



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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## Worship Music

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[Josh Garrels](#)

[Children of the Earth-](#)  
[Josh Garrels](#)

[Zion & Babylon-](#)  
[Josh Garrels](#)

## Prayer

Lord, I want to serve You with the highest level of excellence. Forgive me for times when I have tolerated a low standard in my life, my business, my ethics, my church, or my ministry. Nothing in the world is more serious than the services I render in Your name, so help me do it in a way that glorifies You. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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1 AFTER THIS, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day (birthday). 2 And Job said, 3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night which announced, There is a man-child conceived. 4 Let that day be darkness! May not God above regard it, nor light shine upon it. 5 Let gloom and deep darkness claim it for their own; let a cloud dwell upon it; let all that blackens the day terrify it (the day that I was born). 6 As for that night, let thick darkness seize it; let it not rejoice among the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months. 7 Yes, let that night be solitary and barren; let no joyful voice come into it. 8 Let those curse it who curse the day, who are skilled in rousing up Leviathan. 9 Let the stars of the early dawn of that day be dark; let [the morning] look in vain for the light, nor let it behold the day's dawning, 10 Because it shut not the doors of my mother's womb nor hid sorrow and trouble from my eyes. 11 Why was I not stillborn? Why did I not give up the ghost when my mother bore me? 12 Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should suck? 13 For then would I have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then would I have been at rest [in death] 14 With kings and counselors of the earth, who built up [now] desolate ruins for themselves, 15 Or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver. 16 Or [why] was I not a miscarriage, hidden and put away, as infants who never saw light? 17 There [in death] the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. 18 There the [captive] prisoners rest together; they hear not the taskmaster's voice. 19 The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master. 20 Why is light [of life] given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, 21 Who long and wait for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, 22 Who rejoice exceedingly and are elated when they find the grave? 23 [Why is the light of day given] to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in? 24 For my sighing comes before my food, and my groanings are poured out like water. 25 For the thing which I greatly fear comes upon me, and that of which I am afraid befalls me. 26 I was not or am not at ease, nor had I or have I rest, nor was I or am I quiet, yet trouble came and still comes [upon me].

### Chapter 3

And finally Job spoke up. Job begins to curse the day of his birth.

Job opened his mouth, and he cursed his day (Job 3:1).

Notice he didn't curse God; just the day in which he was born.

Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a boy that is conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for the night, let darkness seize upon it (Job 3:3-6);

You notice the repetition of darkness, blackness, darkness. This is Hebrew poetry. It's that repetition and all of a thought and of an idea with amplification upon it.

Let that night be solitary, let no joyful sound come therein. Let them curse it as the curse of the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, and have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day: Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid the sorrows from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? (Job 3:7-11)

Why wasn't I stillborn?

why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of her belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should nurse? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, With kings and counselors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light (Job 3:11-16).

Why didn't I die where it would all be over with? I would have just been quiet. I would have never experienced anything.

There [he said] the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it does not come; they dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, which can find the grave. Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came (Job 3:17-26).

Now let me point out, first of all, that you should not take the statements of Job in his misery and seek to develop from them biblical doctrine. For the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses, and others have taken these statements of Job here and they have developed the doctrine of soul sleep out of these statements of Job where he declares, verse 17, "There the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor." He's talking about the grave. "Why didn't I just die where even the wicked is at rest? Where nobody is troubled. Where there's silence. Where there's nothing." Remember now the context. This is Job, he's crying out of the misery of his own experience. These are not God's inspired truths that he is crying. These are his endeavors to understand God and the ways of God. Job is actually challenging God. "Why did God ever allow me to live? Why wasn't I born dead?" And the reason why you cannot take these statements of Job as he is talking about death where there is no trouble, where everybody is at rest and peace and so forth, the reason why you cannot take these for biblical doctrine is verified in the thirty-eighth chapter of the book of Job. For after the vain endeavor of man to understand what was going on, God finally came on the scene.

And in the thirty-eighth chapter, when God began to speak to Job, God began to question Job. He said, first of all, the first question, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2) Now what is expressed in Job is the greatest knowledge of the day. The philosophies of men and the wise men of that day. And God speaks of all of their speculations of being words without knowledge, which indeed they were. All of this counsel lacks real knowledge to it. It did. None of them really understood what was really going on behind the scenes. "Who is this that darkeneth words of counsel without knowledge?" And then in verse 17, God said to Job, "Have the gates of death been opened unto you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of the death?" (Job 38:17) Okay, Job, you've been talking about hey, I wish I were dead where everything is quiet, where there is no trouble. Where there are no problems. Everyone rests together. God said, "Wait, have the gates of death, have you been there? Do you know what's going on there? You know, you're talking, Job, with words that have no knowledge. You're talking of things you don't know about. You haven't been there. You don't know that that's the case."

Therefore, if you want to develop doctrine concerning what transpires to a person when he dies, you cannot go to the words of Job or to the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes. Nor even to the Psalms, because many times these men were speaking of things of which they did not know. Expressing the ideas, the thoughts, the wisdom of man and the limited knowledge of man. If you really want to know what happens beyond the grave, you better go to the words of Jesus. Who knows better than He? If you want to develop doctrine of what happens when a person dies, you have to go to the words of Christ or to the inspired words of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. God rebukes Job because he's talking about something that he knows nothing about. Talking about death and what he imagines what would be if he were dead. But God says, "You're wrong."

Now there are those blessed, misguided saints who are just as ignorant as Zophar and Bildad and Eliphaz who take the scripture where Job declared, "What the thing I feared, the thing I feared is come upon me," and they say that was Job's problem. He lacked faith and he was fearing these things all the time, and you know, what you say is what you get. And so Job had this fear which shows the lack of faith. Had he had enough faith, this never would have happened to him. That's as stupid and ignorant as Eliphaz or Bildad or any of the rest of them that were trying to understand Job's condition. These men showed the same ignorance. Only they have no excuse for their ignorance because God had told us in the beginning what was going on. At least Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar, they have an excuse for their ignorance because they weren't able to read the first chapter of Job to know what was really happening. But it is, well, I can't get into that. But it is so...it's not biblical exposition. It is sheer stupidity to use this scripture, to say, "Well, you know, the person, because you were fearing this, this is why it happened to you and all. The thing that you fear is going to come upon you." That is not true. You can look at David and he said, "I know that one day Saul is going to kill me." That's a negative confession, Dave. What you say is what you get. No, Saul didn't kill him. You don't have to be worried about making some negative confession. It isn't that God is waiting and listening and you make some negative. "All right, you said it so I'm going to do it." What kind of a God is that?

In the same token, you can make a positive confession for something that is not good for you and God is gracious enough not to do it for you. You don't control God, and please don't try. The world is in enough of a mess now. And it would be even worse if I were the one that began to take over and ordered the things that were going to happen.

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries, 1979-1986)



"Salvation: Part 1" J. Vernon McGee

When we come to the doctrine of salvation, a great many folk think that we've come to something very simple, something we know all about. May I say this, and I want to say it kindly, but I think it should be said: In Southern California where perhaps more gospel is preached than in any other area of the country today, there is more confusion and cloudy presentation of the gospel. One day I listened by radio to a lady preacher, and she used quite a few of the common Christian clichés that we all use, pious phrases which are acceptable to people, but in attempting to declare the gospel, this dear lady didn't even know what it was! She was entirely confused as to the gospel and to what salvation really is. Frankly, the gospel is something on which there is a great deal of confusion. How tragic that is!

We're going to center on some important words in this section for the simple reason that if we know the meaning of these words and can make a sharp distinction among them, then we will be able to understand something about salvation.

The thing that keeps a great many people from witnessing is not the method so much as it is not knowing what to say. That is, they do not know how to present the claims of Christ and to be clear on the gospel. Oh, my friend, this is one place we should be clear! Following you will see a list of certain words, and no two of these words mean the same thing. Yet each one of them sets before us one of the facets of our wonderful salvation:

Atonement..Substitution..Redemption..Propitiation..Reconciliation..Regeneration..  
Justification..Faith..Repentance..Assurance..Sanctification

Now, friend, if these words are new to you, don't shy away from them. By the time we finish this book, you will see how simple and how wonderful they really are.

#### Atonement

First of all, I want to deal with the word atonement. The Hebrew word for atonement is kaphar, and it only means "to cover." That's all in the world atonement means. I realize that there has been an attempt to simplify it by making a play on words, by calling atonement "at- one-ment." May I say that though that concept may be there, it is not the meaning of the word at all, because the word means "to cover." And it is strictly an Old Testament word.

You do not find the word atonement anywhere in the New Testament. Now, I'm sure that somebody's going to counter this statement and say, "Wait a minute! I remember reading it over in Rom 5:11: 'We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement' [KJV]. You see, it's there."

Well, if that is how your Bible reads, the word atonement ought not to be there. If you check the original Greek, you will see that the correct translation is the word reconciliation and not atonement at all. Atonement is a word that does not occur in the New Testament because God could not forgive sin on the basis of animal sacrifices. He merely let the people bring the sacrifices previously because they were types or prefigures, pointing to Christ; and on their part it was an act of faith, and God accepted that and covered their sin. But there was never any merit in the sacrifice per se. When you get to the last book of the Old Testament, God says through Malachi, "Away with your sacrifices; I don't want them." In other words, God was saying, "Do you think I'm interested in your offering up an animal? I'm not interested because you've missed the value of it, you've missed the meaning of it, you've missed the intention of it. I intended it to teach you something."

We're definitely told that the sacrifices in the Old Testament never did take away sin:

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. (Heb 10:4)

That's a clear-cut statement, isn't it?

Back in the Old Testament, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away a person's sin. Every instructed Israelite knew and understood that the little sacrifice he was bringing was pointing on to Christ.

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man [the Lord Jesus], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:10-12) The Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself, and every sacrifice in the Old Testament foreshadowed Him. And that's what Paul meant in Rom 3:25 when he wrote of Jesus:

... whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.

What does he mean by the "passing over" or remission of sins that are past? Does he mean your past sins, my past sins? No. He has no reference to that. It's a chronological word meaning every sin committed before Christ's death on the cross. God forgave those people who brought the sacrifices in faith, when they realized that the sacrifice was prefiguring the Lamb of God who was going to take away the sin of the world, all the way down from the sins of Abel.

Now suppose you had met Abel as he was approaching the altar to offer that little lamb, and suppose you had stepped up to him and said, "Abel, do you really believe that the blood of that little animal is taking away your sin?"

Abel happened to be a very intelligent man. Remember, he was the son of Adam, and he had a higher I.Q. than any of us. I believe people were much more intelligent in the beginning than we are today. And this brilliant man Abel would have said, "No, I don't think the blood of the little animal takes away my sin."

"Then why are you doing it?"

"Well, God commanded me to do this temporarily, as this little animal is pointing down to the expiation, to the sacrifice that God will make in His own time. And I'm coming, merely by faith, offering this lamb—it's only a type of that which is going to come."

Those in the Old Testament understood that the blood of bulls and goats did not take away sin but pointed to the One who was going to take away sin. So when God forgave Abel, He forgave him on credit. When God forgave Abraham, He forgave him on credit. Sin wasn't paid for. He said, "I'll forgive you, Abraham, for doing this, but your sin has not been paid for." Christ came and died on the cross, Paul said, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. (Rom 3:25)

You see, when Christ died on the cross, He paid for all those sins of the past. All of them were paid for when our Lord was made sin for us. So back in the Old Testament the proper word is atonement, meaning "to cover." God merely covered them until Christ came, and He blotted them out so that today when you trust Christ your sins are washed away and remembered no more. God removes them. They've been paid for through the death of Christ upon the cross. So, friends, atonement is only an Old Testament word.

Unfortunately, there have been theologians who have used this term, and many do it today. Especially in these half-liberal seminaries they use this term to speak of all that Christ did, and they call it the atonement. And you'll find that there are many theories of the atonement. Let me mention several of them which are being preached today.

#### Martyr Theory

I listened to a liberal preacher here in Southern California as he preached on the death of Christ. He told about how He died on the cross, and someone said to me, "Dr. McGee, he preaches the Cross of Christ just like anyone who is fundamental in his doctrine." You

see, this person wasn't able to make the distinction. What the preacher was actually saying was that Christ died as a martyr. He emphasized the point that He was poor and helpless and hopeless here and that He stood for a cause. And because He stood for what was right, He was put to death—and the preacher considered that to be the value of the death of Christ. There was no mention that He died as a substitute or that His death was necessary to satisfy the holiness and justice of God. That was not mentioned. It was only that His death was an awful thing—and it was! He depicted it in all of its gory detail so that many people said, "My, isn't he sound in the faith to talk about the death of Christ?" No, he was merely presenting Him as a martyr.

Now did Christ die a martyr's death? Absolutely not! That's one thing you cannot get from the Word of God. Will you notice several things: Jesus made basic doctrines very clear. For instance, He said that He was not a martyr: No man takes it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father. (Joh 10:18)

May I say, if you feel sorry for Him, don't do it. Remember that as Jesus was being led to His crucifixion, among the great multitude following Him were women mourning and lamenting Him. He turned and said:

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. (Luk 23:28)

The interesting thing is, He was in entire control at the time of His crucifixion. After all, He predicted it:

You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified. (Mat 26:2)

And today the Lord Jesus Christ is still in control.

Now let's continue through verse 5 and see something very interesting here:

Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people." (Mat 26:3-5)

In verse 2 Jesus tells His disciples that He is going to die. According to the record, this is the sixth time He has told them. Six months before this, beginning at Caesarea Philippi, He announced His impending death. And now He sets the time of His death. He tells them that He will die during the Passover. But the religious rulers had other plans—notice they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people." The very ones who put Him to death said that they would not crucify Him during the Passover; He said that He would die during the Passover. When did He die? He died during the Passover. You see, Jesus, not His enemies, set the time of His execution. He is in command.

And to Judas that night, at the Last Supper, after he had been singled out as the betrayer, our Lord said, "What you do, do quickly." So Judas rushed out of the place and went directly to the religious leaders to inform them that Jesus was going to the Garden of Gethsemane, away from the crowds. Evidently he told them something like this: "If you want to take Him, you'd better take Him tonight. He's aware of our plot. He told me, 'What you do, do quickly.' He intends to leave. You'd better seize Him now." And that night they went out and arrested Him at midnight.

Now whose bidding were they doing? They were doing our Lord's bidding. He didn't die a martyr. I hope you don't have merely a sentimental feeling in your heart toward Jesus, as I'm afraid a great many people do. Jesus says, "Do not weep for Me." He did not die for that reason. He did not die as a martyr. In fact, I've heard the death of Christ likened unto a blood transfusion! It was not a blood transfusion. He didn't die for any such reason.

Now there's another theory that is actually called the "governmental theory." A Dutch theologian by the name of Grotius is the one who developed it. This theory holds that Christ died to show God's hatred of sin; that He did it to maintain the government of God. This is closer to the truth than any we've considered. He did die to satisfy the law of God. However, this theory becomes a brutal sort of thing. Jonathan Edwards held this theory, and this is the reason for his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." It is said that when he preached that sermon—he was a tremendous orator—the people in his audience would hold onto the edges of their seats to keep from falling into hell. He made it really vivid! And one time when he preached that sermon the fire department went by, and in that day the engines were crude, smoking things, and there was absolute panic in the church where he was preaching.

May I say to you that the governmental theory does not reveal the love of God at all. And it is not what we believe the Scriptures teach. Actually this is not a theory of the atonement, although we list it as such. Rather, it is the truth of the atonement, if you want to call it atonement. Jesus Christ died as a satisfaction to God for the sins of man. And we're going to develop that truth as we move on because we believe that when He died on the cross there were some wonderful things that took place.

Substitution... There were a number of conspicuous accomplishments of Christ on the cross; a number of wonderful works were accomplished when Jesus Christ gave Himself up for us. The first wonderful accomplishment when He died on the cross was that He became a substitute for sinners. Back in the Old Testament God had already put down these great principles for His people. In Leviticus you'll find one of the axioms of God:

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. (Lev 17:11)

The life of the flesh is in the blood. It wasn't until the seventeenth century that William Harvey made the discovery that our blood circulates and that the life of the flesh is in the blood. And in our day we have institutions that maintain blood banks and send out pleas for donors. Why? Because the life of the flesh is in the blood. That's a great truth—and think of Moses putting down that axiom in his day when man had to wait several thousand years to make the scientific discovery that the life of the flesh is in the blood.

God said, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls." The blood of another had to be shed because it is a substitution for us. Therefore Isaiah could write: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (Isa 53:5)

When Peter quotes this, it's obvious that the healing is not physical. Peter makes it clear that Jesus Himself bore our sins in His own body: ...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—whose stripes you were healed. (1Pe 2:24) "By whose stripes you were healed!" What from? Sin! Jesus died a substitutionary death on the cross. This is a truth that is so difficult to get over to the human family! Even today so many pastors do not preach that Christ died a substitute for sinners! Just think of it! They say that He died for some other reason—one of the theories we have just dealt with or another. There are others out there. I did not mention all of the theories, by any means. But may I say to you that God was attempting to instruct His people, and He did it in many ways. The Passover was one of the ways. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: "On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year.... Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. (Exo 12:3, Exo 12:5-6)

Just look at how exact that language is. Each family was to have a lamb. But when God was telling them about the killing, He didn't say to kill them, He said to kill it, because the sacrifice spoke of One, even of Christ. The exactness carried through even in the grammar. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.... For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.... Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.... (Exo 12:7, Exo 12:12-13) This was the first great lesson that these people had when God took them out of slavery. They were in Egypt, a land given to idolatry and, friend, they were idolaters themselves. Israel was so tied into idolatry that when they reached Mount Sinai, from the minute they got into the wilderness and Moses was gone from them to get instructions from God, the people wanted a golden calf to worship! Why would people who had been so wonderfully delivered by God do such a thing? Well, my beloved, because they had lived in Egypt all of their lives and had been worshipping idols. They were brainwashed people. And so they wanted an idol:

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." (Exo 32:1)

They wanted something they could see, something they could bow down before. That was the custom under which they had been brought up in Egypt.

God is instructing these people concerning the way He's going to forgive their sins. So He says, "This night is going to mark the beginning of months, the first month of the year for you. This is the night I will take you out of the land of Egypt. Now I want it made clear to you, I'm not taking you out of the land of Egypt because you are superior to the Egyptians. You're not." Later, after forty years in the wilderness, Moses wrote in the Book of Deuteronomy that God had said, "I knew all the time you were a stiff-necked people. I didn't bring you out because of any merit in you." In Exo 2:24 He gave Moses two reasons He came down to deliver them. He "heard their groaning," and He was moved with compassion toward them. The second thing was, He "remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

And, my friend, when God saves you and saves me, it's not because He sees any good in us at all. He sees only that we are sinners, ungodly and lost. Although He sees no merit in us whatever, He remembers His covenant with His Son; that is, if the Son would die in our stead, He would save those of us who would trust Him: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Joh 3:16)

In other words, God says, "That's the covenant I made. When you recognize your sinfulness and trust My Son to be your Savior, I will save you. On what basis? On your great need and to keep the covenant I have made with My Son." Jesus died to be your substitute, friend.

Likewise the people of Israel had to have a substitute. God didn't redeem them from Egyptian bondage because they had signed on the dotted line and promised to do a little bit better than they had been doing. Honestly, they did worse! They were bad in Egypt. They were terrible in the wilderness. He didn't deliver them because they had promised to reform. Instead God said, "This night is the first month of the year for you. You can mark this down—this is the Passover feast. Tonight you are to take a lamb, kill that lamb, take it to your home, roast it, feed on it, and share it. Then I want you to take the blood of that lamb outside your home, sprinkle it on the two doorposts and on the lintel above the door."

Then God said, "Tonight, I am coming to Egypt. And when I come to a house, I am not going to knock on the door and say, 'I'm wondering if you would like to be delivered, and if you will promise to serve Me if I will lead you out of Egypt.'" He didn't do that. The only basis on which God spared the firstborn of any family in the land of Egypt was this: "When I see the blood I'll pass over!" That little lamb died, and they were delivered, teaching that when Christ died, you and I are delivered just like the people of Israel were delivered that first Passover night. The lamb prefigured Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Christ's death is what redeemed them, and Christ's death is what redeems you and me. He died a substitution for sinners. When He went to the cross, He took my place. He took your place. The Lord Jesus Himself put it like this: The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mat 20:28) Over in the fifth chapter of Romans is the finest exposition of the love of God in the Bible. Joh 3:16 is not an exposition—rather, it's merely a declaration. But this is the exposition: For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:6-8) My friend, when He died upon the cross, He was a substitute for you! And He was a substitute for me! What happened to Him at that time should have happened to us—we are guilty, He is innocent. That's important to see. Don't feel sorry for Him. It was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the Cross. He did it willingly and gladly. He doesn't want your sympathy, He wants your faith. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2Co 5:21) In other words, for you and me down here, Christ became sin in order that you and I might have His right in heaven! That's the only basis on which God receives sinners. You see, mankind thinks too much of himself. Honestly, what could you contribute to heaven? May I say to you, I would dirty up the place if I got up there, and you would too. You wouldn't decorate heaven, and your talent is not needed up there. God doesn't have to have you. But you and I have to have Him. He's saving us, my beloved, and He finds all the explanation in Himself. When Christ died, He died a substitutionary death so a holy God could reach down and save us. God gave the children of Israel a day of atonement, Yom Kippur. And again the blood of an animal sacrifice was taken into the Holy of Holies, and Israel was accepted for another year. But this Man—He didn't offer many sacrifices. He doesn't go in every year. Once, at the end of the age, He offered Himself. He went into the Holy of Holies for you and for me, and He is there for us at this hour.

My friend, I don't know about you, but the only thing I'm counting on is Christ. I am not counting on Vernon McGee's performance. Now maybe you thought I was. No, my friend, I am counting on Jesus Christ, my Lord. He is the substitution for sinners. That enables me to go to bed at night and sleep. I'll be honest with you, I don't care what happens—life or death. And I sometimes think, the way things are going, I'd like not to wake up here but to wake up in His presence. My hope is in Him. I am not trusting Vernon McGee for anything—not anything. Christ is my substitute.

Are you trusting Him today? Is He really a substitute for you? You don't need to feel sentimental about His death. He died for you. And you are the fellow to feel sorry for if you have never trusted Him. Because, my friend, what happened to Him will have to happen to you if you don't trust Him. But He died, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, the One who is holy for the unholy. He took my place. He took your place. That's a wonderful truth! Are you trusting Him today? Is He really a substitute for you? You don't need to feel sentimental about His death. He died for you. And you are the fellow to feel sorry for if you have never trusted Him. Because, my friend, what happened to Him will have to happen to you if you don't trust Him. But He died, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty, the One who is holy for the unholy. He took my place. He took your place. That's a wonderful truth!

Redemption....Our Lord's death is not only a substitution for sinners, it is a redemption toward sin. The psalmist wrote: [He] redeems your life from destruction. (Psa 103:4)

That's what He came to do. He came to redeem us. Now redemption is a Latin word. It actually means "to pay a price." Our Lord came, He said, for that purpose. Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." (Joh 4:34) Then He could say in His great high priestly prayer when He turned in His report to God shortly before His crucifixion: I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (Joh 17:4)

On the cross He shouted, "It is finished!" What was finished? His work of redemption was finished forever. What is redemption? Redemption means to pay a price. It means that something has been sold and is either owned by another or it is in slavery and needs to be bought and brought back to the rightful owner. We have that pictured in the Book of Ruth, which is the reason, by the way, I wrote my book on Ruth, Romance of Redemption. I graduated from a Presbyterian seminary, and it was a good one, don't misunderstand me—some of the best scholars in America were teaching in that seminary, both liberals and conservatives. But during my years there I felt like the liberals were winning the day, because redemption was presented as a cold business transaction as though Christ paid with His blood, cash on the barrelhead, and that was it. Well, that is not it. Redemption is a love story, which is the reason the Book of Ruth is in the Bible.

Ruth was a poor widow. She was a foreigner. She was shut out, an outsider, and in her poverty she had to go out in the fields and glean. Then somebody she had not seen before came to the field one day, and he owned that field. His name was Boaz, and he fell in love with her. Immediately he wanted to redeem her according to the law of the kinsman-redeemer:

If ... one of them dies and has no son, the widow ... shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall ... take her as his wife.... And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother.... (Deu 25:5-6)

Ruth had lost the property that had belonged to her husband, and she herself was in danger of being sold into slavery. Because Boaz loved her, he set out to pay the price to redeem her and to redeem her property according to the law in Lev 25:25:

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative [kinsman-redeemer] comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.

Redemption is always toward sin. That is, you and I have been sold under sin. We today are as Rom 6:17 tells us, "slaves of sin." And the Lord Jesus said: Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. (Joh 8:34)

Now the Lord Jesus redeemed us, which means He paid a price. That price was His blood, in order that He might buy us, if you please, out from under the slavery of sin. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (Joh 8:36)

He bought us to set us free. Therefore we have redemption in the blood of Christ. That was the price that was paid.

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Gal 4:4-5)

Any way that you take man, he is a slave. If you put him under the Mosaic Law he can't keep it, and he needs to be redeemed from under law. He needs to be redeemed from sin. And the Lord Jesus is the Kinsman-Redeemer. He came down here and took upon Himself our human flesh. On the cross He took our place, and He paid the price, which was His own precious blood.

Now here's a poor man who has lost his property, but he's got a rich uncle. He sees his rich uncle one day, and the rich uncle says, "How much will it cost to redeem it?" So he writes out the check and pays the price. It's wonderful to have a rich uncle when you've lost your property!

Not only that, but will you notice: Suppose a man sold himself into slavery—he had lost everything, and that's all he could do. So he sold himself to his rich neighbor and he's a slave, expecting never to be free again. But then suppose one day he looks down the road and sees his rich uncle coming and taking out his checkbook to pay the price of his redemption!

May I say, friend, this is a fine illustration of our redemption. You and I live in a world that has been sold under sin. This creation today is groaning and travailing in pain; we have lost our property. Adam, you see, was given dominion over the earth, but he lost it. The human family has absolutely lost its inheritance. Not only that, we were sold in the slavery of sin. And when Christ came to this earth, He came to pay a price in order to redeem us, to buy us back.

There are several Greek words that are used. The agora was the ancient marketplace, and the word agorazo means "to go and buy in the marketplace." Another word, exagorazo, means to go and buy in the marketplace with the idea that you are taking it out of the market. Some folks may have a fruit stand, so they go to the wholesale market, buy there, and then take the fruit out to their market and up the price a little so they can make a profit, you see. They don't buy it because they love the stuff. They buy it to sell it.

Suppose a man goes down to the agora, and he sees an antique or something else that he likes very much, and he says, "I want to buy that for myself." Suppose he sees a slave, and he wants to buy that slave, not to sell him, not to make money, but to use him. May I say, exagorazo is also used for redemption.

Now here is another word altogether: lutroo, which means "to pay the ransomed price." In the Gospel of John we find still another word, eleutheroo, which means not only to go and buy and not expose for sale again, but to buy and set free. And that's the reason the Lord Jesus said:

Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (Joh 8:36)

He did not buy us in order to make us His slaves. And that's one reason I don't like the song that says something like this, "I gave My life for you—what have you done for Me?" When He saves you, He puts you under no obligation. He saves you to set you free. Then if you are free, you have the freedom to go to Him as Paul did. In effect, Paul said, "I'm free from the law. I'm now a free man! But I went to Jesus Christ and I yielded to Him, and I said, 'I want to be Your slave.'" And Paul called himself the bondsman of Jesus Christ. Why? Because he did it voluntarily.

If you want to be a servant or slave of Christ, you will have to initiate it. When Christ saves you, He doesn't put you under any obligation—that's what grace is. If you are under obligation to pay Him back, then it is not grace, you see. God saves you by grace. And grace creates no debt whatsoever. When God saves you, you are free. And the glory of it is you can go in your freedom and yield to Him.

My friend, you'll never know what real joy is until you have yielded to Him. Just as we came to Him for salvation, I believe we can make this transaction: "Lord Jesus, I'm coming to yield to You. You made me free, but I want to be Your servant, Your slave forever."

In the state of Alabama years ago, before the Civil War, a beautiful Negro girl was being exposed on the slave block for sale, and a very brutal slave owner was bidding for her. Every time he made a bid she winced. Standing at the edge of the crowd was a wealthy plantation owner who was a Christian, and he saw what was going on. So when it looked as if the brutal slave owner might get this girl, the plantation owner stepped forward and raised the bid so the other man couldn't touch it. The plantation owner bought her, signed the necessary papers, and started to walk away, then noticed that she was following him. He turned around and asked, "Why in the world are you following me?"

She said, "Sir, you bought me."

"Oh, you don't understand. I didn't buy you for a slave, I bought you to set you free."

She stood there stunned for a few moments, then all of a sudden she just dropped to the ground and said, "I'll serve you forever!"

A service of love, you see, is the kind of service you and I can render to Christ. He won't have it any other way. He redeemed you to set you free. And now you can choose to yield yourself to Him. That's redemption. Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!

Propitiation....

Now we are coming to another wonderful word: propitiation, and propitiation is toward God. It occurs seven times in the Greek text of the New Testament. The reason it may not occur all seven times in your Bible is because in several places it's not translated correctly into the same English word propitiation. For instance: Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation [reconciliation in some English translations] for the sins of the people. (Heb 2:17) It should be propitiation here, for it is that in the Greek.

First of all, let me say that the word propitiation is absolutely void of any pagan meaning. If you have read any Greek mythology or read anything concerning the pagan religions, or if you've read any of the stories of the Greeks, you will recall that even Agamemnon had to make a human sacrifice to appease the gods on Mount Olympus. They were perceived to be angry, therefore a sacrifice had to be made, and that was called a propitiation. In fact, the Greeks used it like that.

Well, may I say to you that the word as used in the Scripture does not even hint of being used to appease a deity. It doesn't convey the idea that God is angry and you've got to do something to win Him over. It doesn't have that thought at all.

Therefore, I want to turn to several passages where this word occurs, and let's look at them. First, ... being justified freely [that is, without a cause] by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. (Rom 3:24-25)

The word propitiation actually means "place of propitiation." I want us to see something in Hebrews, where we'll find again this word in the Greek text. It is not translated propitiation here but with another word, a very vivid word. I'll move back and quote a few verses before the occurrence of this word since the writer to the Hebrews is describing the tabernacle. He says:

... behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat [here is our word propitiation].... (Heb 9:3-5)

Propitiation means "to be a mercy seat." That's the picture. Notice again the passage in Romans for just a moment:

... whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed. (Rom 3:25)

This is the tabernacle. Outside was the laver and also the brazen altar.

The Holy Place. The entrance faced east. Inside there was the golden lampstand on the left (south), and over on the right (north) the table of showbread, and then before the veil was the golden altar, which speaks of prayer.

The Golden Altar. It is interesting that the writer to the Hebrews puts the golden altar inside the Holiest of All. The Old Testament places it in front of the veil, so why did the writer to the Hebrews put it inside where the ark is? Because when we come to the New Testament the veil which represented the body of Christ is torn in two, opening the way into the presence of God, and Christ has gone up to heaven. This altar of prayer is where the priest went to pray. And that's where our Lord is now. He is in heaven, making intercession for us. Properly, the altar of prayer belongs there now.

The Holiest of All. Behind the veil was the ark. And inside the ark there were three things—the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. On top of the ark, which was shaped like a box, there was this very highly ornamented cover with two cherubim of gold over-shadowing it. Once a year the high priest went inside, and we are told that the Shekinah Glory was there, indicating that God dwelt there. This is where they were to meet with Him, and the high priest went there once a year and sprinkled blood on the ark's cover between the cherubim. And this is the throne of God where the presence of the holy God is. Now it is a mercy seat. It's where God can extend mercy to His people. That which was a throne of judgment before has become a mercy seat now.

Let's refer again to Rom 3:25. The apostle Paul, speaking of Christ, wrote, "Whom God set forth as a propitiation [mercy seat]." Christ on the cross served as our mercy seat. We know that as He hung on the cross, blood was running down His face from that thorny crown, blood was coming from the nails in His hands and in His feet. It is John who mentions the propitiation, by the way. He and Paul are the only two writers who do that. John tells us at the time of the crucifixion: One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. (1Jo 19:34-35) We know that this made a tremendous impression on John because, when he wrote his first epistle, he made this statement again. He didn't forget about this incident: This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. (1Jo 5:6) Without going into detail, we will skip verse 7 since it is not in our better manuscripts: And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. (1Jo 5:8) John was present at the crucifixion. Remember it was there at the cross that the Lord said to him, "Behold your mother!" In other words, "You take care of My mother," and John says, "When I was there I watched, and I was very close." It seems that at the trial of Jesus, John got in closer than anyone else. And he's also closer at the crucifixion than anyone else. He said in effect, "While I was watching, blood was coming from His head, blood was coming from His hands and His feet. Finally, this soldier came up to make sure He was dead, and he ran a spear into His side." John says, "Out of that side there came water and blood." May I say that John is going to tell us that our Lord was the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. It was Christ, Paul says, "whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith" (Rom 3:25). Jesus Christ on the cross shed His blood.

I think that every drop of blood went out of His body and that His whole body was covered with His blood. That, my friend, is the mercy seat for you and me. Because He shed His blood, taking your place and my place, a holy God now is able to extend mercy to us. And that's the meaning of propitiation. It means simply that Christ is our mercy seat.

Now I want to follow through on what John has said. Let's look at that for just a moment: And He Himself [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins. (1Jo 2:2)

John is the one who says, "I was there and I saw that soldier put the spear in His side, and there came out blood and water." And he adds, "These three bear witness on earth and they agree." The Spirit and the water and the blood—and that blood speaks of the fact that He shed His blood that He might be the propitiation for your sins and my sins. This is tremendous! "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world."

Notice something here which is very important: John said this: "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin." Well, John, I wish I could say I didn't sin, but I do. Now what shall I do? And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1Jo 2:1) And after all, John says, "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins," referring to our sins as Christians. I need a mercy seat every day, don't you? I don't want justice from God. I don't want Him to treat me on the basis of legality because I would come off a loser. I want mercy from God. That's the thing I want from Him—mercy. And that is the thing both you and I need. He is the propitiation for our sins. John doesn't stop there: ... and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (1Jo 2:2)

There is a mercy seat today for every person on top side of this earth. And people are not lost because of the fact they are so bad and cannot do enough to gain God's forgiveness. That's not the reason. They are lost because they won't go to the mercy seat. There's mercy for every person. God is merciful today. And the reason He is merciful is not because He's just bighearted and sort of sentimental. No, He is not that. God is holy and righteous. And He loves. God loved long before He did anything about it—but God is not only love, God is holy. And though He might love a sinner, He cannot take the sin into heaven. But then Christ died and was covered with blood. So He is the mercy seat. A holy God now can extend mercy because Christ paid the ultimate penalty for our sin.

And that's not all. He wants to mention it again to us: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." He loved us, and what did He do? Did He fling open the door of heaven and say, "Everybody, come in"? No, He cannot do that because He is holy. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [to be the mercy seat] for our sins. (1Jo 4:10) And so today a holy God is prepared to extend mercy down here to lost men and lost women. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. (Heb 8:12) God says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness." How can a holy God do that? Because there is Christ on the cross, covered with blood, His precious blood is poured out, and there is a mercy seat. The throne of God, where a holy God would judge you and judge me—that very throne at this moment extends mercy to us. Oh, my friend, God is not a police officer waiting around the corner to give you a ticket or to find fault with your conduct. God is not demanding. He is saying to the world tonight, "I have My arms outstretched toward you, and I am prepared to extend mercy to you because Christ died. There is a mercy seat for you." Now let's see that in action. Turn with me to the eighteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel, starting with verse 9, our Lord spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector [a publican]. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself...."

It's sort of like Hamlet's soliloquy. In Shakespeare's play, Hamlet goes out and talks to no one but himself:

To be, or not to be, that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing, end them? To die, to sleep—

No more, and by a sleep to say we end

The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep—

To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come....

And so on. He's just talking to himself. And when a soliloquy is done by a fine actor, with expression, it's tremendous! But may I say that the Pharisee's prayer was a soliloquy. Our Lord says, "He prayed thus with himself." He didn't pray it to God. He had a big time patting himself on the back and, in essence, said, "What a fine actor I am!" And an actor was what he was. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God [although he addresses God, he is not really talking to Him], I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

**I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luk 18:11-12) Now that’s what a lot of people brag about today. But, you see, that kind of talk didn’t get anywhere, didn’t get out of the rafters, and it did not get to God. My friend, you never get to God when you go to Him and tell Him how good you are and all that you’re doing for others. No one gets to our holy God that way. Then will you notice, a publican, a despised tax collector, was there. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (Luk 18:13)**

**The only thing is, he didn’t actually say, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Literally, he said, “O God, if there was only a mercy seat for me to go to!” You see, the Pharisee was the fundamentalist of that day, and he was quite separated. Well, listen to him, and know that everything he said was true. He said, “I do this,” and he did do it, friend. And he said, “I’m not like this publican,” and he wasn’t. But he sure was proud, and he was depending on his works. He was depending on himself, not recognizing he needed to have mercy from God. As you know, most people—your neighbors and my neighbors—don’t think they need mercy from God. Oh, my friend, we all need mercy from Him. He is the propitiation for our sins. For those of us who are Christians, He is the mercy seat for our sins. And He is the mercy seat for the sins of the whole world.**

**But this publican stands way off and he beats his breast. He won’t even look up. He says, “God, I’m a poor publican. I have no access to that mercy seat yonder in the temple. If there was only a mercy seat for me to go to!” Why did he say that? Because when he became a publican he denied his people. When he denied his people, he denied his God and his religion, and he no longer had any access to the mercy seat in the temple of that day. Therefore when he went to the temple to pray, he couldn’t claim mercy there. He was pleading, “O God, if there was only a mercy seat for a publican to go to.” And the Lord Jesus Christ said, “That fellow went down justified.” Why? Because the Lord Jesus right there and then was on His way to make a mercy seat for him.**

**And our Lord has made a mercy seat for you and me. Today we don’t need to ask God to be merciful. My friend, He is already merciful! What can you do to make Him merciful? Do you think you can shed a few little tears and win Him over? Do you think you could promise to do some good little thing to persuade Him? My friend, what do you want Him to do? He gave His Son to die for you. Don’t you know that when Christ died on the cross He paid the penalty for your sins? You can’t add anything to that. He is holding out His arms to you. Don’t ask God to be merciful—claim it, my friend! Claim it!**

**That’s the way I stay in fellowship with Him. Bad as I am, I have to go to Him constantly and say, “Lord, I need mercy. Oh, I need mercy.” He hasn’t run out of it yet, and He has enough for you. In fact, He has enough for the whole world. Jesus Christ is the mercy seat for the sins of the whole world. Oh, how we need to get to that mercy seat! Have you been there recently?**

**Reconciliation...We have seen that propitiation is toward God. Now we’ll see that reconciliation is toward man. *Katallasso* is the Greek word, and that means “to change thoroughly” or “to change completely.” In the classical Greek it meant to change from enmity to friendship. Reconciliation is strictly a New Testament doctrine. Back in the Old Testament, the word is always atonement, which does not even have the connotation that reconciliation does in the New Testament. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that God is reconciled. That is, God is not changed completely. You see, God is immutable—God never changes. That’s the error of the wicked. A great many people would like to believe today that the Hebrews had a crude idea of God, that according to the Old Testament concept He was a God of judgment, but that now in the New Testament era He is not a God of judgment. May I say this: The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament, and He is the God of the present hour. God has never changed. He doesn’t have to change. He never makes mistakes. He doesn’t learn things. He didn’t learn something today that He did not know at the beginning—He is immutable. He never changes. So this idea that you can change God is a delusion, friend. Reconciliation does not apply to God, it applies to man, but God brings it to pass. This is the thing I want you to understand: For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Rom 5:10) Let me repeat, nowhere does it say that God is reconciled. It says that God has reconciled the world. That is, God through the death of Christ has changed the world in reference to Himself. No longer is God looking at the world as being a place that He must move against in judgment immediately. That’s the reason He doesn’t move in today. God’s attitude toward the world now is that He has reconciled the world to Himself. He has not changed, but He, by the death of His Son, has changed the world to Himself so that today He can reach down and save. Look at this again. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” In other words, Paul is saying that when we were enemies God gave His Son to die for us, and instead of judging us, Christ bore the penalty. Now God wants to deal with us on a different basis altogether. He says to us, “I am reconciled to you.” That’s what Christ’s vicarious death accomplished. That is the reason a holy God doesn’t strike out today and judge this world.**

**Somebody asks the question, “Why doesn’t God do something today? It seems like He would do something about the frightful conditions in the world.” Well, the reason is simply this: God is reconciled to the world, and He is not willing that any should perish. His arms are outstretched to the world, and He’s saying to it, “I’m not demanding anything, I’m not asking anything. I am reconciled to you. I would like for you to be reconciled to Me.” And reconciliation is always toward man.**

**Let’s look at 2 Corinthians 5, for this is the great passage on reconciliation:**

**Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. (2Co 5:18-20)**

**Friend, this is what the gospel is and the gospel is nothing else but this. The gospel is not God asking you to do something. He is not asking you to jump through a hoop or to come up to His standard or to do this or to do that. God is now saying to a lost world, “When**

Christ died, I reconciled the world to Myself through the death of My Son. My message to you is the gospel that was preached to you. And that's what you believed. And that's the way you were saved."

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved.... For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (1Co 15:1-4)

That, my friend, is the gospel.

Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, speaking to a class of seminary students, used to put it like this: "You never preach the gospel, young men, until you give people something to believe. The gospel is something to believe, not something to do."

When man sinned back in the Garden of Eden, that wonderful fellowship which God had enjoyed with man was broken; broken in two ways. God, because He is a holy God, had to turn away from this disobedient child of His, this rebellious one. And man in his rebellion turned away and ran from God. They were separated. Then what happened? When Christ died on the cross, God turned around to the world. He brought the world around and put it in a different relationship. Now He is saying to man, "Be reconciled to Me. I'm satisfied with what Christ did for you on the cross. Are you satisfied? Will you accept it? Will you be reconciled to Me?"

Today those who have accepted it declare, as Paul the apostle says, "We are ambassadors." Ambassadors? Yes. An ambassador is kept in a country as long as that nation is maintaining relationships. God has not called His ambassadors home. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." The gospel is not your getting God to do something, or promising God you will do something, nor your doing something for God. The gospel is what God did when He gave Christ to die, and you are reconciled when you agree with God that what He did was right.

You see, the death of Christ satisfies God. Does it satisfy you? When God and man meet at that place, there is fellowship again. We meet about the person of Christ, and now God says, "This is My beloved Son." And you come and say, "Yes, He's my Savior." You and God have met now, and there's fellowship, there's agreement, and through Christ you are brought back into a relationship with Almighty God.

May I say, that's the only way you can come to God. You can build your own little altar, your own little system, and you can say, "Well, I like to do it this way," and you can do it that way. But, friend, the Cross of Christ is the only place where God says that He will meet any of us. That's the reason the Lord Jesus, when He was here, said:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (Joh 14:6)

In other words, "I'm the way. God has reconciled the world to Himself through Me, and He wants you to be reconciled."

The other night I couldn't sleep, so I read a review of a new book on psychiatry—not that I thought I needed it, but I felt maybe I ought to read it. In it the writer confesses that he's a layman and knows very little of theology, but he admits that the great difficulty with the human family is guilt. And this psychiatrist writes that because man has sinned, he has a guilt complex. The doctor admits he knows little about the Bible but then says he doesn't believe in a cheap salvation, one without some sort of works—this thing of just coming to Jesus. He suggests that to appease our consciences we should perform some flagellation of the flesh or make some sacrifice.

Oh, what little he knows about what Christ did on the cross! And when you know that, you do not consider it a "cheap" salvation. It cost God everything. It's an expensive salvation! It's His precious blood He shed in order that there might be a mercy seat to come to. And when we come there, we find out He is reconciled. You don't have to do something to win Him over. You don't have to do something to make Him favorable toward you. Christ did that. And you and I, we just come as sinners—like that poor publican described by our Lord in Luke 18—recognizing that we are sinners. And we do not even have to say what he said, "God, provide a mercy seat for me. I cannot go to the mercy seat in the temple. I am shut out." Thank God, no one is shut out today. Not one of us is shut out. I do not know who the worst man in the world is, but let me say this to you: he could come today to God and find mercy and find that God is reconciled to him—but he must come. Because otherwise there is only judgment. Judgment is coming, but today God is reconciled. And He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe 3:9) God is longsuffering. He is patient. I do not think He will strike out of the heavens today. He might, but I don't think He will. He is infinitely patient because He wants people everywhere to be reconciled to Him. We have a wonderful Savior, do we not? We have a wonderful salvation, do we not? How wonderful to know today that God is not angry. He is not finding fault. He is not hard to please. He is saying, "Just be reconciled to Me. I gave My Son to die for you in order that you might be saved."

You can come, there is mercy with the Lord.

( Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 761-762)

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