteous, not even one."* No one is righteous, no one is holy, no one but God. That's why you have to have an imputed righteousness that comes from God through Christ. You have to be given the righteousness of God to be acceptable to God because there's none righteous, not even one human being other than our Lord. The Bible then transitions from character to conversation. Verse 13: *"Their throat is an open grave."* When they open their mouths, there is a stench of death, like a filthy, putrid, open grave. Verse 14: *"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."* Deceptive, poisonous cursing. This is the mouth of humanity. Then, verse 15 discusses their conduct. *"Their feet are swift to shed blood."* Humans are murderous. I hear people saying that black lives matter, and they do as much as any other life. But if they matter so much, how is it that Planned Parenthood can support Black Lives Matter when there are a thousand little black lives being aborted every day? That's a Holocaust. But are you surprised at what's going on with this being the pathology of humankind? All you have to do is let them do it, and they will. All you need to do is release the restraints, as this is the inherent nature of the unredeemed human heart. That's why fear of God is the greatest restraint. Our American founding fathers knew this. They knew that if they wrote a Constitution that depended on people having moral behavior and doing good, they would have to attach it to God. Therefore, they wrote about the concept of God, the idea of one nation under God, inalienable rights granted by God, and the idea of being answerable to God. Why? Because they understood that without a fear of God, the beast would be

uncontrollable. And they were right! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-80\)](#) – **Who's to Blame for the Riots?** – [TOC](#)

Day 535

Who Are the Truly Wise?

According to Scripture, no matter how much knowledge someone has, fools reject God, worship themselves, and mock the whole notion of sin. As a result, fools possess a fourth characteristic: they corrupt others. Proverbs 15:2 says, *"The mouth of fools spouts folly."* Proverbs 1:7 says, *"They despise wisdom and instruction,"* and they make sure that their disdain for it is known by all those around them. This essentially describes the entire human race. We are all fools born into this world, and that foolishness shows up in hating God, worshiping ourselves, mocking sin, and corrupting others. However, divine wisdom has come into this world to rescue fools. Proverbs is the book of wisdom, and it begins by personifying wisdom as if wisdom is a person speaking. Chapter 1:20 says, *"Wisdom shouts in the street; she lifts her voice in the square; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the gates in the city she utters her sayings: 'How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?'"* God says, *"Look, I put wisdom in the world. It's crying out from the Scriptures; it always has. And men don't hear it; they refuse. They neglect divine counsel."* And God says in Proverbs 1:28–29, *"The day will come when I will laugh at your judgment. They will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me, because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord."* This is a characterization of humanity: fools who refuse knowledge. *"Fools die,"* says Proverbs 10:21, *"for lack of understanding."* And when it says they die, it doesn't just mean they die physically; it also means they die spiritually and eternally. The irony in all of this is that fools think they're wise. Proverbs chapter 1 ends in verse 33: *"But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil."* Look, you can be the most educated person in the world. You can have all the degrees from elite institutions and PhDs, but if you don't know God, reject God, worship yourself, mock sin, and corrupt others, you're a fool. You may profess to be wise, but you are a fool. So what defines a fool? First Corinthians 1:18 says, *"The word of the cross"—the gospel—"is foolishness to those who are perishing."* Scripture is clear: anybody who rejects the gospel is a fool. And if you refer to the gospel as foolishness, you are the ultimate fool. On the other hand, wise people believe in the true God and come to Him through Christ. It's the people who have come to Christ who are the truly wise people. Why? Because they possess the mind of Christ, as revealed in Scripture. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-77\)](#) – **Divine Wisdom for the Family** – [TOC](#)

Day 536

The Attacks of the Rejectors

Regarding Jesus' second coming and the end of the universe, Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:3-4, *"In the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep (died), all things continue just as they were from the beginning of creation.'"* In this text, there are three attacks on Christ's second coming. 1. The attacks of the rejectors. 2. The attack from immorality. 3. The attack from uniformity. Let's look at the attacks of the rejectors. The *"Mockers"*—use skepticism, sarcasm, and ridicule. The attacks of ridicule can make it challenging for many Christians to maintain their hope for Christ's return, especially if they are ignorant and subject to ridicule. Unfortunately, some individuals who identify as Christians may ridicule the concept of the second coming or completely avoid it all together. So Paul starts by saying, *"Look, you have to expect people to mock the Second Coming; you have to expect that."* Christians need strong confidence in the Lord's return. We need it to survive. We need it to make it through the chaos and insanity of this life. We need to know there's something better coming, and the attacks of those who mock and scoff at the thought of Christ's return should not shake our confidence. By the way, *"the last days"* began when Christ arrived, and the last days are the days between His first coming and His second coming. Throughout that entire period of redemptive history, there will be mockers who will come and ridicule the idea that Jesus is returning. And if you haven't experienced that ridicule, it may be because you haven't told anybody that's what you believe. However, any of these supposed elite scientists involved in this climate nonsense would laugh you to scorn over the idea that Jesus was coming back and doing what the Bible says is going to happen to this universe. This is nothing new; mockers have been prevalent throughout all of redemptive history since Christ's first coming. They take advantage of those who doubt, and they take advantage of those who are ignorant. This is the attacks of the rejectors. And as your pastor, I don't want them to take advantage of you. I don't want you to get caught up in this insanity with regard to trying to protect the planet. I want you to understand that in order to live your life in light of this reality, you must have the hope in Jesus Christ's return that He expects you to have. Therefore, as Peter says, expect the attacks of the rejectors. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-125\)](http://GTY.org) – **Reserved for Fire**
– [TOC](#)

Day 537

Authentic Preaching

Let's talk about the lasting legacy of the Puritans. We know how important it is to sustain their influence into the next generation. We inherited this legacy as stewards, and it's our responsibility to safeguard the Puritan legacy and ensure its transmission to the next generation. How do we do that? The good news is that we have the same commitment to Scripture that they did, and that's where it all begins. Michael Svigel, in his book titled *RetroChristianity*, posed a question: *"If the church fathers, the Protestant Reformers, or the Puritans were to show up at your church, would they worship or would they run?"* He also introduced a new word to me: *"Metrodoxy."* He defines it this way: *"trendy faddish practices of contemporary megachurches and wannabes in*

metro areas who value personal fulfillment, contemporary music, innovative technology, culturally based messages drawing largely on secular thinking, corporate leadership, sociologically driven motivation, and personal promises." That's Metrodoxy. He sums it up with an illustration. He writes, "Sadly, the beautiful symphony of classic Christianity has become increasingly difficult to discern in the carnival atmosphere of one-man bands, competing orchestras, and amateur wannabes who all believe they can play God's original song better than the fathers, the Reformers, and the Puritans. The problem? An increasing number of either arrogant or ignorant evangelical pastors and teachers have never learned how to read the original sheet music. The results? The new renditions of Christianity can be likened to amateur musicians performing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on ukuleles and missing half the notes. This generation of evangelicals desperately needs to recover the magnificence of Puritan preaching and theology." He went on to say, "It only takes one negligent generation to forget the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the entire history of the church." Preaching today needs a massive overhaul, and if we are to preserve the legacy of the Puritans into this generation and beyond, it has to start with preaching, because that is the most defining aspect of the Puritan influence. It must understand that core doctrines must never change, and new opinions must never become core doctrines. First Corinthians 4:6 cautions against deviating from the written word. Puritanism was, above all else, a Bible movement. And it all rose out of the strong conviction they had with regard to the inspiration, authority, perspicuity, and sufficiency of Scripture. Their high view of Scripture and God defined them the most. They handled Scripture in a way that puts all of us to shame. They did deeper textual analysis than most preachers today, and they did it right. William Perkins, in his book *The Art of Preaching*, gave four principles for biblical, theological exposition: "Read the Scripture distinctly. Give the sense of an understanding of the Scripture, comparing Scripture with Scripture. Collect profitable points of doctrine out of the text. Apply the doctrines rightly understood to the lives of the people in plain, simple language." That's a wonderful summary. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, "That is true, authentic preaching." Sadly, that type of preaching today is extremely rare. Repent and believe! GTU.org (PC22-2) – **The Enduring Legacy of the Puritans – TOC**

Day 538

What's the Problem?

The Bible is unmistakably clear about human nature. There is no question; all people are sinners. They may not be as bad as they could be, nor are they as bad as each other, but they are all sinners nonetheless. There is not a single exception according to Scripture. Every person is born in sin. Parents pass on the sin nature to their offspring. It goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. When Adam and Eve fell, their disposition changed. And then everything that's come from Adam and Eve—every human that's ever been born in the history of the world—has been born a sinner, passed down from the original parents. You want proof? Everybody dies. Not only does everyone die, but they also suffer from illnesses and encounter difficulties. But everyone dies. The Old Testament says this: "The soul that sins, it shall die." The New Testament says, "The wages of sin

is death." Babies in the womb die. Millions of them are aborted. Infants just born die—die in a crib; die in the safety of a family home. Little children die—die from accidents, die from illnesses. And these little ones die before they have committed any willful transgression against God—before they have consciously violated the law of God or committed iniquities or sins. Why do they die? The reality of death is in the fabric of humanity. They die because the principle of death resides in every human being because we're all sinful. All of us die because we have inherited the universal sin nature from our sinful parents, which can cause death even before conscious sin occurs. Universal death attests to the reality of universal sin. We all die. We're living in an incredible explosion of technology. The world advances scientifically, technologically, intellectually, educationally, and materially. But all of that advancement doesn't cancel death and does not overcome the massive force of sin in every human heart. In fact, as we advance, sinners gain more and more devastating weapons, and more and more ways to express sinful corruption are available. The deadliest force in the world is not nature—not winds, not rain, not earthquakes, not animals. The most dangerous and deadly force is humans. They can plot evil. They can devise harm. They differ from animals that kill because they are innately designed to kill. That's how the food chain works. Despite their design to give life, humans are remarkably adept at causing death. The Bible says all have sinned. In fact, if you go back to the beginning in the book of Genesis, you read this: *"Now the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The earth was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on earth, and the earth was filled with violence."* We have the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, and by the time you get to chapter 6, all there is in the world is corruption. Therefore, God unleashes a worldwide flood, submerges the human race, leaves behind eight individuals, and then begins the process anew. And what was the result? More corruption. The Bible is clear: we are the problem. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-419\)](http://GTY.org) – **How God Restrains Evil in the World – [TOC](#)**

Day 539

The Clarity of Scripture

Divine truth and sound doctrine require clarity. And according to Psalm 19:8, *"The commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes."* Thus, if the Scripture is clear on all doctrines, it must be clear in itself. In fact, the entire revelation of the Lord is clear, implying that it is radiant and bright. Scripture is clear as to what we must believe. Scripture is clear as to whom we are to believe and in whom we are to believe. Scripture is clear as to what we must do. Scripture is clear as to what we must avoid. Scripture is clear as to what we must fear, what we must worship, and what we must hope for. It is a clear revelation, and therefore it enlightens the eyes. It removes all doubts, misconceptions, prejudices, and lies. It takes away the darkness that obscures the soul from seeing the truth. It gives light, illumination, knowledge, and wisdom. Psalm 119 says, *"Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."* Peter writes that the word of God is a lamp shining in a dark place. The word of God is revelation. It is God revealing truth. All the revealed divine truths come into clear focus. Even for unbelievers, the gospel is clear enough. In

fact, John tells us the purpose of his gospel and therefore the other gospels as well: *"These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and believing have life in His name."* That is to say it is directed at those who don't believe, and it is clear enough for them to know what they should believe. In John 3, Jesus said, *"You will be judged"*—you will be condemned—*"because you believe not."* This assumes that the message is clear even to an unbeliever. When the Bible says, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"* and subsequently explains the significance of His coming, death, and resurrection, that is not obscure even to the darkest soul. When the Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death,"* that is not obscure even to the most pagan mind. Actually, the Scripture and the gospel are so clear as to be violently rejected. Unbelievers know exactly what they're rejecting, just as the Jews knew exactly who they were rejecting and why they were rejecting Jesus. Indeed, the natural man is incapable of comprehending the mysteries of God. That is to say, he cannot understand the rich, deep, spiritual, internal truth, but he bears responsibility for the external knowledge of the revealed truth in Scripture. He possesses sufficient knowledge and understanding of this truth, and his rejection of it condemns him to eternal damnation. Rejectors have a sufficient understanding of what they are rejecting. However, believers, to believe and be saved, can only come to believe the truth internally by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Bible is clear both externally to unbelievers and internally to believers through the work of the Holy Spirit. That's the clarity of Scripture. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(SC20-1\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Shine the Clear Light of Scripture** – [TOC](#)

Day 540

God Deposits the Truth

In the upper room with our Lord and the 11 disciples, Jesus gives them massive, far-reaching, sweeping promises. He promises them a room in the Father's house and an eternal paradise. The promise is that the Lord will come and gather His chosen ones to join Him in the place He has prepared for them. Meanwhile, according to John 14:12 through 14, all of heaven's resources are available right now; all we need to do is ask. And if we ask according to His will and in His name, He will provide. Therefore, He promises heaven to His disciples and all those who will come after them, promising to come and take them there. But in the meantime, all of heaven's resources are available through prayer. Then, He promises that here and now, throughout our lives, and on into eternity, we will enjoy the presence of the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will be with us, says our Lord. We are living Christians who exist in the very presence of the Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity, the Triune God, is our eternal life. It isn't as if He gives us life apart from Himself. The life He gives us—the eternal life He gives us—is Himself. So, heaven is to come, and He will come and take us there. In the meantime, all of heaven's resources are available to us. And even more wonderfully than that, God Himself, in His Triune reality, lives in every believer. And in verses 24 through 26, there is yet another amazing promise. *"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."* The greatest gift that God has ever given the world is the truth—divine revelation, divine truth. The truth about Himself, the truth about us, the truth about

time and eternity, the truth about life and death, the truth about origins and consummation, the truth about judgment, the truth about salvation, the truth about heaven, the truth about hell. This is the greatest gift that God has ever given. In a world rife with liars and lies, the evil one—the arch deceiver—controls the entire world. He employs his deceit through a multitude of fallen angels known as demons, enslaving the entire human race. However, in the midst of all of Satan's deception, the demons' deception, and duped human beings' deception, God deposits the truth in the darkness, blackness, and bleakness of an unregenerate person's ignorant heart. Amazing! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-76\)](#) – **The Illuminating Role of the Holy Spirit** – [TOC](#)

Day 541

The Fathers Lesson Book

The society in which we live has attacked the male role with such devastating force that I really do believe we have sentenced the next three and four generations to tragic experiences of disastrous proportions. Why? Because if one thing is clear in Scripture, it is this: the sins of the fathers are visited upon the third and the fourth generations. What that means is, where you have wicked men in leadership, where you have a decline in the father's role, it takes three or four generations to root out the evil that they produce. I believe that the legacy of this generation of fathers is going to be tragedy upon tragedy in the following generations. In the plan of God, however, that's not the way it's supposed to be. And certainly in the church we should be following that plan; but no matter what may be happening in the society around us, we should be ensuring a righteous generation in the church. We have a responsibility as fathers to our sons, particularly sons who tend to be, for the most part, more rebellious than daughters, because they are the ones given by God leadership roles and capacities. If we faithfully teach our sons, they will, by example and precept, lead the women as well. If there is a plurality of godly fathers in a nation, their influence will extend to the mothers, and similarly, if there are godly sons, their influence will extend to the daughters of the next generation. Therefore, Scripture places a high priority on fathers teaching their sons, thereby raising up a generation of godly leaders. Because God has ordained this, and because God wanted us to be sure that it was followed carefully, God, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gave a manual for fathers to use on their sons, a basic resource book. That book is the Book of Proverbs. This is the lesson book on living that fathers teach their sons. Scripture is clear: as fathers go, so go nations; so go generations; so goes history. And so God took the principles—the basic principles of spiritual living—and packaged them in the 31 chapters that we call Proverbs. A proverb is very simple. It's a principle stated in concise terms. We could say a proverb is wise in content and concise in form. It's a brief, to-the-point, pithy statement for the purpose of instruction so that they might be remembered. What you have in Proverbs is a compilation of these concise, wise statements. This, then, becomes the basic book of truth that fathers use to teach their children, a book of wisdom. If fathers are to raise a generation of godly men who will lead the women to godliness, they must teach the truths that are mandated by God in this father's lesson book on living. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-71\)](#) – **Crucial Lessons for a Wise Father** – [TOC](#)

Day 542

Confessing Our Sins

The true church, the church of Jesus Christ, is the one and only organization where members meet regularly together to acknowledge themselves as miserable sinners. That's certainly a vital part of our church life. The true church of Jesus Christ, in a sense, is obsessed with sin. In fact, I believe the more mature a Christian is, the more mature a church is, and the more obsessed with sin it is. I don't believe you grow spiritually out of that obsession. I believe you grow spiritually into it. Churches that talk only of good things and never or rarely speak about or confess sin are not mature. They're immature. Individuals who talk little about sin and talk mostly about good things are not filled with the attitude of confession and repentance; they are not mature Christians; they are immature. Not holy but usually unholy. Look at the beginning of Psalm 51: *"Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Thy sight."* A shallow, insensitive, immature person would never be able to write Psalm 51. It flows out of the life and pen of one who loves God deeply and hates sin fiercely—even the sin that he sees in his own life. So any person who really knows God in a deep way, who genuinely communes with God, who is truly filled with the Holy Spirit, and who spends time in the Word of God is deeply troubled about his or her sin. And there is a certain obsession about it. He longs to confess, longs to repent, longs to enjoy forgiveness, longs to enjoy restoration. Such a man was King David. David was not a novice in spiritual matters, but rather, he was spiritually mature. A man *"after God's own heart."* He was a man who not only pursued the heart of God but also the will of God. He was a man who hated sin—even his own sin. That's the kind of man we want to lead us into confession. A man who did sin but hated it, a man who was obsessed with his own guilt and wanted deliverance from it. He is the man who can teach us about matters of confession. This entire Psalm bears the mark of deep guilt. It bears the mark of severe remorse over sin. And it reveals the nature of true penitence, true repentance, and true confession. If we want to incorporate true confession into our lives, we must carefully understand it. Therefore, in order to comprehend the significance of confessing our sins, we turn to a Psalm such as this one for guidance. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-78\)](http://GTY.org) – **How to Confess Your Sins – TOC**

Day 543

Christians and Alcohol

The latter half of the book of Ephesians is about the Christian life. Paul talks about what the worthy walk looks like and what kind of life we are to live. At the heart of this worthy walk, at the heart of living a godly life that honors the Lord, is this reality called *"being filled with the Spirit."* Ephesians 5:18 speaks of being filled with the Spirit—not in the sense of filling a glass but of filling

a sail—moved along in the direction that honors God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Parallel to that is Colossians 3:16: *"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."* So, it's having a Word-centered life and thus a Holy Spirit-controlled life; it's moving through life under the power of the Holy Spirit by conformity to the revelation of the Spirit on the pages of Holy Scripture. As we live alongside in our humanity, the supernatural Holy Spirit works in us. Therefore, we are to be passive, being kept filled with the Spirit. We are to yield to the wondrous work of the Spirit as He conforms us to Christ and moves us in the path of obedience. As He frees us from sin, as He attaches us with delight to the law of God and enables us to live righteously, that's how we are to live. Paul then introduces an intriguing contrast: *"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."* Why is that contrast here? Why is the filling of the Holy Spirit contrasted with drunkenness? Because Scripture denounces drunkenness as sin. Drunkenness is associated with unrestrained evil behavior. Here the word is dissipation: recklessness, immorality, a lack of restraint, a loss of self-control. A person who lives that way is designated—in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 10—as a person who cannot, will not, inherit the Kingdom of God. This is behavior characteristic of a non-Christian. We understand that drunkenness leads to unrestrained, evil, dissipated, reckless, irresponsible, and out-of-control behavior, which is sinful and characteristic of non-believers as a way of life, but it shouldn't be at all characteristic of Christians. There are many warnings in the Scripture against drunkenness and the sin of drunkenness. There are also constant calls for self-control, clear-mindedness, and sober-mindedness. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 says, *"Let us keep awake and be sober."* As Christians, we are to be awake, alert, and sober at all times. All drunkenness does is produce debauchery. So we are warned: *"Do not get drunk."* Drunkenness is an altered state of consciousness in which you don't have control; it's the opposite of being sober-minded and self-controlled. For the Christian, it is unthinkable; it's an outright sin, and we are called to avoid it. There is no need for a Christian to drink any alcohol. Drunkenness is the old way of life. We don't live that way anymore. Instead, *"Be filled with the Spirit."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-380\)](http://GTY.org) – [Christians and Alcohol](#) – [TOC](#)

Day 544

Where is Heaven?

The Bible talks about three heavens. Second Corinthians 12:2 says Paul was caught up, in some way, into the third heaven. There are three heavens then being defined. There's atmospheric heaven, and that's discussed in Isaiah 55. The atmospheric heaven refers to the air we breathe, which is immediately surrounding and above us. Then there's the stratospheric heaven—that's where all the planets and all the stars exist. That's Psalm 19:1: *"The heavens declare the glory of God."* So there's the first atmospheric heaven—the air we breathe—and the second stratospheric heaven—above that, into infinity. And then there's the third divine heaven, which is the abode of God. The book of Revelation primarily describes this for us, though other places, such as the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel, also depict it. However, the book of Revelation mentions heaven fifty times. Now, there's a kind of spiritual heaven in the sense that Ephesians 1 says, *"We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies."* And that's

not talking about the actual heaven; that's talking about the deposit of spiritual blessings that come down to us through regeneration from God. But heaven is so connected to God that sometimes it's a synonym for God. God is, in a sense, indistinguishable from heaven. He is heaven; He fills heaven. Therefore, we can discuss either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is also that realm of salvation to which we belong. Thus, since we belong to God, we also belong to heaven. And heaven is the place where God resides. When Scripture talks about heaven, it always says it's up. It's a place, and it is up, as if to say it is out of our realm. So all the language of the Bible is consistent that it's not here. It's somewhere else. It's transcendent; it's elevated; it's up. How far do you have to go before you find heaven? Even if we travel as far as we can, leaving our galaxy and entering the next, and the next, and the next, and passing a billion million stars in every galaxy, we will still never reach heaven. Yet, Jesus is hanging on the cross when the thief beside Him says, *"Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."* And what did Jesus say to him? What's the next word out of Jesus' mouth? Today. *"Today you will be with Me in paradise."* Whoa. How is that possible? If, at the extreme end of our capacity to comprehend our universe, we haven't reached heaven yet, how can you get there today? In fact, the Bible says you can be there in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. That doesn't mean a blink; that means the time it takes for light to flash off your eyeball. That's how fast you get to heaven. So where is heaven? Heaven and our universe coexist in two completely independent realms. That's where heaven is. Repent and believe! GTY.org (RE1505) – **Desiring Heaven Above All Else** – [TOC](#)

Day 545

Knowing Verses Believing

High school is a crucial period in your life, during which you make numerous crucial decisions. Many of you, who belong to a good church, experience a multitude of positive influences during this period. However, as you graduate from high school, it's likely that you will encounter a world of negative influences. That's going to make life tougher. So high school presents an opportune moment for you to make crucial decisions about your future. I hope this weekend at camp will be the crucial time of transformation in your life. This week is a time for a heart examination. Now, the Bible says that saving faith comes by hearing the message—the word concerning Christ, concerning salvation. I'm grateful that many of you know the Lord, and you know you know the Lord, and there's evidence you know the Lord because you see the fruit of it in your life. You love the Lord, you love the Word, and you love the body of Christ—fellow believers. You desire to honor the Lord. You hate the sin that you see in your own life, and you want to grow in grace. However, it's obvious in a group like this that some of you don't know where you are spiritually, and you probably need a clear definition of what must happen for your salvation to be real. I'm not referring to the act of believing in Jesus simply because you've learned about Him. You know His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His second coming. You know about Christ. A lot of people know about Christ. A lot of people talk about Christ. And a lot of people talk about heaven. But as the old spiritual song goes, *"Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't goin' there."* And

everybody talking about Jesus doesn't know Him savingly. So it's essential that you understand what it means to agonize, strive, and enter the narrow gate. It really shouldn't be fuzzy in your mind. You shouldn't be confused about it; that's not helpful. However, the world is teeming with individuals who mistakenly believe they are good and okay. They can't believe for a moment that they're going to go to hell. They say, *"I'm a good person; I'm a spiritual person. I believe in God; I believe in Jesus."* These are the individuals Paul discussed in the 10th chapter of Romans, where he asserted that their zeal for God is not based on knowledge. It's just a zeal for God. It's superficial, and it's even emotional. They feel sentimental about God, they feel good about Him, and they like to sing about Him. A lot of people feel religious. But they have absolutely no hope of entering heaven. So how do you make sure you arrive in heaven? First of all, by believing in Jesus. You have to believe that Jesus is who He says He is and did what the Bible says He did. In other words, it's not just knowing about Jesus; you have to believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus said, *"Whosoever believeth will have eternal life."* Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(RE1506\)](#) – **Heaven: The Future of Christians** – [TOC](#)

Day 546

How Amazing is That?

In Matthew 6:19, Jesus said, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* We're citizens of heaven, right? Therefore, we're to set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Heaven is our real home. We live spiritually in the heavenlies. Therefore, we must ensure that we store our treasure in heaven. How do you do that? What is he talking about, *"treasure"*? He's talking about money. Someone said that if you live to be 80 years old, you will spend 50 of those years thinking about money. Money is a dominating reality in life because it's the commodity with which we live our lives. It takes money to eat, sleep, travel, build relationships, and have a life. Therefore, you simplify your life by making a simple commitment: *"I want to invest my money in heaven. That's where I'm going to be forever. I don't want to accumulate things here; I want to send my money to heaven."* What about your future? Where is your future? It's in heaven. That's where your treasure should be. Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 16:9: *"I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."* He's simply saying this life is going to end; it's temporal. You will not be able to take with you any earthly possessions, earthly fortune, or earthly treasure. So what you want to do is use your wealth and money and make friends who will welcome you when you arrive in heaven. Did you get that? When everything on this earth fails, life ends, and you arrive in heaven, you'll be welcomed there by the friends you purchased with your money. How do you do that? You invest in the kingdom. You invest in the gospel. You invest in the church and use your money to present the gospel. You use your money for the life of the church: missions, evangelism. You use your money to purchase eternal friends. We all understand our calling to witness, which includes sharing the gospel,

proclaiming it, and living it out. We have a responsibility to witness. But you can use your money to purchase friends for eternity. You can use your money to populate heaven. How do you do that? By investing in legitimate kingdom enterprises. Invest in people who are making an impact in the world. Put it in ministries that are reaching around the globe. Put it in missionaries. Put it in the church. This is how you make friends with money who will welcome you into heaven. And once you reach heaven, you'll find citizens eagerly awaiting your arrival, all because you utilized your wealth for the advancement of the gospel. How amazing is that? Repent and believe!

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Day 547

Is Salvation Secure?

Is there assurance of salvation? The answer is yes. We say that with great affirmation because our theology underpinnings tell us that. But there needs to be some biblical data to support that. And the Bible makes it abundantly clear that our salvation is, in fact, secure. John chapter 5, verse 24, may be the single-most monumental statement ever made in the Bible relative to the security of salvation. Jesus said, *"He that hears my Word and believes on Him that sent me has everlasting life and, therefore, shall not come into judgment but is passed from death unto life."* The positive is that *"He that hears my Word and believes on Him that sent me has everlasting life."* You have received everlasting life. How long is everlasting life? Everlasting. But in case there is any doubt, the negative is added: *"And shall not come into judgment,"* which is the other side of it. There's no addendum, no fine print; that's it. So, on the positive side, we have everlasting life; on the negative side, we will never come into judgment. The New Testament repeatedly reiterates both the positive and negative aspects of this. John 3:16 says: *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Then verse 18: *"The one that does not believe is condemned already."* John 6, verse 37 says: *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* In other words, only those whom the Father draws will come, and only those will come whom the Father draws. John 6:38 states, *"For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me, and this is the Father's will who sent me, that out of all that He hath given me, I should lose"—how many?—"none, but raise him up again at the last day."* In other words, all those chosen unto salvation, all those who affirm that salvation by coming to Jesus Christ, will be raised up in the last day. There's no loss. Nobody escapes, nobody's lost, and nobody falls through the cracks. John 6:40 sums it up: *"And this is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone who sees the Son"—and that is with the eye of faith, the eye of true spiritual perception—"and believes in Him will have everlasting life."* And just in case someone might be confused, Jesus then adds, *"And I will raise him up at the last day."* Anyone who ever believes will be raised to the fullness of eternal life in the last days. Scripture is very clear; salvation is secure. That is the promise of the Word of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(DOC-13\)](#) – The Doctrine of Salvation: Assurance – [TOC](#)

Day 548

Exercising Discernment

The contemporary charismatic movement has been a concern to me for many decades. I have addressed this from this pulpit and forty years ago, I did a series on the issues surrounding the charismatic movement. I then wrote a book called *The Charismatics*, and some years later followed with another book called *Charismatic Chaos*. I've done more series and given more attention to that to try to help our people to exercise discernment. *Strange Fire*, my latest book, once again confronts and exposes the Charismatic Movement. When people inquire, "*What's the biggest problem in the church?*" I consistently respond with the same answer: the lack of discernment. The biggest problem in the church is the absence of discernment. If you cannot discern the truth with the Word of God, you risk succumbing to 1,000 heresies. It's like having spiritual AIDS. People who have a deficient immune system can die of 1,000 illnesses. The church can die of 1,000 heresies if it can't exercise discernment. This is always the issue. Part of the responsibility of ministry is the positive side: to instruct with great patience, as Paul said to Timothy. However, the negative aspect of ministry involves using the Word of God to reprove, rebuke, and exhort. Exercising discernment is at the very heart of Christian living because Christian living is a reflection of Christian thinking, and Christian thinking must be attached to sound doctrine, and that's where discernment begins. It's clear that a significant portion of those who profess Christianity lack discernment. My goal is to help you become discerning. We know there are people who are in the charismatic movement who are deceivers, and they know they're deceivers. They are false teachers, and they are well aware of their deceit. The money is their motivation, and they know it. We also know there are people caught up in the movement who are deceived and may not know they are. They are brands that need to be snatched from the burning fire, to borrow the words from Jude. There are also leaders who need to be confronted and exposed, and there are unwitting leaders who need to be helped and encouraged and know the truth. We want to be like the noble Bereans. We want to search the Scripture and see if these things are so, measuring everything against the Word of God. So how big is the problem? There are half a billion professed Charismatics on the planet. To put that in perspective, there are one billion Roman Catholics, and there are 14 million Mormons. With half a billion charismatics, it's a massive issue. I don't think anybody would fault pastors for confronting Mormonism, and they should. We should confront all false views of God, Christ, and salvation. So why is it that Protestants have been so reluctant to confront this massive movement that has captivated over half a billion people? Well, what we aim to accomplish, not only faithfully, lovingly, and compassionately, but also in a straightforward manner, is to assist you in recognizing the issues clearly and exercising discernment. Then you will become a force who can help others to see the light. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TM13-1\)](http://GTY.org(TM13-1)) – **Strange Fire** – [TOC](#)

Day 549

The Eternal Separation

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Our Lord Jesus gives the last of seven parables in Matthew 13. And this one is the climax. It's a parable about judgment and hell. The keynote of the parable is found in verse 50, the furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Our Lord spoke very much and very often about hell. He said many things about the abode of the damned, the wicked, and the rejecters of Christ. But of all of the startling, terrifying things that Jesus ever said, perhaps the most startling was when He said to the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23:33, *"How can ye escape the damnation of hell?"* It seems strange to us to hear words like that coming from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. For we don't associate the Lord Jesus Christ with hell as often as we ought. But He said more about hell than He did about love. And He said more about hell than all the other biblical preachers combined. Therefore, if we are to model our preaching after His, then hell is a major theme for us. The world, you see, is moving toward this. Every human life is moving toward that inevitable hour. Today, at least 5,000 people in the United States alone will die and enter eternity; most of them will go to hell. And this final parable is a severe warning. Our Lord paints a picture in verse 47: *"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea and gathered every kind."* It speaks of an enormous net. Verse 48: *"And when the net was then full, they drew it to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels but cast the bad away."* That's the process of sorting out the good from the bad, and the bad was just thrown away. And the picture becomes very clear in verse 49: *"So shall it be at the end of the age: the angels shall come forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous."* All along in this era, the good and the evil go together, and God tolerates the evil. But the time is coming when He will separate those who know the King, are subjects of the King, and know the Lord Jesus Christ from those who do not. That separation is inevitable, and it's ultimate. That's why verse 47 says, *"The kingdom of heaven is like that net."* Little by little, imperceptibly and silently, that net moves through the sea of time, drawing all men to the shores of eternity for that inevitable separation. That is the principle. And by the time men awaken to what is happening, it's too late. They're already there. They are drawn to the separation. This is a general statement and warning that all in the world are caught ultimately in the net of judgment, to be separated in the end. The kingdom will ultimately engulf them all. Then God, with His angels, will separate those who are His from those who are not. And that separation is eternal. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2304\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Furnace of Fire – 2304** - [TOC](#)

Day 550

How to Start and Finish Strong

In the Christian life, it's really what you do at the beginning that matters. First Peter 1:13 establishes in our minds something about setting direction. *"Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, and fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Peter is saying, start by fixing your direction on meeting Christ. That's your goal. You want to be able to meet Christ at the revelation of Christ, unashamed and bold, hearing, *"Well done, good, and faithful servant."* That's your long-range objective. That's where you want to land your ship. From where you are now, to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed to you, and when He rewards His own. So how do you get there? How can you ensure

the achievement of that goal? Well, the beginning of the verse says, "*Gird your mind.*" That means to pull in all the loose ends of your life. Laying aside whatever sin that easily entangles you to run the race that is set before you. Your mind is not just your intellect but all your faculties. It's a matter of pulling in all the loose ends in all your faculties. Be alert in the mental and spiritual dimensions of your life. He adds this in verse 13: "*Keep sober.*" He's not referring to intoxication, though there are instances when it might apply to alcohol. He's talking about clarity of mind. Sober-mindedness, seriousness. This is characterized by a spiritual steadfastness, self-control, and a balance of priorities. That means a disciplined mind that is not intoxicated by the allurements of the world. In chapter 5, verse 8, he says the same thing again: "*Be sober. Be on the alert.*" Why? "*Because your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*" Therefore, you need moral decisiveness and mental alertness. You can't go through life recklessly overexposing yourself to the sins of this society and the world around you. You cannot overexpose yourself to something toxic without experiencing its effects. Spiritual self-discipline is critical. Pulling in the loose ends of your life, making sure that you think on what is good and holy and just and true. So here are some practical ways to achieve this goal. First, if you want to pull in the loose ends of my life, you have to remember who owns you. You've been bought and purchased by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ with precious blood. Secondly, look back to the covenant of your salvation because the death of Christ brings men into a covenant of obedience. And the entry act of salvation is an act of obedience, because the gospel is a command to repent and believe. Thirdly, recognize all sin as a severe violation of God. When we sin, we sin against God. Fourthly, cultivate spiritually strengthening habits. Invest daily time in reading the Bible, meditating on it, spending time in prayer, and engaging in worship. Now is the time to systematically build your convictions that are going to be the pillars of your life. Because when you genuinely believe in something, it becomes a conviction, and people behave in accordance with their convictions. That's how you start and finish strong. Repent and believe!

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The Truth in Love,

Mark Paul

[TOP](#)