



# 50 Days of Wisdom

Volume 3: Days 101-150

## Introduction:

### Submission in the Present

This is the time for humbling yourself, for serving others, for submissive obedience to your Father in heaven and the rightful authorities He has ordained. Even the Lord Jesus Christ was born under the law at the appropriate time (Galatians 4:4), lived in submissive obedience to His Father (John 4:34; Romans 5:18–19), died a humiliating substitutionary death in the place of sinners (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18), and was then resurrected and glorified (Philippians 2:5–11). So we must also remain humble even under the trials, tribulations, and sufferings which God has wisely determined for us. In His timing, He will lift the humble and submissive believer up out of difficulty and ultimately will exalt him in glory. We ought not to look for that exaltation in the present.

The Holy Spirit calls men to be submissive to the authorities God has put over them, and humility is the footing to which that attitude is anchored. To become proudly rebellious, fight against the Lord's purposes, or judge His providence as unkind or unfair is to forfeit the sweet grace of His exaltation when the trial has fulfilled its purpose (James 1:2–4). It is the Lord Jesus Himself who promised, *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"* (Luke 14:11).

Have you demonstrated the humility that God requires of you as a man? Does a lowliness of mind show itself in the different roles you occupy, whether that be in formal positions of leadership or other influence you have over others? Is it a joy for others to be under your leadership, or a burden? Do you willingly submit to the godly leadership of those whom God has placed over you? These are the questions you must grapple with if you are to be a man of humility.

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Let's pray.

Father, again we thank You for the vividness of Your Word and the practicality of it. It helps us discern from the true from the false. We thank You, God, that the pattern has been set so clearly for us, because we are called to the same thing; just as the congregation as Christian people, we're called to humble faithfulness, uncompromising, persevering, enduring faith. We're called to suffer hostilities and persecution. And it's so important that true preachers manifest these attitudes as Paul does, so that we can see how we are to live as well. And, Lord, we're to be

selflessly sacrificial, not trying to use everyone for our own gain, but being consumed with spending our own lives for the sake of the eternal souls of others. It's no different for us than any. The preacher is to model these things so that we can all follow. We thank You again for this example and this clear word. We ask that You would grant to us these wonderful virtues, that we might be an honor to Your name, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul* – (Servant of God)

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## How to Use This eBook:

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

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

This process yields many benefits:

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

## Additional Notes:

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

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Day 101

## Christian Invincibility

We are looking into the matter of Christian invincibility. It's all about our security in an insecure world. The key to this great confidence is in Romans 8:31, "*If God is for us, who is against us?*" Or better, "*Since God is for us,*" a statement of absolute fact, "*who is against us?*" Since God is for us, no one can successfully be against us, and that expresses the reality of what we're calling Christian invincibility. The Almighty God, the Creator, the Redeemer, who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, unchanging, and who alone is God and has no equal, is for us. He is the Savior of His people, and no one can successfully thwart His saving purpose. God is the Creator of the universe, has no informant, does not seek knowledge, information, or wisdom from anyone. He is self-directed and self-counseling, and he has an infinite and perfect eternal understanding of everything. He learns nothing; no one teaches Him anything. He is the source of justice and knowledge. You could take all of humanity and all of the powers of all the people on earth, and they would amount to absolutely nothing. All of this is to say that there is no other like God; there is no one who can contend with Him. All things created by God are nothing before Him. And God is saying, "*You don't have to be afraid of anything. You belong to me; I am the Creator. I formed you, and I redeemed you.*" He will gather everyone who belongs to Him together. That is the testimony of this Scripture. God is affirming to us that He alone is God and that when He determines to choose a people to make them His own, that cannot be reversed or changed. Since God is for us, who can be against us? Answer? No one, not even Satan himself, can break a relationship with God, and this is the remarkable story of the book of Job. The point of the book of Job is to show that when a man has a relationship with God, it can't be broken, no matter what you do to the man, because the faith that he has is a gift from God, and God gives an everlasting faith. It's an unbreakable relationship. God used what Satan intended for evil for good, making Job a better man, a better worshipper, and an even more blessed man. This was because God took the worst possible scenario, the satanic assault, and used it for Job's good and God's glory. God takes it all and works it together for our benefit. This is our invincibility. There is nothing, then, that can separate us from God's saving love. This is an excellent statement about our security and its extent. It is comprehensive and complete. Just know that no matter what comes into our lives, God is working it together for our eternal good. That is a tremendous promise. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-254\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Recipients of Christian Invincibility** – [TOC](#)

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Day 102

## Who is Your Father?

If you don't have God as your Father, then who is your Father? John 8:44 says, "*the devil.*" And if the devil is your father, he makes no promises and provides no benefits. He's not about doing good in your life; he's about doing evil, so you're on your own. The only good that does come into your life is, essentially, common grace from God. It is God letting the rain fall on the believers and

the unbelievers; it's very temporary, but no unbelieving person can make any claim on God. The unbelieving world has no promises from God, no commitments from God, no pledges from God, and no guarantees from God for anything. That describes life among the unbelievers. It's a battle for bread. It's a battle for survival. It's a dog-eat-dog world. The world lives to acquire material things; they're all about survival. Why? They're dead to God. They're dead to spiritual life. So, because they are spiritually dead, all they have is the physical world. Because they are not children of God and have a father (the devil) who never provides good things, they must rely on their own efforts to reap the meager benefits of God's common grace. They live to survive, ignorant of God, ignorant of God's provision, and unable to lay any claim on God's promise or God's power. Unbelievers feel the full weight of survival. But for believers, God is their Father and He acts in the same way as a father would, providing and protecting you, knowing exactly what you need. All that you need is available to you through God. What are believers worried, afraid, or anxious about? Nothing! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-173\)](http://GTY.org) – **Anxiety-Free Living, Part 2** – [TOC](#)

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Day 103

### **Discontentment is a Sin**

There is what I perceive to be a somewhat pervasive discontent among Christians. Discontentment essentially forms the foundation of our society. The whole idea of advertising is to make you aware that you're dissatisfied. Every commercial you encounter on television, radio, in a commercial magazine, and in the newspaper appeals to your dissatisfaction with your current circumstances. Frankly, Satan's temptations all aim to dissatisfy you with your current situation, your relationships, your possessions, your feelings, and your emotions. Breeding dissatisfaction is what the world does. And sadly, but somewhat predictably, the church catches those ailments. Therefore, a broad view of the church today reveals clear discontentment and dissatisfaction in people's lives, leading to a variety of unintended consequences. For example, the very popular prosperity gospel says that Jesus wants you healthy and wealthy. Jesus wants you to have everything you want. So if you don't have what you want, you're not healthy or wealthy, and that's because you're just not tapping into what Jesus wants you to have. That prosperity gospel will only succeed in a soil of dissatisfaction, where people are demanding this and demanding that and I want this and I want that is the attitude. Fortunately, Philippians chapter 4 speaks to the issue of contentment. The key verse is verse 11, where Paul says, "*I have learned in whatever state I am to be content.*" Content means being able to say, "*I have enough; I'm satisfied.*" However, most people's attitude is that they're really not satisfied, no matter what they have or don't have. For Christians, Psalm 23:1 says, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*" Is this your testimony? Is that the testimony of your heart? The Lord is my shepherd. I have no needs; I have enough. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Christian people really gave that kind of testimony to the watching world? That we had found complete satisfaction and absolute contentment in our God, in the salvation He provides, and in the spiritual resources at our disposal. A satisfied heart should be the experience of every single Christian. Christians should express contentment and

satisfaction, stating that we have everything we need and desire. Why? Because we have the Lord. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-21\)](http://GTY.org) – [Seven Keys to Contented Living](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 104

### **The Penalty of Sin**

It all started when Adam sinned. Scripture tells us that sin entered the world through one man. It also tells us that death entered the world through sin. *"You shall not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die."* Gen 2:17. When corruption entered the human stream, so did the penalty for that corruption. Romans 6:23 says, *"The wages of sin is death."* Ezekiel 18:4 says, *"The soul who sins will die."* Death is not natural to man's constitution as created in God's image. God did not create a man who would die. That came as a penal act, a penalty, and a consequent punishment for sin. We were never made for death. That is why hell was never made for us. It was made for the devil and his angels, not for us. That was never going to be our place. However, Adam's sin led to the transmission of evil across all generations, bringing with it the inevitable penalty of death. Had Adam not sinned, he would have reached heaven without ever experiencing death. That would have been the norm. However, death was the penalty for sin. Death and sin are inseparable. And that's why Hebrews 9:27 says, *"It is appointed unto all men once to die."* Everyone has a predetermined death date. Adam died, so everybody who comes out of Adam's loins is going to die. It's the penalty of sin. The good news is that someone has conquered death and shown us how. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(45-43\)](http://GTY.org) – [Adam and the Reign of Death](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 105

### **The Wax and the Clay**

Two men spent three years side by side, experiencing exactly the same thing in the presence of the glorious Son of God together, and ended up as separated as two human beings can be: one in heaven and one in hell. They both had the same experience with Jesus Christ. In that sense, their lives couldn't have been more similar. And their ends couldn't have been more dissimilar. What made the difference? Why does Peter end up in heaven and Judas in hell? Well, the answer is very simple: they had different attitudes toward Jesus Christ. That's what it comes down to. Salvation isn't based on hard work; they performed the same tasks. They had the same knowledge and received the same information, proving that salvation is not based on works. A person's attitude toward Jesus Christ essentially determines their salvation. To put it simply, Peter loved him and Judas hated him, and they both came out of the same context. The same sun that melts

the wax hardens the clay. Just to contemporize a little bit, churches are full of the same kinds of people today. Churches are brimming with individuals who, like Peter and Judases, are exposed to the same messages, truths, doctrines, and explanations of Scripture. They share a common spiritual experience within the fellowship, witness the same divine grace and power in the lives of others, serve together, worship together, and evangelize together, only to find themselves in two very different places. Jesus pointed this out when He talked about the wheat and the tares. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated, "*Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord,' and I'll say, 'Depart from Me; I never knew you.'*" When Judas and Jesus' eyes met in the darkness of Gethsemane, Judas kissed him with a kiss of hate, the kiss of a hypocrite. When Peter's eyes met Jesus', he felt crushed, shattered, devastated, and broke down in genuine tears of true repentance. Crushing sadness led Judas to commit suicide without repentance. Crushing sadness led Peter to restoration with repentance. And the difference was in the way they looked at and responded to Christ. For Peter, the vision of Christ drew him to repentance. For Judas, the vision of Christ drew him to suicide. You might say that for Peter, the vision of Christ drew him to heaven; for Judas, the vision of Christ drew him to hell. What was the difference? Peter loved Jesus Christ. And Jesus loved Him. What does it mean to be a Christian? What is the difference between Judas and Peter? Love for Christ. That's the difference. That's the message of Christianity. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-446\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Tale of Two Sorrows** – [TOC](#)

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Day 106

### **Understanding Redemption**

What are Christians redeemed from? Sin. We are redeemed from sin. The first thing that's necessary is to discuss sin. We have to understand the human predicament. We are destined for both physical and eternal death due to our sinful nature. God's divine judgment is our fate. We are then redeemed from sin. Morally, intellectually, socially, and religiously, we're sinful every way you cut it. Our morality is not what is acceptable to God. Our minds aren't acceptable to Him. We can't attain to Him. Our social impact is zero, and any man-made religion is damning. This is the state of our sin. Our sin is pervasive, ensnaring us. The Scripture clearly defines sin as a prison cell, primarily due to our alienation from God. And there's no jail break for us by our own hands. Man, once a companion in the Garden of God, is only now fit to have fellowship with devils and demons. And that's what we are redeemed from: sin. What are we redeemed with? Blood. Blood is a vivid way to describe death; the sacrificial death was the price paid, and that's how God designed it. There needed to be a substitute to pay the price of redemption to God. It necessitates the death of a substitute. It necessitates the death of a spotless, blemish-free lamb who is precious. Who are we redeemed by? Christ. It was Christ, the Lamb of God. He's the perfect, spotless, unblemished sacrifice for sin. He is more precious than anyone who has ever lived or walked on this earth. He gave His precious life for us. He died on the cross to pay our ransom price and to satisfy the justice of God, in the person of Jesus Christ. That's why John the Baptist looked at Jesus when He came down to the Jordan River and said, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" *John 1:29*. Sin, substitution, and submission all talk

about the fact that you must come to God in submission by recognizing your sin and embracing Jesus as Lord to receive the gift of salvation. That's the gospel. Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(80-200\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Basics of Redemption** – [TOC](#)

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Day 107

### **The Horrific Side of Christmas**

When most people think of Christmas, they think only of its beauty. The sight of lovely trees adorned with bright lights and decorations, colorful ornaments, beautiful candles, wreaths, snow scenes, warm fireplaces in family homes, and beautifully wrapped presents is a common sight. Everything is bright and light and cheery and happy. But there's also another side. There's a very ugly side. And to have a proper understanding of Christmas's beauty, you must also understand its ugliness. And the real beauty of Christmas is to understand the ugliness that it cures. That is my concern today: to demonstrate the power of sin, to demonstrate Christ's living and dying and rising again to deal with that which blights all of human life, sin. Sin is the phenomenon that condemns every soul to hell. Sin pervades the whole world. Because of sin, there are tears and pain; war and fighting; anxiety; discord and unrest; fear and worry; sickness and death; famine; earthquakes; and pollution—all those things that mar our existence are the direct result of sin. Sin disturbs and disrupts every human relationship, whether between man and man, man and creation, or man and God. You see, Christ was born to be the Savior who came to deliver men from sin. If there were no sin, there would be no Christmas. Therefore, we cannot separate the two, nor can we conceal ourselves behind the illusion of Christmas. We cannot hide behind the smokescreen of Christmas cards and all the rest. Sin must come to the forefront, because that is what generates cosmic chaos. It is that from which no one escapes, and all who die in childbirth or from heart disease or cancer or war or murder or accidents or old age or whatever else are dying, and all are dying because of sin. The Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death."* Sin affects everyone on the planet, causing them to die. But the Bible says that Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from sin. That's the reason for His coming. Sin is the degenerative power in the human stream that makes man susceptible to disease, disaster, illness, death, and hell. This is the reason for Christmas. And anything that is that sinister, that powerful, and that totally debilitating for the whole human race must be dealt with if God, who is infinitely holy, is to reconcile man to himself. Thus, Christ came into the world to deal with sin. Therefore, you cannot look at Christmas and celebrate its peripheral elements. You must understand that the heart of it all is the ugliness of sin. The ugliness of Christmas is sin. It stands behind the scene and is the reason the Savior came. This is a true statement worthy of all acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. That's the heart of Christmas. [GTY.org \(80-7\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Ugliness of Christmas** – [TOC](#)

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Day 108

### Can God Bless America?

On what basis are we saying “*God bless America*”? We've turned our backs on God, blasphemed God, and rejected God. In His place, we've made our own idols. And now we're saying, God bless America? Blessed means that you've come to the Lord, you've come to the truth, you've embraced His Word, and you've sought forgiveness. And you've been justified; that is, no longer is iniquity imputed to you. Your sin has been covered, in fact, by the very righteousness of God through Christ. You want to be blessed? Return to the Lord. But there are conditions. These conditions include walking in the truth, knowing God, repenting, and confessing sin. There is blessing, but that blessing is attached to repentance for sin and obedience to the Word of God. And that's not a national thing until it's an individual thing. The only way God could bless America as an entity is if it was dominated by individuals who had stepped into His blessing. We have a message for America. God will bless America if the conditions are met. But before we can be concerned about America, we must be concerned about Americans. And the way to blessing is to go back to the book, to know the truth of God and the God of the book, to repent of sin, and to come to Him for forgiveness, new life, and a new capacity for obedience through faith in Jesus Christ. All of God's promises are in Christ. All spiritual blessings are ours in Christ. I wish that all the people who say “*God bless America*” were willing to acknowledge God, His Word, their own sins, and the Savior Jesus Christ. Because that's the only way anyone will ever be blessed by God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-245\)](http://GTY.org) – [Can God Bless America?](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 109

### The Dominant Fear

Death is called the king of terrors because there is in every human heart the sense that there may well be an accounting for the transgressions and iniquities that dominate the human heart. No human being can escape the knowledge of his or her own sinfulness. We can either mask it or play psychological games with it. We may try to blunt it through drugs, alcohol, or a fast-paced life that goes from relationship to relationship. But in every human heart, the law of God does a convicting work, and that convicting work has an existential element to it. There is naturally a fear of death because of what may lie immediately ahead of that. And even though people would reject Christianity, the Bible and what it says in Hebrews 9:27 about “*It's appointed unto men once to die, and after that, the judgment*”—they cannot escape the consciousness of their own sin, and they cannot escape the lingering reality that justice does exist in the world. We understand the concept; we understand right and wrong, and there may well be an accounting yet to come. Therein lies the dominant fear of death. Fear of death can come from the fear of a virus; it can come from the fear of terrorists; it can come in a lot of ways. But there is this foreboding reality in the heart of every sinner that there may be a day of accounting, that even though you don't believe the Bible, there's something true about, “*It's appointed unto men once to die, and after*

*that the judgment," Hebrews 9:27.* And so, people are doing everything they can to prevent the inevitable death. They know they can't stall it off forever, but they work very hard to prevent it. Of course, there is no fear of death for those of us who are Christians. Death is an entrance into the presence of the Lord. It is far better to *"depart and be with Christ"*—to *"be absent from the body and present with the Lord."* *2 Corinthians 5:8.* We have no fear about what is coming after death, only joy and anticipation. For the believer, fear is not a virtue; fear is a sin, because we have been told many times, *"Fear not; your life is in the hands of God."* However, the Bible never lists safety as a virtue. Life is full of risks. Being born into this world is akin to contracting a terminal disease known as life. And for Christians throughout all of history, the last thing that Christians who were faithful to the Lord cared about was safety. So safety is not a virtue. We don't pursue safety as a goal. We're reasonable, but we pursue the gospel proclamation, living godly lives, and doing Christ's work. And if there's a risk, so be it. We don't live with fear, nor do we live for safety; we live to be faithful. [GTY.org \(81-123\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Voice from Hell** – [TOC](#)

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Day 110

### **The Dangers of Cultural Moralism**

What are some of the dangers of Christians trying to moralize our society? 1. Cultural morality is not our commission. Our commission is, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel."* *Mark 16:15.* 2. It wastes immense amounts of precious resources, time, money, and human energy. It doesn't matter whether you go to hell as a prostitute or a policeman; it only matters that you go to hell. 3. This effort at cultural morality sets up an inevitable failure. No one can be truly righteous and moral before God apart from the transformation of his soul by the Holy Spirit through the gospel. 4. Cultural morality fails to understand the nature of the kingdom of God. *"My kingdom is not of this world."* *John 18:36.* Want to bring blessings to this nation? Then preach the gospel, for there is no connection between a national entity and the kingdom of God. 5. This effort puts the responsibility on man rather than God. We do not have the ability or capability to make people moral. Only God does. 6. This effort at cultural morality creates morality without theology. My understanding of the world is completely subject to what Scripture says. My motive is the glory of God and the honor of God. If you don't know theology, you really run amuck. 7. It fails to understand this movement of cultural morality. It fails to understand that salt and light are not moral influences, but gospel witnesses and the power of holy living. 8. Cultural morality is dangerous because it has no New Testament model to follow except the Pharisees. They were the moral ones, and Jesus said to them, *"When you're through making somebody a convert to your morality, you have made him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."* *Matt 23:15.* Wow. In summary, moralism confuses and misses the priority for Christians in the world. It misrepresents the divine message that man, moral or immoral, is damned, must be saved, and can be saved only by believing the gospel. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-257\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Deadly Dangers of Moralism** – [TOC](#)

Day 111

## A Severe Danger

I think often about the spiritual issues in people's lives. It has to do with people who are in the church but who are not in the kingdom. I suppose all of us, to some degree, aren't what we ought to be. We're Christians, but we aren't what we ought to be, and that is a concern. But frankly, someday we will be what we ought to be, even if it's going to take our death to accomplish it, because someday we'll be in glory and the Lord will make us perfect. However, the presence of non-Christians within the church community is more concerning than Christians who aren't living up to their potential. It's overwhelming to think about going to hell from Grace Community Church. This is not a good place to go to hell from. Because according to Luke 12:48, *"to whom much is given, much is required."* Hebrews 10:29 says that far worse, eternal punishment falls to the one who has heard the truth and rejected it. If you've been in this church for any length of time, you have surely heard the truth. And the more you hear it, the more responsible you become. It would have been better for you if you had been a pagan and never heard the gospel; you would have gone to hell and suffered far less. The reality of people in this church not knowing Christ and never coming in true repentance and saving faith to embrace Jesus Christ tops my list of concerns. We can effectively tackle this issue at the Lord's Table, as 1 Corinthians 11 mandates us to assess our spiritual state before consuming the bread and cup. 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, *"Test yourselves whether you are in the faith. Examine yourselves."* Certainly, self-examination starts with, *"Am I really a Christian? Have I truly repented and, savingly, accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord?"* My deepest concern is that there are individuals within this church, some of whom have been members for some time, who are heading to an even harsher hell because they have heard and understood the truth but never embraced Christ. This is the issue facing the church today. Initially interested, people who attend a church that faithfully teaches the Word of God eventually lose interest, become infantile, and struggle to comprehend the fundamentals of righteousness. They are in severe danger. They listened. They understood the truth and the path to righteousness. They heard it. They may have believed it. However, because they never embraced it, they lost it. They regressed to some level of infantile understanding, and they need the most basic elementary teaching all over again. This is a warning to someone who knows the truth about Jesus—His death, His resurrection, and the truth of the gospel—but will not let go of his or her sin and come to the Savior. There is a severe danger of being close to salvation and being unsaved. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-219\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Warning to Pretenders** – [TOC](#)

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Day 112

## The Sacrificial Lesson

Adam and Eve had two sons, and they taught them two lessons. One lesson is that, because of the fall, we are all sinners, cursed, and facing death. The second lesson is that you don't offer God something of your own doing. There must be a sacrifice, but it must be one that God desires. God

accepts sacrifices because sin requires death. But here are the two types of religion. God will accept the death of an innocent substitute if the heart is right, as demonstrated by Able's animal sacrifice. Cain, who brings something he himself has plucked up from the ground, embodies the other religion. The plants symbolize false religion and man's efforts—that is, covering of sin without the death of a substitute. Animal death symbolizes true religion and God's provision by death—a death acceptable to God in the sinner's place. Cain, then, is the prototype of false religion. Abel is the prototype of true religion. Abel brought an animal sacrifice. Cain offers the fruit of his labor, and that becomes the endless pattern of false religion. Abel offers an animal sacrifice because he knows he has nothing in and of himself to give. But he knew God would accept a death in place of his own. That's how it has to be. The death of an acceptable, innocent substitute would bring salvation. Cain became angry that God did not accept his man-made sacrifice, so he killed an unacceptable innocent substitute, Adam. The other lesson you should take away from this is that false religion has consistently tried to destroy true religion. Look at the world. It's always false religion that leads to massacres against God's true people. Cain's path is one of works and hatred, while Abel's path is one of faith and obedience to God. The way of Cain trusts in himself; the way of Abel trusts in another. The way of Cain doesn't need a death; the way of Abel demands a death. Man-made works have never brought salvation to anyone. That is the way of Cain. The real lesson? God sent His own Son, the Lamb of God, to die as a substitute for all who believe. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-9\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Danger of Adding to the Gospel** – [TOC](#)

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Day 113

### **A Proper Christian View**

The book of First Peter is an eminently practical book. It provides a framework for how you live your life as a Christian. It is true that as you think, so you are, and thinking appropriately about yourself as a Christian is essential if you're going to be what God wants you to be. As you progress, it's crucial to reaffirm your commitments. We're not talking about looking at something outside of yourself, like successes, achievements, or accomplishments. We're talking about how you see yourself and your own life. There are some things that Peter tells us that really set an incomparable structure for how to view your life as you move forward. Number one is the starting point for an appropriate Christian view of oneself. Remember who owns you. 1 Peter 1:18 says, *"You were not redeemed, or purchased, or bought with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."* Verse 21 says, *"Through Him you have become believers in God."* What that's telling us is that God owns us because He purchased us. Acts 20:28 says that *"God bought us with His own blood."* In Chapter 2 of 1 Peter, verse 9, it says of Christians, *"Since you have been purchased by God, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation."* The verse continues, *"A people for God's own possession."* Christians are slaves owned by God. The New Testament reveals that God chose you before the world's foundation. Your names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. You were chosen to be given to Christ as a part of His bride. In time, the Holy Spirit convicted you; you were brought to salvation, and you came to be the

possession of Christ. God the Father gave you to Him, according to John 6. Jesus paid the price—His blood—so that God could take you, own you, and then give you to Christ as a gift of His love. This is the foundation for how a Christian views his life. You are not your own; someone bought you for a price. You have to constantly remind yourself that I am not my own. I'm not a master of my own fate; I'm not the captain of my own destiny. I'm not in charge of my own life. I belong to God. Everything starts with remembering who owns you and who bought you at an immense price—the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the purchase price. The image depicts a slave being purchased at an exorbitant cost. The payment is made not with silver or gold, but with blood—not just any blood, but the blood of the sinless Son of God. So that's where it starts. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-403\)](#) – **You Are What You Think** – [TOC](#)

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Day 114

### **How God Uses Trouble**

The Lord brings troubles into our lives to test the strength of our faith. Inevitably, the testing exposes our pride, self-confidence, and self-trust, leading to our humility. The Lord is weaning us from earthly things. What are those earthly things you need to turn from? According to Colossians 1, *"immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed. You once walked in those things; put them away, along with anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech. Don't lie. Put on the new self, renewed in true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. Be marked by compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience; bearing with one another; forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, to which you were indeed called, and be thankful. And then let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your heart to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."* That's a godly life. That's what it means to set your mind on things above and not on things on the earth. In other words, we've been weaned from the world; we're now walking more in the Spirit, and we're in touch with what the Lord is doing in our hearts. We then become more useful to others and more devoted to the Lord because we love Him more than anything else. Taking anything away from us only leaves us with less, making it easier to focus on the one who truly matters: God. Are you discovering that you love Him with all your heart and soul? That's the test. So what happens in times of distress? What you really love and who you really love become manifest. And if you really love God, then, in the midst of all the distress, you're rejoicing because God is in the distress. It is His will, both for your good and for His glory. This is the work of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-73\)](#) – **Finding Security in a Troubled World** – [TOC](#)

Day 115

## The Right Option

The goal of the four gospels is to understand who Jesus is and receive the eternal life that He alone can bring. Mark wants us to know that in spite of what the initial weak response to Christ was, the testimony is clear: He is the Son of God, as the angel said He was when he introduced Mary to the child she would bear. The evidence of His divine nature is unmistakable. However, when it comes to identifying Jesus, you have only three options. One, He was delusional; two, He was demonic; or three, He was divine. Those are the only options. "He's delusional" was the attitude of Jesus' family, who believed He was mentally ill. How strange that is—that those who had lived with Him for thirty years thought He had lost His mind and couldn't see that He was divine. So the first option you have with Jesus is that He's delusional, and that was the attitude of His family. But it doesn't make sense because of the miracles. How do you explain them? The second option appears. And this is the option that He's demonic. His enemies wanted to destroy Jesus. Why? They concluded that the Holy Lord of Heaven was Satanic. That was the Jews' final verdict. And the reason they had Him executed was because they were convinced He was a blasphemer. But they were the blasphemers; what they were doing, in their minds, was God's work by destroying this blasphemer. If you say that about Jesus, it may explain the supernatural elements of His life. Saying that Satan himself is the source of His power could serve as an explanation for the miracles He performed. But what you can't say is some patronizing nonsense that Jesus is just a good teacher. No, he's either a lunatic or satanic. And both of those are bad options. Your conclusion is as ridiculous as the family's. How can you say he was deranged and delusional when they knew him so well? And how does that explain the miracles? How can you say he's demonic when he's casting out Satan's forces? These two options are absurd. His family believed He was delusional, while His enemies considered Him demonic, leaving only one other viable option. His followers believe that He is divine. That's the truth. When you read the New Testament account of Christ, it doesn't lead you to conclude that He's delusional or demonic; it leads you to conclude that He's divine. This is because the Holy Spirit wants you to understand that misjudging Christ is an eternal sin for which there is no forgiveness. However, those who adhere to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in the four gospels, perceive, comprehend, and validate His divinity, thereby securing eternal life. Romans 10:9 says, *"If you confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."* That's the right option. Repent and believe! [GTU.org \(81-141\)](http://GTU.org) – **The Sin God Never Forgives** – [TOC](#)

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Day 116

## The Elimination of Marriage

Since Genesis, God has made it very clear: He made them male and female. Nothing in the middle. He said marriage is when a male and female come together, create a union for life, and have children. That's marriage. But you don't get very far in Genesis until you run into polygamy, incest,

prostitution, and rampant homosexuality. All the deviations and all the perversions are in the book of Genesis after the Fall. In America and the Western world, we've had a bit of a reprieve because of the prevailing influence of Christian morality. But the objective of Satan and demons, and consequently, the objective of all who are the subjects of Satan—the children of Satan, as they're called in Scripture—is to destroy everything that God has made. They are the enemies of God, Christ, the truth of Scripture, and the gospel. The objective is not simply to redefine gender or marriage. The objective is to destroy what God has designed. Families provide a small, sovereign unit that acts as a small barrier against the corruption that seeks to dominate. Destroy the family, and the small sovereign barrier is disintegrated. The goal behind all of this is not homosexuality, but same-sex marriage. The goal is to completely eliminate all marriages, which means your children are not yours. They're public children, and they belong to the education system, the country, and the village—but not to you. And so, when they're fifteen years old in Oregon, they can have a sex change without telling their parents—and the state will do it and pay for it. We've come all the way from sex without having children to having children without sex. Children can be manufactured. The normal reason for marriage—a man and a woman coming together to produce children—has been completely convoluted. People will be able to make any kind of arrangement they want. Same sex. Opposite sex. Polygamy. Because Satan just wants to completely obliterate marriage. Why do you need a family—a husband or a wife? Just make your own arrangement. This attack on marriage and the family is nothing new, but it is happening now. Scripture and the laws of our country are now colliding head-on. And we're going to feel it. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-425\)](http://GTY.org) – **We Will Not Bow** – [TOC](#)

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Day 117

### **The Atonement: Unlimited or Limited**

The book of Revelation gives us a glimpse into the praise of heaven. Worshiping is the occupation of heaven, and the worship will be directed at God out of gratitude for His saving plan effected through the sacrifice of Christ. This tells us that at the core and heart of heavenly praise is gratitude for Christ's purchase of sinners for God. When we come to the Lord's Table, we are looking at the cross, and we are looking at the great event and historical reality of Christ paying the price to purchase for God His people. Now, when we talk about Jesus Christ's death, we are talking about an actual purchase of His people. We're not talking about a potential purchase for everyone; we're not talking about a general sort of act on Jesus' part that may in the future become a purchase; we are talking about a real purchase. It is the act of Christ's death on the cross that pays the price to God, purchasing His people, who will be redeemed from every tribe, tongue, and nation. What I want you to keep in mind is that Jesus Christ's death is an act by which he purchases His people. It is not a potential, general, or unlimited act for everyone; it is an actual, particular, and limited act for His people. Now, for whom does God do this? According to Revelation 13:8, it is for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world. By His eternal choice, bound up in the glorious truth of sovereign election, God has determined to save certain people, and it is for those certain people that Jesus

paid an actual price, that Jesus rendered an actual atonement, that He was an actual propitiation (or covering or satisfaction) for the wrath of God, that He provided a specific and particular redemption for His people. Now, all of this is very important because, if you ask the average person or most pastors, *"For whom did Christ die?"* The answer would be, *"For everybody and everyone."* That's the typical belief. But in John 10:27–28, Jesus says, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand."* That can't be more precise, can it? Therein are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, testifying to a specific atonement, a particular redemption, and an actual substitutionary sacrifice for His sheep. He knows them. The Father has identified them. They belong to Him by virtue of the Father. They are drawn to Him. They come to Him. And it was for them that he died. His atonement was not unlimited or universal. His atonement was limited to His people, who believed. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-356\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Atonement: Real or Potential?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 118

### **The Paradox of Happiness**

The Old Testament is the book of Adam. The first king on earth was Adam, and it was said by God to Adam that he had dominion over the earth. But because he fell into sin, the Old Testament had to end with a curse. But in the New Testament, there's a new king. The first king fell, leaving a curse. The second king reigns and leaves a blessing. So the Old Testament gave us the law to show man in his misery, and the New Testament gives us life to show man in his bliss. Big difference. A fantastic new reality dawns upon human history. A new king has emerged, and He is the one who can reverse the terrible curse of Adam. The Sermon on the Mount is the great statement of the new King, as he opens his mouth and gives blessings instead of cursing to those who desire them. That's the general biblical context in which this sermon is delivered—a new age, a new king, a new message. Jesus says in *Matt 5:3–12* that *"the happy people are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and the thirsty, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted, and the reviled."* There exists a paradox where happiness is inextricably linked to misery. Yes, misery is the key to happiness. Jesus comes into the world to announce that the tree of happiness doesn't grow on the cursed earth because physical things don't touch the soul. Therefore, you cannot fill a spiritual need with a physical substance. It can't be done. However, people try to do it all the time. But things that cannot quiet the heart in a storm cannot provide any kind of blessing. In fact, external things do more to discomfort the soul than to bless it. Some people today, posing as Christians, are offering material goods to the world. They're promising financial prosperity, money, and success. Jesus never offered that. That's never in the Sermon on the Mount. The opposite is there. If you're looking for real blessings on earth, they're not there. You've got to ascend to another level. And the Sermon on the Mount is going to take you to that level. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2197\)](http://GTY.org) – **Happiness Is...** – [TOC](#)

Day 119

## The Wicked Hatred of Christ

The wicked treatment of Jesus did not start at the cross; it actually pursued him from His birth. It was wicked men who, seeking to kill Him, slaughtered babies in and around Bethlehem. When Jesus taught, it was wicked men who tried to discredit him. It was wicked men who tried to destroy Him because He was a convincing, miracle-working prophet of God who condemned their false religion. It was wickedness that eventually secured His condemnation to death by violating every standard of justice, truth, equity, and honor in both Jewish and Gentile law. Wickedness had already betrayed Him. Wickedness had already kissed Him. Wickedness had arrested Him. Wickedness had framed Him, denied Him, slapped Him, punched Him, spit on Him and mocked Him. And it was wickedness that would execute Him, the wickedness of men, so it says in Acts chapter 2. It was wickedness that, from a human standpoint, fastened Him with rusty nails to a cross suspended in humiliation and torture. His life and death were a portrait of the work of wickedness. One writer said, *“For thousands of years, wickedness has been growing. It had wrought deeds of impiety and crime that had wrung the ages with agony and often roused the justice of the universe to roll its fiery thunderbolts of retribution through the world. But now it has grown to full maturity. It stands around this cross in such gigantic proportions that it has never been seen before. It works an enormity before which the mightiest of its past exploits dwindle into insignificance and fail in words. It crucifies the Lord of life and glory.”* And wickedness didn't just kill him; it tormented him. He was not allowed to just die with the agonies of the cross, as fierce as they were. No, until His very last breath, His enemies filled Him with every kind of hostility, expressing their wickedness and endeavoring by their actions and words to torture Him all the way to death. It seems to be Matthew's responsibility to show these agonies attendant at the cross. And He identifies four groups of wicked people. Each demonstrates a kind of wicked hatred of Christ. They are the ignorant wicked, the informed wicked, the fickle wicked, and the religious wicked. Everyone who rejects Christ falls into one of those four categories. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(82-7\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Best Friend of the Wicked** – [TOC](#)

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Day 120

## Who Can Be Saved?

The religious legalists of Jesus's time hated Him for redefining them as sinners. People don't like that today, either. But God can't save anyone who doesn't see himself as a sinner. You can't mask sin. You can't gloss it over. You can't trivialize it. You can't underestimate it. You can't turn it into something superficial. You have to preach the true understanding of the desperate, sinful, wickedness of the human heart so that a person understands themselves as poor, prisoners, blind, and oppressed, headed for a Christless, Godless eternity in hell, having violated the law of God and the God of that law. By the grace of God and the work of the Spirit, a person can come to a true assessment of their sinful heart and an understanding of God's grace through faith in Jesus

Christ and His work on the cross, leading to salvation. Remember, God gives grace to the humble, but He rejects the proud. I tell you, Beloved, that God offers you grace. He offers you mercy. He offers you forgiveness. He offers you compassion. He'll forgive all your sins if you come to Him. But he can't do anything for people who believe they're okay. He can't do anything for people who think they're righteous or good. He came to call sinners to repentance. The church does not consist of the righteous. It's made up of penitent sinners. It does not consist of individuals who believe themselves to be good. It consists of individuals who recognize their own shortcomings. It's not made up of people who have brought their righteousness to God as satisfaction. God's righteousness has come down as a covering for these people. The only way you're going to find mercy is when you come to repentance, so that Jesus Christ can demonstrate His perfect patience with sinners. The bottom line? Jesus came to call sinners to repentance, and He's calling right now. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-67\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus Came to Call and to Save Sinners** – [TOC](#)

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Day 121

### **Finding Jesus in the Old Testament**

We have had a full New Testament glimpse of Christ, having gone through the entire New Testament verse by verse, line by line. On many occasions, the Lord Jesus Christ declared that the Old Testament reveals Him. Now, Jesus Christ is not in every verse, every chapter, or every book of the Old Testament, but He is nonetheless the prophetic theme of the whole Old Testament. The Lord Himself says, *“Search the Old Testament Scriptures, for they testify about Me.”* We have been instructed by the Lord Himself to go back and find Him in the Old Testament. Christ declares Himself to be in the Old Testament; the disciples and apostles believed in Christ because they understood the Old Testament; the early preachers preached the gospel based on the Old Testament; and the writers of the New Testament ground their writing in the Old Testament because it was their foundation. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ himself declared that the Old Testament revealed Him. That's critical. He said things like, *“Abraham rejoiced to see My day.”* He said, *“Moses wrote of Me.”* He said, *“David called Me Lord.”* In John 5, He said, *“If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.”* These are simply illustrations of the fact that Jesus repeatedly said the Old Testament speaks about Him and about the redemption that is available in Him. Matthew 5:17 says, *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets;”* that's simply a title for the Old Testament, *“I didn't come to abolish but to fulfill, and to fulfill it completely. Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law,”* meaning the Old Testament, *“until it's all accomplished.”* He came to fulfill the Old Testament. And since we're talking about the all-wise, all-knowing, sinless, perfect Son of God, we can trust His view of the Old Testament. If He says that the Old Testament reveals Him, then that is a true statement. His story is in the New Testament, but His Bible was the Old Testament. The only Bible that Jesus ever had was the Old Testament. He was gone before any of the New Testament was ever written. His Bible was the Old Testament, and the Old Testament Scripture was constantly on His holy mind. He vanquishes Satan with the use of the Old Testament and He uses Scripture to demonstrate His messiahship, His purpose for coming,

and His arrival. It was always about Scripture with Christ. All through His ministry, He quoted and referred to the Scripture directly or indirectly because it totally dominated His mind. He is saturated with the Old Testament. Now, all of that is simply to say that the Lord Jesus Christ declares that the Old Testament reveals Him. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-431\)](http://GTY.org) – **Christ the Expositor** – [TOC](#)

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Day 122

### **Purpose of the Preacher**

Sometimes I give you more information than you really care to have, and even if that is not true in a given sermon, it's probably true cumulatively. Some people have referred to me as an expository dump truck. Someone who just backs up and dumps the whole deal, leaving you about eight feet deep in it. I'm not here to preach you sermons so that you can have more information. As much information as I give you, that's not what I'm trying to accomplish. I'm not here to offer you some oratory upon which you can render criticism and an evaluation. I am basically here to jerk you out of your complacency week after week and yank you back to a God consciousness. I'm here to pull you back into Scripture. I'm here to pull you toward heaven. I'm here to refocus your thoughts. I'm here to shift your gears away from whatever it is you think about all week. Everything from your job to your family issues to the neighborhood to fixing the fence to the TV sitcoms and whatever it is you occupy yourself with, I'm here to jerk your mind back to spiritual reality so that you can fix yourself on God. And that's why we don't forsake our assembly together. You don't need to attend church every Sunday morning and night to gain more knowledge, but you do need a jolt back to spiritual reality. Now you understand that that's the function that I serve: to pull you out of your complacency and out of your preoccupation with trivial things, worldly things, and everything else that floods your mind. My responsibility for the hour that we're together in the Word of God, the time of worship, the hymn-singing, and all that we do is to focus you on God. And if you don't think you need that every Lord's Day, you're wrong. It isn't that if you miss a Sunday, you miss some more information; it's that you miss that confrontive work of the ministry of the Word and worship that pulls you back to a God consciousness. We want you to have a God-centered heart, and we assist you with that. But you need to assist yourself with that by reading the Word regularly and spending time in the Word. That's why we produce so many materials. We don't want you to just buy books, give them as gifts, and stick them on your shelf so you can say you own them. The purpose of sermons, books, radio programs, and everything else is to help you fix your eyes on God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-171\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Key to Spiritual Victory** – [TOC](#)

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Day 123

### **Divine Destruction of Earth**

There will be a suitable judgment on man because you will remember that in Romans chapter 1, it says in verse 18, *“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”* – listen to this – *“because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature have been clearly seen.”* Man should have been able to look at his world and the immense creation and have concluded that there is a God and that God is powerful. They ought to have seen God in creation. But they did not. *“Even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks; they became futile in their speculations; their foolish heart was darkened. They professed to be wise but became fools.”* – and here’s the issue, they *“exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”* And then verse 25, *“They worshipped the creature rather than”* - what? – *“the creator.”* Man worships Mother Nature, the earth. Man has failed to honor God, failed to recognize God, gives God no thanks, gives God no place, rejects His manifest glory in creation, and worships the creature and the creation rather than the Creator. That’s that preoccupation with Mother Nature, that environmental atheism, that evolutionist that says God is in everything and everything is God. This type of atheism asserts that human beings hold no greater value than frogs, rats, or rocks. At the last New York Central Park Earth Day, three-quarters of a million people worshipped the earth, the creation, rather than the Creator. Therefore, God will destroy their false idols. Men have made gods out of the earth, animals, and even themselves. And God will devastate the earth, its animal population, as well as its human population. People worry about the ozone layer; God's going to destroy it. And all that stuff flying out of the sky is going to do a number on the ozone layer, for sure. God will take over and get involved in global warming. God will turn up the heat. God will wipe out the rain forests. God will slaughter both plants and animals. And as I’ve been saying to you all along, if you think we’re messing up this world, wait till you see what He does to it. And not only will their source of life be taken, but their god will be destroyed, for their god is the creation. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(66-32\)](http://GTY.org) – **Divine Destruction of Earth's Ecology** – [TOC](#)

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Day 124

### **How to Get to Heaven**

To get to heaven, you must enter the narrow gate, enter alone, enter with difficulty, and enter naked. It's the gateway to self-denial. You must strip off all the sin and self-righteousness. It's the way you unload yourself. It's where you say, *“I no longer want to be the person I have been.”* There is nothing easy about the narrow gate. In contrast to that, there is the wide gate. The wide gate is just that: wide. The path is also wide or broad, and you can enter this gate with ease. You can enter this gate with a multitude of people; there is no need for self-denial; you can bring all your belongings; repentance is not required; and surrendering to Christ is not necessary. This is the gate of self-indulgence: bring your pride, bring your self-righteousness, and bring your sins—sins of all sorts are very welcome there. There’s a large crowd coming through this gate because

everybody else's not coming through the narrow gate. Also, *"There are few who find it."* Matt 7:14. The narrow gate is truly a form of enslavement. You confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, which is also a confession that you're a slave. For the rest of your life, you are now subject to an alien will. It's not a luxurious meadow that we wander in; it's a road that is hard and narrow. In truthfulness, Christianity is not a soft option for the weak-hearted and weak-kneed. When you enter this narrow gate and start on the narrow path, you declare war on all of hell's forces and all the forces of your own flesh. And living a beatitude life—a brokenness in humility, holiness, and righteousness—is tough. The masses of the world are racing toward hell on the broad road, thinking it's the path to heaven. But that's every man's decision. You have the option to either stay eternally damned and adhere to your happy religion of tolerance, or embrace the truth and receive eternal life in heaven. Spoiler alert: At the end, the narrow path explodes into the new heavens and the new earth, with all its infinite breadth, height, depth, and length of unending joys and blessings. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-325\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Only Road to Heaven** – [TOC](#)

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Day 125

### **The Significance of Deliverance**

The Old Testament contains three Hebrew words that translate to *"deliverance."* A synonym might be *"rescue"* or *"escape."* But basically, these three words mean *"to deliver."* The Old Testament uses one of those words, *yasha*, three hundred and fifty-three times. So it's a very common word. And always in the Old Testament, those three words refer to God delivering His people, God rescuing His people, and God allowing His people, by His power, to escape threats or danger. When you come into the New Testament, there are two words: *sōzō* and *rhuomai*. They appear approximately 130 times and convey the same meaning: *"to deliver," "to rescue,"* or, commonly translated, *"to save."* However, we frequently translate Old Testament words with the word *"deliverance."* For example, Psalm 68:20 says, *"God is to us a God of deliverance."* Psalm 40, verse 17, says, *"You are my help and my deliverer."* Salvation is a work of deliverance. It is the dramatic rescue of the sinner from all dangers—all ultimate, final, and eternal dangers—all that threaten eternal destruction. In Romans chapter 11 and verse 26, Paul writes concerning the Messiah, the Savior, and he says this: *"The Deliverer will come from Zion, and He will remove ungodliness and take away their sins."* And he's actually quoting Isaiah 59. Deliverance may not feel like a familiar word in Christianity, but it is maybe the best word, maybe the most comprehensive, and maybe the most clarifying word to explain God's gracious work in our lives. Perhaps we could reintroduce it into our Christian language and begin discussing our deliverance. But from what have we been delivered? That's the important question that I want to address. Scripture clearly unfolds the doctrine of deliverance for us. Let me show you just a sample of it. Turning to Romans chapter 6, verse 17, we read, *"But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were delivered; having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I'm speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness,*

*resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves to sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore, what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification and the outcome, eternal life.”* You have been delivered from sin, unrighteousness, ungodliness, and death into righteousness, godliness, sanctification, and eternal life. That is a significant deliverance. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(TMU272\)](http://GTY.org) – **Delivered by Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

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Day 126

### **Why is the Church Still in the World?**

Has the church settled for a self-indulgent kind of Christianity that makes it nothing more than an activity center? Are we all content with comfort and personal prosperity? A church or a Christian without strong convictions and a strong passion to save the lost is basically powerless. In the church today, there’s a lot of theatrics, a lot of manipulation, and a lot of foolish hysteria, but where is the power and the passion for the lost? Why is the church even still in the world? If we were here just for fellowship, we’d go to heaven, where fellowship is perfect. And if we were here just for worship, we’d go to heaven, where worship is perfect. We are here because there’s only one reason to leave us here, and that’s to be the agent to bring other people to Christ; otherwise, we might as well go. And if we’re not doing that, we’re not doing the thing we’re most needful for. Jesus energized His church, His disciples, and His people through His Spirit in all generations for the task of evangelism. Jesus had a great commitment to reach lost people with the saving gospel. I know Jesus had a passion for evangelism because His forerunner, John the Baptist, was a fiery evangelist. That tells me something about the Lord’s commitment. He wanted to start the “good news” revival before He even got here. What is the good news? That men’s sins can be forgiven and that God has made provision for sin. And everywhere Jesus went, He preached it. He had a passion for the lost. He was a preacher of the gospel, and that was His primary calling—to call men to salvation. He came on an evangelistic mission, and He agonized and grieved over the souls of lost men. By the way, have you ever noticed that the most zealous evangelists are the newest converts? The longer you’re a Christian, the more indifferent you become to the lost, because the longer you’re a Christian, the fewer of them you know anything about. But when a person initially comes to Christ, they have this terrible sense in their heart that everybody around them is so lost, because that’s how they were. Many of them have forgotten how it is to be lost; some of them never knew because they’ve been saved for as long as they can remember. What should you do? Study Christ, study sin, study sinners, study Scripture, and then pray. Pray for the lost, and pray that God will give you the heart that you should have for the lost. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-6\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Passion for the Lost** – [TOC](#)

Day 127

## You Must be Perfect

All through The Sermon on the Mount, the Lord has been setting forth the divine standards of His kingdom. As the anointed Messiah, the Christ, the King, He has certain principles that He has demanded of those who desire to enter the kingdom. Those principles are at the heart of this sermon, but they can all be summarized in one word. You must be righteous in order to enter the kingdom. Matthew 5:20 summarizes the entire sermon: *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* The kingdom of heaven is God's world, dominion, salvation, and eternal life. Entry into that kingdom is contingent on righteousness. Now, how righteous are we to be? Well, we're to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees. How righteous were they? Well, they were as righteous as a man could get on his own terms. They had reached the pinnacle of human achievement in religion. They were obsessed with religious functions. They were exceedingly righteous, as the people around them knew. They seemed to do all the right things, like praying, giving alms, and fasting. They seemed to have all the right standards, such as not murdering, not committing adultery, and making sure they maintained every minute element of the law. It seemed as though they were the ones who were exceedingly righteous, and yet the righteousness that Christ demands far exceeds theirs. In fact, our Lord demands a righteousness that is beyond man's capacity—a divine righteousness that comes from God—a standard that man himself is utterly unable to attain. In fact, if you want to know how righteous you are, all you have to do is look at Matthew 5:48. And here our Lord says, *“Be ye, therefore, perfect”* – how perfect? – *“even as your Father, who is in heaven, is perfect.”* We are to be righteous; how righteous? More righteous than the most righteous. We are to be perfect; how perfect? As perfect as God is. If you truly understand this message, you will come to terms with the fact that you cannot live up to this standard. On your own, you cannot be more righteous than the most righteous people. You can't be more righteous than that. And because you're a human being, you cannot be as perfect as God is. And so all through the sermon, Jesus is endeavoring to show men the inadequacy of their own human resources to deal with God's kingdom. They can't make it. Therefore, the whole idea of the sermon is to bring them to the very point at which our Lord started. They can't earn it; they have to beg for it. It is a gift from God. Repent and believe!

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Day 128

## Spiritual Light is Everywhere

Here's the real issue: Luke 11:34 says, *“The lamp of your body is your eye. When your eye is clear, your whole body is also full of light. But when it's bad, your body is also full of darkness.”* This is the real issue. It's not about light; it's about sight. Seeing depends on the condition of your eyes. The lamp of your body is your eye. This is obvious. Your eye is not the light; your eye is the organ

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that delivers the light to your mind and therefore makes everything clear to you. And that's how you see it. When your eye is clear, your whole body is full of light. It's the only organ channeling light to the mind. However, when the eye is bad, the body is full of darkness. No light can enter. And Jesus is simply saying that this is obvious. It's not about light; spiritual light is everywhere, but spiritually dead people can't see it. The only people who see the spiritual light and perceive what it reveals are people who have clear eyes, Christians. Our eyes then give us the full benefit of all that the light reveals. Because we have the ability to see, the entire world becomes visible to us. Jesus is simply saying the problem is not light; there is spiritual light everywhere. First John 1:9 says, "*Christ is the light that lights every man that comes into the world.*" Christ extends his light to the ends of the earth. It's not about the revelation of light; it's about the perception of light. When your eye is wide open, you see everything. On the other hand, when your eye becomes clouded by sin and covered by evil, it becomes full of darkness. You see, it's sin; it's the cherishing and holding to sin that makes you blind. The only way you're ever going to see the light is to repent and be willing to abandon sin. The Bible teaches that men are sinners, powerless to change, and destined for eternal judgment unless they repent and seek God's forgiveness. We cannot alter this reality; God alone, through Christ, is responsible for it all. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-163\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Question of Sight** – [TOC](#)

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Day 129

### **We Must Not Question God**

We need to remember that there is no injustice with God. There is no wrong with God. God can do essentially exactly what He wants to do. He's not answerable to us. The bottom line is that you can't question God. You can't ask why God does what He does. God has not chosen to reveal that. All we know is what we know in Scripture. Ultimately, we should trust and honor God. The Book of Romans confirms what we learn in the case of Job and elsewhere in Scripture, even in the case of Adam. And it's this: First of all, we have no right to complain against God. And when we do, we expose ourselves to the sin of disobedience because we are to trust Him to do right in every situation. Secondly, God is under no obligation to give us an intellectually satisfying answer to all of our questions, including the question of why God allowed evil. Thirdly, God is sovereign. And that settles every issue. He can do exactly what he chooses to do, and it will always be right. Furthermore, the unwavering truth and reliability of God's Word ensure that Scripture accurately reveals all our knowledge. So, to summarize, God is sovereign; He is the standard of His own actions; He is not subject to human judgment. On the contrary, our judgment is subject to His Word. In the end, you're not going to get an answer about why you suffer, why your child dies, why you get cancer, why things are the way they are, or even the big picture of why God allows evil. However, if you trust God, He will honor your faith and bless you accordingly. Therefore, we must bow in faith to our glorious God when it comes to the problem of evil. We gratefully accept what He has revealed, as it was best for us to know only that and nothing more. All we know is this: Adam and Eve's sin was the source of all evil in this world. That's what we know. We can infer, in general, that God permitted sin in order to ultimately eradicate evil. God has the ability

to show grace to sinners and judge them as evil takes its course. If evil didn't exist, it would be impossible to display such things. As a result, the display of attributes that necessitate a sinful environment glorifies God. But God is not the author of evil. The Creator is good—all good, and only good. And the original creation was very good. He is not the author of evil, or He would be evil Himself. And if He were evil Himself, then He couldn't triumph over evil for Himself or for us. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(90-237\)](http://GTY.org) – **The Fall of Satan** – [TOC](#)

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Day 130

### **Remembering the Truth**

Any teacher knows that people forget. And so a teacher is very aware of forgetfulness. Therefore, the challenge of teaching is to repeat the same great truth in a different way so that people hear it fresh. This is very challenging. There is always the reality that Christians can forget the blessedness of salvation and wander off into sin. We can turn our backs on the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, and we can turn our backs on multiplied grace and peace. We can turn our backs on all of the divine power that grants us everything pertaining to life and godliness. We can turn our backs on the precious, magnificent promises that are ours as partakers of the very nature of God, and we can wander off into sin. We can also forfeit our assurance by wandering into sin. And so Peter eagerly reminds us of the crucial, essential, and important greatness of salvation, as well as the blessedness of assurance. 2 Peter 1:12 says, *"Therefore I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them and have been established in the truth."* Both preaching and writing are reminders. It is important to know that there are no new truths, only a clearer understanding of the Word of God, perhaps a truer interpretation, but it is a ministry of reminding, reminding you of doctrinal truth, and reminding you of moral requirements. Repetition is for the sake of safeguarding the truth. People do forget very easily. So how does a pastor overcome that? Any faithful minister feels the urgency of doing the same thing over and over again in different ways, just as the Word of God does. Why? Because of the greatness of salvation and the blessedness of assurance, we want you to live godly lives so that you can participate in the fullness of salvation and the blessing of assurance. We aim to jog your memory, which is why we are committed to reminding you frequently. Eventually, a topical preacher will run out of subjects. However, an expositor preacher can continue forever and ever. Thus, we are touching on the heart of this ministry when we touch on the issue of remembering. That's part of the pastoral duty. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(61-13\)](http://GTY.org) – **A Ready Reminder** – [TOC](#)

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Day 131

### **Does the Truth Matter?**

Of course, we know the truth matters, but I want us to think about it because it is absolutely the most critical question that could be asked and answered. To me, life is all about the truth. The truth is the most important thing that exists. It's the most important reality in the universe. By the truth, we are saved from hell. By the truth, we are sanctified for the purposes of God. By the truth, we are given strength, we are edified, we are comforted, and we are encouraged. It all comes from divine truth, living truth—the person of Christ who dwells within us—and written truth, the Word of God, which are perfectly in harmony. So, I live for the truth. I dedicate every day of my life to proclaiming the truth, making it known, making it clear, fighting for the truth, and propagating the truth—that sums up my life. Therefore, if you ask me, *"Does the truth matter?"* the answer is undoubtedly yes. It matters to me more than anything else. That was true in a truth world. Now, in a post-truth world, the lies have now reached epic proportions, to the point that you can't believe anybody who says anything. Whether you're talking to a kindergartener or a congressman, you can't believe anything anyone says because the truth doesn't matter anymore. You can go to a university, sit in a class, and have a PhD as a professor, but unless you're talking about some kind of hard science, an obvious nature fact, or natural law, you have no reason to believe that what you're hearing is actually true because truth isn't as important to this generation as certain other things, such as power shifting. So we live in a post-truth world. The question is not, *"Do we need some lies to cover our perversions? Do we need to tell lies in order to find personal satisfaction or fulfillment? Is there something we need to lie about in order to get along and advance ourselves?"* That's not the question in a post-truth world. The question in a post-truth world is, *"Why would we lie, because there's really nothing to cover, because everything is okay?"* We don't want to cover our wickedness anymore; we want to live it out. Most perversions are now acceptable. Lies have become more useful, more important, and more in demand than the truth, which begs the question, *"Does truth matter?"* It mattered some to the pre-post-truth world, the world where people actually thought there was truth, but it was still convenient to lie. Now, it's really inconvenient to tell the truth. In fact, it's offensive to tell the truth, and to call someone a liar is the ultimate offense. They need to be allowed to live in their own category of lies, deceit, and untruths. And we are told that we must allow them to exist within their own realm of lies, deceit, and untruths. There's a basic insanity to all of this. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (TM19-1) – **Telling the Truth in a Post-Truth World** – [TOC](#)

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Day 132

### **How to Know God's Will**

Adam and Eve, in a state of sinless perfection and innocence, with the epitome of natural powers in their sinless condition, perfect minds, perfect reason, and pure morality, only knew what God required if God revealed it to them. They couldn't discern it on their own. That is why God walked and talked with them daily in the garden. He was communicating; they were having a conversation; He was revealing His will. It was God who had to tell them what to eat and what not to eat. It was God who explained what to do when you woke up, and a woman was there. *"Marry her; she's your wife."* It was God who told him to name the animals. It was God who told

them to tend the garden. Everything came from God. All revelations came from God. They would have had, by their human reason, absolutely no idea of what they were to do, even in a perfected state. So much more for those in an imperfect state. Adam was not the origin of truth; he was not the origin of justice; he didn't define it; he didn't discover it; he didn't define and find duty; he didn't invent morality, meaning, or beauty. God did it all and conveyed it to him in the early days, walking with him in the garden, by special revelation. No one, not even Adam in his perfected condition, would know what God expected if God didn't reveal it. Therefore, in our condition of fallenness, we have to believe what God has revealed. By our natural powers, we cannot attain the will of God in the midst of our ignorance; we need special revelation to know the will of God. And we have that special revelation on the pages of Holy Scripture: there is no other way to know God's will. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-377\)](http://GTY.org) – **Saved by What?** – [TOC](#)

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Day 133

### **The Shot Heard Around the World**

The book of Galatians had a very strong impact on the Reformation. Five hundred years ago, in 1517, a monk named Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and Catholic priest, launched the Protestant Reformation. He did that by writing up 95 theses, all of which condemned some practice in the Roman Catholic system. He nailed those to the door of the Roman Catholic Church in Wittenberg, Germany, effectively launching the Reformation. That was the first shot heard around the world. He saw what was wrong with the Roman Catholic Church. And, in particular, when he came to Galatians chapter 3:11, "*The just*"—or the righteous—"*shall live by faith*," he understood for the first time the true gospel. Of course, Habakkuk 2:4 in the Old Testament is the source of that statement. Paul refers to it in Romans 1:17. And Hebrews 10:38 makes a third reference to it in the New Testament. That launched Luther's understanding of the gospel, brought about his salvation, and gave force and power to his ministry as God used him as a key part of the great recovery of the gospel known as the Reformation. Before Luther became a clear-headed theologian, he was a confused Catholic monk. Before he was a powerful force, he was a tormented failure. Before he had spiritual peace, he lived in constant spiritual pain. Luther was so depressed and overwrought with guilt that he lived with constant anxiety and fear of God. In the monastery, he found that the road to earning your way to salvation was very hard. It was hard for all the monks. It was so hard that the Catholic Church invented a place called purgatory, whose purpose was to purge the remaining sins of certain people who were too bad to go to heaven but too good to go to hell. Luther was taught, like all monks and all Catholics, that salvation is by grace, but you have to earn that grace. In other words, you have to reach a certain point of worthiness. You have to have accumulated a certain amount of merit, and if you are worthy enough, God will give you grace. He was aware that he lacked the necessary merit, so he followed the advice of Catholics and applied for any available merit he could inherit from deceased individuals. That is another invention of the Catholic Church. The monks were so terrified of God's wrath and Christ's judgment that they turned to Mary. They were taught that Mary was more compassionate than either the Father or the Son, so they would go to her, pleading with her to

plead with Christ and plead with God on their behalf, to grant them salvation. This is yet another invention of the Catholic Church. In the end, Luther had ultimately rediscovered in Scripture everything required for reconciliation with God. "*The just shall live by faith.*" Therefore, there's no need for inventions. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(48-1\)](#) – **Getting the Gospel Right** – [TOC](#)

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Day 134

### God's Teaching Aids

Go back to the Old Testament, and you will note that God gave Israel many pictures, ceremonies, and object lessons. Object lessons or memorials commemorated all major events, while symbols, analogies, or pictures illustrated major spiritual truths, serving primarily as teaching aids. For example, let's say you have a couple of little children in the family, and they have a little brother. On the eighth day after that little brother has been born, it is time for the family to circumcise him, and the older brother and sister say, "*Daddy, why do you do that?*" That is precisely the purpose of that ceremony: to pass on spiritual truth to the next generation, and the spiritual truth is this: There is innate sin in us. It is in our nature, and all we can do is procreate sinners, and so man, at the very point of his procreative organ, must recognize that he produces wickedness and is in desperate need of a spiritual cutting away and cleansing. So what you have is a demonstration of how a man's heart and soul desperately need cleansing from sin. When a little child would go with mother and father to the temple and see the bloody animals being sacrificed, they might say, "*Mother, why do they do that?*" To which the mother would reply, "*Well, our sins demand death, and so someone or something must die for sin, and God has graciously permitted us to offer an animal to die in our place, and so this is a picture of the substitute.*" And then that parent could say, "*And someday God is going to send the real Lamb, the final substitute, and all these other sacrifices will be over with. But sin is so bad that it brings death—bloody death.*" A little child standing in the temple would literally be shocked at the hundreds and thousands of animals being slaughtered and would get a vivid picture of the sinful sin of one's life and the ramifications of that sin. And when God established the Passover, a little child would say, "*Why do we do this?*" The father would say, "*To remember that God is our great deliverer and that He delivered us from Egypt.*" Everything they did was a teaching tool to produce a godly generation. That's how spiritual truth was passed on, in vivid terms. All of those ceremonies are gone. With the ending of the old covenant, all those pictures are gone, and the Lord only left us with two: the Lord's Table and baptism. So they must be His two most important pictures. The Lord's Table is a physical picture of the death and sacrifice of Christ, and baptism is a physical picture of the death and burial of the new birth that occurs when one puts his faith in the Savior. It is an object lesson. It is a visual representation of a spiritual reality. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-57\)](#) – **Understanding Baptism** – [TOC](#)

Day 135

## The Ministry of Jesus

Let's look at the three-fold ministry of Jesus in Matthew 9:35. *"He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."* The first part of His ministry was teaching. The synagogue's main feature was the detailed reading and exposition of Scripture. They explained what it meant. Translating it and explaining it. We continue to hold the conviction that teaching the meaning of God's Word to God's people when they gather is the mandate. Secondly, the scripture states that Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom, thereby proclaiming it. That was evangelism; the teaching in the synagogue was edification. We believe that that model still stands, even in the church. The church gathers to be instructed and scatters to proclaim. Our Lord has established the pattern. A third element of His ministry was to heal every sickness and disease among the people. Why did He do these miracles? Why did He heal every sickness and every disease among the people? He did so for two reasons: first, to validate his message. The miracles were what convinced them that He was of God. How else are you going to explain these supernatural miracles? So the first purpose was to verify the message. Jesus' second purpose in performing miracles was to demonstrate the loving tenderness of God's heart. Jesus touched people where they hurt and was sympathetic, kind, caring, and loving. Dr. Paul Brand writes this in his book, *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*: *"Jesus reached out His hand and touched the eyes of the blind. He touched the skin of the person with leprosy and the legs of the cripple. When a woman pressed against Him in a crowd to tap into the healing energy she hoped was there, He felt the drain of that energy, stopping the noisy crowd and asking, 'Who touched Me?' I've sometimes wondered why Jesus so frequently touched the people He healed, many of whom must have been unattractive, obviously diseased, unsanitary, and smelly. With His power, He easily could've waved a magic wand. In fact, a wand would have reached more people than just a touch. He could've divided the crowd into affinity groups and organized His miracles. Paralyzed people over there, feverish people here, people with leprosy there, raising His hands to heal each group efficiently en masse. However, he chose not to. Jesus' mission was not chiefly a crusade against disease but rather a ministry to individual people. He wanted those people, one by one, to feel His love and warmth and His full identification with them. Jesus knew He could not readily demonstrate love to a crowd, for love usually involves touching."* What was the ministry of Jesus? It was expository teaching. It was preaching, proclaiming, and it was healing people with the affection and tenderness of His care that manifested the heart of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(2269\)](http://GTY.org) – [The Harvest and the Laborers](#) – [TOC](#)

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Day 136

## How to Court Spiritual Disaster

As you take in the Word of God and learn more about the Scripture and more about the Word of God, your knowledge begins to give you a higher standard, and your conscience will hold you to that high standard. To reject the voice of conscience is to court spiritual disaster. You cannot reject the voice of conscience with impunity. It's a sad and tragic thing when a whole society of people endeavors to do that. When, as a Christian, your mind becomes fully enlightened by the truth of God's Word, your conscience will then hold you to live at that highest standard. As you grow in your understanding of God and His glory and majesty, Christ, and Scripture, the standard just keeps getting elevated, and your conscience will hold you to that standard. When you violate that, your conscience will warn you. When you violate the standard, it will condemn you. It will trigger feelings of shame, anguish, regret, consternation, anxiety, and even disgrace. Sometimes it will make you weep, make you fall on your face, and make you plead with God for forgiveness. And that's as it should be. That's a fully functioning conscience reacting to the full knowledge of God's truth. On the other hand, when we know God's truth and obey it, our conscience will commend us, bring us joy, and affirm us. It will grant us peace, gladness, and contentment. You can find a myriad of counselors who will help you in the process of silencing your conscience. If you engage in such behavior, you risk nullifying your conscience through abuse. And you will twist your life, in some cases, so that it can't be made straight again. It is possible for both the mind and the conscience to become so defiled that they fail to distinguish between what is pure and what is impure. We see much of that in our world today. Conscience is not infallible. But it does respond to what you believe to be the highest moral standard, and that's why you have to get yourself in your Christian development to the place where your standard is biblical. Your Christian life is going to move ahead in large measure, depending on your conscience. To know the Word of God, to confine your Christianity and your beliefs to what is truly biblical, nothing less and nothing more, informs your conscience at the highest level and guarantees that it's going to speak to you in the way that it ought to speak. A regular diet of Scripture will strengthen a weak conscience. And a regular diet of moral evil will corrupt the conscience. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (47-5) – **The Soul's Warning System** – [TOC](#)

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Day 137

### **The Shepherd Metaphor**

Many people read the Bible as if it were a spiritual book, detached from history, events, people, consequences, and sequences. But this is all history. All the doctrine and theology we read in the gospels, as well as our Lord's great discourses, were, in a moment and an event, strategic points that spoke to that moment and that crucial hour. That's essentially true of this. In the ancient world, shepherding served as a metaphor that people in an agrarian society could understand. According to Psalm 80, it was very common in the Old Testament that God was the shepherd of Israel. Psalm 23 declares, "*The Lord is my shepherd,*" among other references. Israel was full of sheep and shepherds. Shepherds spoke of care, feeding, and protection. Israel's religious leaders were men who appointed themselves shepherds of Israel, but they were false shepherds. The truth is, they were wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus then launches into a description of how a

good shepherd conducts his life using this metaphor. A shepherd has his own sheep. He knows his own sheep. He not only has the right to lead and feed his own sheep, but he also has the responsibility to do so. At night, every shepherd would bring his sheep into the same fold. While they're in the fold at night, thieves and robbers may try to climb over the wall and fleece the sheep or even slaughter them. Therefore, a guard must stand at the door to safeguard the sheep. In the morning, the shepherd would come and call out his own sheep. The shepherd even stands at the door, requiring the sheep to walk past him in order to inspect and identify them as his. He knows his sheep. The sheep know their master's voice, and they follow him. The sheep will not follow a stranger. He then leads them to green pastures and still waters. When you look at the language in John 10:9, the reality becomes clear. Jesus said, *"I am the door; if anyone comes through Me, he will be saved."* This is a picture of the salvation provided by the true shepherd. All these images represent the doctrine of salvation. The divine Shepherd has His own sheep. The Father has given them to Him. The Father chose them before the foundation of the world. He knows them all by name, and he has the right to call them. He calls them by name; they know His voice and follow Him. They will not follow a stranger. That's salvation. The elect are in the world's fold. But the time comes to call them out, and the voice of the shepherd calls, and they hear that voice, and they follow that voice. This is irresistible grace; this is the effectual call; this is the divine call to salvation. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-53\)](http://GTY.org) – **I Am the Good Shepherd** – [TOC](#)

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Day 138

### **Why Some Reject God**

If you reject the true God, it's most likely because you don't want Him controlling your life. You don't want Him setting the standards and the rules and rendering the judgments, so you become your own god. Proverbs 14:9 says, *"Fools mock sin."* Scripture says that fools walk in darkness, cling to sin, are corrupt, abominable, self-sufficient, self-deceived, empty talkers, liars, angry, lazy, contentious, hypocritical, idolatrous, and self-destructive. They mock sin. In other words, they fail to give any weight to the destructive power of sin. How do you define a fool? Someone who rejects the true God; someone who becomes his own God or creates his own God, which is another way of worshiping himself; someone who then eliminates all that the true God has laid out and becomes a mocker of sin. Another characteristic of fools is that they corrupt each other. Proverbs 15:2 says, *"The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly."* They don't want to be alone, so they propagate their folly and their ignorance. The word *"fool"* appears in the book of Proverbs forty-two times. In a book about the wise, one would expect to find a contrast. Proverbs 1:7 says, *"Fools despise wisdom."* Proverbs 10:21 says, *"Fools die for lack of understanding."* The irony is that they profess to be wise. Remember, there are only two kinds of people in the world. The fools and the wise. So there are those who are in the category of the perishing and those who are in the category of the saved. According to the fools, the only way you can truly become wise is to become what the world thinks is a fool, right? A world of fools who think they're wise think you're a fool if you become wise; that's how twisted they are. We're not surprised that there is increasing hostility against the Christian gospel; there

always has been. The Scriptures are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation, which is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and from Scripture alone. Wisdom begins with the gospel. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) ([GTY171](#)) – **Walking Wisely in a Foolish World** – [TOC](#)

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Day 139

### **Transformation: The Nature of Salvation**

We all live between God's judgment and God's salvation. We live between divine wrath and divine mercy. That's what human history is. Human history is full of judgment. From the time of the Fall in the garden, judgment fell; death came. Human history is the chronicling of all of God's relentless judgments on the unrighteous and the ungodly. But at the same time, history is the story of God redeeming His people. So we find ourselves, along with everybody else in human history, living between God's judgment on the unrighteous and God's mercy on the righteous. God knows exactly what He is doing. 2 Peter 2:9 says, *"The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."* For example, God drowned the world and protected Noah and his family; God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and protected Lot. This division tells the story of human history, with the ungodly facing judgment and the righteous experiencing rescue and salvation. That's always been the dividing line in human history. Nowadays, there's so much divisive talk about race issues, but there's really only one race: the human race. Yes, there is only one humanity, but there are two families: the family of God and the family of Satan. 1 John 3:9–10 makes that very clear. However, since there is only one human race, the real division comes between the children of wrath and the children of mercy. They live in two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, which is the kingdom of God's beloved Son. The difference between the two is not superficial; it is profound and far-reaching, because salvation is such a radical transformation. The distinction between those in the kingdom of darkness and those in the kingdom of light is salvation. God not only affirms it to be true, but He also manifests it in the transformation of redeemed individuals. This refers to the significant change that occurs as a result of the salvation event. This event causes a dramatic and manifest spiritual separation from what we were. The difference between the description of the old self and the description of the new self is stark; it's massive. You go from operating in the futility of your mind, darkened in your understanding, excluded from the life of God, ignorant, hard-hearted, callous, sensual, and greedy, to a person who is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. This is a crucial message that evangelical Christianity often fails to convey. People who are saved are transformed. In John 10, Jesus says, *"I know My sheep."* Yes, He knows His children, and because they have undergone a transformation, His children also recognize that they belong to Him. Transformation is the nature of salvation. And if you haven't undergone transformation, you can't claim to be a Christian. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) ([49-21](#)) – **What's Wrong with Everybody?** – [TOC](#)

Day 140

## A Gift from Heaven

To be in the kingdom of God, you must be born from above. Jesus makes that very clear in John 3:3, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* *“Truly, truly”* means this is really new, and *“to see”* means to participate. In order to have that relationship with God, you have to be born from above. Something has to happen to you that is a work of heaven. The New Testament picks up on the reality of the new birth. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, *“If any man be in Christ, he’s a new creature, a new creation.”* 1 Peter 1:3 says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born from above to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* Later in that chapter, verse 23 says, *“You have been born again, born from above, not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”* That’s the new birth. This is something that you don’t contribute to. Jesus is using an earthly illustration to make a spiritual point that is unmistakably clear. Jesus is saying, *“You want to be in the kingdom? No contribution you have made or will make puts you in the kingdom. You have to be born from above. It has to come down from heaven.”* He doesn’t say, *“Well, you’re a good man; you’re a very religious man. Just say this little prayer. No. He says you’re at zero. Oh, you’re high up in the religious stratosphere, but with God, you’re at zero, and you need to be born from above, and that is a work of God.”* But how can that happen? Jesus answered, *‘Truly, truly, I say to you,’* – He says that again because this is new—*‘unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’* John 3:5. What does that mean? In the Old Testament, Ezekiel 36:25–27 says, *“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes.”* *“I will wash you”*—that’s the water. *“I will put My Spirit within you”*—that’s the indwelling Spirit. This is essential to Christianity: to participate in the kingdom of God, you must be born again from above. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(81-97\)](http://GTY.org) – **You Must Be Born Again – [TOC](#)**

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Day 141

## The Predicted Messiah

Matthew, chapter 1, records the most fascinating details surrounding the birth of Christ. But by the time we get to Matthew chapter 2, the birth of Christ is over. The heart and soul of the second chapter of Matthew tell us that Jesus, in the events around His birth, fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Now, that is very important for us to understand. So Matthew assembles those specific prophecies, starting at the end of chapter 1 and going through chapter 2, in order that he might strengthen his argument that this child is indeed the promised King. Having established that Jesus is the promised King by virtue of His lineage, Matthew then turns to the virgin birth. He explains that Jesus had no earthly father. The Holy Spirit, not a man, conceived the child in Mary, making him the God-man. The Holy Spirit placed the seed in Mary's egg, which became the child that

grew in her womb and was born Jesus, the Son of God. Therefore, Matthew establishes Jesus Christ's credentials through His lineage and His virgin birth. By seeing the fulfillment of prophecy, Matthew further establishes Jesus Christ's credentials as the promised King and Messiah. He then proceeds to the next set of credentials for the Messiah, highlighting His fulfillment of specific prophecies. Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. That is miraculous. No human being has ever been or will ever be born without a father, without a human source for the sperm that impregnates the egg. Only one person has ever been born without a male contribution, and that is Jesus Christ, virgin-born. He is man because He comes through Mary's womb; He is God because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy took place six hundred years later. That brings us into this whole realm of prophecy. As we transition into Chapter 2, we find the prophecies to be quite remarkable and often overlooked. They have to do with locations. The first prophecy that Jesus fulfills has to do with Bethlehem. The second prophecy that He fulfills has to do with Egypt. The third prophecy that He fulfills has to do with a place called Ramah, and the fourth prophecy that He fulfills has to do with a town called Nazareth. This is a complex of prophecies that makes us certain that the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, cannot be somewhat coincidental. There are just too many prophetic aspects. God must have orchestrated it, and the association of Christ's birth with Bethlehem, as Micah predicted, Egypt, as Hosea predicted, Ramah, as Jeremiah predicted, and Nazareth, as numerous prophets predicted, provides ample evidence that this is indeed the prophesied and predicted Messiah. Scripture makes it so abundantly clear that Jesus, who came into the world in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, fulfilled every specific prophecy required to be the Messiah. Yes, He is the King, Redeemer and Savior. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(80-163\)](http://GTY.org) – **Jesus' Birth Fulfills Prophecy – [TOC](#)**

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Day 142

### **Two Miracles of Holy Anger**

Jesus does a miracle that, on the surface, may not appear as a miracle because nothing really obviously supernatural takes place as it does in a resurrection or a healing, or the casting out of demons, or the creation of wine as we saw in the first miracle. But this is nonetheless a miracle. It is a miracle of mammoth proportions, and I will try to help you understand that. Anger, not compassion, drives this miracle. The first recorded miracle, which initiated Jesus' miracles, took place in a private setting. It happened among family and friends in the little town of Cana, where He turned water into wine. The second miracle, however, is not a private miracle because tens of thousands of people participate. At the beginning and end of His ministry, He did two miracles, essentially the same thing—He threw the entire mass of humanity at the Passover out of the temple. Both of those were miracles of holy anger. It was an age-old problem of hypocrisy in Israel—false religion and superficial worship. At the first Passover, He cleanses the Temple to publicly begin His ministry. At the last Passover, He cleanses the Temple to publicly end His ministry, then becomes the Passover Lamb. This, however, is the first act of His Father's business. They have turned His Father's house into a place of business, but He's going to do His Father's

business. In the temple, there was business and extortion. Jesus sees all of this: selling sacrificial animals, changing money, and totally polluting His Father's house. They're irreverent. It should have been a place of repentance, a place of humility, a place of worship, and a place of praise. Instead, it's a chaotic marketplace—abusive commerce and corruption marked that place. Nothing enraged Jesus with holy anger and fury like irreverence. And He took His most severe action in these two incidents in His life. This was divine fury. Jesus carried out the most severe actions of His entire life to combat hypocritical worship. He just drove them all out. It was just an unimaginable act of power. This was not an act of cruelty toward people. This was an act of judgment on a religious system. This miraculous power is crowd control, for which there is no human explanation. This is a preview of the power that Jesus has to judge. This is the loyal Son of God, and He is, first of all, loyal to His Father. According to Scripture, He will do this again on a massive scale during his second coming. But at His Second Coming, there will be death. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (43-9) – **Zeal for My Father's House** – [TOC](#)

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Day 143

### Worthy Testimonies

To say that any man is the Son of God is a grandiose statement; it must be supported, and so Mark begins immediately to give unmistakable testimony to the fact that his identification of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, is supportable. The Old Testament promised that a forerunner would come and announce the arrival of the Messiah. So Mark first gives us affirming testimony to the deity and Messiahship of Jesus Christ from the forerunner, John the Baptist. In Mark 1:10 and 11, Mark takes us immediately to Jesus' baptism, where the forerunner, the last Old Testament prophet and the greatest prophet who had ever lived up to his time, identified Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior, and the Son of God. The Holy Spirit identifies Him as the Son of God by settling upon Him to empower Him. Speaking out of heaven, the Father identifies and affirms Him as His beloved Son by saying, *"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* Jesus then gives testimony to His own authority in chapter 1 and verse 17 when He says to some fishermen, *"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* In verse 24, a demon also testifies to His identity. So, testimony from the prophet John the Baptist, testimony from the Holy Spirit, testimony from the Father, testimony from Christ Himself about His power to rescue men, and testimony from a demon as to the identity of Jesus Christ sum up the immediate evidence and testimonies for Mark's claim that this One known as Jesus is indeed the Messiah and the Son of God. It's fine to make those claims, but can Jesus sustain them? Can He demonstrate them? Can they be proven? Are there evidences for them? In verses 21–28, Jesus gives clear evidence of who He is in the synagogue by casting out that very demon who identified Him. Verse 25: *"Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet and come out of him.'"* Verse 26 says, *"He threw the man into a convulsion, and then the unclean spirit screamed with a loud voice and came out of him."* People were amazed. They said in verse 27, *"What is this? A new teaching with authority: He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."* So our Lord demonstrates His authority over the souls of men by saying, *"I will make you fishers of men. I will lead you to rescuing the souls of*

men.” And the Lord demonstrates His power over the spiritual realm of demons by commanding a demon who instantly obeys against his own will. By the time you get to verse 28, you have amassed a great deal of evidence from all different testimonies to the deity and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, *“News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.”* And the good news continues to spread throughout the entire world! Repent and believe!

[GTY.org \(41-6\)](#) – Kingdom Power – [TOC](#)

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Day 144

### What a Transformation!

Apostle Paul says, *“There is coming a transformation.”* We're going to be changed. You see, our earthly state is corrupt and mortal. We're susceptible to disease, injury, and death. It's inevitable. We are victims of our mortality. In fact, Paul refers to our bodies as bodies of humiliation. In this world, we are victims of the decay process. We are victims of deterioration, and we are in the process of dying. We live a dying existence. We continue to deteriorate until the ultimate breakdown, at which point we vanish. But Paul says, that's okay. It doesn't matter, because there's going to be a transformation. You're going to become incorruptible. No more decaying or dying. You're going to become immortal. Revelation 21 says, *“When that happens, death shall be no more.”* There will be no more sorrow, pain, sickness, or death. That's a great transformation. God is going to take this corruptible me, this mortal me, and reverse it, making me something that I never was. And all because I belong to Christ, incorruption and immortality shall be mine. Christ received His glorified body when He rose from the grave. I will receive mine, and you will receive yours when you rise from the grave. Do you know when I will get my glorified body? When I will have my resurrection? At the Rapture of the Church, when Christ comes to catch away His church, and for all those who have died, their bodies are going to be resurrected. If you're a believer and you die today, as a Christian, your body is buried or burned, but your spirit will go to be with Christ. *“Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”* 2 Cor 5:8. Then, when Christ arrives, your body comes out of the grave. When Jesus Christ returns for His church, glorified bodies will emerge from the grave to join the spirits who have been with Him, and we, the living and remaining, will join them to meet the Lord in the air. That's resurrection day. That's the real Easter for us. How does it happen? 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us, *“The last trump, and the dead in Christ rise.”* When is this going to happen? The Bible says we don't know the day or the hour, but we believe Jesus Christ is coming back very soon. The end times will be characterized by lawlessness. What more significant word could describe our day? So, Jesus Christ not only conquered death, but also made a way for me to conquer it. For those who love Jesus Christ, someday corruption will stop and a new eternal, incorruptible body will be ours, with no more dying, sickness, or pain. What a transformation! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(1203\)](#) – Abolishing Death: The Ultimate Triumph – [TOC](#)

Day 145

## A Wicked Generation

Only months before the cross, we find ourselves hearing Jesus speak very definitive words. Luke 11:29: *"As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, 'This generation is a wicked generation.'"* That was Jesus' final statement to Israel. The nation, led by their leaders, has rejected him. People have adhered to their belief that Satan is the one who empowers Him. They have rendered their verdict. From now on, in His ministry, His words to the people are largely judgmental. *"This generation is a wicked generation."* The term "wicked" refers to Satan, the embodiment of evil. We could still make the same statement about our country today. This is a wicked generation. This generation is undoubtedly the most wicked we have ever known. It seems to be, at least on the outside, far more wicked than in the past, and getting more wicked all the time. Not only is it wicked, but it also displays its wretchedness with pride. Ours is a very wicked generation. Sin, corruption, filth, and perversion abound. They are propagated, promoted, publicized, and paraded. Our nation is increasingly immoral, blatant, and flagrantly ungodly. We could apply this statement to our own generation. But it is actually shocking that Jesus made this statement about His generation, because by normal human standards, this generation should have been the most moral, the most religious, and the most God-conscious of any society. This is not a godless culture that Jesus is living in. This is not a group of people who flaunt their wickedness. He is not referring to pagans who display blatant evil, idol worshipers, Gentiles, or lawbreakers. He is speaking of the most religious, the most moral, and the most God-sensitive people of all, the Jews, who in most cases were fanatically concerned about keeping the law, the law of God, and their tradition, who were intensely religious so that the whole of their lives were under the control of their religious duties, obligations, and ceremonies. Repeatedly, Jesus affirmed that on the outside, they were clean. They were moral. However, on the inside, they harbored a spiritual and internal wickedness that was extremely dangerous. In fact, they were in a more dangerous state than those that are openly immoral. You see, when it comes to responding to the gospel, immorality is preferable to morality. When it comes to responding to the gospel, it is preferable to be irreligious rather than religious. This is because those who are moral and religious tend to believe they are good, feel they have gained a measure of favor with God, and often become self-righteous and self-satisfied. And the essence of the gospel's initial message is that you are a sinner, and you are wretched, and there is nothing in you that is good, and your morality counts for nothing, and you're a doomed sinner, utterly without any ability to alter that. And they hated Jesus for His indictment and diagnosis, which revealed their true spiritual condition. So what did the religious do? They killed the Son of God. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (42-162) – The Last Sign – [TOC](#)

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Day 146

## Let the Light Shine

Jesus tells us a story in Luke 8:16: *"Now no one, after lighting a lamp, covers it over with a container or puts it under a bed, but he puts it on a lamp stand in order that those who come in may see the light."* What's He talking about? What does hiding the light from the lamp illustrate? Hiding the light of God, the gospel, from those around us. Nobody who lights the light will then extinguish it. You light it up so others can see. Nobody for whom God has lit the light is going to want to conceal and cover it. They're going to want to shine the light on everybody around them. That's why I say that true Christians listen evangelistically. They listen with the intention of proclaiming. They listen with the intention of informing others. We know that one of the great evidences of a person's conversion is their immediate passion to tell everybody what has happened in their life. These disciples had heard the truth. They had lit the lamp, so to speak. And Jesus is now saying, *"You're going to spread it, aren't you? You're going to let everybody see it, because if you're a real disciple, if you have a good and honest heart, if you're a true follower of Me, you're going to respond to the truth evangelistically. You're going to take it in, and your immediate response will be that you want to take every opportunity God provides to give it back out."* False disciples are content to extinguish it. In fact, they're not likely to care about witnessing, evangelizing, or communicating the gospel to anyone. They might even be embarrassed about it. They might even be reticent to do that. Or, in order to continue engaging in the worldly activities they still yearn for, they may not even want anyone outside the church to know that they're Christians. God didn't give us the truth to hide. Our desire to let the light shine is the evidence of God's mighty work in our hearts. This is our great commission: *"To go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* Mark 16:15. So let the light shine! Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(42-106\)](http://GTY.org) – **Be Careful How You Listen** – [TOC](#)

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Day 147

### **Total Depravity**

The State of Theology, a survey of evangelicals, took place a couple of weeks ago. People were defined as evangelicals based on their belief in the Bible, Jesus, the gospel, and their sense of responsibility to spread the gospel to others. So if you believed those four things, you were considered an evangelical. Interestingly enough, the survey indicated that many evangelicals have absolutely no idea what they believe, in stark contrast to Puritans and other responsible believers. Here are some of the results: 65 percent of evangelicals agreed that everyone is born innocent. 55 percent of evangelicals agreed that the Bible is not literally true. 55 percent of evangelicals agreed that God accepts worship from all religions. And perhaps most tellingly, 43 percent of evangelicals agreed that Jesus was a good teacher but not God. This is tragic. This is so far from Puritan understanding or anybody with a sound sense of doctrine that it's shocking. How did we come to have *"evangelicals"* who don't hold the essential beliefs for salvation, let alone identify as true evangelicals? How did we get here? Well, this is the legacy of leadership. Hosea said *"Like people, like priests."* Jesus also said that people don't rise above their teachers. The evangelical church has been so busy over the last 30 years trying to find ways not to offend non-Christians, trying to find methods to take the offenses out of the Christian message,

designing approaches to nonbelievers that don't create hostility or rejection. In doing that, it has created an evangelical movement that is void of the truth. Why do they do this? This is due to the gospel's inherent offensiveness. Contrary to popular belief, nonbelievers actually despise the gospel. Therefore, in order to highlight the differences between the Puritan interpretation of sound doctrine, which aligns with our own, and the prevalent beliefs within the evangelical movement, I will retrace our history and discuss the most despised Christian doctrine. The disciples knew one thing for sure: the world hated Jesus Christ. Why all the hate? Jesus answered that in John 7:7. *"The world hates me because I testify that its works are evil."* There is the most hated Christian doctrine. Theologians call it the doctrine of total depravity. It declares that the whole human race is sinful. That's what generates the hate, because fallen man has to find a way to tolerate himself, and the dominant sin in fallen man is pride, and he will create an image of himself that escapes ultimate condemnation. He will spin a web of delusions about himself, saying that he is good and noble—anything but that his deeds are evil. But this hatred was especially compounded because Jesus was saying to the Jewish religious people, *"You are evil not only in your general life, you are evil in your religion, which is just another form of your wickedness."* They hated him because they could not accept that they were sinners. So they killed him. Jesus' doctrine of total depravity is what generates hatred in fallen man. Repent and believe! [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) (81-132) – **The Most Hated Christian Doctrine** – [TOC](#)

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Day 148

## The Nature of Sin

How is sin described in the Bible? First of all, sin is defiling. It is not just an act of disobedience; it is internal pollution. It has been likened to filthy rags. Even at his best, man's actions are essentially akin to filthy rags. So sin is defiling; that is to say, it stains and pollutes. Secondly, sin, in terms of its nature, is rebellious. It isn't just that you slip up and break the law of God. It is that you have a desire to rebel. Sin is so rebellious that it is God's would-be murderer. Sin would dethrone God and ungod God and replace Him with the sinner. Sin is defiling, but it is also blasphemously rebellious. Thirdly, sin is ingratitude. The sinner is literally engulfed in the goodness of God. It is God, after all, who's given us all things. It is God who gave us life and breath, food, beauty, joy, and love. It is God who's given us all the goodness of life: knowledge, wisdom, fun, laughter, skill, health, and relationships. But a sinner abuses his privileges. Sin is such gross ingratitude, and Romans 1 says it is characteristic of the sinner to not be thankful to God. Additionally, sin is incurable. Man does not have in himself the capacity to do anything about his sin. He is sin to the bone, and he cannot alter that. In other words, sick—sin sick from head to toe and utterly incurable, like a leper. John Flavel, another Puritan, said, *"All the tears of a penitent sinner, should he shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation, cannot wash away one sin. The everlasting burnings in hell cannot purify the flaming conscience from the least sin. Nothing in this life, and nothing in all of eternal hell, could expiate sin from the sinner. In hell, men pay an unpayable debt. There is no human cure for sin, not good works, not reformation, not education."* Sin is also deadly because the Bible says the soul that sins shall die, and the wages of

sin are death. It's amazing knowing how hard people work at sin. This defiling, rebellious, ungrateful, and constant violation of God's law, which is incurable and deadly, is still the choice of men. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. They eagerly pursue sin. People go to hell sweating and make amazing efforts to sin. This is all they know. This is all they're capable of. This is life. This is where they seek their pleasure and fulfillment. Sin, then, as to its nature, is defiling, rebellious, ungrateful, incurable, and deadly. To what extent does sin impact individuals? This virus infects the entire human race. And nobody escapes sin's nature on their own. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(62-17\)](#) – **The Cardiology of Worldliness** – [TOC](#)

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Day 149

### **A Sad Miracle Story**

Jesus healed a man who had been ill for 38 years. And the Jews were persecuting Jesus because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. They couldn't care less whether that man could now walk. They were ugly and indifferent. They had nothing but contempt for that man, believing that he was in that horrible condition because God had punished him. But more importantly, they have nothing but contempt for Jesus and what He has done. They want to know who did this. Ignoring the miracle, they ask, "*Who told you that you could carry your bed on the Sabbath?*" Yes, it is a miracle story, but it's a tragically sad miracle story. This narrative does not revolve around a man who received healing and subsequently converted to faith. The story revolves around a man who, after receiving healing, turned against Jesus. And if that surprises you, keep it in mind. Almost all the people Jesus healed rejected Him because He healed massive numbers of people, and there were only a few at the end. That is the damning power of false religion. The healed man sided with those who had invented ridiculous prescriptions for behavior on the Sabbath. That triggered persecution, which then proceeded all the way to the cross. Our Lord is confronting the very core of Jewish legalism: the Sabbath. He challenges the traditions with His authority as Lord of the Sabbath and as God. He heals a man. He warns him about living in sin and the need to turn from sin, and the man goes right back to being loyal to his damning religion and turns Jesus in. The Jewish leaders successfully transformed him into a son of hell, according to Matthew 23. That's what they did. What about you? Do you love Christ? Do you accept Him as your Lord and Savior? Or are you captive and loyal to a false religion that is led by false teachers who tell you lies and make you a prisoner of their deception? I warn you, as Jesus warned. There's only one hope of salvation, and that's in Him. Reject Him, and you are lost forever. And the punishment is forever outside of His presence. The man made a wrong choice, a tragic choice—a kind of microcosm of Judas, who encountered Jesus, saw His power, heard His words, heard His warning, and chose hell. It's a tragic story, and that sets the tone for the rest of the gospel and the rejection to come. Repent and believe! [GTY.org \(43-25\)](#) – **The Damning Power of False Religion** – [TOC](#)

Day 150

## Here Was a Man

*“Here was a man—a man who was born in a small village. The son of a peasant woman. He grew up in another small village. Until He reached the age of thirty, He worked as a carpenter. Then, for three years, He was a traveling minister, but He never traveled more than two hundred miles from where He was born, and where He did go, He usually walked. He never held a political office. He never wrote a book. He never bought a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. And He never set foot inside a big city. But yes, here was a man. Though He never did the things that you’d usually associated with greatness, here was a man. He had no credentials but himself. He had nothing to do with this world except through the divine purpose that brought him to this world. And while he was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. Most of his friends ran away. One of them denied him. One of them betrayed him and turned him over to his enemies. Then he went through the mockery of a trial, and was nailed to a cross between two thieves. And even while he was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property that he had in this world. And that was his robe. When he was dead, He was taken down from the cross and laid in a borrowed grave provided by compassionate friends. More than nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today, He is the centerpiece of the human race. Our leader in the column to human destiny. I think I’m well within the mark when I say that all of the armies that ever marched. All of the navies that ever sailed the seas. All of the legislative bodies that ever sat. And all of the kings that ever reigned. All of them put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth so powerfully, as that one solitary life. Here was a man!”* These are not the words of John MacArthur. This song *“Here Was a Man”* is a tribute to Jesus Christ, and its lyrics are a reflection of Johnny Cash’s Christian faith. The song’s lyrics are a poetic and introspective exploration of Jesus’ life and teachings. I look forward to seeing both John’s in heaven. Repent and believe! – [TOC](#)

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The Truth in Love,

*Mark Paul*

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