

VOLUME THREE

PRECIOUS  
BLOOD

THE TABLE OF THE LORD

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# Precious Blood

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# A Memorial

Open your Bibles to Acts 1:9 in the New Testament. In the earlier verses, Jesus gave his parting comments before He ascended into the heavens and the promise that the Holy Spirit will come.

***“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. [He just went up and disappeared into the clouds.]***

***And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up [Let's face it; I probably would have done the same thing, and you would have too. Put flesh and blood on it.], behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;***

***Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? [In other words, “Jesus already told you and gave you instructions about what to expect. Why are you still here gazing up?”] This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”***

We have too many gazers in the Christian world, not just looking up but looking all around for His return. There is nothing wrong with looking for His return. I teach we should get ready for it and get others prepared for it. I expect it even in my lifetime. If not, I am reasonably sure it will be shortly after that. In the meantime, we have work to do. We have the Commission to fulfill. We have too many gazers and not enough people on the front lines announcing not only what Jesus did, but what is about to happen that will catch this world unprepared for an event of all events—His return. While we are actively waiting for His return let us keep remembering and announcing what He did while He was here. 1 Corinthians 11:24 tells us,

***“And when he had given thanks, he brake it [scratch out it], and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.***

***After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it [scratch out it], in remembrance of me.”***

***Remembrance.*** What He did for us. If you have listened to any of the communion messages, you already know the benefits we received when He spilled His blood and broke His body on our behalf to take on the sin of the world as the unblemished lamb prophesied for centuries upon centuries before His arrival. It is noticeably clear what the Greek word *remembrance* means. It is a memorial, the memory, of the greatest sacrifice of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He sacrificed His own life. He experienced death, but He also resurrected, so it is the memory of the greatest sacrifice, death, and resurrection. But there is something else too. It is a memorial or a memory also of His return. So, we have the death, the resurrection, and the return. It is a trinity within itself, a memorial of His death, resurrection, and His return as seen in verse 26,

***“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show [or ye announce in the Greek] the Lord's death till he come.”***

To repeat, it is a memorial of His death, His resurrection, and His return. There are three things we remember at this table: not just the death and resurrection, but also His return. If you do not

believe in His return, why even believe the first two? The Greek word *death* in the above verse is clear and has two possible definitions; a physical death, which most people only remember, but also death to sin, which is the greatest memorial that benefits mankind. The memory of the greatest thing that ever happened to humanity. The death, a physical death because it had to happen that way, but also the death to sin. This does not mean we will not sin any longer. It means that even if you are growing in Christ, you will find yourself sinning, so it is the battle between the old man and the new man now governed by the Spirit. He not only died a physical death which was needed as the unblemished perfect sacrifice that was required, but His death also signifies that there was the death to sin. Circle *remembrance* in verses 24 and 25. It is a memorial to His death, which was a death to sin and the resurrection to a new life, and when this is all over, and His return, which He promised us would happen. If you believe in the first two, why would you not believe in the last event that is still yet to take place?

Let's look at the United States of America for an example. We have all kinds of memorials in Washington, DC that are an essential part of our culture. Other countries have their own memorials for different events. Here in the United States of America, we have the Washington Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, even the Vietnam Memorial, and there are others not only in Washington, DC. Then there are worldwide visual reminders, not only in this country, such as corporate logos. A famous one everyone recognizes is Nike. Everyone has seen the McDonald's golden arches. Coca-Cola is another typical example. How about Disney and Mickey Mouse's ears? They are all reminders about what something is, its purpose, and even what the future holds in some cases.

Christians in the New Testament have reminders or symbols, such as the fish. Another symbol is the dove and the cross. There are also memorials in the Old Testament. How about the rainbow after the flood. That is a memorial. Anyone can see it whether you are a believer or non-believer. Then we have the Ark of the Covenant and Jacob's well. The list could go on and on.

So, you understand? Marking something as a memorial is nothing new in society. In the New Testament, the Lord's Supper is a memorial instituted by God in honor of Jesus Christ when you understand what *remembrance* means in Greek. The Greek word is *anamnesis*. God established this memorial in honor of Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us because of our sin.

In addition, the Lord's Supper is not just a memorial; it is a celebration. Jesus Christ did not remain in the grave. He came out! And He is alive. Furthermore, He is not only alive, but He will also return some day and someday soon. Every time we go to the table of the Lord, we proclaim His future return. That is why it says in verse 26,

***“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye announce the Lord's death [physical death and death to sin] till he come.”***

We remember His death, but we should also announce to the world, as it states here, that we have faith, and we are confident (*pisteuo*; the so-be-it faith) that He is alive and we are anticipating His coming again. If that is not something to celebrate, then I do not know anything we should celebrate.

Too many Christians say, “Where is Jesus? How come He hasn't come back yet?” They are gazers. They should be announcers and proclaimers. The very act of going to the table of the Lord is announcing that Jesus not only died a physical death and put death to sin, but He is alive. Not only did He come out of the grave, but He also coming back again. It is a celebration, and we should be expecting His return. Therefore, take the elements and proclaim, “Jesus, we do remember you. We will keep announcing the Gospel.” It is as clear as that. A completed Gospel, from the beginning to the end, including what is still yet to come.

We do remember you, Lord, and we do it every time we take part at the table of the Lord by taking this bread and wine, so take it with remembrance of Jesus, our savior.

# Acts of Love

Romans 5:6 identify the greatest act of love ever known to mankind and read,

***“For when we were yet without strength [or strengthless], in due time [or according to the time] Christ died for the ungodly.***

***For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.***

***But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

While we were yet sinners. It does not say, ‘while we were sinless,’ or ‘because we were sinless’; it says, ‘***while we were yet sinners, [He] died for us.***’ This idea that we must stop behaving badly for Christ to accept us is nonsense. It is heresy. It is not scriptural, and if you hear someone preaching that, or if you read it somewhere, run from that person as fast as you can, or throw that book in the trash, because it is heresy.

***“...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

***Much more then, being now justified by his blood [being made right with God], we shall be saved from wrath through him.*** [There is no second death for us, we have been saved from that.]

***For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***

***And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received atonement.”***

Or we have received a *divine favor*, or *divine position* with God, so we can now boldly come to his throne because Jesus made us right with God. That is the greatest act of love being described here in these verses when verse 8 begins,

***“But God commendeth his love toward us...”***

Five things happening in verses 6 through 11. Before I go through those five, I want to say that I do not like observing or looking at a dead Christ hanging on a cross. What do you think about when you see a cross, or when you see a dead Christ hanging on a cross? Now, many get emotional and become overwhelmed by all the physical and emotional suffering that our Savior endured for us. It reminds them of the scourging that took place; the beatings, the thorns, the shame He went through, the mocking He endured. It reminds us of all of that. Therefore, even though I do not like seeing it, because it reminds me of what Christ had to go through for me, I realize the importance of it.

The Romans were cruel, the Jewish religious establishment was cruel and heartless. Their hearts were hardened by hatred, and I believe they were possessed by evil beings to eliminate Jesus. But I have come to realize something wonderful happened at that crucifixion. You might be thinking, “How can you say that it was so horrible?” There was a lot more happening than the

eye could see at that time, but through God's Word we realize what took place. You see, because verse 8 reads: "***But God commended his love toward us,***" God was carrying out His plan for the purpose of rescuing mankind; that means you and me. And He knew His only begotten Son could provide everything that we possibly might need for salvation. There was nothing that we could have provided for ourselves, even though man has tried over the millenniums. Nothing that we could provide would lead us into that reconciled state of being made right with God with our sins removed, and our sins forgiven. God now sees us sinless, and that is nothing we could have done by ourselves. So, the cross reminds me of the rescue plan that God had for us. It reminds me that He provided everything for salvation, so we will analyze these verses.

First, write ***redemption*** as number 1. When you read these verses, you come to the realization that Jesus paid the full price of the debt that we owed because of our sins. Because of our transgressions, He paid the full price. The payment He made by hanging on that cross set us free from the bondage of sin. He set us free, that means He removed sin. As far as sin goes, we could never pay that debt, but Christ did. Christ paid that debt for us meaning sin no longer exists at the throne of God. God sees no sin because Christ removed our sins. Stamp that bill *Paid in Full* by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is redemption.

***Forgiveness*** is number 2. Forgiveness really means that we no longer face punishment. I am not talking about discipline in our life here on this earth. I am talking about *punishment*. We have been released from the punishment that we deserve.

***Propitiation*** is number 3. This is Christ's payment that He satisfied the Father by fulfilling His demand for justice. Christ stepped in and paid, which satisfied the Father, fulfilling his demand for justice, period. That is the simplest way I can describe it, and because of that, Christ was allowed to forgive us. It is through Him we are forgiven. God does not see our sins because they have been and will be removed.

Number 4 is ***justification***. That is what these verses are identifying here. Because of the sacrifice that Jesus paid, God the Father declares all believers trusting in Jesus Christ as *not guilty*. He has two stamps. The first stamp affirms—*Paid in Full*. The other stamp says *Not Guilty*. That does not mean we will never sin in this life, but it does mean we now have standing through Jesus Christ before the Throne of God, as one of His righteousness ones because we are made righteous by His precious blood. It is like a legal document, a declaration, that can never be removed or reversed. We are not guilty. Think about it, let that sink in. We are not guilty. My debt is paid in full. I owe nothing. Christ paid for it, and I am not guilty. That is justification.

Number 5 is ***reconciliation***. The sin barrier that separated us from God was removed by His Son Jesus Christ's death on our behalf. We are now His, God the Father's children. We now have open access to boldly come to His throne, and now have fellowship with Him. That is what Jesus has done for us. Now as much as I hate the crucifixion, when thinking about it, it was the only way that we could be rescued. While we were yet sinners, He rescued lost humanity. There was no other way because if there were another way, then the cross was a brutal act, a divine display of brutality. But it was the only way; the way prophesied in the Old Testament. It is what needed to happen for us to be reconciled back to the Father.

When you read these passages, put in the word's *redemption, forgiveness, propitiation, justification*, and *reconciliation*. This truly is the greatest demonstration the world has ever seen of how God loved us, and how His Son stepped in to rescue lost humanity and bring us back to the Father. That barrier of sin is what the first Adam started, and the second Adam removed. No barrier, the debt paid in full, and we are not guilty, therefore, we once again have fellowship with God.

Get your elements, and while we let this sink in, in the days and weeks to come, every time you go to the Table of the Lord in your own personal devotional time, remember what Christ has done for you. If you were the only person, I believe He would have done that for you, but He did it for lost humanity. The only way back to God is through Him. Works do not get you there. Being good does not get you there. Donating to charity does not get you there. Only Jesus can do that, and for that I am thankful. I am thankful that He provided me eternal life by giving up His, however, He did not stay dead but rose again to complete the victory over death.

It is the greatest act of love that mankind has ever seen. So, thank you Jesus; thank you for having your body broken and your blood shed for me.

***“Do this,”*** as Jesus said, ***“in remembrance of me.”*** And do this as often as you eat and drink. We are not to forget the price that was paid to bring us life, life eternal, so let's not. Just do not wait till I do it with you, do it on your own, and do it as often as you can. Focus on Him and remember what He has done for us.

With that, thank you Jesus for saving a wretch like me, and bringing me back to the Father.



# Be My Savior

Romans 8:1 begins,

***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh....”***

The words *There is* here is in italics meaning it is not in the original translation. Also, the word *therefore* is referring to what comes after what Paul wrote in Romans chapter 7:14-25, where he speaks about the struggle of our sin nature that still remains in us. Knowing that, this verse should read,

***“Therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh...”***

Most preachers explain the phrase '*after the flesh*' by listing sins that in their mindset would not lead you to pursue God and Jesus Christ to be filled with the Spirit. However, before I get to it, I want to read to you how even Paul struggled with this 'old man.' We all still struggle with sin, even if you are born again, and not the way it has been cheapened in the Christian world's definition, because they are really asking if you have repented of your sins.

In the New Testament, there is not one request or demand from Jesus or anyone else that you must repent of your sins to be born again. I challenge you to show me where it says that in the Greek, but no one has been able to. You cannot find it anywhere. All He asks us to do is to recognize that we are all wretched sinners, and we need a Savior. What He asked over and over, and the apostles too, is that we trust Him to do what He said He would do for us. That is, that He would be the sacrificial unblemished lamb who would go to the cross, suffer, and die as was prophesied in the Old Testament. Then, three days later He came out of that tomb and sailed off to meet the requirement to sprinkle His blood like the Old Testament high priests would do when they sprinkled the blood from the slain lamb on the mercy seat in the tabernacle. Christ was our tabernacle, and He sprinkled His precious blood on the heavenly mercy seat, and said to the Father, “All is fulfilled. You cannot look at them as sinners anymore because you must look at them through me and I'm righteous, I'm sinless.” That is why there is no condemnation when we are in Christ Jesus. However, Paul only wrote that after chapter 7:14-25, which tells us,

***“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”***

Because of Adam's sin, we were born with sinful blood, but Jesus was not, and I have given all the biblical explanations and reasons why. If you missed that teaching, you need to go back and listen or read it or this will all sound confusing. Verse 15 continues,

***“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”***

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*

*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

Paul bemoans that he did not do the good he desires, stressing the object of the act as the Greek language is phrased here, but did the evil he did not want. He is developing a concept of conflict between his new nature (the born-again nature) in which he rejoices, as seen over and over in Paul's letters, within the now new law of God. This is not an Old Testament Mosaic Law but what Jesus provided which captivates him. However, Paul has a problem; he still has that old nature in him. He does not have sinless blood that constantly believes there is something good that you can do to stay saved, but I have said repeatedly there is not. There is nothing good in us, and nothing that we can do because our part of the transaction would be in the flesh. It would be works thinking that God would pay close attention to whatever it is we do, and say, "It's pretty close so it provides salvation, or you can keep your salvation." Bull spit. There is nothing we can do. I can see Paul probably just raising his pen and saying, "Therefore now there is no condemnation. To heck with what I just said through verses 14 to 25," because that struggle will be there continuously until we die. Paul continues in verse 25 to write,

*"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."*

In this verse, Paul is speaking of the mind that recognizes it is not through his merit that he will be a servant to the law of God, it is through Christ. Any time the flesh is brought in it brings the law of sin, especially when it concerns anything to do with our salvation. That is why Paul writes, *"Therefore now no condemnation* [the Greek word here is *katakrima* which means *no judgment, no separation, no divide*] *to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh..."* The flesh is anything you think you can do to make yourself better in God's presence, but it is God that goes to work on us after He saves us. As soon as we start trusting Him on what true salvation means, He starts going to work on our life. He knows how we sin, but that is what the Holy Spirit is for. It guides us through His Word; *"faith cometh by hearing, and by hearing the word of God."* It is a continuous action. It never really ends, and He will mold us into the creature He wants us to be even while we are still in this sinful flesh and even that is His doing.

There are many flawed plans of salvation out there saying how sinners can reach heaven by their own merits or by combination of faith in Christ plus their own works and deeds, but you must understand, beyond any doubt, the truth of what Christ says about the gift of salvation, and it truly is a gift. Every day that goes by I am more astonished by it. This series is to help you arm yourselves with the necessary knowledge of God's Word for you to detect what I have been preaching against, which is probably the greatest weapon our enemy (the adversary) must keep people from having that connection. They talk about it, but they do not understand what it is

really like to be truly a free man in Christ. The truth shall set you free. The adversary wants to con people into living the Christian lifestyle (whatever the heck that is) without realizing they are more concerned about the lifestyle than salvation. They are as born again as the street rat running down the road.

There is more talk about being born again than understanding its meaning, so I have been trying to provide the truth because I know the truth will set you free. I have made it my mission. I have seen some messages that never realize that salvation and discipleship are two different things. I am sure it does not give me many friends in the Christian world, especially some of the churches and preachers that I have pointed out, like John Hagee. In this message, I will look at Joel Osteen, but they are not the only ones. It includes Charles Stanley, Kirk Cameron, and Billy Graham. For them, it is salvation plus their opinion of how you get salvation and how you keep it, but I have said if you cannot do good works to earn salvation what makes you think bad works will make you lose it or just not enough good works? This is going to offend some of you, but it also applies to my mentor, who preached grace without works, but he brought in discipleship, so in a sense he preached lordship salvation which means what you do after you are saved can make you lose your salvation. It is what it is, and I do not doubt their love for God. Do I think they were or are sincere? Absolutely.

I was accused once of preaching works for salvation. I read the message and many of you were as surprised as I was. Yes, God says we are sinners and no amount of good works or behavioral changes on our part can make us holy enough to enter heaven. That is why God sent His Son to pay for our sins. Jesus paid for our crimes by dying on the cross not just for me, but for all of us. His dead body was in the grave, but on the third day His dead body rose from the grave and is alive and well. In the instant you put your trust (*pisteuo*, one of the Greek words translated as *believe*, but *trust* is a better translation) and confidence in Christ's work of redemption, (without all the attachments from preachers) you are saved by Christ's grace. All He wants to know is that you trust in His death and resurrection and what it did for mankind and for you, personally. As soon as He knows that He saves you with no additional attachments. It is why there is ***"no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."*** Romans 8:2 tells us,

***"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free [or redeemed me] from the law of sin and death.***

***For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh [because no one could keep the law], God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:***

***That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."***

Paul did not say Christ had sinful blood but was instead in the likeness of sinful flesh. I am not concerned about whether you did this or that sin so therefore you are walking in the flesh. It is another subject that is handled differently. But you do not walk in the flesh as great compared to those things if you think you have anything to do with salvation. The only thing you participate in when the Spirit draws is your response to the drawing, when you start trusting and having confidence in what He said He did, the death and resurrection for our benefit. Pay close attention to what He is saying in John 6:47,

***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth [really trusteth] on me hath everlasting life.”***

This free gift He has given to anyone who responds to that drawing based solely on your trust in what Jesus did for you. It has nothing to do, I repeat, it has nothing to do with what you do for Him, nothing whatsoever. It is worth repeating again in Ephesians 2:8 and 9, which everyone should have memorized by now,

***“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”***

I know I have made this clear in message after message, but do you realize how free a person you are in Christ!? Have you stopped and analyzed it and said, “Everybody talks about freedom, but this is true freedom only Christ can provide.” I am saying, literally, Jesus saves you the instant you trust in what He did for you. That is it! Salvation is not what you do for God. Salvation is what God did for you and nothing of yourself. Works never enter the contract. The problem is the popular preachers that I mentioned have clouded the message of salvation, so you question whether you are saved or not. I am telling you if you question whether or not you are saved, which you only question based on the things that you do which brings works into it, then like Paul said you are guilty of boasting about what you have done. I have said that these preachers and many others like them keep you guilty, keep you questioning your salvation, keep you wondering whether you are going to make it in or not because of the things you did, mostly based on failures.

I pointed out David and the adulteress affair he had with Bathsheba. He did not want to get caught in his sin, so he sent her husband (a soldier in David’s army) into the most dangerous part in the battle, likely to be killed. He was killed to cover up David’s sin, but Nathan the prophet came later and pointed it out. He was surprised, but God did not let it go by without notice. And this is King David, a man after God’s own heart committing something so awful. Do you think King David is in heaven right now? I do.

What is free and available for everybody by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, is hijacked. It is the only way you can really say it; hijacked by the addition of human efforts. I do not care how good your good works are, in no way are they to be added to the contract that God has on salvation. God will not honor that kind of contract. If you die on the terms of your own works-based contract, which essentially makes you the savior and not Christ, you will not be standing before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ where the saints will be issued rewards. You will be standing at the Great White Throne Judgment, where all non-believers and all the different categories of that, including what they thought salvation was and how they contributed to the process. Like I said, salvation has been hijacked by the addition of human effort.

I can rip Joel Osteen’s dividing of the Word of God to shreds, but what is really aggravating is what he preaches on salvation. He says we must make Christ both our Lord and our Savior. If you have heard that all your life, then you were told all your life that the works of discipleship is necessary to being saved and going to heaven. You see, Christ becomes your Lord when you begin serving Him. He has His purposes why that event is going to happen after salvation, but do

not make that criteria a necessary component of salvation because it is not! As far as salvation is concerned, Christ said in His Word that He must be your Savior first, period. Many will call Him Lord, but He is not their Savior. What good is that going to do them?

Do not make a mistake thinking I am saying something I am not. Once you become His, you cannot live as you please. It is not a free-for-all. Salvation is free, but Jesus has a way of interfering in your life, especially if you live disobediently. Do not say I did not warn you if you are new to the faith or trying to decide whether they should trust Jesus as their Savior. You are not here by accident. The Spirit is drawing you. Are you going to respond? Like I said, are you going to do what Jesus said and required; not *repent*, the King James used the English word. The original is *metanoia*, a *change of mind*, is literally what Jesus said. It is a change of mind about how you will get to heaven. Repent all you want, but the only way you will get to heaven is to trust Jesus as your Savior. If you are going to have a change of mind about how you will get to heaven, the only way is to start trusting that Jesus is your Savior, and then you will have troubles. He will interfere in your life after you start trusting and having confidence that He is your Savior. I wake up every day saying, "Thank you, Lord for being my Savior," knowing that by trusting Him to be my Savior whatever I do that day or did the day before, past, present or future, I know my sins are not covered, as they were in the Old Testament, but removed as the New Testament proclaims. They are removed so far you cannot see them any longer. Once that happens, He is going to interfere in your life especially when you are living disobediently. I guarantee He will step in and correct you as many times as needed.

It is sad that just about every pastor you listen to or read today will make discipleship a necessary part of salvation. This is not scriptural, and it voids the salvation contract that God wants to make with you. Yes, we are absolutely to be disciples, but you also must distinguish between salvation and what comes after. As I said, you can be a disciple and never be saved. A perfect example is Judas. He was a disciple of Christ. He followed Christ as Lord, but Judas never trusted Jesus as his Savior, which is obvious now because we have the record. He is not in heaven with Christ just because he was a disciple of Christ. He lived with the other apostles. He heard everything Jesus said and as far as we know he did everything that Christ told him to do while he was still a disciple, but yet when it came down to the end, he did not trust Him as Savior.

The point is, in terms of the Osteen plan of salvation, you could try hard to quit sinning, if that is even possible, and follow Christ as your Lord for the rest of your life, but still end up in the lake of fire. Osteen is not preaching salvation the way Christ intended it to be heard and received. There is nowhere in God's Word that says making Him Lord or quitting sins, or even bad habits, is ever necessary to attain the free gift of salvation which is the promise of everlasting life. Yet Osteen and others like him preach works; the very same works that Christ himself condemns. Just think about it, if Joel understood how simple the plan of salvation is, which is found only in Christ alone, and taught his audience Christ's way of salvation instead of man's way, what an explosion of salvation there would be. It would be a true revival, unlike anything ever seen before, including early church days, and it would literally turn the world upside down.

With Osteen's kind of platform, he could literally change the world by giving a pure plan of salvation that is easily found in God's Word. It should be something everyone who considers himself a pastor to research. Instead, they have their congregations trust in Jesus partially and

discipleship partially. Listen to them, read their words. That is exactly what they are doing. They are producing counterfeit followers believing in a counterfeit gospel. It is sad. Unfortunately, these living preachers that I have named will not change because they would have to admit to the world that they were wrong about salvation all along. They are not feeding the sheep. Ezekiel 34 tells us, *“woe to the shepherds.”*

This is Christianity 101. Without salvation there is no reason to move further into anything else that we find in God's Word. Like I said, if you do not get this right you are in a lot of trouble. I do not think Satan and his demonic army are going to allow that to happen if they have anything to do with it. They do not want to see this explosion of people who truly become free in Christ because of a change of mind. Even though Satan's power is limited, he knows there are too many pastors more concerned with their image and standing in society. Even unbelieving pastors who finally realize this will never admit it to their audience because of their spiritual pride. They will lose credibility, they might even lose their salary, maybe their friends, family, or wives.

At one time I lived for years with the daily concern that if I did not do this or that, I could lose my salvation. Do you want to know how you lose your salvation? I do not believe ‘once saved, always saved’. I believe you are always saved if you keep trusting daily in Jesus and His redemptive work, even if you fail in all the other aspects of discipleship because believe me that will be an up and down roller coaster. That is why the last nine or ten verses of Romans 7 are so beautifully written. Even Paul struggled with this concept of sin in the flesh and with the law and how people perceive it. Like I said, I think he just threw his pen down and raised his hands and said, “Know therefore, there is no condemnation. The heck with everybody else's preaching that tries to convince me differently.” No, there is no condemnation for the ones in Christ Jesus, period! You walk after the flesh when you add all the other things to the plan of salvation and not after the Spirit because the Spirit does not add anything to your salvation plan. It is not the contract God made.

Christ is noticeably clear about His ‘trust alone’ requirement, and I have already presented many of the Scriptures. Christ cannot lie. Christ says no works, but Osteen says works. Two plans of salvation. Who will you trust? Christ saved me the instant I trusted in Him and what He did at Calvary. He delivered the full payment for my sins and for yours too, and He did it without any behavioral changes or promises to serve Him. The discipleship aspects of the relationship with Christ come after we are born again, but the Bible never says or implies that we must follow Him in obedience first in our lives in order to be saved. To add that to what is clearly already there as the plan of salvation is to add in your boastful works of what you can do. It is the flesh that Paul preaches against, which makes you a little personal savior. You think too much of yourself if you are guilty of it. You are destined for doom and God's Word is trying to set you free.

You do not have to change first then come to Christ. No, just say, “Christ, I recognize I am truly a sinner (man or woman) and there is nothing I can do to change that. I am going to trust and have confidence in you solely based on what you did at Calvary as was promised and fulfilled in the Old Testament. Be my Savior.” You do not need to say a sinner's prayer. Just three words: Be my Savior. Those three words are based on what I have been preaching: the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Those who say we must follow Him; commit our lives to Him as a condition of being saved are reading a different Bible or reading the Bible incorrectly. I guess

they are skipping the parts of the Bible that states clearly, we are born again only by trusting in Jesus alone. I have no problem with the true explanation of what a born-again person is, but not the way it has been described. I sin daily, and so do you, but when we trust in Christ alone as our Savior, we are seen as sons and daughters of Christ. Do you realize what a wonderful privilege that is? Think about the greatest honor in this world you can receive for your efforts that you are involved in. It does not even compare or come close to the position we have with Jesus Christ as sons and daughters. We do not do anything for it except trust and have confidence in Him that the shedding of His precious blood did it all for us. If you trust and have confidence that He did do that, then all you have to say is: Be my Savior.

Jesus is our Savior and when saved He sees us as sinless, even though we still sin. After that, after trusting and having confidence that Jesus is your Savior, the Holy Spirit enters into your life and helps you to overcome the sins in your life. We will never be fully sin free in this life because we inhabit a sinful body. We were born with a sinful nature and it will not change until we get a new body. Even though believers or people who now trust in Jesus Christ have God's new nature in them, implanted by the Holy Spirit, we still possess this old sinful nature that we received at birth.

We are what we are, sinners. I do not care how many good works we do; we cannot change it. That is why we need a Savior. We cannot ever save ourselves. We are helpless. Christ knew this. He died for us and rose again from that grave to secure a place for you and me if we trust Him. Christ credits me with His righteousness because my righteousness stinks. All the self-righteousness that people think is a product of the Holy Spirit because of good works, stinks. What we have in falls short. It is Christ's righteousness when we become His saved children. Christ Jesus keeps you saved and under that no condemnation status, it is not your works or your discipleship.

I have read a few articles from this person's ministry before. Some things I agree with and some things I do not. At the end of an article, I was disappointed even though I had suspicion based on this subject of salvation. I will read the last few sentences.

***“You cannot believe it on your own the mystery of Christ's death, but if you repent and allow the Spirit to illuminate your heart, then and only then you can truly believe.”***

That is dead wrong and not scriptural. I would like to get some testimonies of how many times you have heard ***“if you repent and allow the Spirit to illuminate your heart then and only then you can truly believe”***. He added that the works you do first then allows the Holy Spirit to look upon you as a candidate and then and only then “you can truly believe.”

***“In that moment you have passed from death to life.”***

This author's name is Rick Frueh. What he writes is not correct. Let's just call it fraud because that is unquestionably a works for salvation plan. Even though he might have some insight on other subject matters, this is one he surely gets wrong and that frightens me. If you do not get it right at the beginning, you are on the wrong track. You can choose to trust Christ and what He says about salvation or you can follow all these works or lordship salvation plans, but you will be

accountable if you choose incorrectly. Discipleship has nothing to do with salvation. Salvation is all Christ's doing. However, we become disciples when we acknowledge Christ our Savior and then He has a lot of work in progress to accomplish in each one of us. That sign is never put away. I am sure I have an invisible sign on me somewhere that says 'Work in Progress. Leave my saint alone.' If I keep trusting in Jesus, I know the enemy will come in the seen and the unseen world to try to interrupt that progress, but ***“greater is he that is in me, than he that is in the world,”*** both the seen and the unseen. He is the Potter, and I am the clay. He knows what is best.

By the way, as I said before, do not think that because you are saved according to His plan that you can live your life your way, doing what you want, because you are in control of your life. If you turn your life over to Christ and let Him be your Savior first, He will set you on the course He wants you on. He does not let go easily and some of you are more hard-headed than others because you do not want to let go of your control over how things should happen. Satan and his minions do not like what is happening and will do everything in their power to interrupt your walk with Christ. It is why you need the full armor of God to go to war in battle with what truly controls the seen and the unseen enemies of your life. I have news for those enemies, remember Christ is the creator of all things and He knows how to put a black eye or two on the seen and unseen enemies and it goes the same for you.

He is a wonderful Savior, and we go to the Table of the Lord because He instructed it in the Gospel records and in the Epistles. Jesus states we should remember Him and what He was going to do at Calvary for all of us before He went to the cross. He was going to save us from eternal damnation. He asked us to remember Him as often as we eat and drink, meaning every time we eat or drink something. If you do not remember every time, make it a practice to try to do better at it, not because you are going to lose your salvation if you do not, but it honors Him.

I am trying to make the point that Christ wants you to remember what He achieved for you and me. He wants the acknowledgment because the more you acknowledge it, the more you see what a free gift of grace it is and what sacrifice was paid for our debt that He did not owe, but He freely went and paid it for us.

We serve a wonderful Savior which is why, in addition to other things, we remember Him; the why, what and when 2,000 years ago. He was nailed on that tree and took on the sins of the world, setting us free from the bondage of sin forever removing our sins from His and His Father's sight. What a wonderful Savior! If He is not your Savior, cry out to Jesus, 'Be my Savior'. When He becomes your Savior constantly remember what He did for you. The bread represents His body, the wine represents the blood that He spilled. It is a remembrance of what He did at Calvary. Thank Him, praise Him, honor Him, remember Him each time, as many times as you want. The one thing you cannot overdose on is what He has done for you and for me, as we do it again. Thank you, Jesus for being our wonderful Savior.



# Decontaminated

Open your Bibles to 1 John 1:8,

***“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”***

*Just* in this verse means He had the right to forgive our sins because He paid the price for it. In addition, these verses are telling us that if we say we have no sin we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us, but in this message, I will be looking at this word *cleanse*, so before we take the elements, I will read something to you,

***“How to dispose of toxic waste is one of the most difficult dilemmas in modern American life. Indeed, some experts consider chemical poisons the world's biggest problem next to nuclear bombs. The difference is that tons of daily compounds are already seeping into our soil and water, but not a single atomic warhead has yet exploded outside of government control in our country. Toxic waste, if properly stored, is ticking away like time bombs in tens of thousands of landfills and water sources across our country.***

***Mankind is very good at producing not only a high level of physical toxins that endanger the body, but also a high level of spiritual toxins that imperil the soul. Furthermore, just as our flesh requires a clean atmosphere to ensure health, so too our hearts must be cleansed of all those deadly sins that contaminate.”***

Isn't that what Jesus said? ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*** He has decontaminated us.

***“Where is the answer to this problem of toxicity to be found? The Gospel points us to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and whose shed blood purifies us from all contamination. Calvary made forever clear that our sins are truly toxic, a death dealing blow for Christ and for us, but Easter announces that He took toxic waste to the tomb and left it there.”***

Jesus took our toxic waste to the tomb and left it there. He cleansed us. He left the toxic waste in the tomb that was spiritually poisoning us. He took the toxic poison from us. All sin of every human fell on Jesus. All our iniquity was laid on Him. I want to thank Him for cleaning this toxic waste dump, Joe Cortes. You could put your name to it. Thank Him for cleaning up this toxic waste dump. I am not poisonous any longer and you are not poisonous any longer. We have been cleansed from all unrighteousness because of what He did at Calvary. He poured out of His blood to remove all our sins. He decontaminated us. We are toxic free, hallelujah, because of what Jesus did for us. What a wonderful way to remember Him. He made us toxic free. We are no longer a dump site for spiritual evil poison. We are no longer a dump site for sin. We have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ from all unrighteousness.

Thank you, Jesus, for removing our sin. Take these elements and remember what He has done for you. Thank you for reminding us through your Word that we are no longer toxic. Amen. Take the elements.

# He Hideth My Soul

Exodus chapter 33:18 reads, “...*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*”

Moses was conversing with God, and toward the end of the conversation Moses said, “*Show me thy glory.*”

Verses 19-23 continue,

*“And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

*And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

*And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:*

*And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”*

This is kind of a strange story, but it is a powerful message that applies even today. Moses had a desire to see God’s face. After all he had been through, he was determined to see God’s face, but the Lord tells him that is not possible, there was no way that could happen. There was no way he could see God’s face and live.

This story lays down the truth that only through Christ can we see God. In this story, the Lord sets Moses on a cleft rock. Moses is hidden in this split rock, and when God passes by, he sees the Lord through that rock, and lives. That is how God allowed Moses to be able to see a glimpse of His glory and survive. Face to face he would not survive but protected by that cleft rock when God passed by, he was able to see the Lord through the rock and live.

Read the 23rd verse again,

*“And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”*

I have heard this verse preached and I have read everything about this verse, but something is missing. The interpretations that I have heard or read never really satisfied me, so I had to research this verse for myself. I kept digging and kept at it until I exhausted every possible source, I could find about the Hebrew language and any other interpretation or understanding of what God was trying to communicate here. This is a peculiar verse, and it has been mistranslated “...*And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts...*” Most translators have not rightly divided this Hebrew word.

When you read this, at least in the King James version, you would automatically think that Moses saw (how can I put this) God's rear end. Be honest, you have either heard it preached like that, or read somewhere that Moses was gazing upon God's rear end as he passed by. Well, that is not what it says. Moses did not see God's rear end! That is a bad translation and interpretation. The 'back part' here in this verse is referring to that which follows, or which comes behind, after God passes through.

In the past, I preached a message that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness. God's light, here in this passage, is the afterglow, not God's rear end, but his afterglow. It is the light which followed, so this is how it should read:

***“And I will take away my hand, and thou shall see my afterglow: but my face shall not be seen.”***

So, looking at this, what is the significance of this rock? The New Testament mentions it. Go to 1 Corinthians 10:1,

***“Moreover brethren, I would not that ye be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;  
And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;  
And did all eat the same spiritual meat;  
And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”***

We have the answer that Christ is that Rock. They were baptized unto Moses. They were not baptized in the Red Sea. This passage does not mean that once the Egyptians were drowned, they went back to the Red Sea, or to any other body of water to be baptized by water. There are over 20 different definitions or meanings for the word *baptizo* in the Greek.

As with most times in scripture, *baptizo* here means to be identified with something. So, the phrase “and were all baptized” in context means they were all identified unto Moses. Now, this really has nothing to do with this message, but on occasion people ask me It will not keep you from going to Heaven, because the only proof you need of that is the thief on the cross. Jesus said to him, ‘*This day you will be with me in Paradise.*’ The thief did not have time to get baptized in water. Our baptism, the one that matters, the Holy Spirit baptism, is the one that identifies us with Jesus Christ. That is what we should be seeking and desiring.

***“And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”***

There are several different ways to interpret verse 4. There are different rocks mentioned in some spectacular events during their journey through the wilderness. Water came from a rock. Moses was hidden in a rock while God put his hand over Moses's eyes and face as He was passed by so Moses would not die. But after God passed by, He lifted His hand and Moses was able to see the afterglow. The significance of all this is that Christ is the Rock. Moses could not see God, but by being hidden in the rock, which is Christ, he saw God. The rock Moses was hidden in filtered out

the wrath of God. By that I mean Jesus had not come on the scene yet. His blood had not yet been applied on the Heavenly Mercy Seat to remove sin forever. No man can exist in the presence of God in his sinful nature. It took His only begotten son, Christ, to come and give us the opportunity to be in the actual presence of God, where we could say, “We can boldly approach the Throne.”

The Rock filtered out the wrath of God, and allowed the Mercy rays, the Love rays of the eternal to pass through. You see, man needed a shield because we cannot stand before God without a mediator.

Psalm 84:11 makes that point,

***“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”***

Highlight that in your bible, ***“For the Lord God is a sun and shield....”*** This means that God could never be our sun unless He also is our shield as He is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we trust Christ, we identify with Him, the living savior, being baptized into Christ. This is our spiritual baptism of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is just a ritual baptism, but real baptism is the work of the Holy Spirit. And when we understand and connect that He is also our sun and shield in the person of Jesus Christ, we have a lot to be thankful for.

We are thankful and remember Jesus for a lot of things, but I want us to remember that we can be thankful that He is our shield, so we can stand in the presence of God. Because without Him, there is no such opportunity. You can never stand in God’s presence without the shield, the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I love the words to the song, He Hideth My Soul. It was written by a woman in the 1890’s:

*A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,  
A wonderful Savior to me.  
He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,  
Where rivers of pleasure will I see.*

*He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock,  
That shadows a dry, thirsty land.  
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,  
And covers me there with his hand,  
And covers me there with his hand.*

*When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise  
To meet Him in clouds of the sky,  
His perfect salvation, His wonderful love,  
I’ll shout with the millions on high.*

*He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock*

*That shadows a dry, thirsty land.  
He hideth my life in the depths of His love,  
And covers me there with His hand,  
And covers me there with His hand.*

This is a great song. When the here-and-now is over, if you are not at the *bema*, the Judgement Seat of Christ, you will stand before God to receive judgement. Just think about that. Now those of you who put your trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, the One who saves your life, rescuing you from standing in the presence of God without His Blood shielding you, for that itself we are to be thankful. God's wrath will come down, but we will be spared from it. He will deal with all those who reject His Son, and they will receive judgement. Just think about how horrible that will be. Probably worse than being in Hell itself, is to stand in the presence of God without that shield to receive judgement. And the message is the same; without that shield, without being in that cleft rock, only death is the outcome. It will be a horrible experience, far worse than being cast into Hell. In fact, we are told in the scriptures that they will cry to the rocks and mountains to cover them from the face of The Living God, who is light.

Go to the Gospel of John 5:24. Here Jesus is speaking,

***“Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth [pisteo] on him that sent me [God], hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”***

You see, the world has it backward, if you really think about it. You always hear people using the phrase “Life unto death.” Really? As a Christian we cannot think that way. It is ‘death unto life’ for those who heareth the word and believeth on Him that sent Him and hath everlasting life.

I used to say when someone died, that it was Graduation Day, but I thought about this yesterday. I used to preach messages about Graduation Day when we breathe our last breath in this body and move on to the next. I will not change the title, but I like Moving Day better. Moving Day because we are moving away from death unto eternal life! We probably all think about it on occasion, especially as we get older, wondering what that transition might be like. And you might get a little fearful at times, especially if you have seen other people die. It might sound scary and you might have some fears over the experience but remember this: because of what Christ has done for all of us who trust in Him, we are not moving to death, we are moving away from death. So, this phrase that the world uses: Life unto death; NO! It's Death unto Life! That is what Christ provided. And between point A to point B, His promise is that He will be our shield. God's Wrath cannot affect us because Jesus paid that price by taking it upon Himself so you and I would not have to experience it. What a wonderful savior we serve!

I would not want to stand in the presence of God without Christ as my shield, Christ as my rock, and Christ as my savior. He is the Rock of ages. He hideth my soul from death, the way nonbelievers will experience it. Some day we will be in God's Shekinah Glory, and we will not have to hide any longer. We will not even be limited to just seeing God's afterglow as Moses was because man was able to see Jesus face to face. Jesus said, “He that hath seen me hath seen

the Father.” What a day that will be when we are in the presence, face to face with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We will be face to face with God, who rescued us from damnation! We have a lot to be thankful for, we have a lot to remember about why Christ should be front and center in our lives. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,” That is how much he loved me, and that is how much he loved you.

Moses could only wish for the day the disciples experienced when Christ walked this earth. All he saw was the afterglow. When Jesus came, before He died and rose again, on that transfiguration day, Moses saw a glimpse of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was of the few privileged ones before Jesus’ death who were able to communicate with Him. Now that day is coming for us. In the meantime, His spirit is in us, do not forget that! If you have your trust and confidence that Jesus is your savior, that His blood was precious, that he gave His life so that you could have life, then you are experiencing Jesus within you. He also said that He would never leave us or forsake us, which is another thing to be thankful for, and another wonderful thing to remember. It is what Jesus said, promised and delivered for us.

We are not destined to hope for rocks and mountains to cover our miserable souls when the wrath of God is coming, because we cannot stand in His light. Just the opposite is true; and that would never have been possible unless Jesus died on that cross as He said He would. He went to the grave and rose from that grave. He presented His blood on the heavenly Mercy Seat, informing His Father all is fulfilled, they are mine, and you cannot reject what is mine. That is how we get identified, tagged by God through Jesus Christ. We are baptized, identified with our Lord and Savior, period.

If you want to go through water baptism, that is fine. I will baptize you. But remember it is just a ritual baptism testifying to others what the Lord has done for you. However, what you need is the Rock of Ages and what He has promised; the baptism of the Holy Spirit within you. What He says, He will deliver. He will not renege on His word. Keep having trust and confidence in Jesus Christ. Put your faith in Him, put your trust in Him, He is our sun, He is our shield. He is our Rock of Ages, the Rock in which we stand and are delivered from damnation.

Now, with that, go to the Table of The Lord. We remember that only through Jesus Christ, as no other substitution is possible, He is our only hope. He is the eternal Word in human flesh, having delivered on what He promised for our benefit, every good thing which has been covered above can come to pass in your life. Remember and be eternally thankful for what He has done. Remember, through God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, we do not have to look at just the afterglow, we shall see Him face to face.

Thank you, Jesus!  
Take the elements.

# Forsake

Isaiah 55:6 reads, ***"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:"***

In the Hebrew, *seek* means to *diligently pursue*, and this verse is as true today as it was thousands of years ago. The Lord still can be found. Verse 7 continues,

***"Let the wicked forsake [or separate from one location to another] his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."***

There is mercy written all over the Old Testament. These verses just prove the point. When we forsake our way and look for another way, that other way is Jesus Christ acknowledging the way He provided through His redemption plan for our sake. I have said many times in both the Change of Mind Series and the Table of the Lord Series that you do not go to heaven because you have amended your sinful ways or because you have cleaned up your life and apparently rehabilitated. Turning over a new leaf is rehabilitation. You hear that in the secular world, and unfortunately, you also hear it in the Christian world. Turning over a new leaf is rehabilitation, which is not salvation and has nothing to do with salvation.

Reformation or rehabilitation is not the answer. You cannot even legislate what you are seeking concerning your sinful ways. The only solution is restoration by being born from above. Christians used the term *'born again'*. I like to say we must be *'born from above'*. We are saved by receiving Christ's redemption plan, which includes payment for our sins. There is no other way. Jesus came, He died, He was buried, He rose again all for our justification, which simply means making us right with God. It only happens if you go through the Son, and you put your trust and confidence in Him and what He has done for you and me.

God loves people and that is a good thing. We are fortunate for it because if God did not love us, if He did not love sinners, then none of us could be loved. None of us! Because we are all dirty rotten individuals in God's eyes without Christ paying for our sin penalty. Thank God he did. God loved us so much, He sent His only begotten Son. He provided a way of escape through the blood sacrifice of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, which is why it says at the end of verse 7 ***"and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*** God wants to abundantly pardon our sins and our iniquities. He released us from their bondage to make us free from the curse of the law.

***"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."***

I want you to notice something about ***"Let the wicked forsake his way..."*** It does not say *sin* in the scriptures does it? The answer is No! There is nowhere here in this scripture or any other



scriptures that says we are to stop sinning to be saved. Many will say, "How dare you!" Then give me the chapter and verse that says something different than what must be forsaken. It clearly says, "***Let the wicked forsake his way....***" What way? The way of unbelief is what you must forsake. What needs to be forsaken is your way of unbelief. Disbelief in God, unbelief in His Son because you will never have access to God without His Son. There is only one way. I have repeatedly been saying, and I will keep saying it to my last breath, Jesus Christ is the only way.

Unfortunately, there are people in the church world, telling people that you must forsake your sins to be right with God. That is a big lie! Give me chapter and verse. That was never the requirement to obtain salvation. I have said if God takes me home before He comes back, please put on my plaque or tombstone "*here lies a friend of sinners.*" I base that on Luke 7:34, where the Pharisees were on Jesus's case because he was partying with tax collectors and sinners. Over the years, I have become more uncomfortable hanging around self-righteous Christians than I do sinners. Send me the sinners. Those are the people I want to hang around with. If they influence me, I have no business doing what I am doing right now. I want to be a reflection, the ambassador that Christ uses to influence them. Our whole commission is to bring sinners to saints. That does not mean they will not sin anymore, but now they are part of the family of God through Jesus Christ. There are self-righteous people in the church world lying telling lost sinners that they cannot be saved unless they give up their sinful ways. My Bible says, "***Let the wicked forsake his way,***" not his sins. They say that you can't be someone that is saved by the blood of Jesus Christ if you don't give up that particular kind of lifestyle or stop sinning. God does the changing. If He wants me to give up whatever lifestyle I have, I am sure He will make me fully aware of it if I put my trust and confidence in Him to shape me daily.

Hopefully, I sin less and less each day, but I still sin. I sinned so much today if I was a Catholic, I would spend an hour at the confession booth. I did some driving around today, and where I live, you find the worst drivers that ever got behind a wheel of an automobile. Like I said, if I was Catholic, I would probably spend at least an hour in the confession booth because of what I thought of people today and where they should go. Nothing could be further from the truth if you are telling people they must stop sinning, they must change their lifestyle or else they cannot be saved. Can you completely stop committing sin or sins? Do not be a hypocrite; you cannot. Just as no one could keep the 613 commandments, no one can stop sinning. All God ever required is for a person to acknowledge their guilt of sin, acknowledge he deserved the death penalty and to believe in the Lord Jesus to have those sins removed and forgiven completely. That is genuine repentance. Once you understand what repentance means, a full change of mind which will change your ways and thoughts and come to an understanding it will be His way and not yours. Our part is to simply believe and put our trust and confidence in Jesus.

I know what I am saying goes against the grain of the church world. However, in Galatians 4:16, Paul dealt with the same thing when he said, "Therefore, I became your enemy." In that verse, Paul's reason was that he told the truth. Therefore, if I am your enemy because I tell you the truth, so be it. So be it. Let me make it perfectly clear; none of your works will cause you to be saved.

Titus 3:5 reads,

***"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration [a spiritual rebirth, a restoration to His mercy], and renewing of the Holy Ghost [or to make new by the Holy Spirit]."***

It is not by works of righteousness that saved us or keeps us saved. The only way is through Jesus Christ, not the church, whether it is United, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, or whatever. Do not deceive yourself, only through Jesus Christ alone can you be saved—only Him. There is a lot of nonsense and babble of different ways of how to get to heaven, but there is only one way. The Bible says Jesus is the only way. He is the only one who can provide life. I think you can rest assured the Bible has it correct; God's Word has it right. It can be trusted. It is the most reliable source ever to exist concerning the things of God and how God responds to His people that He loves so dearly. That is why we go to the table of the Lord. And why I come against those who teach only about God's love. There is a lot of that going on right now, and I am not against it, but you also must teach about sin and judgment. To preach only about the love of God is an incomplete gospel. It is good news to those who see it and bad news to those who do not. There can be no salvation, none whatsoever, without the knowledge of sin. That is what the law provided, and it made the world and everyone in it guilty before God. Sin showed the world they needed a savior, Jesus Christ. That is why I come against those who preach fire and brimstone and judgment, making the false claims that God hates sinners. Really? The truth of the matter is God loves every human being who was ever conceived. I know that goes against some doctrines that say only certain ones are chosen. I have not dealt with that yet, but I will. My Bible says God so loved the world.

Thank God, whether you put your trust in Jesus Christ or not has no bearing whatsoever on God's unconditional love. I am not saying God is not angry with the wicked ways of men and their constant rejection of His Son Jesus Christ, I am not saying that at all, but it does not change the fact that God still loves people. He desires for people to come to that change of mind that leads to salvation. Jesus has paid our sin debt, but you must receive the gift that the Lord has provided. You must acknowledge and have that change of mind trusting on what He did with His work of redemption that not only washed away but removed all your sins, period. It is why we go to the table to remember what He has done for us. Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Paul goes further and says to do it as often as you eat and drink. I have said so many times, and it is worth repeating, you cannot survive very long without eating or drinking, especially drinking. So, what a great reminder when you do eat or drink to remember what Jesus did for you. Thank Him and remember what He did for you. Also, He said to expect His return. There are many things we need to remember of what Christ not only did but what He said and what He promised.

As often as you eat and drink, "Do this in remembrance of me. Remember my love for you. Remember that I died to pay your sin debt. Remember that all your sins will always be removed from the presence of God the Father. Remember that you are right with Him because of what I have done for you. Remember me."

And that is what I am planning to do. Join me! And let us remember Jesus every day. Thank you, Jesus. Partake.

# Heaven's Mercy Seat

Open your Bibles to Hebrews 10:1. The Old Testament tabernacle, Holy of Holies, mercy seat, and all the priestly work of atonement were shadows of things to come. Verse 1 begins,

***“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”***

All the slain animals were continually sacrificed year after year for the sin offering and the trespass offering. The sin offering had to happen year in and year out for hundreds of years. In verse 2 Paul begins by asking,

***“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.”***

However, *every year* changed when Jesus came, died, and His blood was poured out. Before that happened, the high priest would sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood of the slain animals for the sin offering, again, year in and year out. The Old Testament tabernacle, Holy of Holies, the mercy seat, and everything along with it were just shadows of things to come. The blood of Jesus had to be applied to the heavenly mercy seat. That is right, the heavenly mercy seat. What you see here on earth is just an ‘earth copy’, let's just call it that, of what is on or near the throne of God where Jesus' blood had to be applied to the heavenly mercy seat in order to redeem mankind. If for some reason all of Jesus' blood dripped out and soaked into the ground at Calvary, then the sins of humanity could not have been taken away. That is right, you heard me correctly. Even though some popular people preached, and still preach, that sins were taken away by the death of Jesus Christ, they leave out the blood. Hebrews 9:12 says,

***“Neither the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

That holy place was not the Holy of Holies in the temple at Jerusalem. No, it was the heavenly location of the mercy seat. Now I am going to peel a layer off what I have already preached concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I have a message called *It Is Finished*. It was finished, but not completely finished if you dive into God's Word a little further and bring the Old and New Testaments together understanding there was something else *besides* what was finished at the cross. I bet I have so many Christians throwing stones at me now, or at the computer or however they are listening or watching or reading shouting, “Blasphemy! Blasphemy! Of course, it was finished at the cross.” No, it was not. Hear me out. The blood had to be applied on the heavenly mercy seat. This is not some strange new doctrine I am preaching. This is in the Word of God. The problem is many never come to understand this fact. This Easter, I have no problem with anyone saying, “It is finished.” To a certain degree that is correct, but this is one preacher who realizes it was not completely finished. As far as that is concerned,

you can say it was finished or you can say it is finished, but when you do an analysis of what God's Word said, then it was not completely finished because Jesus had to present His blood at the heavenly mercy seat. In the Old Testament a lamb's death was not good enough. Most of you know the story in Exodus 12:13. If not, I suggest reading the whole chapter. However, verse 13 tells us,

***“And the blood [from the slain lamb] shall be to you for a token [or a mark] upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”***

Earlier in the same chapter in verse 7 it gives further instruction,

***“And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.”***

They had to locate a lamb without blemish, a male in its first year, and keep it for a certain amount of time, and when it came time, they had to slay it. Compare this with some popular international preachers who preach that death was sufficient. If these verses in Exodus are the type, it would have to happen in the New Testament where about 1,400 years later Jesus would come, not as a type, but the real thing, and then you would figure the same thing had to happen again. Jesus' death was just not sufficient. His own blood needed to be applied by Him to nothing down here, because there is no record of anything after His death and resurrection except occasional meetings He had with His disciples and a few others and then He just sailed off into the blue. So where was His blood applied? To the heavenly mercy seat, because in verse 13 it states,

***“... when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”***

Century after century for millenniums, the Old Testament saints looked for their precious Lamb of God, their Messiah. In Luke 2:23, they were looking for their messiah because it says,

***“As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;”***

Every pregnant woman was hoping that their child would be the promised messiah, no exception, and He did come just as was promised many times in the Old Testament. The literal blood had to be applied to the mercy seat in heaven. I want to read something,

***“The blood was to be sprinkled on the mercy seat right after the death of a substitutionary animal or sacrifice. Now Christ is, of course, our substitute.”***

I do not think anyone has a problem understanding that.

***“He was slain for us upon the cross and entered into death for us, and when He arose, He immediately went to heaven, entered into the holy of holies in heaven, sprinkled His precious***

***blood upon the mercy seat before the throne of God, and forever settle the sin questions, and delivered us from the curse of the law. This is clearly taught in the New Testament.”***

That is right because in Hebrews 9:12 the Bible makes it plain,

***“... by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

***“On the morning of the resurrection He meets Mary at the tomb. As soon as Mary recognized Him, she prostrated herself upon Him, and would have kissed His feet, but with shocking suddenness, Jesus emphatically says to her: ‘Touch me not’; and then He proceeds immediately to give the reason why Mary is not permitted to touch him at all.***

[John 20:17 says,]

***‘Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.’***

***Literally the Lord Jesus Christ said, ‘Touch me not; for I now am about to ascend unto my Father.’ We can understand this action when we remember that the high priest after he had offered the sacrifice, was to enter the holy of holies, before he did anything else with the precious blood. No one was allowed to approach him. Everyone was shut out until this was completely done. ... in the record of the meeting with Mary we have the fulfillment of this type. Here Mary meets her great High Priest [our great High Priest], just arisen from the tomb [from the physical dead], but before He had entered the holy of holies with [His precious] reconciling blood. And so He said to her, “Touch me not.”***

The Bible makes it clear, but man-made doctrines confuse the matter. It is beautiful and wonderful the way it is written for us to understand. I have said many times we must use the verifiable Word of God. The best way to interpret the Bible is not to bring in confusing doctrine, but let it verify itself repeatedly. By cross-referencing scripture, and not twisting it, you will form a complete and correct picture of what God's Word says, which is the truth.

Let me add something here. For those of you who rely on your Greek dictionaries and Lexicons like they are a bible, some Lexicons say this verse should be translated “Do not continue touching me.” See how they get things wrong and twist the Word of God? If you get the blood of Jesus Christ wrong, it is like getting in your car thinking you are heading cross country in the right direction, but you do not realize you are really going the opposite way. This is something you just cannot be close to getting correct, you must get it right. Some say I do not preach salvation messages; however, every communion message is a salvation message if with eyes to see and ears to hear. This author continues,

***“Some suggest that Mary was attempting to show Christ that she desired for him to remain in the world and not go to his Father.”***

Of course, there are all kinds of reasons behind why they define what happened in those days. Using the language, they are trying to define it as their reason why their translation or definition is the accurate one, but they are missing a very important part. That is, what the high priest did in the Old Testament was a type and shadow of what was still yet to come, which Jesus would

fulfill. He emphatically said when Mary tried to touch Him, and why would she not try to touch Him, what she was seeing was remarkable. Jesus said, "Touch me not," and then He gives the reason why.

Let me continue reading. I got a bit sidetracked here, but it was good that I did.

***"When the Lord was going to pass over Egypt to destroy the firstborn, he said to Moses and Aaron in Exodus 12:13, 'And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.' The death of the lamb wasn't enough."***

According to some popular preachers, one in the valley of Los Angeles with the initials J.M. and another famous international preacher/pastor R.T., the death of the Lamb was enough. It was not. In the Old Testament or in the New, God was not looking for a dead lamb in the backyard somewhere. In the Old Testament, God was looking for the blood that would be applied on the door post and the door plate above the door. If the blood had not been applied, death would come to the firstborn. The blood had to be applied. These ministries that preach differently are flawed and if you do not get this right, everything else is flawed. I am sorry, that is just the way it is. Maybe there are some other things that are okay, but if you do not get this right about the blood, you have major problems. It might sound harsh, but that is the God given truth in His Word; not Joe Cortes', but God given truth. This is the most important Christian doctrine that you must get right. Hebrews 9:12 states,

***"Neither the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once to the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."***

***We don't hear enough these days about the precious blood of Jesus, '...and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin'. What a wonderful Savior! [I agree.] Jesus paid a debt he did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay. Our sins had to be paid for with Jesus' blood.***

***In the Old Testament, the people's sins were only ATONED (i.e., covered) for Leviticus 17:11 states, 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.' This Scripture speaks of the blood of animals, which were sacrificed to temporarily cover the sins of the people in the Old Testament, until the Messiah would come and offer the perfect Sacrifice of Himself to God the Father.***

***We read in Hebrews 9:12 concerning Jesus, [I will read it again. I can't read it enough] 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Jesus' blood didn't atone for our sins; but rather, took them away forever!"***

The word *atonement* is used a lot in pulpits today, and that is fine, but it is not complete. I do not care how you were taught; it must live up to what is being said or it is either incomplete or flawed. Jesus' blood just did not atone (or cover) our sins. For the lack of a better illustration right now, did you ever see a magician on stage with a handkerchief or piece of linen cloth and in his act, he shows you a bottle of water? He tells you he will make it disappear right in front of

your eyes. He has this linen cloth, and he says he will put it over the object (in this case a water bottle) and when he lifts the cloth, the water bottle will be gone, out of sight. No one can find it. Gone forever. Of course, in the magic act usually he brings it back, but that is not what Christ did. He just did not cover our sins. Using that illustration, He made our sins disappear. Gone forever! That is why so many denominations are flawed on this subject matter. Maybe I will teach a couple of service programs on their flawed doctrine. The Seventh Day Adventists is an example of that flaw. He took our sins away forever; he did not just cover them. He covered them, and they disappeared, gone. Because they are gone, we can be reconciled back to the Father. God cannot even find them, and He is God. Jesus' blood did not atone for our sins, but rather, took them away forever. In the Old Testament all they could do was have their sins atoned for the year by the high priest when he sprinkled the blood. Christ did it once, forever.

***“There is a damnable heresy circulating in many of our churches today, popularized by [famous] religious [preachers across this and other nations. They teach] that Jesus' liquid blood has no value or significance in and of itself. [They] claim that Jesus' blood is important only in the sense that it represents the DEATH of Christ. [Like I said, if you do not get this right you are in a lot of trouble.] Nothing can be further from the truth! [I agree.] When God told Moses to warn the Israelites concerning the coming 10th plague, i.e., the death of the firstborn, the people were instructed to kill a lamb, and then APPLY the lamb's blood to the side and upper doorposts of the home.”***

It was not just the death of the lamb, but the blood that was spilled from that lamb at death had to be applied. You could not go about this halfhearted. Exodus 12:23 tells us,

***“And the blood shall be to you for a token [or mark] upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”***

Are you hearing what is being said over and over? ***“When I see the blood...”*** When God sees the blood, He will pass over. Even though God probably has His own timepiece, for our understanding there is not a second on the clock (or whatever God's timepiece is) that goes by that He does not see Christ's blood on the heavenly mercy seat, not any earthly mercy seat. Who cares if you find the Ark of the Covenant down here? Who cares!? The one in the heavenly places might even be the one that was here at one time. No one will ever know for sure. Christ's blood is on it. God was not looking for a dead lamb when He sent the death angel in Egypt. The death angel was looking for the blood that was applied in the Old Testament. These preachers that cannot get it right be forewarned, because thus saith the Word of the Lord.

In Hebrews 10:29 we read,

***“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”***

Read that again and be forewarned; it is not something to mess around with. You do not have an option, preacher, or listener, including myself. We must get this right. There is too much at stake.

There is an eternity at stake. I might be off on some topics, God forbid, but just in case I am, I pray daily. “Please Lord never let it happen that I preach differently than what your Word says about your precious blood because I know I have to get this right.” There is no Plan B.

Hebrews 9:24 also tells us,

***“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:  
Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;  
For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”***

The author continues,

***“Jesus’ blood applied to the Mercy Seat in Heaven is all-sufficient. Jesus only needed to offer Himself as a sacrifice once.”***

That is what is wrong with the Catholic religion and the Catholic crucifix. People admire the beauty of their churches and I used to many years ago, too. I can hardly go into one now because I see Jesus on a cross. The Catholics keep Him on a cross and I am sorry if I offend some Catholics; do you not believe in the resurrection? Or do you just stop at the death like some of these popular preachers today? I grew up as a Catholic. We were taught to believe each time the wafer was the literal body and blood of Jesus Christ. They call it transubstantiation. You cannot find it in Scripture because it is not scriptural. Like I said, Jesus is not hanging on that cross any longer.

***“Also, every crucifix I’ve ever seen makes Jesus’ look decrepit and sickly. [Yes, He was bruised and marred beyond recognition, but I believe] Jesus was a strong man, not some sissy looking wimp.”***

Religions of this world have created some strange ideas about Jesus Christ.

***“Jesus died on the cross, was buried to confirm His death, and then rose victoriously three days later. Christ is alive! Thank the Lord for His mercy, for paying for our many sins with His precious blood. [Absolutely.]  
From the blood of Abel’s slain lamb in Genesis, to the robes of the saints washed in the blood of the Lamb in Revelation, the Word of God centers around the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. [It is a bloody book.] Hebrews 9:22, ‘...without shedding of blood there is no remission.’ Jesus’ death was just as important as His blood sacrifice, and equally important the burial and resurrection; BUT everything concerning the events of Jesus’ life were leading up to the blood being applied to the Mercy Seat in Heaven. Jesus took his shed blood to heaven to present it to the Father by applying it to the mercy seat. ... This is why Jesus said to Mary in John 20:17, ‘Jesus said unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father.’ The blood couldn’t be tainted.”***



It's not only preachers who get it wrong. It is actual bibles or the supposed Holy Bible of the Word of God. I know the King James Version is hard to read, but it is still the best English translation. An example of how the bibles that get it wrong is the NIV translation, another product that could be traced all the way back to Westcott and Hort. I have preached in the past how these two individuals changed the course of how Scripture would be understood. It is so subtle, but so important what they did and what has been done ever since because we are still speaking about the *touch me not* verse. How do they say it? This is from the NIV, Jesus said, ***“Do not hold on to me...”*** Do you see what it is saying? Did you catch it? It is not as the King James says, ***“Don't touch me,”*** but ***“Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father.”*** What the King James says is ***“Jesus said unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father:”*** Get this wrong and you might as well forget the rest of the translation if you are reading from an NIV. I could list a few others, but I will not, it is not worth the paper it is written on.

***“Jesus needed to apply His blood in Heaven, just as the Old Testament highpriest did year after year in the holy of holies in the tabernacle. If Mary had touched Jesus, she would have corrupted the blood. The NIV is ridiculous [and wrong], as if Jesus could not ascend into Heaven because Mary was holding on to him. [Think how silly that is just on the surface using common sense.] That's not what John 20:17 means at all. Jesus had risen from the dead and needed to appear before the Father in Heaven as Hebrews 9:24 teaches; and Jesus needed to apply His blood in the Holy Place as Hebrews 9:12 teaches.***

[So, these modern translations or these modern prophets of God] ***minimize the importance of Jesus' blood. There can be no forgiveness of sins if it weren't for Christ's blood sacrifice.”***

Just as they applied the blood in the Old Testament so the death angel would pass over their household, Jesus had to apply His blood on the mercy seat of heaven, so the eternal death angel passes over us. Colossians 1:14 is our hope and what we faith and trust in. This is what we thank Christ for. ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”***

***“Even the forgiveness of sins.”*** We serve a wonderful Savior. In fact, it is like the word *love* that I have taught about before. I do not care who you are, including myself, we will never completely comprehend what Jesus Christ gave up. I do not care if you are the richest person in the world who lost everything, I do not care if you are Job in the Old Testament who lost everything. It does not even compare to what Jesus gave up. We will never have a complete understanding about what the word *love* means. We just get a glimpse of it and the rest of the mystery will be hopefully explained over there. I believe it will when all the true nature of *love* and all the meaning behind it will be revealed.

I want to end this message by thanking Jesus for paying the price so I can experience eternity with Him. What He did on the cross in this earthly realm was not finished, but He made sure He completed what He came to do including applying His blood on the heavenly mercy seat for my benefit, for all who would trust and faith in Him. We surely can be thankful beyond what words can express for what He has done for us. That is the kind of Savior I serve, and that is the kind of Savior that I will always continue to remember to my last breath in this body. He wants me to remember Him and He wants you to remember Him as often as you eat and drink.

Do not let a day go by without remembering our precious Savior who poured out His precious blood for sinners like us. Thank you, Jesus, for making that trip and finishing it.

Let's go to the Table of the Lord and take the elements in Jesus' name.

# Investigative Judgment

I want to start this message by reading something to you:

***“Another manifestation of the devil's activities is false religion. This is Satan's masterpiece and perhaps his greatest means of influence. It is also his most deadly weapon because it is aimed directly at men's souls. The ultimate goal of the devil is to keep a human soul from the salvation that is available in Christ, and he will do anything in his power- even to the point of encouraging religious devotion- to obtain the desired results.***

***The apostle Paul said, 'For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.' He has kept multitudes of people blinded to the truth through false religious systems. As Paul also said:***

***'If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age have blinded.’***

Just substitute ‘the gods of this age’ with ‘the false religions of our age today’. What have they done? They have blinded those who do not believe, ***“lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*** Just because a church or denomination uses the name of Jesus Christ or God means it is the true church; a true gathering of out-called ones to be disciples of Jesus Christ without twisting or manipulating scriptures and creating doctrines for their own agendas. If you want to be part of their church, you must follow their man-made rules of self-righteousness. If you do not, you have demonstrated that you are none of God. Of course, they twist scriptures to prove their point to gullible people who do not know the scriptures enough to understand what they are hearing is false and misleading. Unfortunately, many remain in this religious toxic environment to the soul because they have established friendships or they like what the group offers. We live in the age of the lukewarm church. It is neither hot nor cold, but the Lord said in the Book of Revelation that He vomits those lukewarm types out. They do not digest with the Lord either. It makes Him sick to the point where He vomits up what is happening in His name.

***“In reality, the so-called great religions of the world are nothing less than satanic counterfeits intended to destroy men's soul eternally. I know that might sound extreme to some,”***

I do not think it is extreme to the ones who have a better grip on what God's Word rightly divided says. I have had people write to me saying, as they explore different churches, watching or listening to some other ministry, “Wait a minute! That is not what God's Word says and how dare you twist it.”

***“but if you take the Bible seriously, that is the only conclusion that can be drawn. Some insist that all religions essentially teach the same thing and are all equally valid.”***

That is the big thing today to say it does not matter who you listen to or what religion you are part of, if you are sincere in the act of doing what they say you need to do that will get you into whatever heaven. All acts of practice and worship are equal. God is only judging the good things

that you do which brings works into the equation. There is a place for works, but they cannot provide you salvation. Their conclusion is that you get in by works no matter what religion you are practicing. However, Jesus said just the opposite. They are not all equal.

***“Yet, a simple comparison between Hinduism and Christianity, for example, shows the fallacy of this position.***

***Hinduism teaches that there are millions of gods, and Christianity insists there is only one God. A comparison of Buddhism and Christianity shows the same thing. Buddhism does not involve belief in God at all; it is inherently atheistic. Islam denies the core Christian belief that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son. [The true definition of that is the spirit of antichrist.] The pseudo-Christian cults like Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses would also be examples of satanic counterfeits.***

***But the devil's activity is not limited only to these other religions. We also see it in the church. Many in the mainline Protestant denominations have actually left the faith. They no longer believe that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh or that he was born of a virgin. They no longer believe that He died an atoning death on the Cross or that He literally rose bodily from the dead. They don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God. One wonders why they call themselves 'Christian.' They reject outright most of what the Bible teaches”***

In fact, most of them would like to improve on what the Bible should have said. That is how the prosperity doctrine got so popular; they manipulated what it means and what you should have understood it to mean. Because they were able to make a few bucks off of what they preach they use themselves as an example, “It worked for me, so it has to work for you.” Just name it and claim it and all the other nonsense that goes along with the prosperity doctrine which is straight from the pit of hell. Then finally,

***“Much of Roman Catholicism would have to be included in the same category for in many of their beliefs and practices, everything from the mass, to the pope, to the priest, to the supposed meditation of Mary and the saints is contrary to the simple message of salvation presented in the scriptures.”***

Absolutely. I think I will expose a lot of these different false religions for what they supposedly are in the name of Jesus Christ. Even if it causes controversy, good. It is worth it to have these people stuck in these false religions see the truth and be released from the bondage they are under, to be totally free men and women of Christ the way the scriptures preach it and teach it. Too many are stuck in a dead faith in a dead religion. Christianity has become too passive, hence lukewarm. It is time to heat it up a bit. The Roman Catholic churches claim that it is the one true church. It is indefensible both biblically and historically.

***“Satan is indeed active! He is manipulating the forces of nature and bringing disaster upon men, he is at work in society oppressing people through various philosophies that lead to tyranny and war, and he's busy spreading false religion that he might steal men's souls and rob them of eternal life. [That was his plan from day one.]***

***As we gain a greater awareness of Satan's activity in the world, may it provoke us to a greater use of the mighty weapons of prayer and the proclamation of the gospel. It's through prayer that catastrophe can be turned into an opportunity for God to work. [It will take more than***

prayer even though it is important.] *It's through both prayer and proclamation...*”

Now we are getting closer; it is not just praying, but proclamation. That means somebody must say it. Someone must stand up against these false religions in this PC environment that we live in. We are constantly being told that we should not really cause any problems, treat everybody as equal and with respect. I treat people with respect, but I do not have to treat what they believe in with respect.

***“... that God intervenes in the affairs of men by pouring out His Spirit and bringing about radical change... It's through the proclamation of the gospel [rightly divided] that men are freed from the blinding effects of false religion and brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. ...The more familiar we are with the devil's schemes, the more effective we will be in overcoming him and helping others to do so as well.”***

The key is ***“in helping others to do so as well.”*** I bet less than 1% of the people that listen to me do not know anything about the Seventh-day Adventists and what they teach regarding communion, especially when it comes to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I know on the surface Seventh-day Adventists are not bad people. They are honest, hardworking folks, thinking they are doing the right thing by following the doctrinal rules and regulations of that denomination. However, they are lost without even realizing their situation. I have said before, if you do not get it right at the Table of The Lord where He said, “Do this in remembrance of me” and the reasons why, you are in trouble. What sickens me is a lot of the practices and doctrinal viewpoints that they have established, and not just the Seventh-day Adventists, but others as well, are totally scripturally wrong. There is no other way of saying it, but what really gets me stirred up is when they develop false doctrines concerning this act that Jesus told us to do continuously to remember Him until He comes again for us or for the church. This author also states,

***“Any good military strategist makes it a point to know the strategy of his enemy.”***

I have been saying that for a long time, but I want to keep focusing on what is wrong with the church when it comes to remembering what He did for us and why it is important it is done as often as you eat and drink. There are other ways to remember Him continuously. For example, our breath, even though Jesus did not say as often as you breathe. Do you realize when you are given the breath of life, let's start with Adam, every breath you inhale and exhale, when you understand anatomy's function, is not just a daily reminder. It is every living waking moment of your life a reminder of God's presence. There is no excuse for mankind not to remember the Creator and the only begotten Son.

Back to the Seventh-day Adventists; over a century ago they came up with what I believe is a false doctrine, a theory called investigative judgment. First, there is no such thing as investigative judgment anywhere in the scriptures. It is exclusive heresy brought on by the Seventh-day Adventists. It is unbiblical teaching that Jesus entered the Holy of Holies in the year 1843 AD to begin His work of investigative judgment. It is also called by several other names however I will use its old term. In other words, it is the process of deciding who is worthy to enter heaven and who is not worthy to be there. Romans 3 and other areas in scripture make it

noticeably clear if you really think about it and study it. Verse 23 tells us,

***“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”***

That is why Jesus had to do what He did! No one was worthy before and no one is worthy after what He did unless you faith in Him. His blood does not cover like the Old Testament animals that were slaughtered to bring atonement upon the people. No, His blood as I taught previously REMOVED sin, not just covered it up, but removed sin. His blood goes beyond just covering. Romans 3:23 teaches no one is worthy of heaven—NO ONE. Furthermore, Christ's work of redemption was finished long ago; it is not continuing today as the Seventh-day Adventists foolishly teach in their churches.

As sincere as many preachers are, and I believe they are sincere, they are also ignorant. Sorry, they can be the most scholarly preacher or teacher, but they are ignorant if they teach that Christ's work of redemption was completed at the cross, completed at Calvary because the blood had to be applied in the mercy seat in heaven. Without that it was an incomplete mission and Christ failed. But did He? No, He succeeded. In the message, *It is Finished* when Jesus said it is finished you have to remember this one thing, He did not die, so in reality how could it be finished? There are multiple ways to understand this and I already taught one way in an Easter message. In this message, I want to look at it a different way. It is finished, yet He was still alive so how could it have been completed? Did He have to die or what was Jesus referring to? He was not buried yet, and He sure had not risen again. He sure did not sail into the blue after three days and three nights in the grave, come out of the grave and say, “Don't touch me, I haven't ascended unto the Father yet,” and then He applied His precious blood on heaven's mercy seat. So, what did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished”? In John 19:28 we read,

***“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.***

***Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.***

***When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”***

So, what was finished? What yet still had to be done? The answer is all the prophecies, and there are many of them, concerning Jesus Christ up to this point in the scriptures we just read. Jesus paid close attention to what He had to fulfill, every detail that was ever prophesied concerning Him. He knew what needed to be completed. He said, ***“It is finished”*** after He received the vinegar. It does not say Christ's work of redemption was not finished at the time He spoke those words. No, Christ's work of redemption was not finished at the time He spoke those words. Furthermore, people use the word atonement a lot. Scriptures make use of it, especially in the Old Testament. It is an Old Testament word. I am going slowly because I do not want any Seventh-day Adventists to twist anything that I say. Hebrews 10:4 states,

***“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”***

This is because the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins. The blood coming from

those animals covered or atoned for sins. Even in the Greek the word atonement comes with the same definition, *to cover something*. In this case, in reference to sins, your sins would be covered. This is the same Hebrew word that was used for the pitch that covered the ark Noah built. Therefore, the blood, according to Hebrews 10:4, was only a temporary solution that atoned for the sins of the people to cover the sins of the people. What did Jesus do? What did His sacrificed blood accomplish? Some people may be shocked to hear that Jesus' blood did not atone for sins even though they have heard that repeatedly. Jesus' blood did not atone for sins, but rather His blood took our sins away. We read that in Hebrews 9:12,

***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

Also, in Hebrews 9:24,

***“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:”***

In the Gospel of John, Jesus said, “Don't touch me. I have not yet ascended to the Father.” That is because Jesus needed to take His shed blood to heaven and apply it to the heavenly mercy seat. When He applied it to the heavenly mercy seat, it removed, I repeat, IT REMOVED our sins. It did not cover our sins, it removed them. The covering was only good for a certain amount of time. In the time of Moses, God required the people to apply the blood of the slain lamb to the top of the door, if you remember the Passover story, of each home, or the firstborn would surely die before they exited out of Egypt and its bondage. When the test of wills between Pharaoh and God, not Moses and God, was going back and forth it was the last straw for God. Exodus 12:13 explains,

***“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you....”***

Once the animal was slain, if they did not apply the blood, their firstborn would die. I have said before, the blood had to be applied. It was true for them in the Old Testament, it was true for Jesus and how He applied it for us on the heavenly mercy seat. That is why I come against preachers like John MacArthur who claimed that Jesus' blood is only representative of Christ's death. What bible are you reading from? Maybe it is one of these new versions or something. He also made a comment that the blood by itself has no significance, which makes me want to scratch my head in disbelief. The Word of God proclaims differently, and it always has.

Before we get into some of the silliness, I want to make sure we understand where I am coming from. A lot of this is review, and we have been to these passages many times before. Beginning in 1 Peter 1:18 we read,

***“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ....”***

I have taught messages on the precious blood of Christ and am so tired of hearing that Jesus Christ atoned for our sins at Calvary. You have probably made the same mistake if you have been a Christian for many years, making the same statement not understanding what atonement means and that Christ's application is not equal but better than any atonement in the Old Testament. My sins are just not covered, my sins are removed, vanished! Jesus does not atone for our sins; He took our sins away forever. Let's go to the word *atonement* in the New Testament.

Romans 5:11, ***“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”***

This verse only mentions the word atonement in the New Testament, but it is a mistranslation. Some of your Bibles might even have like mine the word translated correctly, which is *reconciliation*. If you do not have it in your Bible write it in. Check me out if you do not believe me. I do my homework.

However, let's return to Jesus and how He did not finish His work at the cross. This is because He still needed to ascend into heaven with His shed blood to apply to the mercy seat on our behalf. I have said many times now, and I will keep saying it over and over, this was to remove our sins forever. When Jesus returned from heaven, He allowed Thomas to touch His scars. He told Mary not to touch Him before He went to heaven because once the blood had been applied to the mercy seat in heaven, Christ's work was then finished. What a wonderful Savior we have.

With that all laid down, so you know where I am coming from, let's look at the Seventh-day Adventist teaching concerning investigative judgment. This is a quote from Ellen White's book The Great Controversy, however, it is not worth reading if you are interested. This book states,

***“As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for redemption of men is completed, there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2,300 days ended. [I have no clue what the 2,300 days mean.] (according to Mrs. White this was in the year 1844!-Ed.). [A lot of things happened around that time and not just with the Seventh-day Adventists.] Evidently the nineteenth century was more wonderful than we had imagined!) At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our high priest entered the most holy to perform the last division, of his solemn work to cleanse the sanctuary [I would like to know where Jesus was all the other times.] ... in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ, and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary... so the actual cleansing to cleanse the sanctuary... in the new covenant the sins of removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But, before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves work of investigation- a work of judgment. [Therefore, the investigative judgment.] Those who followed in the light of the prophetic word saw that, instead of coming to earth at the termination of the 2,300 days in 1844 (as Prophet William Miller had so dogmatically and widely proclaimed. -Ed.), Christ then entered into the most holy place of the heavenly, to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to his coming.”***



In case you missed the introduction or did not quite understand everything I just read; this was heresy in The Great Controversy by Ellen White. In a sense, it claims that Christ's work of redemption was not completed at the mercy seat when He went up and presented His blood. The redemption had to be pushed forward 2,000 years. There is no scripture to base any of that on and there is nothing in scripture anywhere which teaches that. Investigative judgment is not even remotely found in scriptures. It is damnable heresy. I am skipping a lot, but the Seventh-day Adventists believe that Jesus is still in the process of redeeming them. On the contrary, in Hebrews 9, halfway through verse 26 it says, ***“but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”*** Jesus did not need to go into the Holy of Holies, even the heavenly Holy of Holies, repeatedly as they had to in the Old Testament with what the high priest would do over and over.

Hebrews 9:25 states, ***“Not yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;”***

Christ did this only once. The very concept of investigative judgment would require Jesus, not what it says here in Hebrews, to enter into the Holy of Holies a minimum of twice; the second time being 1844. Show me anywhere that this is biblical. It is a false doctrine and teachings concerning the 2,300 days. This heresy of investigative judgment and all the other names it calls itself that the Seventh-day Adventists teach, denies Christ's completed work of redemption once He sprinkled the heavenly mercy seat with His blood.

This is a quote from the Adventists organization website:

***“In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, He [Christ] entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry.”***

Where Christ had twice entered into the phase of sprinkling His blood again, I guess on the mercy seat is blasphemy. I am even skeptical that they believe in the mercy seat, however there is nothing in the scriptures about a second phase of Christ's atoning work. If there is, show it to me. Give me chapter and verse. I have the book right in front of me. If that is true, say they are right, and they have the knowledge of how to get in, which they do not, but if they did, then salvation can only be found through Seventh-day Adventists. Think about it. This theory or doctrine of a second phase of redemption is exclusive to the Seventh-day Adventists. It is bizarre what they teach. It is not based on anything in scriptures. It is just another segment of false religion; a demonic whore religion that mis-applies scripture and demeans what Christ did for us at His death, resurrection, and ascension into the heavenlies, and what He sprinkled on the mercy seat. This doctrine will take you straight to hell in my opinion. I will not be bashful, shameful, or passive about it. I have said it before and I will say it again, if you get this redemption process wrong and you teach something different than what it teaches in the Bible, you are in bad, bad shape.

I am just giving bits and pieces of this doctrine. It is a lot more complex and can be very confusing because the scriptures have been twisted and manipulated to make this doctrine seem biblical. I can almost guarantee most Seventh-day Adventists or non-Seventh day could not even explain it even with Ellen White's work or material right in front of them to guide them along the

way. It has been one of the most debated and most controversial doctrines in the Seventh-day Adventist church since its invention and they have been debating it for almost 170 years. But Ellen White put her stamp of approval on it and it stuck just like so many things have stuck in the last 200 years as I preach in the Last Days Series. It almost becomes cult-like, and you cannot shake it or discard the doctrine without admitting some of these people you admire, if you are in that certain organization, to be false prophets so they continue being misled, practicing, and maybe not believing totally in the false doctrine, but not fight against the system. Better yet just leave the system. Set yourself free and find the truth somewhere else.

Most of these denominations took part in this advent movement as they called it. In the Last Days Series, I briefly mentioned the Millerite movement which some have now called The Great Disappointment because they were expecting Jesus' return because they believe that Christ will return to earth and save them and destroy the wicked, including those who rejected William Miller's theories and date setting theories, with hell fire raining down from heaven. I covered some of it in the Last Days Series. The first day of the end of the world, according to them, was 1843 and that did not happen, so 1844 was the next date. But they wanted a more pinpointed date, so they finally settled on October 22, 1844. Needless to say, these dates came and went, and nothing happened. No savior returned, hence the term The Great Disappointment. Because Christ did not return to earth, the Millerites broke up into two groups. The larger of the two groups was led by Miller, who then renounced his belief of anything prophetic about 1844, so after the fact he renounced it. If you understand everything that happened to the Millerites, they went back to the old ways of thinking before all this influence of the advent movement. They went back to holding evangelistic meetings trying to get souls to Christ. A splinter group from that was led by Ellen Harmon who later became the wife of James White. They would hold their meetings behind closed doors as they were developing all these doctrinal viewpoints and they called themselves the little flock. Well, that little flock grew to the point where you cannot go to any town or city practically around the world without seeing a Seventh-day Adventist church. There is a lot of other history that goes along with it, but these groups split so one went one way and one another way. There is another group also but to save time, because some of this history could get lengthy, on October 22, 1844, the investigative judgment theory was developed. It is not an accidental doctrine from the Bible that was discovered or jumped out from scripture. It was developed to be a modern origin created by men just like a lot of the last days nonsense. Let me read a few more quotes from Ellen White's book The Great Controversy before I finish.

***“ ‘Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God, to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man- to perform the work of investigative judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.***

***‘...So in the great day of the final atonement and investigative judgment, the only cases considered are those of the confessed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, at a later period.’***

***‘At the appointed time for the judgment- the close of 2,300 day, in 1844- began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass Its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are judged “out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works.”’***

***... The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. [starting in 1844] Forty years has this***

*work been in progress. Soon- none know how soon- it will pass to the cases of the living.”*

In short, what the Seventh-day Adventists are saying is that what happened 2,000 years ago was not sufficient. Christ had to create other events almost 2,000 years later that puts them in an exclusive group because of what their doctrinal beliefs were. What I am not reading is a 300-page book that establishes Seventh-day Adventists and went on to make them an exclusive group that believes by your works and other things in their doctrinal instruction you had to accomplish. If you did not accomplish those things you did not pass the scrutiny and if you did not pass the scrutiny, then you would be classified in the wicked section. If you passed the scrutiny under investigative judgment, then Christ would remove your sins. There was the first phase, but they are shaky about that. The second phase in 1844 was the time set because 2,300 days went by according to how they look at the scriptures and how they interpret the 2,300 days they find in the Book of Daniel. And now the time was set that Christ was going to look at everyone's sins and if you were a true Seventh-day Adventist you would pass the scrutiny and therefore you would be in. If you were not, then you were out. In a nutshell, it all implies that Christ's work of redemption was insufficient at Calvary at His death, at His resurrection, and at His ascension into the Holy of Holies and because it was insufficient, Jesus needed to continue His redemptive work in heaven.

The Bible does not teach this nonsense. I said it earlier and I will say it again, it is blasphemy against the Word of God. The blood that Jesus took with Him to the heavenly mercy seat was all sufficient and acceptable to the Father. He only had to do it once, not continuously and certainly not starting in 1844. Christ's work of redemption was complete. They corrupt the scriptures to justify their foolishness. It is the way the devil deceives people to believe in a false religion, and if it was not for William Miller's foolishness in 1843 there would be no Seventh-day Adventists. They were born out of a failed prophecy to start with. If that does not prove it was a hoax, then what does? This is rooted in man's prideful sinful self and wickedness to only improve on what God's Word says. There is no other explanation for it. On one hand they say that Jesus died once, yet on the other hand they say there was also a second phase to His death. Two redemptions is ridiculous, but Catholics are no different. They have come up with their own version that distorts what Christ did at Calvary and beyond. Be forewarned; just because it has the word church after it does not mean it is a church of Jesus Christ, and I am not talking about Mormons either.

I will conclude in Acts 16 and then we will take the elements. This is when Paul and Silas were in prison. In verse 31 we read,

*“And they [Paul and Silas] said, Believe [*pisteuo*, trust, faith; requiring action based upon what you heard and were persuaded by] on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

Man has wicked ideas in the name of religion and all the diverse ways that you can be saved. However, trust in what Jesus Christ did by going to Calvary fulfilling all the prophecies He had to fulfill up to the point that it was finished as written in the Old Testament as we would describe it today. He knew it had to be fulfilled for every 'i' to be dotted and 't' to be crossed of the law that had to be met for the requirement of what He came to accomplish, but that is not the finished work. The finished work was still yet to come at His death, after His blood was shed, after He

arose, and then ascended into the heavenlies to the heavenly mercy seat and applied His blood. If you trust on Lord Jesus Christ, I almost hate to say the word believe, if you can act in faith because you heard it and you are persuaded it is true, then you too without any first or second phase of redemption or any other nonsense that is out there could have the trust and confidence that Christ did more than just atone for sin. He did not just cover sin. In fact, He never covered sin. That was what the bulls and goats did. He removed sin. He makes sin disappear, which makes you sinless because even if you cover sin, underneath that cover is sin. His finished completed act, removed it. It has vanished. Gone forever and cannot be found anywhere. That is why He wants us to remember Him, and why wouldn't we? If you trust and believe in Him, if you faith and act in Him in your daily life, if you exist to be His disciple waiting for His return and living forevermore with Him and the purposes He has for your eternal life, why wouldn't you?

If someone does something nice to you in this world, we have the tendency of saying, "I'll never forget it. This will always stay with me. I will never forget what you did for me." Multiply what Christ did for us by a gazillion. How could we not remember Him as often as we eat and drink? He is an amazing, wonderful Savior we serve. He is an amazing, wonderful Master, but He wants the recognition, and His Father wants the recognition for what His Son did for us. It is why I am adamant about going to the table of the Lord, and I am adamant about teaching God's Word rightly divided concerning why we remember Him. All these false religions, and I call them false even though good intentioned people are participating in them are not just Seventh-day Adventists or Catholics. They are being misled and they are missing the wonderful truth of what Christ did for us and what He wants us to remember. In addition to a lot of other things, some people think they are a last day's ministry. No, it is not! *This* is a Jesus ministry remembering everything we can find in His Word, and not just about the last days. I cannot think of anything more important than remembering what He did for us. And it should be.

He wanted us to remember Him, so let us do that as we take these elements and say, "Thank you Jesus for all you have done for us. We will continually keep trusting in you in Jesus' name."

# Our Sins Are Forever Removed

Open your Bibles to Hebrews 10. In this message, we will be reviewing how salvation is a gift from Jesus Christ, we do not have to do anything, and there is nothing we can do using our own merits to receive it. There were times in the early stages of my Christian years where I was told that if we did not do this, or did not participate in that, our salvation might be at risk. Because of that, I can understand why people experience doubts about their salvation when these forces come at them with these 'checklist' items. However, they cannot be found anywhere in God's Word, although churches hold it over people's heads to keep them in line and fearful of their salvation.

Philippians 2:12 says, ***“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”*** Unfortunately, most people do not understand what this verse is saying, especially in context. It is not because Christ wants us to fear and tremble over it, but because of everything else we will be facing after we receive salvation. Once you understand God's Word and you start getting the necessary knowledge, hopefully from someone who is rightly dividing the Word of God, you will come to realize just as I did that the fear is because of your ignorance of the Scriptures. This ignorance allows these opposing forces and their opinions, even from behind a pulpit, to influence you, and you started questioning and doubting your salvation. It comes down to this, many are confused on what the Scriptures say about salvation, which will be the subject matter of this message and then we will go to the Table of the Lord.

To begin, let's review Hebrews 10 before moving forward. The word *atonement* in the Old Testament meant *to cover*, however, Jesus did not atone for mankind's sins, even though that is preached over and over. Instead, He took those sins away completely, washing them away, as I have been saying, removing them with His precious blood. There is a difference between the Old Testament atonement of sin and Christ's blood removing sin in the New Testament. Verse 4 in Hebrews 10 tells us,

***“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”***

In other words, those things cannot remove them. The blood of bulls and goats did not take away sin, they only temporarily covered the sins of the people in the Old Testament. It could not remove their sins, and it was just a temporary covering. In Hebrews 9:12 we read,

***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his [Christ's] own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

Jesus Himself entered the heavenly holy place to appear before His Father and obtain eternal redemption for us. As I have said, Jesus applied His blood on the heavenly mercy seat just as the Old Testament high priest had to apply the lamb's blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

Hebrews 9:23 also reads,

***“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”***

The Old Testament tabernacle holy place, mercy seat, and the work of the high priest were all patterns of things in heaven. In Hebrews 4:15-16, Jesus is our heavenly priest stating,

***“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly [with confidence] unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”***

In other words, even though we are unworthy, we are made worthy by the precious blood of the Lamb. Therefore, a believer has a right to boldly, with confidence, to approach God's throne of grace. Jesus paid it all. Knowing that should give us the peace, assurance, and understanding that our sins were washed away, and not only washed away, but removed by Jesus' blood at that salvation experience. His precious blood cleanses from all sin.

I always like going back to Revelation 1:5,

***“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood [literally bathed us in His blood],”***

It is the blood sacrifice of Jesus that saves us, not our self-righteousness. That would not save an ant. The Bible tells us we are saved by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, yet I hear from a lot of believers around the world saying they doubt their salvation. They wonder if they did the right thing, if they said the right prayer, if they correctly prayed to God, if they had enough faith for this or that, or if they were sincere enough. Does the Bible ask for any of that to obtain salvation?

I really do not care about your sins or how far you have strayed from God. All I know is that you may still come to Jesus for forgiveness and salvation. The Bible says when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Isaiah 1:18 plainly states,

***“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”***

The definition of the Hebrew word for *crimson* here refers to a worm used to make clothing dye. Once the dye stained the cloth it was permanent; it could not be removed or bleached. Just the same, God's Word is saying that although your life may be permanently stained with sin, He can cleanse you as white as wool, and both Testaments have that same message. In other words, what was permanently stained could only be removed through Jesus' precious blood, the ultimate stain-remover that washes away and makes your sins vanish. This is the power of Jesus' redeeming blood that cleanses and removes our sins forever.

God's Word is full of promises, and He is a promise-keeping God, too. Some say the Bible holds over 7,000 promises of God, some conditional and others unconditional. Romans 10 is one of

those promises. In context, this chapter is referring to the Israelites that I have taught on in the past but personalize it for you. Verse 13 tells us,

***“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”***

In the Greek this simply means ‘*whosoever appeals unto the Lord shall be saved.*’ If we simply come to Jesus to be saved, we will be saved. All that God really requires is that we have that little amount of faith, because faith comes by hearing as we read verse 17,

***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”***

Just hearing enough of the Word of God introduces Jesus to you and what He has done for you. If you recognize that you are a vile sinner, as God's Word says we are, and you come to the realization that you need a savior to wash and remove these sins away and start anew, you will be saved. It only requires just a little faith if you think about it. How much faith do you need to be saved? Just enough faith to obey God's calling on your life. Just enough faith to obey God's calling that Jesus provides salvation. Just enough faith to obey the Scriptures by placing your faith in Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and be your savior.

By the way, I lean more towards ‘once saved, always saved’ but I am not a once saved, always saved doctrinal-type person who believes the way they believe. There is one thing you can do to lose your salvation. I think the unpardonable sin is to deny Jesus Christ and that goes whether you are a believer or non-believer. If you had access to some knowledge or listened to someone who introduced Jesus Christ to you and you completely ignored it, mocked it, and denied it as a non-believer, you have problems. But as a believer, if you decide it is not for you and you move over to the Muslim faith after years as a Christian going to church, the doctrinal ‘once saved, always saved’ folks will say that you were never saved in the first place. Oh, malarkey. They are just trying to save their doctrine. I am somewhere in the middle of that ideology.

I plan to show how salvation statements of faith sound good but lead people in the wrong direction. Their declaration on how to receive salvation is not in God's word. I will show, although I think it is unintentional, that a lot of what these ministries produce and convince people to follow in order to be saved comes from ignorance of the Scriptures. Because of that, it leads to a wrong understanding of salvation, and it unfortunately brings up other baggage. For instance, if you did this or if you did that, you would lose your salvation. However, I am telling you that you will not. You lose your salvation if you deny that Jesus Christ saved you.

I said at the beginning of this message there were times in my earlier years where I had doubts wondering if I had enough faith. Of course, just thinking about winding up in a lake of fire or hell scared me a lot. I remember as a young boy in New Jersey living in a scary old colonial mansion, one of the oldest homes in the district built right after the Revolutionary War. Once, I had to go down to the basement in this old colonial home to get to the garage area, and the basement was huge. Basements usually had the furnace which was converted to oil tanks that supplied the necessary fuel for the heating system of the house. The old steam radiator-type systems that heated the house made all kinds of crazy noises and I hated to go down into that area. It was dark and there was just a tiny light from a lousy 60-watt bulb. Nobody ever thought

about putting in a 150-watt bulb. There were other lights to switch on, but you had to get to certain sections and had to go through the darkness to turn on the lights. As a young kid I did not like it. It scared me. I dreaded going down to that basement because I feared the unknown, the uncertainty of what might be down there lurking behind something.

You may wonder what this has to do with this message. Well, years of doubt people have concerning their salvation is based on the same principle; fear of the uncertainty of the unknown and worry based on what they cannot see. Because of uncertainty of the Scriptures and because unfortunately not many are rightly dividing the Word of God, my early years of doubt and questioning if I had enough faith was based on my ignorance of the Scriptures concerning salvation. I am sure many of you have probably experienced the same thing.

I knew I would survive going through that basement, but I was fearful of the unknown between getting in and getting out. Well, guess what, I am not in the dark any longer about what God's Word says about salvation, and one of my missions is to make you worry-free and fearless about what God provided as a promise if you trust Jesus Christ and His precious blood. Of course, it took years to learn about salvation and it took years to realize that salvation only comes by and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything I worried about, all the doubts that I had, were rooted in my failure to comprehend the truth in God's Word. I am telling you we have the assurance and peace that we are eternally saved, and our name is written in heaven. How do we have that assurance? By relying on the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. Period. Nothing else. If you want to know what part discipleship has, that is a whole other issue. I am not discounting it. It must be included, but I am not like some who try to say it is only salvation and not discipleship. I will get to that, but not until I make this point clear; if I go to the lake of fire, it will be Jesus' fault because I am trusting in Him one hundred percent with my salvation. You heard me correctly. I will not be disappointed because Romans 10:11 says, ***“For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed”*** for believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. When your faith is solely on Jesus Christ because of the literal blood that He spilled and shed for our sins to cleanse us to remove those sins and make us whole, we shall not be ashamed! Let no one shame you.

If you do not think you are saved because of something you have done, God's Word says we shall not be ashamed. Do you still trust that Jesus Christ cleansed you and removed your sins? Even if you fail, your failure is not dependent upon Him saving you. If that were the case, He would never save you in the first place. I have news for you, you will fail, not just today, not just next month, but probably many more times before He takes you home or comes back for you. However, if you keep trusting in Jesus Christ, your salvation is assured. I know I was not born saved, but I know I am saved today because I decided to trust Jesus Christ. If you are not sure whether to trust Him or not, hopefully I can convince you to trust Him to forgive your sins as He has forgiven mine, becoming my Savior, and He can be your Savior too. Salvation really is simple. It really is! We are sorry sinners, even though some people think they do not sin. Jesus is a wonderful Savior. Salvation is receiving, not giving. We cannot give anything to receive it. Eternal life is a free gift. Romans 5:15 tells us,

***“But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ,***



***hath abounded unto many.”***

Romans 6:23 also says,

***“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

It is simple, Jesus paid the sins for many. He paid my sins so I would not have to. That is God's divine justice.

One reason many people are insecure is because of the 'works salvation doctrine' or the 'lordship salvation doctrine.' There are different names for it. It is a cursed teaching that teaches believing or trusting in Jesus Christ is insufficient to save a lost sinner. How pathetic a doctrine, but how often it is preached is unbelievable. These doctrines, which have been incorporated into many different churches, proclaims that you must make a commitment to cease from sinful living and serve God with all your heart. I have no problem with the last part, but commit yourself to cease from sinful living? I wish I could do that, but it is impossible. They deny that the reason Jesus came to pay the sin debt is so we would not have to. Read Romans 4:5,

***“But to him that worketh not, but believeth [literally *pisteuo*; trust and confidence in Jesus Christ] on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith...***

***Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,”***

Salvation is without works. Christ's righteousness is imputed to the sinner by faith. Romans 4:5 and 6 is saying, “a man's faith is counted for righteousness.” Those who teach this 'works salvation doctrine' and 'lordship salvation doctrine' have perverted the Gospel by adding works to faith. Even if you think that discipleship adds works, discipleship is not salvation. The very idea that a sinner must stop sinning to be saved is impossible. Even the best Christians still commit sin, even if they think they do not, they do. Go to Romans 7:14 through 25 and see how Paul struggled with sin, and Paul was the apostle of all apostles. Some of the greatest heroes of faith in the Bible, including King David in the Old Testament, was one of the biggest sinners, and he was called a man after God's own heart. Go to I Samuel 13:14. Remember, David committed adultery with Bathsheba, impregnated her, and then murdered her husband Uriah to try to hide his sin. Nathan the prophet called him out, but God still used David to write a good part of the Psalms.

This theology of 'works salvation' and 'lordship salvation' mandates a changed life as a prerequisite to be saved. I am telling you that it is a doctrine straight from the devil. God saves us so He can change us, but He does not make that a prerequisite to be saved. Beware of these false doctrines that are more popular now than ever. They also teach salvation can be lost, but not the way I said earlier. They are more rooted in 'works salvation' and if you do not do the works, then your salvation can be lost. Bull spit. If you cannot do anything to earn salvation, what makes you think after you are saved you can do anything to keep your salvation through works? The works in the discipleship journey are for a whole other reason, but not for salvation. It is necessary for you as a disciple to grow and understand those works, and not necessarily the

works most people think of as works, need to be applied and practiced in your life so you can grow and mature as a Christian, but it has nothing to do with salvation.

Think about it, if we cannot do good works to get saved, then how can we do bad works to become unsaved!? There is a riddle for you. Answer it! You will find that you cannot find a sound doctrinal basis to give a sufficient answer. It is impossible! The spiritual birth is as irreversible as a physical birth, except, as I said, I am somewhere between once saved, always saved and the others who teach just the opposite. There is one thing that can happen, once saved if you turn your back on Jesus Christ and deny the saving power of His blood.

The very notion that salvation can be lost places a heavy burden to maintain a certain level that produces a certain self-righteousness. God hates that. It is straight from the pit of hell and negates the gift of God and the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Think about it, how can we be assured of salvation if we must live our lives in constant fear of sinning too much? I am not condoning sin. I am also not really introducing it here in these messages. Christ does the changing. As much as you want to sin, you will find that you have no interest in it any longer. That is because Christ's spirit is in you and He is doing the necessary work as a potter to mold you and change you into what He wants for His purposes.

Think about it, if salvation can be lost then we were all lost a long time ago because we are all vile sinners in the eyes of God if we did not have Christ's precious blood to change His opinion about us. That happens because He does not see sin in us any longer. All God requires for salvation is for a person to change his mind. This is not the word *repent* as understood that is used so often, but in the Greek 'change of mind'. Yes, you must understand that you are a vile sinner, but with trust in Jesus, all that will change, and it starts with your mind. The Gospel of John translates the Greek word *pisteuo*, having trust and confidence in Jesus, as the word *believe* most of the time, but never mentions the word *repent* once. That is a man-made doctrine, and they will have you believe you must be crying and sorrowful, looking the part so God thinks you are sincere in your repentance. Jesus never did that in the New Testament, so why must we practice that 2,000 years later? The devil somehow was able to introduce a false doctrine of what coming to Jesus really means and how it is done.

With what is being preached today I think it is almost normal for a Christian to feel 'unsaved' when they sin, mainly because one cannot feel right if they do not live right. I am saying that your salvation is safe and secure in the redeeming power of Jesus' blood. We are not saved by good works. We never have been, and never will be. Just the same, we cannot be lost by bad works either. We might be reprimanded by God, but we are not lost. Salvation is receiving, not giving, and you cannot give back works to keep it. Romans 4:5 says salvation is without works and comes only by faith in Christ Jesus, who justified or made the ungodly right with God. Our confidence, our trust in Jesus and God the Father, should be based solely upon the promise contained within the Word of God. Your faith should remain steadfast on the written promises of God I have been sharing with you. Let's be strong in the Lord trusting what is written in God's Word instead of in personal feelings and false doctrines and guard against placing God on trial as the heathen world does.

I will close with John 5:39,

***“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”***

Knowledge is gained in the Scriptures. Our salvation is grounded in the promises of God's Word. Do not take some statement of faith concerning what you must do to be saved. Searching the Scriptures and what it testifies about Him will ground us, especially about salvation because it is verifiable. God's Word confirms our assurance and peace concerning our salvation. Many people battle with this because they focus on themselves rather than Jesus Christ's work of redemption. Stop focusing on yourself, your failures, and your sins. Christ paid the price for them to be removed. He knows you will sin, but He will work on your life. Our salvation is of Jesus Christ completely and there is nothing to do other than to trust what He did for us, period. It is not what we do for Christ that determines our eternal salvation, but rather what Christ has done for us at Calvary.

That is why He wants us to remember Him always and also as often as we eat and drink. Remember that your salvation is assured if you keep trusting in Him. That is enough for me every day. I want to go to the table of the Lord with excitement to remember how assured I am of my salvation. If you just keep trusting in Jesus Christ, your salvation is sure. Salvation is an exclusive thing that Christ did for us. It is our starting point for one heck of a journey that He has for us. Through that journey and all its circumstances, if we stay trusting in Him, the one thing we do not have to worry about is our salvation. He will be there waiting for us when we cross over, or He comes to get us. God only knows what He has planned for us throughout eternity.

Remember Jesus every day and thank Him for the precious blood He spilled that provided you salvation. Remember you do not do anything to receive it. It is His works, not ours ever. Remember that now as we go to the table of the Lord.

Thank you, Jesus.

# Pandemics

Open your bibles to Isaiah, chapter 53. Recently, I was reading about diseases, plagues, and pandemics that date back over one hundred years. I was curious about how people responded during these horrible times without the medical advances and knowledge we have today, and I found a news clipping that piqued my interest about an epidemic in Italy in 1884. It gives us the inside story of how a king of Italy responded to the crisis in his country on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1884. The news clip reads:

***“King Humbert, who is now in Naples, has been visiting those who were suffering from cholera in the hospitals in order to inspire confidence in the people. His Majesty has been received with great enthusiasm by the people, being greeted with acclamation whenever he appeared in public.”***

Now, let me give you the backstory to this news clipping.

***“In 1884 [136 years ago], King Humbert of Italy was awakened at midnight by a messenger informing him that an epidemic of cholera had broken out in Naples. Though the king was scheduled to be in Monza the next day for a magnificent reception, he telegraphed his hosts: ‘Banquet at Monza; cholera at Naples; I am going to Naples. If you don’t see me again, goodbye.’”***

Then someone who was following the king writes:

***“On reaching Naples, king Humbert found only the common people at the station to receive him. [Only the common people.] The rich, the aristocracy, and even most of the officials had fled. The king, however, did not care for that. It was the people that he had come to save. For weeks, he had worked incessantly to check the plague and to relieve the sufferers; he entered the hospitals, took the hands of the sick and dying into his own, and by his example shamed others into duty. After a week, one of his ministers said to him, ‘Your Majesty, there were three thousand, four hundred cases yesterday. This is getting to be alarming. Ought you not return to Rome?’ ‘You may go if you like,’ replied the king. ‘I shall remain till I see Naples free from cholera.’ And he kept his word.”***

This earthly king stepped away from the safety of Rome to go to Naples and stayed when others fled, with the hope his efforts could save and encourage people who suffered from this disease, this epidemic. He was not a genuinely liked king at first, but through his actions, he became a beloved leader to the people he helped but was eventually murdered by an anarchist that did not like his policies. This story reminded me of another king who came to save lives, one who was tortured and killed. In Isaiah 53:3 we read,

***“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”***

Jesus Christ was the King who left His heavenly throne and walked among the sick and dying, and I am not just referring to physical sickness and death, but more importantly,

spiritual sickness and death. He stepped away from His heavenly throne and became a man. He came from His kingdom, passed unrecognized through the streets of Israel, and reached out with His love.

Now, as far as earthly kingdoms, people have often offered their lives to save kings. This earthly king in Italy did not do that for the people of Naples. But our heavenly King, our Savior, offered His life to save a world that despised Him. Nevertheless, God sent His only begotten son to save us, physically *and* spiritually. Once you put your trust and confidence in Him, and what He has done for you by His redemptive work, you are spiritually healed. You will not be judged at the judgment seat of Christ for salvation because Christ's blood paid the price for your eternal salvation if you put your trust in Him and what He did. He became a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. While He was here, walking on this planet, He loved and served many in Israel. But even though He did all that, as well as promising eternal life, the religious authorities of the day did not accept Him. The religious powers despised and eventually murdered Him.

In the article, you see an example in history of an earthly king's concern for the people of his country who were suffering dearly from this cholera epidemic. They did not have western medicine like we have today. It was a severe and dangerous disease, but this king put his life at risk. How much more our heavenly King has done for us. No matter what this earthly king did, and it is to be admired, he still could not heal them spiritually. He could not provide for them eternal life. All he did in this situation was to provide some comfort, some extra hands on the ground, and that is to be admired. In contrast, our heavenly Father sent His only begotten son, who willingly went to that cross to die for us, to give us eternal hope that no matter what happens to this body, we have a promise of a new one in the future. This temporary existence is not the end, it is just the beginning. We will not just disappear; we will not just die off. We continue because of what He did for us.

However, how you continue is determined by how you receive Jesus. Will you reject Him? Will you despise Him? Or will you recognize who He is and what He did for everyone? It is a shame, so few have looked unto Him for salvation. Instead, many have looked upon their own works thinking about what they must do to be allowed entrance into heaven. Works are not salvation. They are no more than filthy rags if you are doing those works assuming they will provide you with salvation. There is provision for doing good works, but that is for rewards, not salvation! It is all about what Jesus has done, and only trusting in His finished works will get you in.

I will be 62 years old soon and looking back I wish I would have recognized earlier the importance of remembering Him daily. Scripture says to remember Him as often as you eat and drink, not just on Sundays or once a month. We are to remember Him and what He has done for us daily. Thank Jesus for His amazing grace, His amazing love, His amazing mercy. He is amazing. He is wonderful. He is to be adored. He is to be worshiped because He is our King; the one who has provided salvation. He just did not leave us to die spiritually, He provided the way to eternal life.

Someday we will all meet; I am sure of that. Whether in the heavenly place, or in the new earth, we will all meet and rejoice together about what a wonderful savior we love and serve. But until that time, we can remember Him together around this world. We lift our thanks and adoration, to the King of kings that saved wretches like us.

Thank you, Jesus, for your wonderful mercy, grace, and love. We remember you and what you have done for us. Take these elements in remembrance of Him.

Thank you, Jesus.

## Right Price, Right Place

Open your Bibles to Acts 20, where Paul meets with the Ephesian elders. Verse 17 begins,

***“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders [the leaders] of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations [or trials or tests. Paul had plenty of those.], which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shown you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,”***

Can you imagine if someone asked, “How should I preach? What should I preach? How will the congregation take it?” Or even worse, “What do you think they want to hear?” Paul ‘kept back nothing’. He let them have all the Good News of Jesus Christ in the instruction seen throughout all his letters to the churches, sometimes in love and sometimes with a rod. There was a lot of instruction, I believe, given to him by Jesus Christ himself, but that is the whole key. What congregations want to hear is what is profitable for them for the here and now. However, a serious-minded pastor or preacher will keep back nothing that is profitable for them in the eternal perspective. There is a significant difference. Verse 27 continues,

***“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. [He reminds them again that he has held back nothing. They were prepared and well taught.] Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”***

Paul was not even taking the credit for overseeing the flock. It was the Holy Ghost that made these Ephesian elders the overseers of the flock, and they were to provide spiritual food, not physical food, even though that might be involved.

In the New Testament, there are four different Greek words for *purchase*. Some of the things that I will be reading and communicating are things I have said in the past, but I will not be guilty by not laying it all on the table, or of not reminding you repeatedly that Christ purchased you with His own blood. To begin, the word *purchase* here in the Greek means *when you buy something for yourself*, so because Jesus shed His own blood, He bought us for Himself. That is why in other parts of Scripture it says you are not your own, that you are bought with a price. You are not the boss. Jesus had the right price and He paid it. So, the word *purchase* here can then mean that Jesus had the right price, which was sinless blood. Adam and Eve once had it, but they lost it and no one since, other than Jesus, has had sinless blood. So, Christ had the right price.

I also have taught that He had to apply His blood at the right place for the completed work to be finished for our benefit. For example, if I write a check to pay some debt that I owe but fail to send that check, would you consider my debt to be paid off? Obviously, the answer is no. Of

course not, I would still owe that debt, and the same goes for you. Now if I plan to pay off that debt completely, not just a partial payment, but a complete payment, it must be the proper amount that I owe, and it must be made to the proper place where I owe the debt.

The price for the church, the out-called ones, the gathering of people that the Holy Spirit draws, and God chooses to call His church, is not some fancy brick and mortar building where everybody gathers and because of the large numbers you say, “This is one heck of a church!” The church is the people; the church has always been about individuals. The price for the church was paid for by Christ with His own sinless blood, and Christ had to pay that price, which was the right price and only price that could have been paid, but it had to be delivered to the proper place. I have made that clear. So, what is the proper place? Go to Hebrews 9. This may be a review for some of you because I want it to sink in. I do not ever want you to misunderstand or forget what is being said and preached concerning the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Verse 12 tells us,

***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his [Jesus Christ’s] own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”***

That holy place was not in the temple in the here and now. It was the heavenly mercy seat which He entered in and obtained eternal redemption for us. Let me read something.

***“In the Old Testament, the high priest killed two goats on the day of atonement. The blood of one goat was taken by the high priest into the holy place, the ark of the covenant. On the top of the ark of the covenant was the mercy seat. Over that mercy seat were two cherubim beaten out of pure gold. Between the wings of those cherubim was the glory of God. The blood from the goat that was sacrificed was applied to the proper place which was the mercy seat. If the blood did not get to the mercy seat, then it was the proper price but not paid to the proper place.”***

The high priest had the right payment, but if it did not make it to the mercy seat, it was the wrong location. It would have been no more valid than the check written to pay off your creditor if it were not delivered. So, the blood had to be the right price, the proper price, and it also had to be paid at the proper place.

***“If the blood of Jesus was left on the ground at the cross, that means it did not get to the holy place and is not valid. ‘What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.’ It is not just the blood shed, but also the blood applied.”***

You would be surprised how many Christians who take part at the table of the Lord do not comprehend the importance of the blood transfer. If the blood was not applied, it was an incomplete transaction. It is not complete unless it was sprinkled on the mercy seat in the heavenly places.

***“God told Moses to instruct the people to apply the blood of the lamb at the Passover. When he passed over and saw the blood of the lamb, he would hold his judgment. God did not judge them based on His eminence. He made a point of letting them know that He would not judge***



***them only when He saw the blood. It was not enough that the blood was shed, the blood had to be properly applied.”***

It would not be good enough if you just killed the lamb and shed his blood. You also had to collect the blood and apply it according to the instruction in the Old Testament. It had to be applied or else you would face judgment, and in that case, your firstborn would die. That was the price to be paid.

***“How could God see the blood in the tabernacle? His glory was in the holy place and the blood had to be taken inside the holy place and sprinkled on that mercy seat. That was the right place to take it, and for those purposes, the right price. If the right price was paid on the altar in the courtyard but left there, it would have been the right price but the wrong place. If the blood Jesus shed on Calvary was not applied in heaven, it was the right price but in the wrong place.”***

No matter how much blood Jesus shed, it could not save anyone unless He ascended after the resurrection into the heavenlies and sprinkled it on the heavenly mercy seat for the finished work to be completely done.

***“Jesus did more than just shed his blood for the church, he purchased the church [the out-called ones] with his own blood. To purchase it he had to take the right price [sinless blood] to the right place.”***

Not the earthly mercy seat but the heavenly mercy seat.

***“In fact, a different concept to try to understand this is in Hebrews 12:24, ‘And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.’***

***It does not say that the shedding of blood saves, does it? No. ‘And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of the sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.’ It is the shed blood sprinkled that saves. When Cain had killed Abel, God said in Genesis 4:10, ‘What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’”***

God can hear blood speaking. Do not ask me how it is done, I have not figured that one out yet. Genesis 4:10 says, ***“the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”*** The voice of Abel’s blood cried to God from the ground. Somehow, some way, blood can speak a language that God can hear, and it has been speaking ever since. In Christ’s situation, no matter if it is 30 years after His blood was shed, it still speaks. 2,000 years after Calvary it still speaks, but from where does it speak is the question. It must speak to God, so there is a heavenly mercy seat just as there was an earthly mercy seat.

***“Jesus, the high priest, took His own blood to the heavenly mercy seat [I have been saying this], otherwise it would not have been acceptable. It would have been the right price but the wrong place. The blood had to get from the altar to the mercy seat period. The blood of Jesus had to be shed. He could have died without the inflicting of the wounds. Jesus went up to heaven and sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat.”***

He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat. I do not know how much, but enough to meet the requirement, and that blood is still speaking today. Right now, that blood is still talking.

***“It is saying not to charge our sins to us because we have been purchased by that blood.”***

In Acts 20, He bought us for Himself. He paid the right price, His sinless blood, and He made the trip to the heavenly mercy seat and placed it by sprinkling the necessary amount to remove our sin, to cover it, to make it disappear.

***“It is saying not to charge our sins to us because we have been purchased by that blood. Cain's blood indicted him for killing his brother Abel. God's blood speaketh better things than that of Abel.”***

God looks down and sees my sins and your sins and starts to charge them against my record and your record, but Christ's blood starts talking, saying, “I have already paid that sin, period.”

***“The Bible says that God will not impute or write down my sin against me because the blood is speaking.”***

In the check analogy, the blood is the canceled check. It arrived at the right place and it was cashed. That check speaks that the debt has been paid.

***“There is nothing God the Father can do about my sins.”***

Think about that. There is nothing the all-powerful Elohim can do about my sins because Jesus canceled that check, or removed my sin, and the evidence is sitting on the heavenly mercy seat. It is the price He paid for me; it is the price He paid for His out-called chosen ones, the true church.

Peter had something to say about the sprinkling of the blood too. 1 Peter 1:2 tells us, ***“Elect [we are elected, chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:”***

***“This is not referred to the elect according to the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ.”***

And there is a difference. If you go to a church and happen to attend on a table of the Lord Sunday, and if they just keep preaching about the shed blood of Jesus and not applying everything else that I just mentioned, they are not preaching a complete message, so it is really not the Gospel of the Good News. It is just half of the Gospel. It might be uncomfortable to hear but it is the truth. All you are getting is half-truth. It is time that we know the full truth and why it is so important to remember the completed work of Christ. Jesus wants us to remember all of it because it puts all the focus back on Him and His completed work. He wants you to remember that He now has purchased your life. The problem with too many Christians is they think they have ownership on their lives, but you have none. God lets you control a few things in the here and now, but you have none over your life, He does. He wrote the ultimate check, and it has been cashed at the right place and now we are His.

***“This does not refer to the elect according to the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, but to the sprinkling. As I Peter 1:2 says, 'unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ'; unto the sprinkling of that blood applied to the right and proper place. Jesus did die and pay the price, but paying the price and getting the price to the right place are two entirely different things.”***

That is what I have been saying.

***“If on the Passover, the blood of that innocent lamb was left in the backyard where the lamb was killed and not properly applied, the firstborn of the family would have been killed. It was not the blood shed back in the backyard that spared the life of the firstborn, it was that blood applied at the front door.”***

We have too many backyard Christians.

***“It was not the blood shed on the altar that satisfied God, it was the blood applied in the Holy of Holies. It was not the blood shed on the cross that saves...”***

You will hear that over and over. There are songs written about it by ill-taught Christians and pastors who should know better.

***“It was not the blood shed on the cross that saves, it was that blood applied in heaven. When Jesus was resurrected and Mary Magdalene saw Him, Jesus said, 'Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father.' He was the high priest. He was taking the blood He had shed as the Lamb of God to the mercy seat in heaven to sprinkle it there. Between the time the high priest took the blood in the basin and sprinkled it on the mercy seat nobody could touch him. That is why He told Mary Magdalene not to touch Him. Later He told Thomas to put his hands into His side. Why could Thomas touch Him when Mary Magdalene could not? Because when Thomas saw Him, He had already been to heaven, sprinkled the blood and the blood was already talking to the Father.”***

When I sin, when you sin, and do not tell me you are not a sinner, as soon as it happens that blood starts speaking and God cannot render judgment on us with that sin. It does not give us a license to sin, and unfortunately, we will sin. Whatever kind of sin, as soon as it happens the blood starts speaking in God the Father's ears. Think about it.

***“Jesus died for the church [as I said, people who have been called out and chosen to be His disciples is what defines a true church] and purchased it with His own blood. The local church is composed of born-again people who have been scripturally baptized and have joined a certain assembly. The Jews were going to the promised land. When they got there, they were going to build a permanent temple. On the way, all they had was a tabernacle, a tent. It was a portable place of worship. Jesus has bought us a home in heaven, but we are not there yet so He has also bought us a portable heaven, which is called the church.”***

Not a brick-and-mortar building, so do not confuse it with a group of out-called ones denying

themselves, taking up the cross, and following Jesus.

***“He bought me a home in heaven with His blood, and He bought me a home on earth temporarily while I am waiting to go to heaven. He purchased it with the most precious and expensive thing—God's own blood. He not only bought my soul, my spirit, my body a home in heaven, but He also bought and purchased with His own blood His true church.”***

He did it because He paid the right price, His blood in a tent of human flesh which represents the bread. Yes, He shed His blood on the cross and His body was broken. He died, He rose, and He finished it by sprinkling His blood on heaven's mercy seat, and it is still speaking today. It is still talking to the Father every time that I sin. I can hear Jesus saying, “Can't put that mark against him.” If we keep faith in Jesus Christ, His blood will keep speaking on our behalf. Why would we not want to remember Jesus Christ? In December, most churches, with all their activities, are just remembering Christ's birth. In Scripture, Jesus did not tell us to remember His birth. What He did at the end of His life and what He did after He rose from the dead is what we are to remember because it benefits us the most. Without Him finishing what He came to do, the Father would have no other choice but to lay the same judgment on the trusting ones as He will on those who do not faith in Jesus Christ and what they will receive.

Thank God, He called us, and He has chosen us. We have listened, we are growing, and we understand that we will stumble along the way to our heavenly journey, the eternal hereafter. We will sin, but thanks to Jesus, I know what that blood is saying to God the Father and it is wonderful. It is saying, “I can't remember their sin any longer. It has been removed.” For that, let's thank Jesus by participating in the elements, taking them, and remembering what He has done for us.

# Talents

Below are two emails from an HOF regarding questions about what I have been preaching lately on salvation. I thought they were good points to raise, so I decided to share them. Then we will look at the parable in Matthew 25 and go to the Table of the Lord. First, keep in mind that salvation is based on none of our works. Any works done after salvation do not determine whether you keep or lose it. Those works have a different purpose.

***“In the parable of the talents, I'm sure you are familiar with it, the common teaching is it has to deal with literal money. Those who do not put to use that literal money and garner an increase but instead bury it, that worthless servant will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. It seems to me this approach can often evolve into a works for salvation perspective. As I understand it, giving generously is a fruit of the Spirit. Now, of course, some have said if you do not give generously then you are not filled with the Spirit and this is why that worthless servant was cast out. [This has nothing to do with Matthew 25 at all.] Could we have a misunderstanding of this?”***

Absolutely.

***“Our salvation is based on what Christ did, not what we do. Obviously, I'm not saying we should not give generously financially and giving generously can be more than money. It could be one's time, talent or giving generously to others with the same grace we have been given. Could a talent actually mean something else as unto each is given a measure of faith? [We'll see.] Some are given a larger measure than others and the measure is not the issue, but how we use what we have been given.”***

Shortly after the above email, I received a second email from the same HOF.

***“Hope my last question wasn't trying to get ahead of your teaching. I know you have not gone into how discipleship figures into things, but you have made it abundantly clear that salvation is Christ's work alone and we trust in what He has done. We make no contribution to that either on the front or on the back and certainly nowhere in the middle. No problem with that and praise Jesus and amen, I agree. Saved I am, a disciple I am, for which I will receive rewards in heaven, each of us receiving what we do. Some will have more, some not as much. It is not a socialistic concept, but when I read one of his servants was worthless and cast into outer darkness, it is a quandary. There is only one unpardonable sin. We all desire to grow in the fruit of the Spirit though I agree with you that mostly out of agathosune, out of their spiritual goals for growth. I think it is passages such as this and other warnings coming from pulpits that makes it hard for me to make that division between salvation and discipleship.”***

The biggest problem you are having, especially when dealing with the parables, is you seem to forget that Christ is speaking to both believers and unbelievers in and of the church, but I will get to that.

***“Perhaps it is quite a complicated matter, and this is why few teach on it, or even teach it well, and perhaps get it totally wrong. But being I feel I need to know this, I’m kind of desperate to have this right that I am more than willing to go the distance on a complicated issue.”***

Matthew 25 is one of those parables that, unfortunately, too many take literally. Christ was not teaching us how to be bankers, whether He gave five talents, two talents or one talent. That was not the purpose of this parable. Being a parable, it is a bit puzzling, so I can see why people get confused, so I know why it is preached the way it is. Let me read something about a parable.

***“What is a parable? At its simplest a parable is a metaphor or a simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”***

Let's read the last part again:

***“...and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”*** [for the ones that can hear]

Christ had a reason for parables, and I will get to it.

***“The meaning of most parables is not so obvious or at least it shouldn't be.”***

In other words, you cannot use common sense alone to understand the parables without using the verifiable Word of God, which is in a sense almost like its own Bible code. Using different parables to try and figure out Scriptures somewhere else allows us to connect the dots to help us understand what He is talking about. Does He do that in Matthew 25? Absolutely, but you do not even find it in Matthew 25. I know that sounds confusing, but I will get to it.

***“If we assume we know what Jesus is talking about, we are probably missing the main point; [That comes from not listening with spiritual ears and not reading as a biblical detective. When we connect all the dots, we can figure out what Jesus really meant.] if we are too familiar with the story (having heard it so often before), we might not think carefully enough about its real meaning.”***

This has happened over and over; not just with this parable, but with just about every parable that has been preached.

***“Most parables contain some element that is strange or unusual. [This is one of them.] They should cause you to say, 'Wait a minute! That's not how farmers do their work! That's not what kings usually do! That's not what normally happens in nature!' And this strange element should cause you to think!***

***Parables do not define things precisely, but rather use comparisons to describe some aspect of how God acts or interacts with human beings. Yet to say 'A' is like 'B' does not mean that 'A' is identical to 'B in all respects'; so one should be careful not to misinterpret or misapply the parables.”***

Unfortunately, this is done over and over and over behind pulpits every Sunday.

***We might think that Jesus spoke in parables to make it easier for people to understand his message. According to the Gospels, however, he surprisingly does NOT expect everyone to understand them!”***

Many preachers use this parable in Matthew 25 to teach that someone who is saved (a believer), can be lost. Let's examine it. Verse 14 tells us,

***“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”***

I have been to these verses before. Circle the word *called*. You could go right by this English word and not really understand it, because in the Greek it means something totally different. In Greek, the word *called* means *divine invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption*. Not just for themselves, but to participate with others concerning redemption. You could read right through this and have no concept of what Jesus is saying. This verse is telling us that Jesus is the man traveling to a far country who is now in heaven officiating as our great high priest at the right hand of the Father. Jesus has called with the *divine invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption*. ***His own servants*** refers to the church, which includes both wheat and tares.

Jesus had twelve disciples, but one did not turn out very well. Judas was living, breathing, walking, and communing with Jesus Christ himself, so do not tell me there cannot be both wheat and tares in the church. Too many Christians assume that our Lord is only speaking of believers in these types of parables and in what He is trying to teach through these parables. Remember that. In the Spiritual Warfare Series, I preached on the wheat and tares and I will share some of it now. In that series I taught,

***“Moving on to verse 26, Christ says, 'But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.'***

***Lolium temulentum is a kind of darnel, the commonest of the four species, being the bearded, growing in the grain fields, as tall as the wheat and barley and resembling wheat in appearance. Remember that they are similar in size and looks. [You can hardly tell the difference.] It was credited among the Jews with being degenerate wheat. The rabbis called it [the tares] bastard wheat. The seeds are poisonous to men, producing sleepiness, nausea, convulsions and even death. The plants can be separated out, but the custom as in the parable is to leave the cleaning out until near the time of the harvest. The Lord describes the tares as the sons of the evil one; false teachings are dissociable from their propagandists.***

***So, tares are a kind of species similar to wheat and barley not only in size, but also in looks. The rabbis called it a bastard species. That is the false preachers and false prophets [or any false individual with the wrong message about redemption] in the church. This bastard species is not under the kingdom of heaven. It is under the kingdom of the wicked one, controlled by him to say what he wants to say and do what he wants to see done...***

***The bearded darnel, mentioned only in Matthew 13, is a type of species of rye grass, the seeds of which are strong soporific poison. It bears the closest resemblance to wheat until the ear***

*appears and only then the difference is discovered. It grows plentiful in Syria and in Palestine. As Christ said, the wheat comes up with the tares and you cannot distinguish the two. They look the same, they sound the same, but when it is at its most ripened point, the true message is nothing more than an imitation. In this case, the sower sowing the seed produces nothing but bad seed that tries to choke and overcome the wheat. In the church, this is a false prophet or preacher declaring a false doctrine.”*

I will go even further; this is anyone spreading a false message about salvation and redemption. Remember, the seeds are a strong soporific poison, meaning they are hypnotic and induce or tend to induce sleep or drowsiness.

*“What are these tares doing? The enemy is sowing his seed, producing tares, the ones proclaiming a false message to hypnotically convince you what they are saying is the truth, when it is anything but the truth. It is definitely not the Gospel. I found that interesting, so I dug a little deeper and found that another way to define a tare is a 'cheat'. There are many definitions of this word that will be discussed here, however most understand the common definition is to defraud someone. For instance, some may cheat on a test by looking for the answer on another's paper. That is cheating because you did not know the answer yourself. Most have been guilty of it including myself. However, there is also another definition for 'cheat.' A cheat is also defined as, 'Weedy annual grass that often occurs in grain fields [or wheat fields] and other cultivated land; Seeds sometimes considered poisonous, such as the bearded darnel. [The tares.] The King James translators really got it right and truly explained what Jesus was telling his disciples to expect in the future, and what others who understand this parable should expect in the future as well. In another dictionary a cheat is a weedy annual native to Europe, but widely distributed as a weed, especially in wheat. From these definitions we know tares are nothing more than cheaters.*

*Using the definition most people associate with cheaters, it would be someone who cheats or 'deceives by trickery or plunder, to deprive by defrauding to mislead, to fool, escape'. All those definitions sound like false preachers with their false doctrines.*

*Looking further into another definition of a cheat, it is 'someone who leads you to believe something that is not true.' That is what Jesus said. Tares grow the same as the wheat, they look like wheat while they are growing, but it is not until they reach maturity that they are seen as different making you believe something that is not true. They disguise their true identity for what they are, hoping that they will defraud you with their message and that is what Jesus was saying in his Parable of the Wheat and Tares.*

*Another definition is 'a person who tries to bluff other people, a person who swindles you by means of deception and fraud'. I will add to that by saying whether they are doing this willingly or unwillingly, they are still a tool of the enemy, sowing the tare seed instead of the good seed that produces wheat. There is plenty of that in religious television today.*

*Another definition is 'a beguiler who leads someone into danger.' And that danger will eventually be the fire described in Matthew 13:40, “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.” Verse 42 goes on to say, “And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Yes, these beguilers will lead you to danger, but as long as I have breath in my lungs and there is life in me, I plan to expose them for what they are, who they are, and who is controlling them.*

*Other definitions are 'shifty, deceptive person; a person who says one thing and does another,*



***someone who falsifies'. In other words, a cheat is someone who declares the enemy's message, the false doctrine or preaching another gospel rather than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.***

I think you get the point. So why am I bringing this up? Again, the man traveling to a far country is the Lord Jesus Christ; and *his own servants* refers to the church, which again includes wheat and tares. The problem with so many books on the seven churches in the Book of Revelation is they only want to include the wheat. They do not include the tares, so they miss half the point immediately. Like I said, many preachers exclude the idea of believers and unbelievers in these types of parables Jesus used to get His point across. Verse 15 in Matthew 25 goes on to read, ***“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”***

The word *talent* in the original language could be a talent of silver or a talent of gold, but the question is: was Jesus really speaking solely of money here or using a parable to try to get another point across? Again, a talent could be either gold or silver but the last word in verse 18 in the Greek is *silver*. In the Bible, silver is symbolic of redemption, and we already know the word *called* in verse 14 means *a divine invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption*. Silver shekels were always used to redeem, so there is no doubt, symbolically, what Christ meant and what type of talent: not gold, but silver.

The talent Jesus is referring to here is the Word of God. You can find this repeated several different times in the Scriptures. I said you must use the whole Word of God as biblical detectives to make sure you can verify what Scriptures are saying. It is especially important when Jesus is speaking. That is why most parables are not really understood if you try to use common sense, because then you take it at face value, but you must go beyond that. I told you in God's Word there are so many verifiable ways to really understand what is being said if you do the biblical detective homework. What I mean by that is in Matthew 13:11, Jesus is giving the reason for the parables. The same story is found in Mark and Luke, but let's read the Matthew version. Verse 10 begins,

***“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you [to the one asking] to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath [or lay hold of], to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”***

Why? Because their hearts are hardened. Talents are just a mere physical example that refer to the spiritual aspect of producing fruit through and by the Word of God; not self-righteous fruit but producing fruit by getting the redemption message out that Jesus saves. It is not our works; it is all His. Go to John and many different places and read about the concept Jesus gave here. Most people do not make the connection. Read verse 12 again,

***“For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.”***

Remember that. Now, go back to Matthew 25, verse 16,

***“Then he that had received the five talents went and traded [The word here means to be employed, with the idea of giving whatever that talent was. I'm saying it is the Word of God.] with the same, and made them other five talents. [He doubled it.] And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.”***

This is where the word *money* is found for the first time, but the word for money here is really the Greek word for *silver*, so what did he do? He hid what was freely given to him in the ground.

***“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”***

Rewards will be given at the judgment seat of Christ.

Verse 22 continues,

***“He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”***

Notice that the first two servants who were called by divine invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption produced fruit. If you recall, I said at the very beginning of this ministry, that it is not just all about you. It starts there. It must be nourished. The connection cannot be severed, or you will be in a heap of trouble, but it goes beyond that and this is one of those parables that proves it.

Again, the first two servants produced fruit, but it had nothing to do with their salvation because they were already rejoicing and having joy in the salvation they received, the redemption that they were a part of. They took the commission assignment and said, “You know what! I'm going to take this message of God's Word, the message of salvation and do something with it, not so I can keep my salvation, but for others to be able to hear it and be blessed by it and enter into the salvation of the Lord.” Rewards are given to the saved in accordance with these types of works, not works for salvation. I think I have made that clear. The Word of God and works in this passage is by someone who is saved, a believer, and go hand-in-hand with each other. Verse 24 goes on to read,

***“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou has not strewed.”***

He is a liar, but how do we know that the other two were wheat? This servant is a tare. He did not know the grace of God, and for some reason he knew Him as a hard man. Obviously, he had no understanding of the free gift of grace. He had no understanding of the one who went to the far country, representing that after He died and rose again it gave him the opportunity of eternal life for trusting in Him only. Nothing else was required, just trusting, and having confidence what He did was sufficient and the completed mission that fulfilled all the requirements of God the Father. This tare was following the righteousness of the law; works. He did not have the righteousness of Christ which comes without works. He was walking after the flesh and not by the Spirit. This servant might have thought it was just a tough road to follow and maybe in his mind he only knew its hardness because he had not been captured by the redemption plan that Christ provided. So read what happened in verse 26,

***“His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.”***

Notice here how the Lord condemns this ‘tare’ servant because he knew about the sowing. Think about it! He knew about the sowing and strewing or reaping. Where did he get this information? He had access to the Word of God, but what happened? He did not place his trust in it. This unsaved servant never produced anything more than what was given to him. Verse 28 tells what happened next.

***“Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.”***  
Pay close attention to this verse, ***“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.”***

This is almost a repeat of what I just read in Matthew 13. Connect the dots! Matthew 13:11 reads,

***“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables:”***

Connect the dots. This is a repeat and what happens? This tare had access to the Word of God, but he did not trust the salvation plan enough, or at all, as the other two did and decided to bury it. I think the reason why money, usury and exchanges are used in these verses is because the Jews had it in the Old Testament. They would bury their money instead of lending it out because they were not allowed to collect any interest from a fellow Israelite/Jew, although they could from those outside of their nation. So, if they could not make any profit from it, they would bury it in the ground. It was their custom and Jesus knew what their customs were like, so this ‘tare’ servant who had the invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption decided not to believe how important that talent was, not just for his life but for others. He did not place any value in it that could produce something, so he just buried it as they did in the Old Testament. This makes

you think that he was just living in the old covenant and he really did not want to participate in the new covenant, the Gospel. Continuing in Matthew 25:29,

***“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.***

***And cast ye the unprofitable [literally the useless good for nothing] servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”***

This Parable has nothing to do with giving money at all. This is about sharing the Word of God, the redemption plan of salvation. What I want you to gather from this is that parables that address servants, as in this case, are not always unique to believers or saved people only because wheat and tares are in the same group. Christ says, “Don't worry about it. At the harvest I will sort them all out.” I guarantee you will see wheat and tares in today's churches.

For this unprofitable servant, burying his lord's money was symbolic to his response to the Word of God. Now, the unprofitable ‘tare’ servant considered Jesus his Lord, but he did not treat Him or consider Him his Savior. This third servant is a tare, and it says he was a wicked and lazy servant; slothful in the King James. Remember what I just read about the tares. The poisonous effect produces slothful people, fools, inducing or tending to induce sleep, almost being placed in a hypnotic state Tares might look like wheat, but they are not. If you are a wicked tare, you are slothful, you are lazy, and you are hypnotically seduced to believe what Christ did at Calvary has no redeeming value.

This third servant, he was a servant, but he was a servant walking in the flesh not in the spirit. Even a smallest interest payment as referred to here in this parable on the talent could identify this third servant as wheat, but it did not. It identifies him as a tare. This is not a parable, as this faithful Hearer of Faith was trying to understand and make the comparison, on what I have been teaching about lately; ***“I think it is passages such as this and other warnings coming from pulpits that makes it hard for me to make that division between salvation and discipleship.”*** And the reason why is because ***“when I read one of his servants was worthless and cast into outer darkness is a quandary.”*** I understand where your confusion came in because you were somehow relating this as discipleship work, which it is, but it is referring to three types of disciples.

Remember Judas was a disciple, but he was the tare in that group. In this case, two of the three servants, let's call them disciples, were not the tares, but the wheat producing fruit because they accepted the divine invitation to participate in the blessings of redemption. The whole message says that they did not bury it because they took it in, they trusted what they heard and believed it to be true. They acted with all trust and confidence that the one who went to the far country did the completed work that He needed to do here and there. They could not wait to get the message out and they produced double what they were given. The tare did not have any trust and confidence in it and all he did was bury it. How many church going professing Christians have made up their own doctrines and believe their own way about certain issues that are unchangeable in God's Word? What they are is really poison, but they are among the wheat. They look like wheat; the same size, the same look, but at the end Christ will sort them out for what they are.

These verses in this chapter have nothing to do with works for salvation. This has to do with letting other people know what God has done for you in any capacity that He has called you to participate. It has nothing to do with losing your salvation if you do not participate. The point that Jesus was making in this parable is that this unprofitable servant never believed in the salvation that He provided from the beginning. The tare took the message and he buried it, so he was never saved in the first place. This tare will experience outer darkness where weeping and gnashing of teeth will take place, but not because he did not produce other fruit. It is because he never believed in the redemption that Jesus Christ provided as our rescue plan at all, period. Do not confuse the two! I know many have and, again, if you try to read through these parables with common sense you will fall short every time. That is why Jesus spoke in parables. It is why verse 29 which states, ***“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath”*** is almost like Matthew 13.

Jesus was reminding them what He told them about the parables; some will get it, and some will not. The ones that do will have an abundance of understanding and desire to do something with it, which two servants did when they went out and doubled what they were given. The one that did not, his talent would be taken away because he did not believe it in the first place. He did not put his trust or confidence in the man traveling to a far country, which was Jesus Christ Himself. Instead, he was a lost unbeliever from the beginning and that is why he will suffer a dear penalty for it. Again, not because he did not produce fruit, but because he did not believe the message in the first place, which was the message of the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ and what He did for us. That is the difference, the game changer here, and it is unfortunate it is missed so often. Hopefully, I clarified it enough, so you understand what the differences are in this chapter from verses 14 to 30 compared to what others are teaching on it.

This is not a parable about how to be a good banker for Jesus. It has to do with redemption. It has to do with once you receive it that you will be overjoyed to participate because you have been divinely invited in the blessings of redemption to share it with others. Now let's go to the Table of the Lord.

In the Old Testament, Micah ends his prophecy by noting that his total confidence was in God. Despite Israel's sins, and they were great, he proclaimed God indeed pardons iniquity and delights in mercy. Not only does God forgive sins, but Micah also declares that He casts them far away. He sends them into the depths of the sea. Of course, all this is based on God's unchanging promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Read Micah 7:19,

***“He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”***

In other words, remove them from His sight where they cannot be seen any longer. I have been saying that now week after week, Christ is the one who fulfilled this prophecy. Christ did not come to cover, that was an Old Testament practice. He did not come to cover our sins; He came to remove our sins and Micah says He will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea where they cannot even be seen any more.

***“Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”***

Like I said, His unchanging promise from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would go unchanged and He did fulfill that promise. Know this, whatever your sins are, there is nothing you can do to remove them on your own. It is all Christ's work. He casts them into the depths of the sea. He removes them forever, but also after that He imputes us with His righteousness. That is why self-righteousness is ugly because it is all based on what we do and what we do winds up in sin. Yes, another reason, another Scripture that we can go to and remember what God promised He would do with our sins says He will cast them into the depths of the sea where they can no longer be remembered.

I do not care what you have done. Put your focus on having trust and confidence in Christ. You are a new creature in Christ with sins removed. Just start trusting and having confidence in Him day by day. Faith in Him with both types of faith. Keep hearing to be persuaded what God's Word has to say about Him which will build you the *pisteuo* faith where you have trust and confidence. I know one is a noun and one is a verb, but I would rather use those definitions because they build upon each other.

Rejoice with me and remember what Christ has done for us. Keep trusting and having confidence in Christ's redemptive work, day after day after day until He returns. Put your faith in Christ. Be part of the wheat, not a tare that takes the redemption message and buries it in the ground not to be seen, not to be believed by even the one that had it given to him. In other words, the one who heard but refused to believe it to be true. Be wheat and remember daily what Christ has done for us as He has asked us to. Thank Him for removing our sins and iniquities far, far away.

Take the elements now in Jesus' name.

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